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NEWS RELEASE

HEPC announces Internationalizing Higher Education grant recipients

The West Virginia Higher Education Policy Commission (HEPC) today announced four West Virginia public colleges and universities have received a total of \$45,000 to develop or expand international education initiatives that will improve the global literacy of their students.

HEPC has awarded three Internationalizing Higher Education grants of up to \$15,000 each to Concord University/Bluefield State College, West Virginia University at Parkersburg (WVUP) and West Liberty State College.

According to Dr. Brian Noland, HEPC chancellor, the grant program is part of the commission's continuing emphasis on internationalizing higher education in West Virginia.

"These grants will help our colleges and universities to better prepare their graduates for an increasingly globalized 21st century by integrating international experiences and perspectives into the university curriculum," Noland added.

Dr. Bruce Flack, director of academic affairs, points to a number of other accomplishments since the HEPC established the Consortium for Internationalizing Higher Education (CIHE) in May 2006, including several conferences and workshops, a statewide study abroad network, a website at www.studywv.org to promote West Virginia as a destination for international study, and a resolution supporting international education adopted by both houses of the legislature this year.

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“These accomplishments are just the beginning of an unprecedented state-level effort to develop and enhance the international dimension of our colleges and universities in West Virginia,” said Flack.

According to Dr. Clark Egnor, executive director of Marshall University’s Center for International Programs and CIHE chairman, the grants will be a welcome opportunity for the colleges and universities who are faced with the challenge of internationalizing their curriculum in an environment of scarce financial resources.

“Due to the homogeneity of our state’s population, there is a greater need in West Virginia than other regions of our country for an education that prepares college students to be functional in an increasingly globalized economy,” said Egnor. “These grants and other support from the HEPC will help higher education in West Virginia rise to this challenge.”

The successful grant applications were chosen from proposals submitted by most of the 11 public state colleges and universities in West Virginia.

The grants were awarded to the following colleges and universities to implement these sustainable programs to internationalize the curriculum with some impact on international student enrollment or sending West Virginia students abroad:

Concord University/Bluefield State College (Joint Proposal)

Concord and Bluefield State will cooperatively develop an undergraduate Area of Emphasis in International Studies and will work together to recruit international students, develop world language majors and create cultural curricula. The two institutions will also participate in a cooperative international student recruitment visit to Tripoli, Libya, and establish teleconferencing links to Middle and Far Eastern countries where Concord University and Bluefield State College will target their international student recruitment efforts.

West Virginia University at Parkersburg

WVUP will create short-term foreign language study abroad programs for its students, including a summer study program for Spanish language with the Autonomous University of Coahuila in Mexico and a summer study program for French language with Laval University in Quebec, Canada. WVUP will also broaden its existing relationship with the University of Ruse, Bulgaria,

by enabling students in Ruse's elementary education degree program to take courses at WVUP and exploring the feasibility of having WVUP students study at the University of Ruse for a summer or semester. WVUP also plans to initiate an Area of Emphasis in Global Studies in its Regents Bachelor of Arts degree program and establish an Office of Global Connections to act as a center for coordinating international projects for the campus.

West Liberty State College

West Liberty will send students and a faculty member to Bosphorus University in Istanbul, Turkey, to participate in that institution's summer term program. The students who participate in the study abroad program will be expected to serve as Hilltopper Ambassadors for the year following their return to campus. Their duties will include helping to conduct presentations on campus and in the community to increase student interest in studying abroad. West Liberty will also make an active effort to recruit Turkish students to West Virginia through their partnership with Bosphorus and participation at an international student fair.

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