



July 21, 2010

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Jefferson College Receives \$701,000 Grant to Support Healthcare Job Training Initiative

Jefferson College has been awarded \$701,000 to support job training in healthcare as part of the newly formed regional “Graduate! St. Louis Consortium” announced in conjunction with a \$4,404,781 grant by the St. Louis Agency on Training and Employment (SLATE) from the U.S. Department of Labor.

The grant and consortium were announced by St. Louis Mayor Francis Slay, SLATE Director Michael Holmes and RCGA President Dick Fleming. The consortium will prepare the bi-state St. Louis Metropolitan Statistical Area (MSA) workforce to meet employer demands for qualified staff in the healthcare, information technology and emerging green industries.

“In these difficult economic times, Jefferson College continues to be aggressive in seeking funds to help support and train residents as the economic downturn continues to take its toll on working-class families and especially on those who are dislocated or are in low-income positions,” said Jefferson College President Dr. Raymond Cummiskey. “By working together as a region, the Graduate! St. Louis Consortium will provide a much needed lifeline to strengthen job training opportunities and boost economic development throughout the metropolitan area.”

Jefferson College will use its portion of the grant to further support its healthcare training initiative, combining previously announced Training for Tomorrow grant funds to create programs in the high-demand fields of physical therapy, occupational therapy, respiratory therapy, and radiology.

In total, Jefferson has been awarded nearly \$1.6 million in a five-month span for the expansion of its healthcare curriculum.

“There have been some changes in the \$871,000 Training for Tomorrow grant we received earlier this year, allowing Jefferson the opportunity to combine those funds with this new \$701,000 grant to hire full time faculty and buy equipment to support our four new health care programs,” said Dean of Career and Technical Education Elizabeth Check, who secured the SLATE grant funds on behalf of Jefferson College.

The Graduate! St. Louis project is a unique and regional collaborative partnership between SLATE, St. Louis Community College, St. Charles Community College, Jefferson College, East Central College, Southwestern Illinois College, and the St. Louis Regional Chamber and Growth Association (RCGA). In addition to the St. Louis Workforce Investment Board (WIB), the following WIBs have endorsed and will participate in the Consortium: St. Louis County,

Jefferson/Franklin Counties, St. Charles County, and St. Clair County. The WIBs will participate in an advisory capacity to share information, monitor project activities and outcomes, and provide strategic input to the Consortium leadership.

This grant will enhance area training programs, add capacity for 2,200 participants and successfully place an estimated 1,500 of the program graduates into jobs. The RCGA has identified healthcare, IT and green technology as key growth industries in the St. Louis MSA.

“This grant will allow displaced workers to learn the skills of new employer demands,” said Mayor Slay. “These dollars will be infused directly into our community. This is an innovative, regional approach to better our community and strengthen our workforce.”

According to the Missouri Economic Research and Information Center (MERIC), healthcare demonstrates strong potential with projections to 2014 showing a net gain of tens of thousands of positions for Medical Assistants and Licensed Practical, Licensed Vocational and Registered Nurses. The demand for Physical Therapy Technicians, Occupational Therapy Technicians and Respiratory Therapists will also continue to grow.

The “Graduate! St. Louis Consortium” will primarily serve laid off workers affected by the recent economic recession. Over the three year project period, the consortium partners will increase the number of classes offered through the continuous education college system, invest in needed training equipment, hire faculty, and develop a regional web portal in order to facilitate an online community of trainers and job seekers.



Representatives of the Graduate! St. Louis Consortium include, from left, (first row) St. Louis Mayor Francis Slay, Southeastern Illinois College President Dr. Georgia Costello, East Central College Vice President of Career and Outreach Education Brenda Bouse, St. Louis Community College Chancellor Dr. Zelema Harris, Executive Director of St. Louis Agency on Training and Employment Michael K. Holmes (back row) St. Louis Regional Commerce and Growth Association President and CEO Dick Fleming, Jefferson College President Dr. Raymond Cumiskey, and St. Charles Community College President Dr. John McGuire.