

EDITORIAL: OUR VIEW

\$2.2 MILLION FEDERAL GRANT**EMCC program is
tribute to diversity**

Big things are happening at local community colleges.

Each school is forming its own identity and appeal. Midwestern University's College of Pharmacy in Glendale is one of a handful of schools nationwide to offer a three-year doctor of pharmacy degree. South Mountain Community College carries a high-tech campus ranking, with one computer for every four students.

Estrella Mountain Community College now is ready to make a reputation for itself after attracting a \$2.2 million federal grant to improve its services over the next five years. The Avondale campus is one of 45 institutions nationwide to receive money. Estrella got the second-largest annual stipend in the group.

To qualify for the money, at least 25 percent of the colleges' students must be Hispanic, half of whom must be poor.

Of Estrella's 4,500 students, 27 percent are His-

panic. Sixty-one percent of the school's full-time students need financial aid, and 85 percent of students attend part-time, many due to financial limitations.

All that is about to change.

The grant will benefit everyone, not just minorities. Part of the money will go toward technology upgrades, high school promotions and extra tutoring services. Officials also want to develop some new courses to meet student needs and interests.

Perhaps the school's newest, biggest asset is a scholarship endowment fund that will provide up to \$50,000 a year. Over five years, the pot could reach \$500,000, with interest paying for scholarships.

The college receives a matching fund for whatever it can raise itself. If Estrella raises only \$30,000 a year, it will get \$30,000 from the government. To maximize funds, officials are soliciting private donations and developing a plan for long-term funds.

But Estrella can't do it

Want to help Estrella Mountain Community College reach its \$50,000 fund-raising goal?

For more information on the scholarship endowment fund, call (623) 935-8055 or write:

Division of Institutional Advancement
Estrella Mountain Community College
3000 N. Dysart Road
Avondale, AZ 85323

alone: It needs continued community support to help its students. The process is reciprocal: The more money the college raises, the more students can afford to get a quality education and a better life, providing more money for others to do the same.

If the program goes as planned, perhaps in a few years, Estrella will be known as the area's most diverse scholarship-giving campus. Then no West Valley resident will have to miss out on higher education.

ARIZONA REPUBLIC _ Friday, August 10, 2001

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PROMOTION

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Federal grant boost for college

Funds to improve services to Hispanic students

By Beverly Medlyn
The Arizona Republic

Estrella Mountain Commu-
nity College has been awarded
a \$2.2 million federal grant to
improve services to Hispanic
students over the next five
years.

The Avondale campus is
among 45 colleges and univer-
sities nationwide to receive a
total of \$19.4 million starting
Oct. 1.

Estrella's annual stipend of
\$449,387 is second only to
Texas A&M International Uni-

versity, which received
\$450,000, the maximum annual
amount allowed.

To apply, institutions must
qualify as a "Hispanic serving
institution," defined as having
at least 25 percent Hispanic
students, half of whom are low-
income. Estrella's Hispanic
students constitute 27 percent
of the college's 4,500 enroll-
ment. Nearly 55 percent of the
Hispanic students receive fi-
nancial aid.

A provision of the grant al-
lows \$50,000 a year to go to-
ward a scholarship

endowment fund, on condition
that an equal amount is raised
locally. Over five years, that
pot could grow to \$500,000,
with interest paying for schol-
arships.

"We're excited," said Ernie
Lara, dean of students at Es-
trella and project director.
"This is the largest grant we
have ever received."

The money will be used to
help people like Asusena Ama-
dor, a 21-year-old Buckeye
woman who earned an associ-
ate's degree in computer appli-
cations technology in May. She

hopes to get a bachelor's de-
gree to teach English as a sec-
ond language.

"Estrella has a very friendly
atmosphere," she said. "The
people here are willing to give
students an extra hand."

In announcing the grants,
U.S. Secretary of Education
Rod Paige noted that many
Hispanic students are the first
in their families to seek a col-
lege education. Amador is the
daughter of a homemaker and
farmworker who emphasized
education to their three chil-
dren. Amador's older sister
also attended Estrella and now
is at Arizona State University
West.

Estrella Mountain will use
the grant money to increase
college entrance rates among
high school students enrolled
at its feeder high schools in the
Tolleson, Agua Fria, Buckeye,
Dysart and Phoenix Union dis-
tricts.

College employees will be
sent to high schools to identify
students who need extra help
and to encourage them to take
more science and math
courses, Lara said. They also
will guide students to postsec-
ondary programs.

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or (602) 444-6922.