

NEWS FROM MIRACOSTA COLLEGE



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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Hispanic Serving Institution

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MiraCosta College Designated as “Hispanic Serving Institution”

MiraCosta College has hit the threshold needed for designation as a Hispanic Serving Institution, a label that can mean millions of dollars in federal grants to improve educational programs.

“Receiving the Hispanic Serving Institution designation is a significant milestone for the college,” said MiraCosta College Superintendent/President Dr. Francisco Rodriguez. “It signals our strong interest in enrolling students who are representative of the region that we serve. As important, this federal designation positions the college and makes us eligible for grants and services that are geared to dramatically improve the success of Hispanic students, and in doing so, improves the entire institution.”

In general, colleges designated as Hispanic Serving Institutions must have an enrollment that is at least 25 percent Hispanic, must offer at least a two-year program that leads to a degree, must be accredited, and must have a high enrollment of needy students, according to the Higher Education Act of 1965.

Congress in 1992 enacted legislation formally recognizing colleges that fit the criteria as officially designated Hispanic Serving Institutions and began targeting federal money to those campuses. The U.S. Department of Education’s Hispanic Serving Institutions Program today provides grants to help such colleges expand educational opportunities for and improve the attainment of Hispanic students. Funds are aimed at expanding and enhancing academic offerings, program quality and institutional stability.

There are approximately 250 Hispanic Serving Institutions in the United States and Puerto Rico, with almost half located in California and Texas. Locally, San Diego State University, Cal State San Marcos and Palomar College have secured the designation.

Roughly 1 in 4 MiraCosta College students are Hispanic, and 26 percent of the people living within the MiraCosta Community College District's boundaries in 2010 were Hispanic, a number that is forecast to grow to 27 percent in 2015.

Dr. Rodriguez said the college district has been working on securing the designation for several years. He said being a Hispanic Serving Institution is "a call to action for educators."

"The dropout and completion rates for Latino and African-American students are abysmal and we need to harness our resources to fully address this crisis. Graduation rates for underperforming and low-income students need to be improved at both the high school and college level, so having additional resources available to better understand the needs of our students and design effective interventions is a major plus."