

TCC awarded grant to support Life Legacy Partnership Project

TALLAHASSEE, Fla. (February 6, 2007) -- Tallahassee Community College has been awarded an \$11,000 grant from the Florida Campus Compact and the Florida Office of Drug Control Suicide Prevention. The funding will support TCC's Life Legacy Partnership Project, aimed at increasing the quality, impact, and sustainability of the scholarship of engagement through service-learning, civic engagement, applied research, and campus-community collaboration in Florida.

The partnership will achieve this goal by engaging students and faculty in work with local social service organizations that serve elder adults through a number of community outreach efforts. TCC is one of only three institutions in the state of Florida to receive the grant.

The initiative will enable TCC to do its part in meeting an increasingly critical need. Florida ranks second among the 50 states in the number of residents age 65 or older with 2,911,000 in 2005 (U.S. Census Bureau, 2006), many of whom are increasingly isolated from society and social services. At the same time, service learning has been recognized as an effective strategy for strengthening students' educational experience while enriching local communities.

In response to these challenges, TCC and local social service organizations have established a strong partnership to initiate a comprehensive service learning program. The program will recruit and train students to participate in specific outreach programs serving senior citizens, to collect oral histories from elder adults, and to provide support and assistance for the programs run by TCC's community partners. It will also link students with community organizations serving senior citizens in order to promote intergenerational connections and strengthen local communities. The program will also focus on reaching out and reintegrating senior shut-ins who have become isolated from society or services to prevent senior isolation that leads to depression or suicide. Additionally, the program will preserve any collected oral histories and video documentaries in a college campus repository with the goal of making the oral histories available through the World Wide Web.

"Service learning in college courses is a growing trend nationwide. Community service is combined with classroom instruction, so that students become involved in addressing the needs of their communities while developing their academic skills," said TCC professor Dr. Jeanne O'Kon, who is incorporating the Life Legacy Partnership project into her curriculum. "At TCC, we have a number of community partner organizations that willingly accept our student volunteers, helping them to learn and grow through volunteerism."

O'Kon spent the fall 2006 semester working on a project that focused on the development of Service Learning for her "Psychology of Women" course. During this time, the Florida Campus Compact offered a Life Legacy Partnership grant opportunity to incorporate Service Learning specifically with senior citizen groups. As a result, the Life Legacy Partnership project is now being incorporated with O'Kon's SOP 2740 class, as well as with two other classes, AMH 2010

and EDG 2701. Participating students will have a minimum 15-hour Service Learning requirement in the course.

Through O’Kon’s efforts, this requirement can be met by community partnerships established with Elder Care Services, the Tallahassee Senior Center, Aging with Dignity, and Westminster Oaks.