



NEWS RELEASE

IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**For More Information**

Janet Wise: Executive Director, Marketing and Public Relations (505) 428-1217  
[janet.wise@sfcc.edu](mailto:janet.wise@sfcc.edu)

Todd Eric Lovato: Media and Public Relations (505) 428-1776  
[todd.lovato@sfcc.edu](mailto:todd.lovato@sfcc.edu)

**SFCC Awarded \$3.19 Million Title V Grant to Help Hispanic, Low-Income Students**

**Santa Fe, NM, Oct. 25, 2010** — Santa Fe Community College has received new federal funding to help students overcome obstacles on the way to college graduation. The college will receive a \$3.19 million U.S. Department of Education Title V grant over the next five years to provide support for Hispanic and low-income students to stay in school and improve academic skills in order to achieve degrees.

Large and persistent achievement gaps have become a hot topic in the news, both locally and nationally. The Obama administration has placed an emphasis on the role of community colleges to both boost the number of college graduates and help train or re-train people for jobs. The “American Graduation Initiative,” announced in July 2009, calls on community colleges to help produce 8 million more graduates by 2020.

With the assistance of the Title V grant, SFCC will be able to strengthen resources and put new programs in place to help students stay on the path to a degree.

“This new funding will help us increase our support systems for nontraditional students,” said SFCC President Sheila Ortego. “One of Santa Fe Community College’s main objectives is to help students succeed in college so they can find high paying jobs as soon as possible. The main idea is to move more students through college more efficiently, without sacrificing quality. This Title V award allows us to place more emphasis on this critical goal.”

Increasingly, students are entering community colleges with inadequate basic education skills, limited classroom experience, dormant study skills or limited proficiency in English. The Title V grant will support the development of several strategies to address these issues. SFCC will put new staff and programs in place to ensure that first-year students receive more personalized support. Programs will also be introduced to accelerate the time it takes for students to obtain basic academic skills needed to complete their degree programs. New testing technology will help students better identify their specific skill improvement needs and a user-friendly data system will enable faculty and staff to continuously measure and improve results.

SFCC will hire up to five new specialized staff, including academic coaches, a curriculum specialist, a program director and a data analyst, according to Dr. Jacqueline Virgint, director of institutional research at SFCC. She said the college's approach was developed by listening to faculty and staff who work closely with low-income and Hispanic students, and by working closely with the students themselves. "We have always worked closely with students in order to improve programs and systems. But this grant gives us many more resources, and we feel the funding will make a key difference," said Virgint.

The award comes from the U.S. Department of Education's Title V program, which provides educational funding to Hispanic-serving institutions (institutions with more than 25 percent full-time Hispanic enrollment). The community college's student body was 35 percent Hispanic during the fall 2009 semester. Santa Fe Community College is one of five higher education institutions in New Mexico to receive a Title V award.

### **About Santa Fe Community College**

For more than 27 years, Santa Fe Community College has served as the gateway to success for individuals and our community. The College provides affordable, high-quality educational programs that serve the social, cultural, technological and economic needs of Santa Fe's diverse community. More than 14,500 students are served each year in its credit, noncredit and adult basic education programs.

Offering more than 72 degrees and certificate programs, SFCC caters to the academic, career and personal-enrichment needs of local residents, businesses, government and public service organizations. More than 274 full-time and 587 part-time employees are employed by the college. For further information, visit [www.sfcc.edu](http://www.sfcc.edu) or call (505) 428-1000.

###