



OSIT Awards CSN \$1,000,000 to Increase Underrepresented Student Success in STEM

CARSON CITY, NV- October 15, 2018

The Office of Science, Innovation and Technology (OSIT) today announced the first STEM Workforce Equity Grant award of \$1,000,000 to the College of Southern Nevada (CSN). The grant will fund the development of initiatives and strategies that seek to increase the number of underrepresented and low-income students studying and completing degrees or certificates in high-demand Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math (STEM) fields. Underrepresented groups in STEM include women, students of color, and students with disabilities. The grant award represents the beginning of a four-year partnership between OSIT and CSN with the goal of finding successful strategies that meet the needs of students and can be replicated at other colleges and universities across the state.

“Equity in STEM education is the first pillar of Nevada’s State Strategic Plan for STEM. Creating an environment where students from all backgrounds can succeed in STEM fields is not just the right thing for students, it is also necessary for Nevada to reach its college attainment goals and to provide Nevada’s STEM employers with a workforce that meets their needs,” **said Brian Mitchell, Director of OSIT.** “I’m excited to work with CSN on this important project.”

CSN President Dr. Federico Zaragoza said the grant will allow CSN to address significant barriers such as food insecurity, transportation issues and textbook costs that students face as they pursue their education.

“This opportunity could not have been more timely, as it will provide resources CSN needs to address the achievement gap among our minority and female students pursuing STEM careers,” Zaragoza said. “The grant will support our efforts to make a difference, in particular to support efforts that go beyond the classroom and have the potential of broader impact on the institution and our students, faculty and community.”

Students of color and females, particularly students in poverty, are underrepresented in STEM majors and graduate at lower rates. Many low-income and underrepresented students face multiple academic and non-academic barriers to graduation in STEM. Examples of academic barriers include tuition and book costs, lack of mentorship, the need for remediation, lack of understanding of the academic advising or financial aid process, the scheduling of courses, and bottleneck courses. Non-academic barriers include unmet needs for food, transportation, housing, and childcare. Promising new research suggests integrated interventions addressing academic and non-academic barriers can improve student success rates.

CSN will use grant funds to assess the barriers faced by its students and involve students, faculty, and alumni in designing interventions to solve them. The College will also hire a STEM Equity Program Manager who will design and implement a marketing initiative to encourage underrepresented students

to consider STEM majors and programs of study. An evaluation of the results of the initiatives will be made public for others to learn from.

STEM Facts

- The demand for skilled workers in Nevada's STEM industries (requiring knowledge in science, technology, engineering, and math) is growing 41% faster than jobs in non-STEM industries.
- STEM jobs across all industries in Nevada pay an average of \$34 per hour whereas non-STEM jobs pay an average of \$21.66 per hour.
- 50% of STEM jobs in Nevada require an associate degree or industry-recognized credential.

About OSIT

The mission of OSIT is to coordinate, support, and align efforts by K-12 and higher education, workforce development and employers to improve science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) education and STEM workforce development so that Nevada's workforce can meet the demands of its growing economy.

About CSN

Founded in 1971, the College of Southern Nevada is the state's largest and most ethnically diverse higher education institution. CSN is accredited through the Northwest Commission on Colleges and Universities and specializes in two-year degrees and workforce development that lead directly to high-demand careers or transfer to a university. It also offers seven bachelor's degrees in specialized fields and is the state's largest provider of adult basic education and literacy training. CSN is a Minority Serving Institution and Nevada's first Hispanic Serving Institution. Our students create flexible schedules with day, evening and weekend classes taught on three main campuses and multiple locations throughout Southern Nevada or online. CSN is an Equal Employment Opportunity/Affirmative Action institution.