

UC San Diego's CalTeach Program Success Expands to Grossmont College

July 1, 2010

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The University of California, San Diego's CalTeach program, designed to increase the number of local math and science teachers, is expanding. Part of the UC system-wide California Teach Science and Mathematics Initiative, UC San Diego's CalTeach program is one of nine programs at each of the UC campuses which seek to help meet the state's critical need for qualified K-12 mathematics and science teachers. UC San Diego recently concluded the first year of a partnership with Grossmont College, which brings a taste of the innovative teaching program to local community college students-many of whom may typically be underrepresented in mathematics and the sciences.

With the help of private support, the university now hopes to expand the program to community colleges throughout the region.

CalTeach encourages students interested in science, math or engineering to consider teaching as a career and offers courses to help them become great teachers. For California to remain competitive, its educational institutions must train a workforce with the knowledge and critical skills required to lead an economy which is increasingly reliant on science, engineering and mathematics.

Yet, according to the California Department of Education, there is a critical shortfall in the number and quality of math and science teachers in California. By increasing the number of highly prepared teachers in the state's classrooms, the program will cultivate skilled workers for California's growing high-tech and biotech industries.

Leading the CalTeach program at UC San Diego is the Division of Physical Sciences, together with the university's education studies department. The program offers introductory classes for UCSD's math and science students to learn about the challenges-and opportunities-that are associated with teaching math and science at the K-12 level.

"With CalTeach, students are able to explore whether teaching would be a good fit for them," said Jeffrey Rimmel, associate dean of Physical Sciences and professor of mathematics and computer science. "We are training individuals who have a mathematical or scientific background to be teachers, rather than the other way around."

Thanks to the new partnership with UC San Diego, Grossmont College is now offering a version of the first required course in the UCSD CalTeach program.

The course includes consideration of math and science teaching and learning strategies, along with classroom experience at local high schools. The collaboration between the two schools is geared to introduce community college students to the possibility of teaching and attract a diverse group of community college students to CalTeach at one of the UC campuses.

At UC San Diego, students have the opportunity to minor in math or science education, which prepares them to earn their teaching credential and ultimately become highly qualified math and science teachers. As part of the CalTeach curriculum, college students obtain real-world experience by observing and even participating with local high school classes.

"We want people to become math and science teachers who really understand math and science," said Steve Davis, the Grossmont College professor who teaches the CalTeach equivalent course. "We are opening these students' eyes in a positive way. We want to get people thinking about teaching earlier in their college career."

UC San Diego CalTeach has expanded from 29 student enrollments in 2006 to nearly 400 in 2009. Likewise, Grossmont College has experienced an increased demand from students for the CalTeach course. Enrollment increased by more than 30 percent from the first semester to the second.

UC San Diego is pursuing the prospect of expanding the CalTeach program to community colleges throughout the county, in an effort to introduce the idea of teaching math and science to more San Diego students. Private support from individuals, corporations and foundations will play a key role in helping the program expand to community colleges throughout the county.

"It takes a modest amount of resources to get the program off the ground at a community college, which translates into an exceptional opportunity for donors to make a significant impact with their gift," notes Remmel.

To learn how you can help expand the CalTeach program to additional local community colleges, please call (858) 822-3258. For more information on the program, visit <http://physicalsciences.ucsd.edu> and select "K-12 Programs" under "Education."

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