



NEW JERSEY

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QuickTakes!

Montclair State Receives \$1.1 Million NSF Grant for Innovative Teacher Training Program

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A Montclair State University team has received a three-year, \$1.1 million National Science Foundation (NSF) Robert Noyce Teacher Scholarship Program grant for its project “Preparing the Effective Elementary Mathematics Teacher.”

Eligible Montclair State mathematics majors will soon take part in an innovative collaborative program between the College of Science and Mathematics and the College of Education and Human Services that addresses the shortage of high-quality science, technology, engineering and math (STEM) teachers by preparing them to teach math in the New Jersey elementary schools that need them most.

“It is critical that students interested in careers in education have programs that prepare them to become outstanding teachers,” says College of Science and Mathematics Dean Robert Prezant. “This innovative project will provide students with remarkable and creative preparation within an inquiry-based program that deeply prepares them for the demands of working in today’s education system.”

Ten students per year will receive grant-funded scholarships and stipends to be part of the NSF Robert Noyce Teacher Scholarship Program, which addresses the current shortage of high-quality STEM teachers by encouraging talented students to ultimately teach in high-need schools. It has awarded Montclair State’s “Preparing the Effective Elementary Mathematics Teacher” project team funding for three years.

The project’s principal investigator and Montclair State mathematics professor Erin Krupa and co-principal investigators mathematics professor Steven Greenstein, Center of Pedagogy director Jennifer Robinson, and County College of Morris colleague Diana Aria emphasize that the grant will enable them to grow this unique program and actively recruit math majors.

“We will be one of the only programs across New Jersey to emphasize exemplary elementary mathematics education through our teacher candidates,” notes Ms. Robinson, who will work on building partner relationships between the university’s departments of mathematical

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sciences and elementary education. Together with Ms. Aria, she also will strengthen ties with seven area community colleges in order to recruit transfer students into the program.

According to College of Education and Human Services Dean Tamara Lucas, the grant program reflects the University's longstanding commitment to preparing outstanding STEM teachers. "We have received well over \$25 million in recent years to support STEM teacher preparation. This important new grant furthers our mission of providing Montclair State students with the essential knowledge and skills they need to be excellent elementary math teachers – and make a lasting and positive impact on countless young people across New Jersey."

The team will build on an earlier NSF Noyce Capacity Building grant for developing a mathematics major for students wishing to be certified to teach K-6 students. The earlier grant did not provide opportunities for students – which is why the new award is so significant.

Now, through an innovative curriculum, the project's Noyce Scholars will be able to conduct research in elementary school classrooms. The team will also strive to build a sense of community among Noyce Scholars through a program of community-oriented field experiences and seminars. Research focusing on the project's impact on the Noyce Scholars' beliefs about mathematics and mathematics teaching is another key project component.

Once the students begin teaching, they will receive ongoing support through monthly seminars and access to a professional learning community based at Montclair State.