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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Palm Beach State receives \$375,000 grant to boost science instruction

The Quantum Foundation grant will fund a new curriculum alignment project to improve high school graduates' readiness for college science classes

(Palm Beach Gardens, Fla. – Feb. 2, 2012) Palm Beach State College has received a \$375,000 Quantum Foundation grant to better align the school district's biology and chemistry curriculum with that of the College and help improve high school students' readiness for college.

The Science Path project, in partnership with the Palm Beach County school district, aims to tackle locally the national issue of students going to college underprepared for more rigorous science courses. The idea is that if the curriculum and instruction for these critical subjects are enhanced in K-12, students will be better prepared for the college coursework. The College also plans to partner with Florida Atlantic University on the initiative.



The Obama administration and Gov. Rick Scott are among those stressing the need for more workers with competencies in science, technology, engineering and math (STEM) subjects. The U.S. Department of Commerce projects a 17 percent growth nationwide in STEM jobs between 2008 and 2018.

"The current projection for STEM employment opportunities is expected to grow exponentially in the future," said Dr. Dennis Gallon, Palm Beach State president. "The College stands ready to partner and support the development of programs that support quality education for our students and prepare them to take their place in the workforce, advancing STEM industries."

Just 1 in 3 ACT-tested high school graduates met the College Readiness Benchmark in Science in 2011 and at the state level only 20 percent of graduates were college ready in the subject, according to ACT Profile Reports.

(more)

On the local level, Palm Beach State College has experienced troubling withdrawal rates from some of its six introductory level biology and chemistry courses, raising questions about the preparation of the county's high school graduates.

"We are excited to have the support of the Quantum Foundation in working together to significantly move the needle of students' success in these two fields and ultimately help to grow a significant portion of our workforce," said Pat Lord, major gifts director for the Palm Beach State College Foundation.

The College plans to launch a pilot program at the Palm Beach Gardens campus, the site of its existing [Math and Science Summer Institute](#) and the [Employ Florida Banner Center for Life Sciences](#), working with area high schools. The program eventually will be expanded to other high schools in the county. While the Science Path project currently focuses on high school, to further enhance the science curriculum throughout the school district, the College is seeking other funding opportunities to align the curriculum of middle and elementary schools. In addition to curriculum alignment, the partnership will include shared professional development opportunities for college faculty and K-12 school teachers, the initial design of a virtual library of learning objects for faculty and teachers and the development of cooperative teams to identify students who demonstrate interest and potential in STEM.

The timing of the project comes just as the state has boosted its graduation requirements calling for all students beginning in 2013-2014 to pass biology, chemistry and one equally rigorous science course by receive a high school diploma.

It also falls in line with the more aggressive efforts of the Quantum Foundation to enhance science education in the county through the funding of programs that provide curriculum alignment, student pipelines into science and science teaching development.

"The foundation wants to bring partners in the community together to make our students competitive in the global workforce and this grant does just that," said Steve Moore, chairman of the Quantum Foundation Board of Trustees.

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