

## **NSF STEP – Expanding Engineering Opportunities**

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Five year grant

Start date: 9/15/06

Amount: \$498,000

The goal of this grant is to increase the number of students enrolled in our engineering degree program and to increase their success, which is defined as coming back for a second year, transferring to a four-year school, or graduating.

The main funding is for a Student Liaison (SL) who will get to know the students personally and assist them in every way possible to be successful. The SL will implement an E-mentoring initiative, matching students to industry mentors. The mentoring will take place mostly on-line. The SL will also assist with data collection for the evaluation.

A summer academy will be designed and implemented for students who plan to start PVCC's engineering program in the fall. The academy will focus on improving skills needed to be successful, like math. Funding in the budget will cover faculty stipends to research best practices and design a summer academy, with additional stipends for the faculty who actually participate during the summers. Students will receive incentives for attending.

Spring events for high schools students will be designed and implemented. The goal of these events is to expose 11<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> graders to the different facets of engineering and spark their interest. Funding in the budget will cover faculty stipends. Students will receive incentives for attending.

The grant also funds \$62,000 in lab equipment, with a specific list of equipment to be purchased with the funds. Travel funds will cover the annual project director's meeting in DC (and funds for two other project personnel to attend) and the costs of travel to Charlottesville for the external advisory board members.