

Eastside Business

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Lake Washington Technical College Receives Gateway to College Grant

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Lake Washington Technical College (LWTC) has received a \$310,000 start-up grant to implement Gateway to College, a national dropout recovery program originally developed by Portland Community College in Oregon.

Gateway to College is designed for young adults ages 16 to 20 who have dropped out of high school or are at very high risk of dropping out. The program enables them to complete their high school diploma requirements while simultaneously earning college credit toward an associate degree or certificate.

“The affiliation with Gateway to College National Network will benefit our entire college community,” said Dr. Sharon McGavick, LWTC president. “It allows us to receive training in classroom curriculum and strategies to work with local youth who are facing barriers returning to an educational setting.”

The Gateway to College grant will provide support staff and services for students from area school districts who left high school without a diploma. This program is an option for students who need additional support, both academically and socially, to succeed at the college level. The program will launch in September 2009 and will serve up to 310 students during its first three years of operation.

The Gateway to College program at LWTC will be administered through Lake Washington Technical Academy (www.lwtc.edu/academy), one of only three accredited high schools in Washington state that is located on a college campus. Students enrolled at Lake Washington Technical Academy and in the Gateway to College program receive free tuition. The Lake Washington Technical Academy, founded in 1988, enrolls more than 400 students annually from 32 different school districts throughout the Puget Sound region.

“The team at LWTC has expertise with this population and a strong desire to help young people reconnect with education,” said Laurel Dukehart, Gateway to College National Network executive director. “This is our first partnership in Washington state, and everyone at the college showed great persistence working with us to make this happen. We are looking forward to the success of their students.”

Nationally, Gateway to College graduates on average, are more than two-thirds of the way to a college degree. Since 2003, the Gateway to College program has been replicated at 17 community colleges across the country. Six additional colleges, including LWTC, will join the Gateway to College network during the upcoming year.

The Gateway to College National Network is part of the Early College High School Initiative, funded by the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, in partnership with Carnegie Corporation of New York, The Ford Foundation and the W.K. Kellogg Foundation. Jobs for the Future, an

action/research and policy organization that promotes innovation in education and workforce development, serves as the initiative's coordinating intermediary. The Early College High School Initiative will ultimately open about 250 schools around the country, serving over 100,000 students annually. Gateway to College National Network's replication efforts are also supported by the Wal-Mart Foundation.

For more information on Gateway to College, visit www.gatewaytocollege.org.

About Lake Washington Technical College

Lake Washington Technical College (www.lwtc.edu) is an accredited Washington state public college that was founded in 1949. The college's main campus is located in Kirkland, Wash., with a branch campus located in Redmond, Wash. The college offers professional and technical training for today's job market, with more than 100 degree and certificate options in: information technology, business, service, health, manufacturing, and transportation, as well as arts, language and science.