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News Release

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Contacts:

Brent Wilder
Oregon Independent College Foundation
Director of Development
brent@oicf.org
503.227.7595

Jenny Wise
ECMC Foundation
President
jwise@ecmc.org
505.428.2122

ECMC Foundation grants more than \$76,000 to student mentoring programs for Oregon Independent College Foundation students

ECMC Foundation has awarded \$76,632 to the Oregon Independent College Foundation (OICF) for a series of peer mentoring projects on nine OICF-member college campuses in 2006-07. The intent of these projects is to increase retention among students from underrepresented populations, including students of color and those who are the first in their family to attend college. The concept of peer mentoring matches older students (typically juniors and seniors) with first-year students to help these new students connect with the campus and build friendships. Research suggests that peer mentoring can be an especially effective method to increase student retention between the first and second year.

Jenny Wise, ECMC Foundation President, says, "We are thrilled to partner with the OICF in exploring differing approaches to peer mentoring to encourage degree attainment for low-income, first-generation college-going students and as a result, to discover what programs support the educational success of all students."

Each OICF college and university has a staff contact who is responsible for coordinating their campus' peer mentoring program. These contacts prepared a request for their specific campus program via the OICF and ECMC Foundation approved final proposals. Participating institutions include:

- Concordia University
- George Fox University
- Lewis & Clark College
- Linfield College
- Pacific University
- Reed College
- University of Portland
- Warner Pacific College
- Willamette University

(more)

“ECMC Foundation is a model partner for the OICF and our member colleges and universities. Peer mentoring is a high priority for all of our members, and we look forward to working with ECMC Foundation for years to come as we collectively seek to increase retention among students, especially those from underrepresented populations,” says Britt Davis, OICF President. “This new ECMC Foundation grant will make an immediate impact across the network of OICF colleges and universities.”

The group of OICF colleges and universities will administer their peer mentoring programs during the 2006-07 academic year. A year-end symposium will be held in summer 2007 where representatives from the colleges will make presentations about their respective campus programs that will be the basis for best practices in student mentoring and retention. Student retention and related data will be gathered from each campus to track the effectiveness of each program.

Peer mentoring on the OICF member campuses is a key component of the OICF’s “Pathways to Leadership” initiative. “Pathways to Leadership” seeks to provide opportunities to students from populations that are underrepresented at the OICF colleges and universities, including students of color and first-generation students. The OICF seeks to raise \$1 million during 2006-07 for its member colleges to provide services to underrepresented students, including resources for recruiting and outreach, retention programs such as peer mentoring, and student scholarships.

About ECMC Foundation

ECMC Foundation, an ECMC Group company, helps underserved and disadvantaged populations further their educational goals. Through innovative outreach programs, we convey to students the importance of completing high school, and continue our mission by developing and distributing programs that focus on college access, retention, and success. ECMC Foundation partners with government agencies, educational institutions, and other foundations to make the dream of higher education a reality. ECMC Foundation’s affiliate, Educational Credit Management Corporation (ECMC), also serves the higher education industry as the designated Federal Family Education Loan Program (FFELP) student loan guarantor for the Commonwealth of Virginia and state of Oregon. For more program and service information, visit www.ecmcfoundation.org and www.ecmc.org.

About Oregon Independent College Foundation

Since 1950, the Oregon Independent College Foundation has served as a fundraising and programmatic consortium of Oregon’s 10 leading private colleges and universities. Current OICF priorities include connecting students with professional internship opportunities, increasing diversity on the member college campuses, and programs that showcase the colleges’ focus on ethics and leadership development. OICF members include: Concordia University, George Fox University, Lewis & Clark College, Linfield College, Marylhurst University, Pacific University, Reed College, University of Portland, Warner Pacific College, and Willamette University. For more information, visit www.oicf.org.

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