

WSU, QCC, WPS early college system to get state funding

AUGUST 2, 2018

The joint early college program between Quinsigamond Community College, Worcester State University and Worcester Public Schools is one of four such programs to receive official designation from the state.

With Gov. Charlie Baker's administration designating the joint venture as a state-backed early college program, it will now receive part of \$420,000 in state grants.

The collaboration is intended to establish college pathways for students in all seven public high schools in the city. The program will include college credit course offerings and mentoring to Worcester high school students.

Specifically, attention will focus on underrepresented and under-served students, as well as first-generation-to-college students who may not consider college as an option due to language barriers, disability, finances, social factors, culture and academic performance.

Students can earn up to 12 college credits simultaneous to obtaining their high school diploma.

In a statement, QCC President Luis Pedraja said he wants to expand early college enrollment from 200 to more than 2,000 by fiscal 2021.

Worcester State University's Latino Education Initiative -- on which Pedraja and WSU President Barry Mahoney are honorary members -- will play a role in mentoring to improve academic performance of Latino students.

"Mentoring is vital to ensuring the success of each and every student," Pedraja said.

Latino students in the program will be offered support services including English language classes, tutoring, mentoring, and college application help.

"Boosting the number of early college programs in the commonwealth is a priority for our administration that will provide more students with an opportunity to attend and complete college," Baker said in a statement. "Exposing high school students to college courses in a field that interests them, and offering college credits at no cost, will make the transition to college easier and better prepare many students for successful careers following their education."