

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**Date: July 18, 2011**

**From: San Bernardino Valley College**

**Subject: SBVC Selected As the Only 2-Year College in the Nation for \$100,000 Grant**

**San Bernardino Valley College has been awarded a \$100,000 grant** to implement a student success program for retaining and graduating Hispanic students in 2011 and 2012. The funding is offered by Wal-Mart and provided through a consortium of minority serving organizations (MSI) in the Strategies for Success Project including HACU (The Hispanic Association of Colleges and Universities), AIHEC (the American Indian Higher Education Consortium), and NAFEO (the National Association for Equal Opportunity in Higher Education). HACU President and CEO Antonio R. Flores announced the award in a letter dated July 18, 2011 to San Bernardino Valley College Vice President of Student Services Mr. Damon Bell.

AIHEC-HACU-NAFEO Wal-Mart awarded only three (3) higher educational institutions in this 2<sup>nd</sup> year of the program to: one 4-year public institution, one 4-year private institution, and one 2-year public institution: **San Bernardino Valley College**. This year's selected institutions will be paired with their counterpart mentoring institution awarded in 2010; San Bernardino Valley College will be paired with the Community College of Denver. Vice President of Student Services Mr. Damon Bell will conduct key activities at SBVC, visit Denver and host their staff on a visit to SBVC each year to share best practices. The First Generation Student Success program offered by the Community College of Denver shares many similarities with the programs offered by SBVC, such as offering assistance to students and their families as well as providing assistance with student enrollment, tutoring, mentoring, and academic advising.

SBVC's two-year project will coordinate nine (9) current SBVC programs targeting student success and academic achievement, expanding services to include a coordinating counselor and research assistant to collect and analyze data showing the success rates of the programs:

- Tumaini
- The Puente Project
- Valley-Bound Commitment
- Extended Opportunities Programs and Services (EOP&S)
- Success Through Achievement and Retention (STAR)
- California Work Opportunity and Responsibility to Kids (CalWorks)
- Middle College High School (MCHS)
- Foster & Kinship Care Education (FKCE)
- Math and Science Student Success Center (MSSSC)

**Project Team:** The SBVC project team will be led by **Mr. Damon Bell, Vice President of Student Services**, who was awarded the 2011 San Bernardino County Education Medal of Honor Excellence in Education/Educational Professional and 2011 Association of California Community College Administrators (ACCCA) Award for Progress in Diversity.

**Dr. Nori Sogomonian-Mejía, Dept. Chair, Modern Languages**—Nori Sogomonian-Mejía earned her bachelor's and master's degrees in Spanish with an emphasis on linguistics from UCLA. In fall of 1999 she was awarded a Fulbright Scholarship and spent the semester teaching courses in linguistics at the Central American University in Managua, Nicaragua. She earned her Ed.D. from California State University, San Bernardino in Educational Leadership in 2011.

A coordinating counselor and research assistant linking the nine key programs will be part of the team – which will include Damon Bell, Herb English (Director of EOP&S and Valley-Bound Commitment), Dr. Zelma Russ (Dean of Career College/Cal WORKs and Workforce Education), Dr. James Smith (Director of Research and Planning), and Christie Gabriel-Millette (Research Assistant of Research and Planning). The team will build an implementation plan based on SBCV's learning from its mentor institution.

Highlights of project activities include:

Year 1:

- SBVC will hold a bilingual community outreach workshop to provide families with important information regarding the opportunities for their children's educational journey through higher education.
- In October 2011, SBVC will hold a bilingual outreach family education fair with Cal State San Bernardino's Educational Fair, *Feria Educativa*. A panel discussion by Inland Empire educational leaders will air on Telemundo at the end of September in conjunction with *Feria Educativa*. The fair is being organized by CSUSB and partners from educational institutions, faith-based organizations, and nonprofits committed to increasing educational access and attainment for the region's students and families.

Year 2:

- SBVC will hold a bilingual community outreach workshop to provide families with important information regarding the opportunities for their children's educational journey through higher education.
- In 2012, SBVC will organize and host the African American-Latino Male summit targeting young men from local high schools and designed to increase the college-going rate of these two populations.
- SBVC will organize and host in spring 2012 a Roundtable event inviting southern California Hispanic Serving Institutions, with capacity building workshops, and a visioning process for the future of Latino education in the region. Enrique Murillo, executive director of Cal State San Bernardino's Latino Education & Advocacy Days (LEAD) Organization, will be the event facilitator. Juan Sepúlveda, executive director of the White House Initiative on Educational Excellence for Hispanic Americans, will be invited to attend.
- SBVC will organize and host in fall 2012 a college fair for Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs), tribal and Hispanic serving institutions.

San Bernardino Valley College's student success programs are well established and have been shown to significantly improve student grades, transfer rates, and graduation rates. The most pressing challenge facing the college, however, is meeting the incredible demand for services while grappling with year-to-year funding cuts as a result of the California state budget crisis. College administrators and student services staff are invested in not only improving existing services, but expanding them, to reach the greatest number of students and to assist them in attaining their educational goals.

**To support its efforts to achieve these objectives, San Bernardino College has been awarded as the only two-year college recipient of the 2011-2012 Wal-Mart AIHEC HACU NAFFO Student Success Collaborative.**