

## **ExxonMobil Foundation Gives \$1.6 Million to Launch College Preparatory Program in Four Public High Schools in New Orleans**

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With one of the largest donations of its kind to support public school students in New Orleans, the ExxonMobil Foundation today gave \$1.6 million dollars to Tulane University's Cowen Institute to establish an advanced placement training and incentive program. The pilot program will be rolled out in four public high schools in Orleans Parish over the next five years aimed at providing high school students with the tools needed to succeed in college, including advanced placement classes.

The announcement took place at John McDonogh High School, one of the first schools selected to pilot the program. On behalf of the Scott Cowen Institute for Public Education at Tulane University, President Scott Cowen received the donation from Gerald McElvy, President of the ExxonMobil Foundation. The Cowen Institute will launch and provide ongoing oversight for the program with a full time staff member and additional resources. Recovery School District Superintendent, Paul Vallas, also attended the reception along with participating high school principals, teachers, and counselors who will be a part of the program beginning Spring 2009.

The Advanced Placement Program\* (AP), administered by the College Board, is one of the leading programs available to prepare high school students for higher education. High school students who do well in AP classes and pass the AP Exam attain college-level skills and have the opportunity to obtain college credits. As part of this program, they - along with their teachers - also receive financial incentives.

In collaboration with the National Math and Science Initiative, the Cowen Institute selected a diverse group of high schools in which to implement this program, including John McDonogh, L.E. Rabouin, and O. Perry Walker. A fourth school will be selected in October 2008. The program is designed to significantly increase the number of students taking and passing math, science, and English Advanced

## Placement \* Exams.

"We are very proud to help offer this high-impact program to the students of New Orleans." said Gerald McElvy, President, ExxonMobil Foundation. "Preparing students for college is critical to New Orleans, Louisiana and the nation. This program has the necessary tools and our partners have the necessary resources to make this a huge success."

"We have a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to transform public education in New Orleans. This generous gift from ExxonMobil hastens the day when our school system will serve as a model for other cities around the country." said Tulane University President Scott Cowen.

"This is such a wonderful program for our students." said Gerald DeBose, Principal, John McDonogh High School. "Getting them to college is the most important thing we can do and the proven AP Training and incentive program will help us do just that."

"We are thrilled that this outstanding program is launching in four New Orleans high schools. To have these highly trained teachers providing our students with the tools they need to get into college is a huge step forward for our education system." Superintendent Vallas said.

The program will have a significant impact in New Orleans. The training and incentive program also has worked successfully in several other school districts across the United States and is proven to significantly increase college readiness. According to research done by the National Center for Educational Accountability (NCEA), students passing AP Exams are three times more likely to earn a college degree than students who do not pass. And African-American and Hispanic students who pass an AP Exam are four times more likely to earn a college degree than those who do not.

With the assistance of the College Board's products and services and help from the National Math and Science Initiative, the Cowen Institute has developed a program with five key components that have proven to drastically increase college readiness in other school districts around the country. This innovative program also offers performance-based monetary incentives to students and teachers in order to

strengthen AP participation. Teachers are also provided with training and materials to incorporate college awareness and planning into their curriculum. This comprehensive approach engages the entire school - principals, teachers, school counselors, parents, and students - to infuse a new culture and direction based on achievement, success, and college readiness.

Components of the program include the following:

### **Principal Leadership Institute**

The four principals will participate in a leadership institute program to gain the skills required to develop and maintain a rigorous and responsive educational environment that promotes high expectations and college preparedness. They will also receive ongoing support from a mentor and coach over the next five years, as well as stipends for participation.

### **Training Series for Advanced Placement Teachers**

Funding will be provided for current and future AP teachers to attend a series of intensive training sessions for math, science and English during 2008-2012. These courses will provide teachers with an overview of the curriculum, structure, and content of specific AP courses, with attention devoted to the development of curriculum teaching strategies and the relationship of a course to the AP Examination.

### **AP Vertical Teams \* Training**

Vertical teaming allows instructors from different grade levels in given disciplines to work to develop and implement a vertically aligned program to help students acquire skills and knowledge for success in the AP Program. Each year, teachers from the four schools will participate in a three-day workshop to support extensive teacher professional development in vertical teaming to promote readiness for AP offerings. Teachers will develop strategies for developing streamlined and connected curriculum, allowing teachers to concentrate on what and how they teach as well as how they communicate with each other. Efforts will also be made to identify specific middle school feeder patterns for the high schools and allow for their participation in the upcoming years.

### **Counselor Leadership Training**

Since school counselors play a critical role in preparing students for college, the

Cowen Institute has partnered with the College Board's National Office for School Counselor Advocacy to convene the counselors from each of the schools to assess their needs and develop a plan for quarterly one-day workshops. There will be ongoing assessments via quarterly visits with school personnel and students to determine efficacy and necessary adjustments will be made to meet students' needs.

### **CollegeEd\***

The CollegeEd program of the College Board is a collaborative academic and career planning curriculum for students, teachers, and parents. The program is designed to empower students with the skills and knowledge to envision their goals and achieve success in higher education.

### **About The Cowen Institute**

The Cowen Institute for Public Education Initiatives, which began operations at Tulane University in March 2007, is an action-oriented think-tank that actively addresses the issues impeding student achievement by designing and advancing innovative, high-impact policies and programs. For more information please visit <http://education.tulane.edu>.

### **About Exxon Mobil Corporation**

Exxon Mobil Corporation and ExxonMobil Foundation, the primary philanthropic arm of Exxon Mobil Corporation in the United States, engage in a range of philanthropic activities that advance education, health and public policy in the communities where ExxonMobil has significant operations. In the United States, ExxonMobil supports initiatives to improve math and science education at the K-12 and higher education levels. Globally, ExxonMobil provides funding to improve basic education and combat malaria and other infectious diseases in developing countries. In 2007, together with its employees and retirees, Exxon Mobil Corporation, its divisions and affiliates, and ExxonMobil Foundation provided \$207 million in contributions worldwide. Additional information on ExxonMobil's community partnerships and contributions programs is available at [www.exxonmobil.com/community](http://www.exxonmobil.com/community).

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