

Funding roundup



Eric Allyn signs a ceremonial check at Onondaga Community College. His \$1 million gift is in honor of his wife, Meg O'Connell (left). They were joined on stage by OCC student Angel Gonzalez and OCC President Casey Crabill (right). (Photo: OCC)

BY **TABITHA WHISSEMORE** FEBRUARY 7, 2022

New York's **Onondaga Community College** (OCC) received a \$1 million dollar gift from Eric Allyn in honor of his wife, Meg O'Connell, who is OCC's former interim president and chair of the board of trustees. The money will help to create the Meg O'Connell Center for Social Justice and Community Impact, which will provide support for students in volunteer and service-learning opportunities.

The program will build to a cohort of 20 students each year. Students will receive a stipend and additional programming. Because 80% of OCC's students work 30 hours a week or more, the stipend will fill the financial gap from lost wages while students volunteer or perform service-learning.

“With this generous gift from my husband of 35 wonderful years, OCC will be able to continue to provide opportunities for its students to become the future leaders of our community – and I couldn’t be more honored and proud to be a part of it,” O’Connell said.

O’Connell serves as executive director of the Allyn Family Foundation and leader of the Syracuse Urban Partnership.

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Thanks to a \$60,000 grant, **Suffolk County Community College’s** Ammerman Campus will soon have a nearly 20-foot-tall solar tree. The grant comes from electricity and gas utility company National Grid.

The solar structure chosen by the college’s environmental club students will be on the student plaza and contain six charging stations for mobile electronics as well as a table, seating and LED lighting.

“Suffolk County Community College is proud to be the first in the SUNY system to grow a solar tree thanks to the vision of our students and the generosity of National Grid,” President Edward Bonahue said in a release.

Basic needs grants

Six colleges have received Basic Needs in Postsecondary Education Program grants from the U.S. Education Department to scale up efforts to support students.

California’s **Río Hondo College** will use its a nearly \$1 million grant to fund the **Hope Scholars Program**, which provides holistic support services for unhoused and transitionally unhoused students. With the funding, the college can increase staffing for the program and deepen community awareness and expand holistic support services for students, such as tutoring and success coaching, mental health services, financial literacy programs and more.

In Texas, **McLennan Community College** will use its \$575,210 grant to create a fully integrated network of support to address basic need challenges by connecting students with on- and off-campus resources. The network will include resources for academic, social and emotional support to help improve the retention and completion rates of underserved students.

Montgomery College (Maryland), **Los Angeles City College** (California), **Hartnell Community College District** (California) and **Passaic County Community College**

(New Jersey) also received grants.

Arizona

The **Mesa College Promise** scholarship program at **Mesa Community College** (MCC) got a boost thanks to a \$10,000 gift from Dexcom, Inc.

Mesa College Promise started in fall 2021 and enables eligible graduating high school students to attend MCC for two years with Arizona resident tuition and fees fully paid. Students are provided with their own academic advisor, a Promise orientation, and career and financial aid advising.

“One hundred fifty-three students applied to the Promise program, and of those 96 were eligible to receive the scholarship,” said MCC Interim President Lori Berquam. Of those 96 eligible students, 85 were awarded scholarships. “With the pandemic affecting high school students working to complete their studies online, we are pleased to offer this program to these exceptional students and to welcome the next generation of community college learners.”

Georgia

The Georgia Automobile Dealers Association donated \$100,000 to the **Technical College System of Georgia** (TCSG) Foundation to support students pursuing a career in the automotive industry. The gift will establish a scholarship program for students enrolled in auto technology, auto collision and other automotive-related programs at TCSG colleges.

“There is a crucial need for automotive technicians all across the state of Georgia,” said Lea Kirschner, president of the association. “By partnering with TCSG and providing funding for students interested in an automotive career, we will be growing a workforce ready to fill the jobs of today and tomorrow.”



Georgia Automobile Dealers Association President Lea Kirschner presents TCSG Commissioner Greg Dozier with a check. (Photo: TCSG)

Indiana

Ivy Tech Community College will use an \$8.75 million grant from Indiana University Health to expand its nursing program. The funds will help with recruitment of faculty and staff, the purchase of equipment and student support services.

Ivy Tech has 18 nursing programs across its campuses, with a new program launching at the Hamilton County campus by early 2023.

North Carolina

The Wilson Center at **Cape Fear Community College** will receive a \$150,000 federal American Rescue Plan grant from the National Endowment for the Arts (NEA). It will support the center in presenting performances and artists to the community, including the development and implementation of educational and community engagement programs for local school systems, youth organizations and other area nonprofits.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

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