



12/6/19

ASU Mid-South Receives Notice of Title III Grant Application Funding

Recently, Arkansas State University Mid-South received notice from the U.S. Department of Education that its recent Title III *Strengthening Institutions Grant* application was funded at 100% of total project costs. ASU Mid-South was awarded \$2,250,000 (\$450,000 per year) over the next five years to support technological advances aimed at increasing enrollment, retention and student access.

The college will use these funds to transform instructional and service delivery through improved technology. The main grant objectives are: (1) improving and expanding on-line instructional delivery for all programs through curriculum design and professional development; (2) developing and implementing more robust online student services, to include admissions, tutoring, and retention management; and (3) updating and strengthening the college's Information Systems Technology curriculum to include a Programming option.

"We made a decision several years ago to be very intentional about the grants we seek, to ensure they clearly support our mission and/or enhance our existing programs and activities," said Dr. Debra West, Chancellor of ASU Mid-South. "This *Strengthening Institutions Grant* does just that. It supports several of the goals identified in our 2018 – 2021 Strategic Plan, including the goal of providing increased access to affordable educational programs through the expansion of our capacity to offer fully online programs and support services. There's no question this funding will enhance our ability to support increased opportunities and outcomes for the students we serve."

Title III grant funding will provide ASU Mid-South with the ability to develop online resources making college more accessible and students more successful. It will create increased online student support services through the integration of programs such as StarFish, TutorMe, EMSI Career Coach, and CashCourse.

StarFish is a student success management application that facilitates communication among academic advisors, instructors, students, and others who support student learning. Some uses are to track students closely to ensure they are following their individual success plans, identify and address confounding

variables, collect and analyze data on multiple interventions. At ASU Mid-South Starfish will support data-driven student services, identifying the services and resources which are most effective in helping students be successful.

TutorMe is a 24/7 online tutoring service with thousands of tutors who work with students in a virtual lesson space that includes whiteboard, text editing, screen sharing, text chat, editing tools, and more. An administrator dashboard gives instructors a full view of students' progress and what the instructor needs to do if they are struggling. The service provides tutoring support for over 300 subjects and connects a student and tutor in under 30 seconds any time of the day or night.

EMSI Career Coach helps identify a clear path into the labor market for students, providing connections between their programs of study and specific occupations in the region. Career Coach helps students find programs that meet their interests and helps them make informed decisions regarding career paths, based on current regional labor data. Students can take a career assessment that will help them link to ASU Mid-South programs.

CashCourse is tailored for college students and will provide access to a range of workshop materials covering key financial topics in addition to online coursework resources offered on the CashCourse website.

“Our Strategic Plan also states that we will use innovative and best practices to enhance learning opportunities,” added Dr. West. The Title III funding will provide for professional development through ASU Mid-South’s utilization of Quality Matters, a non-profit organization leading quality assurance in online and innovative digital teaching and learning environments.

In addition, the grant includes funding for five positions – a project director and administrative specialist, as well as an Instructional Technology Design Specialist, an Online Services Specialist, and a Computer Programming Specialist (faculty position).

This grant will not only provide an additional program option in Information Technology, it will position Mid-South to take advantage of the increasing demand for online learning.

About Arkansas State University Mid-South

Arkansas State University Mid-South is a public two-year institution of higher education with an open-door admission policy, serving Crittenden County, Arkansas and the surrounding areas. The College is

committed to *enriching lives through high quality educational programming that fosters student success, workforce development, and lifelong learning*. For more information about ASU Mid-South, visit <https://www.asumidsouth.edu/>

###