New Skills4Success Center Debuts at Canyon Country Campus

In addition to providing lower division academic education, workforce training and lifelong learning opportunities, College of the Canyons assists all underprepared students and community members in obtaining the knowledge and skills needed to succeed both academically and professionally. It is with that goal in mind that the College of the Canyons Canyon Country Campus launched its first Skills4Success Center.

"College of the Canyons and the California Community College system have always sought to help fill the gaps in student learning," said Dr. Dena Maloney, founding dean of the Canyon Country campus. "The Skills4Success Center brings an additional resource to students seeking to improve their college skills and prepare for the educational opportunities provided by the Canyon Country Campus."

As part of the college's larger Basic Skills Initiative, the new Skills4Success Center is a dedicated facility on the Canyon Country campus for students to receive additional instruction and support services to strengthen their basic math and English skills and/or prepare to take the GED exam. The California Community College system's Basic Skills Initiative is a multi-year effort to improve curriculum, instruction, student services, assessment, program practices and campus culture in the areas of ESL and college success skills across the state.

The Basic Skills Initiative at College of the Canyons is referred to as the Skills4Success program. The goal is to address the ever-increasing population of students who need assistance in order to succeed both in college and in the workplace. The Skills4Success committee has identified reading, writing, math and English as a second language (ESL) as well as key learning and study skills as the main areas of focus.

"An increasing number of students are coming into college underprepared for the skills required to succeed in the college classroom and beyond," said Heather MacLean, ESL department chair at the college. "The college's Skills4Success program has made great strides in trying to reawaken the principles of good instruction and effective classroom practices and this new Center will greatly assist us in that effort."

The Skills4Success Center, opened last month to coincide with the start of the fall semester, is located in CCC-308. It operates Monday through Thursday from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. and 5 p.m. to 7 p.m.

Students visiting the lab may enroll in one of the college's free non-credit GED classes offered through the college's Community and Continuing Education department or work independently on skill areas identified during the assessment process or suggested by their instructors.

While a qualified college instructor and support staff member will be present during lab hours to assist students and answer questions, students will primarily use the lab's self-paced, computer-based instructional PLATO Learning software to focus on specific skills. The on-site instructor can monitor student progress and make adjustments to the software's lesson plans by including extra level-appropriate exercises, lessons and skill building activities catered to each student's academic needs.

Though primarily designed for students and community members who have not yet received a high school diploma or GED, the lab is open to any student who feels they might benefit from receiving additional instruction.

"To be successful academically or professionally, students need some of these basic skill sets," MacLean said. "The ability to read actively, listen effectively and retain information, participate in discussions and set personal goals and self-reflect have all proven to be essential elements of student success."

Students may enroll in GED lab classes at any point in the semester, but are encouraged to sign up early as space may become limited. To enroll, students must file an application with the college's Continuing and Community Education department and complete all necessary assessment tests.

For more information about the Canyon Country campus Skills4Success Center and schedule of classes, or to speak with a counselor please call (661) 362-3300 or visit www.canyons.edu/Offices/CTE/CollegeSuccess.

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