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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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BMCC awarded GEAR Up, ASPIRE grants totaling \$43,612

PENDLETON, Ore. – Blue Mountain Community College was recently awarded two grants that will help high school students achieve their higher education goals. BMCC received a \$25,000 GEAR Up grant and a two-year ASPIRE grant totaling \$18,612.

The GEAR Up grant will fund a three-day summer enrichment program at BMCC for 25-30 economically disadvantaged students from the Pendleton and Hermiston areas who will enter the 9th or 10th grade in the fall. The program teaches these students about leadership development, college life and paying for college, as well as gives them opportunities to participate in workshops and experience what a college course is like. The goal of the GEAR Up program is to increase the number of economically disadvantaged students who are prepared to enter and succeed in postsecondary programs, as well as promote early awareness of college opportunities and engage students in college and career planning.

This program will involve students in the BMCC area who do not have the support or means to attend college on their own. BMCC will give them the passion to pursue higher education in some capacity through interactive workshops, sample courses and student life booths that will help them not only feel comfortable on the campus but to feel comfortable with the journey from high school to college to career. Through engaging activities, BMCC will promote a passion for learning and higher education while talking with students and families about the journey of navigating college with the main focus of getting their foot in the door.

The ASPIRE grant will fund a mentoring program at BMCC that matches trained and supportive mentors with students to develop a plan to meet their educational goals beyond high school. Success coaches will assist students with developing a college readiness and academic path that is understandable and attainable, and the student will have opportunities to explore a variety of career paths. The BMCC ASPIRE program will focus on College Prep/GED students, but will be available to all BMCC students. The first year of the grant – which runs now through June 30 – provides \$7,812 to BMCC for the program’s development, while the second year (2016-17 academic year) will grant \$10,800.

“BMCC always strives to support students in achieving their educational and career goals. These grants are opportunities for BMCC to reach a diverse group of students and help them to navigate their college journeys,” said Wade Muller, BMCC’s Student Success Center Director. “We’re excited to get to work to implement these programs.”

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