

[UNH's
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UNH Center Receives Federal Funding to Help Low-income students

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DURHAM, N.H. , Thanks to new federal funding, the University of New Hampshire's Center for Academic Resources and Student Support Services will be able to provide direct scholarship assistance to approximately 45 students this spring for the first time ever.

"Nationally, we know low-income students with high debt are more likely to drop out of college than other students," says Len Lamberti, director of the center. "This federal funding finally acknowledges that debt encumbrance is an ever growing obstacle to graduation for a lot of students. We can provide all of the tutoring and academic mentoring possible, but if a student has to work 15 to 20 hours a week there's no doubt that academics will suffer."

The money, about \$31,000 in federal money and another \$16,000 from a required university match, will go directly to students, who will each receive about \$1,000-\$1,200 to reduce loan debt. In return, the students agree to participate in an academic program offered by the center.

"It's a unique program because it's not just about handing out a check," says Lamberti. "We're telling students UNH is making an investment in them, and that they need to make an investment, too."

In addition to this one-time scholarship money, the center also received word that it will be awarded \$250,000 a year in federal funding for the next four years beginning September 2002.

"This Student Support Services money is approximately

two-thirds of our annual budget, and allows us to achieve our mission of working with about 180 students each year who have substantial financial need and come from families where they are the first to attend college," says Lamberti. "We provide these students with academic support and enrichment to help them excel and graduate."

The million-dollar grant will also support the Rising Scholars Program, a new program scheduled to begin in the summer of 2003 that will provide up to 20 students a year with a scholarship of up to \$500 to come to school a week early for academic enrichment. In addition, the Rising Scholars will participate in activities during their first semester.

For more information on the center and its services, call 862-3698.

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