



Monday, June 8, 2009

Contact: Carla Vigue, Office of the Governor, 608-261-2162

Governor Doyle Announces UW-Eau Claire Selected for Pre-College Awareness Program

Blugold Beginnings to Encourage Students to Pursue Higher Education

MADISON – Governor Jim Doyle announced today that the University of Wisconsin-Eau Claire has been selected as the recipient of new funding to expand pre-college awareness programs on its campus. UW-Eau Claire's program, Blugold Beginnings, will replicate the UW-Green Bay's successful Phuture Phoenix program to encourage young at-risk students to pursue higher education.

"We are working very hard to ensure that every kid in Wisconsin knows that if he or she works hard, there will be a place for him or her at one of our great technical colleges or universities," Governor Doyle said. "Blugold Beginnings will help more Wisconsin kids get on an early path to higher education."

Campuses from Wisconsin's public, private, and technical college and university systems competed for a \$100,000 grant to help students learn about and prepare for a postsecondary education. UW-Eau Claire's program, Blugold Beginnings, was selected from nine outstanding proposals to receive the funding and will also receive assistance from Phuture Phoenix program staff.

"We have over 1,000 fifth graders in the surrounding school districts, and it is critical that we work to raise their and their families' aspirations and expectations and put a college degree on their horizons," UW-Eau Claire Chancellor Brian Levin-Stankevich said. "We are thrilled to be able to learn from the seasoned professionals at Phuture Phoenix and implement a program with proven results."

Earlier this year, Phuture Phoenix was selected for replication on another college campus through funding provided by the Wisconsin College Access Challenge Grant. The \$1.8 million grant is being administered by Great Lakes Higher Education Guaranty Corporation on behalf of the State of Wisconsin. In addition to serving as the grant administrator, Great Lakes is contributing an additional \$911,000 in matching funds over the two-year grant period.

Started in 2003, the Phuture Phoenix program hosts an annual field trip day for 1,500 fifth-graders from low-income schools in the Green Bay area and recruits undergraduate students to mentor students at surrounding schools. The program has helped more than 5,000 school children understand the importance of education as a path to a brighter future. During the tour, the students are exposed to the college experience, encouraged to be excited about education, eventual high school graduation, and the possibilities for college, university or technical college careers. The program will be replicated on the UW-Eau Claire campus, with field trip days for area students to be held in spring 2010.

For more information about Wisconsin's College Access Challenge Grant and the Phuture Phoenix Program Replication on the UW-Eau Claire campus, contact Maria Bundy at (877) 214-2667.