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University is one of nine colleges to get Students in Service Award

By Meagan O'Toole-Pitts

Stephen F. Austin State University is one of nine colleges receiving Students in Service awards from Texas Campus Compact for the 2011-12 academic year.

Texas Campus Compact, a nonprofit organization hosted by The University of Texas System, promotes service learning and civic engagement on higher education campuses and in communities.

The Students in Service program, which began two years ago, provides stipends to students who engage in service learning programs at a Texas Campus Compact member college or university. More than 70 private and public higher education institutions across the state are Texas Campus Compact members.

A \$94,000 grant, given to Texas Campus Compact by Washington Campus Compact, will be divided amongst 80 students on the nine awarded campuses who complete a year of volunteer work.

SFA applied to the program this year for the first time and has now been selected to fulfill five student spots in the program, said Jamie Bouldin, SFA assistant director for leadership and service in the Office of Student Affairs.

"We're going to be looking for five SFA students to participate in a project," Bouldin said. "They're going to be working with leadership and service programs from the Office of Student Affairs. They're going to be participating in a mentoring project."

Bouldin said the students will continue a mentoring project the Lumberjack Leadership Academy began last year.

"We started with the Martin Center last year," she said.

"Students did mentoring with the juniors and seniors at the Martin Center and then they helped to bring in guest speakers on topics that were relevant to access to college - financial aid, admissions and employment."

Students participating in the program, who must be juniors or seniors, must complete 300 volunteer service hours in a calendar year to receive the stipend.

"Three hundred hours over 52 weeks - they're looking at a minimum of five to six hours per week," Bouldin said. "They need to be able to commit to it fully for the year. We're looking for students who have a interest in or experience in working with youth."

Students are slated to be admitted into the program in October, she said.

To apply, call Jaime Boudlin at 468-1088.

Texas Campus Compact

The stipends will go toward the cost of students' educations, said TxCC Executive Director Patricia Spencer Potyka.

"These students will be mentoring students at K-12 schools on college campuses, working on a variety of issues including obesity, which is a big issue right now, voting, ethics, the need for more STEM, Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math, careers," she said. "Essentially the end result of this Student in Service Texas Campus Compact program is that we're helping to close the gap, ultimately creating a better prepared and more educated workforce and a stronger economy."

The Students in Service award program is funded nationally through Washington Campus Compact, housed at Western Washington University, and through the Corporation for National and Community Service as an education award program, said Katie Hardgrove, TxCC programs director. Last year, the organization worked with six member schools, providing 24,000 volunteer service hours a year to communities.

The nine recipients this year are SFA, Austin Community College District, Houston Community College System, Huston-Tillotson University, Lone Star College-Kingwood Campus, St. Mary's University, Texas State University-San Marcos, University of North Texas-Dallas, University of Texas at Austin.

For more information on Texas Campus Compact, visit www.texascampuscompact.org.