

# Mercy College Awarded \$2.8M Federal Grant to Expand Support for Hispanic Graduate Students

*The five-year program will fund courses, culturally sensitive mentoring, scholarships and other resources to support academic, personal and professional success*

DOBBS FERRY, NEW YORK, UNITED STATES, June 29, 2023 /EINPresswire.com/ -- Today, Mercy College announced it has been awarded a grant from the U.S. Department of Education under the Promoting Postbaccalaureate Opportunities for Hispanic Americans (PPOHA) Program. The five-year project, known as Graduate Professional Resources and Opportunities (GRAD-PRO), addresses the College's priority to support the Hispanic students it serves, along with other underrepresented graduate and professional students.



Mercy College is the largest, private, non-profit minority-serving institution in the region and a Hispanic Serving Institution (HSI). Students are 41% Hispanic, 23% Black, 22% White, 6% Asian and 2% two or more races. In 2022, Excelencia in Education awarded Mercy the prestigious Seal of Excelencia, a national certification for intentionally serving Latino students. Mercy is the first private college in the country, as well as the first HSI in New York State, to receive this certification.

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*Tim Hall, president of Mercy College*

“Throughout its history, Mercy has maintained its dedication to student success, for all students and at all levels,” said Tim Hall, president of Mercy College. “This new grant from the Department of Education signals Mercy's continuing commitment to provide more opportunities for

Hispanic students to succeed. I'm extremely proud to have had a hand in leaving a legacy that this grant will carry forward into the future.”

The GRAD-PRO project's overarching goals include building an array of new opportunities for

students to engage in the successful pursuit of credentials beyond the undergraduate degree. The program features a professional development program for faculty, aimed at providing students with mentoring that is more grounded in cultural understanding and inclusivity while addressing the specific needs of underserved students. The grant also aims to bolster student retention, persistence and degree attainment by providing supplementary resources that may include scholarships. Total funding over the five-year award period is \$2,888,607.

Mercy College will use GRAD-PRO funds to enhance teaching and learning across the institution by centering on four key areas:

- (1) providing experiential learning in community-based settings for students in the health sciences;
- (2) implementing evidence-based practices specifically tailored to the needs of underserved students;
- (3) professional development for faculty mentors in ways that will enhance cultural understanding and inclusivity with regard to race, ethnicity, culture, language and disability status, and
- (4) offering a new online series of advanced certificates that can lead to a master's degree in business analytics.

The project will be led by Dr. Elena Nitecki, professor of Mercy's Department of Early Childhood and Childhood Education. Assisting Dr. Nitecki will be five activity directors: Dr. Pamela Eliach, assistant professor of physician assistant studies; Dr. Aki Ohseki, assistant professor of childhood education; Dr. Carmela Dormani, assistant professor of behavioral science; Dr. Sarah Hahn, assistant professor of behavioral science, and Victor Petenkemani, assistant professor of business.

"GRAD-PRO addresses the College's priority to not only serve more underrepresented graduate and professional students, but also to support their transition into successful professional careers in the high-need areas of education, health care and business," said Nitecki. "Mercy is committed to removing educational and career barriers that have impeded the advancement of historically marginalized students, and providing the sustained support they need for academic, personal and professional success."

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#### About Mercy College

Founded in 1950 by the Sisters of Mercy, Mercy College is an independent, coeducational college that offers more than 100 undergraduate and graduate degree and certificate programs within five schools: Business, Education, Health and Natural Sciences, Liberal Arts and Social and

Behavioral Sciences. The vibrancy of the College culture is sustained by a diverse student body from around the region. The College offers campuses in Dobbs Ferry, the Bronx and Manhattan as well as online offerings. For more information, visit [www.mercy.edu](http://www.mercy.edu).

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