

# Spotlight

on TCC  
FALL 2010

## 2009-2010, An Amazing Year for TCC

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# The OK-INBRE MEDBEEd Program: An ARRA Supplement to the Parent OK-INBRE Award that Provides Outreach to High Schools with 30-60% Underrepresented Minority Populations in Northeastern Oklahoma

We acknowledge the NIH/NCRR IDeA Program for funding

## OK-INBRE Funded High School Outreach Activities are Highlighted in Yellow

What began 40 years ago as a one-campus community college is now a four-campus, multi-faceted community college that is ranked among the top in the nation. Tulsa Community College is an infrastructure of learning opportunities, community outreach and economic development research targeted to improve the quality of life for everyone who calls northeastern Oklahoma “home.”

In fact, many of TCC’s collaborations are with area public schools and community agencies, including:

- TCC has representatives on the Tulsa County P-20 Council which supports a seamless process of learning from “prenatal to post-secondary”;
- Tulsa Public Schools and TCC have partnered to establish Early College High School, where TPS students take their high school classes on TCC’s Northeast Campus; and
- TCC has secured the MEDBEEd grant, which provides scientific lab instruments and reagents to rural high school teachers who teach in schools with high minority populations.

By cultivating relationships with school districts, businesses, community agencies and other higher education institutions, TCC is taking steps to ensure higher education is accessible to all.

### *Seamless transition*

A group of leaders across Tulsa County are developing a plan that will support a seamless process of learning from “prenatal to post-secondary.” The plan, P-20, is being developed by the Tulsa County P-20 Council.

The concept is to bring multiple institutions and community resources together in order to advance human capital development. The council focuses on assuring successful transitions at critical points along the developmental pathway.

The council has four objectives:

- Increase public awareness and understanding of the challenges facing human investment efforts, especially education, and what really needs to happen to promote greater success;
- Increase accessibility to higher education for all students including concurrent enrollment and dual enrollment programs;
- Organize a community wide “math and science renaissance” initiative to enhance math, science and overall technology skills at all levels of education; and
- Develop a strategic plan for preventing disengagement of teens and young adults from school, work and general steps for individual improvement.

By involving a variety of institutions and agencies, the council hopes to create an overall plan that will ensure more students stay academically and socially engaged throughout their educations. They will accomplish this by ensuring students have access to basic services: transportation, health, mental health, housing and financial assistance. And because of this support, the council concludes that more students will earn college degrees and/or complete post-secondary training.

Council members represent Tulsa Community College, Union Public Schools, Tulsa Public Schools, Tulsa Technology Center, Oklahoma Department of Human Services, the University of Oklahoma—Tulsa, Oklahoma State University, Tulsa Metro Chamber, City of Tulsa, Workforce Tulsa and many more.

“We are looking at gaps that go beyond education,” said Talia Shaull, TCC Regent and member of the Tulsa County P-20 Council. “It’s all about collaboration and using the community to develop ideas and a work plan of objectives to create a seamless transition.”



*Each teacher took home \$4,000 worth of instruments and reagents to conduct lab experiments after attending two MEDBEd workshops in January.*

“It opened their eyes to the biotechnical world,” he said. “I don’t know that any of them didn’t like it.”

In 2009, TCC received a \$512,824 grant titled Medicines, Explorations and Discoveries in Biotechnology Education (MEDBEd) from the National Institute of Health, National Center for Research Resources. These are American Recovery and Reinvestment Act dollars.

The MEDBEd project connects biomedical education with rural high schools that have 30-60 percent underrepresented minority populations. The project exposes these students to the field of biotechnology by giving high school teachers instruments and reagents, equipment and chemicals for conducting high-tech lab experiments in their home classrooms.

Teachers apply for the program, and upon acceptance, they may attend up to six workshops where they learn how to conduct experiments using the latest biomedical technology.

Teachers receive \$8,000 worth of instruments and reagents to take back to their classrooms after attending four workshops.

“Our goal is to touch 50 schools,” said Dr. Diana Spencer, Biotechnology Assistant Professor/Coordinator at TCC and MEDBEd Project Director.

Now at the beginning of the grant’s second year, they are more than halfway to that goal. They have reached 33 schools by enabling 39 teachers to attend workshops. Spencer said these teachers have the possibility to reach and benefit 4,144 science students.

MEDBEd is under the parent grant, Oklahoma IDeA Network of Biomedical Research Excellence (INBRE). The University of Oklahoma Health Sciences Center awarded the funds to TCC as part of OK-INBRE’s efforts to enhance outreach activities and build a pipeline of new biomedical researchers.

OK-INBRE is a nearly \$19 million grant dedicated to expanding the infrastructure of science in Oklahoma.

“It has been transformative for Oklahoma,” said Dr. Darrin Akins, Principal Investigator of OK-INBRE and Assistant Dean of the OU Health Sciences Graduate College. “It’s getting students excited about science and enhances the number of students going into science programs.

“And by building the infrastructure, we are enhancing our economic development as well. We aren’t just educating them and shipping them off to work somewhere else. We’re not just a launch pad. They’re landing here, too.”

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### Science savvy

Because of budget cuts, grants are huge for teachers like Marla Hewitt, of Yale High School. She said before she received specialized training and lab equipment from a grant awarded to TCC, she could only do small demonstrations within her science classes. Now, every student can have a hands-on experience in lab activities.

“It allows them to do what they could only look at before,” she said. “Our resources are really limited, so things like this are critical to improving our Oklahoma classrooms as well as the training we (as teachers) receive.”

Dale DuShane, a teacher at Oaks Mission High School, said the new lab experiments funded by TCC’s grant have given his students a new outlook on science.