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PRESS RELEASE

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Avisinia Rodriguez, the interim assistant dean of the Palm Desert Campus and student engagement coordinator, participated in CAMP in her freshman year at Cal State San Marcos and later worked as a peer mentor in her last year as an undergraduate and first year of graduate school.

CSUSB awarded \$2.3 million grant to help students who are migrant farmworkers

PALM DESERT, Calif. – Cal State San Bernardino has been awarded a five-year \$2.3 million federal grant that focuses on helping students, who are migrant/seasonal farm workers (MSFW) or the children of migrant/seasonal farm workers, stay in school during their first year of college and continue into their second year of higher education.

The College Assistance Migrant Program (CAMP) grant from the U.S. Department of Education was awarded to CSUSB and the [OneFuture Coachella Valley](#), a Palm Desert-based organization that seeks to assure students succeed in college, career and life – expanding and enhancing the local workforce so that our youth and economy thrive.

“We are thrilled to have been selected to bring the College Assistance Migrant Program (CAMP) to CSUSB and look forward to working with all of our educational partners to implement a program, designed to meet the unique needs of MSFW families in the Coachella Valley,” said Summer Steele, director of the CSUSB California Student Opportunity and Access Program (Cal-SOAP). “This historical investment in the Valley will transform lives by improving the educational and economic outcomes of the region.”

Sheila Thornton, president and chief executive officer of OneFuture Coachella Valley, said they were excited to partner with CSUSB for the CAMP project.

“We see this as an excellent opportunity to support postsecondary attainment for migrant students from the Coachella Valley. This grant will allow us to provide much needed support and resources to students who face significant barriers to enrolling and persisting in college and completing degrees,” said Thornton. “The work helps advance the Coachella Valley’s Regional Plan Goal of having 70% of students completing a degree or certificate within six years of graduation and will directly impact economic mobility among our most vulnerable community members. We are grateful for the strong partnership with CSUSB and look forward to celebrating the college and career successes of our youth!”

Avisinia Rodriguez, the interim assistant dean of the Palm Desert Campus and student engagement coordinator, knows firsthand about CAMP. She participated in the program in her freshman year at Cal State San Marcos and later worked as a peer mentor in her last year as an undergraduate and first year of graduate school.

“CAMP taught me how to be a college student, and they became my home away from home. CAMP was also my introduction of working in student affairs,” Rodriguez said. “When I felt like I didn’t belong in college, the staff and my peers in CAMP reminded me that I was right where I belonged. I will always be grateful for the support I received and the everlasting knowledge they provided me as a first-generation, low-income student.”

Rodriguez said that CAMP at the Palm Desert Campus means that “our students in the Coachella Valley will have access to extra support services to develop the skills needed to be successful in college.”

The five-year grant, which begins July 1 and will serve 50 students annually, will work out of Cal State San Bernardino, the CSUSB Palm Desert Campus, the OneFuture Coachella Valley and the [Boys & Girls Club of Coachella Valley – Mecca Club](#).

The CAMP grant’s objectives are that participants complete their first year of college and continue onto their second year of higher education, increase their workforce readiness skills and provide opportunities for holistic student support and enrichment, including social, emotional and academic needs.

The CAMP grant seeks to offer support to the students in three areas:

- Academic support through college and career planning, progress tracking, advising, tutoring summer residential programs, STEM and supplemental curriculum;
- Financial academic support through family financial aid workshops and application assistance, book loan program, scholarship assistance, employment connections, opportunities for fellowships and internships and career preparation; and
- Personal resources through leadership development, mental health and wellness programming, college tours, cultural experiences, and connections to basics needs resources.

The program's projected outcomes are that 86% of the CAMP participants will complete their first year of college, and 92% of the CAMP participants will continue into their second year of college after completing their first year of higher education.

For more information about the College Assistance Migrant Program, contact Summer Steele, director of the [CSUSB California Student Opportunity and Access Program](#) (Cal-SOAP) at bivenss@csusb.edu.

About PDC: The CSUSB Palm Desert Campus offers bachelor's and master's degrees, a doctorate in educational leadership, teaching credentials and certificates. Serving more than 2,300 students, it is the Coachella Valley's four-year public university and plays a vital role in educating and training the region's growing population.

For more information about the CSUSB Palm Desert Campus, contact Mike Singer in the Office of Strategic Communication at msinger@csusb.edu or (760) 341-2883, ext. 78107, or visit the PDC website at www.csusb.edu/pdc.