

## **Grant Creates New Biostatistics Grad Program**

A master's degree program in biostatistics will be created at California State University, East Bay thanks to a grant from the Alfred P. Sloan Foundation launching the Professional Master's Degree Program on 12 CSU campuses.

The \$891,000 grant will initially provide more than \$50,000 to Cal State East Bay to initiate the graduate program in biostatistics, which explores the theory and techniques for describing, analyzing, and interpreting health data.

The Cal State East Bay program is projected to begin in the 2008-09 academic year and admit about 25 students annually by 2009-10. There is demand in this field from the pharmaceutical and biotechnology sectors as well as from public sector agencies, according to Joan Bissell, associate director for teacher education and public school programs for the CSU.

"We have been working on this project for the last three years and we hope to have the master's degree in biostatistics in place by next fall," said Eric Seuss, chair of the Cal State East Bay Department of Statistics, which recently added five new professors, including two with doctorates in biostatistics.

Seuss said the department also is investigating the addition of a Professional Master's Degree Program in applied computational statistics, as well as offering statistical computing in online courses. The Professional Master's Degree Program differs from the traditional master's of science graduate degree in that the curriculum incorporates skills useful in business, such as the use of statistical software.

"One of the things we're most looking forward to is making new connections to the other CSU campuses involved in this grant," Seuss said.

The CSU plans to launch 16 such programs on the 12 campuses within the next three years in fields including bioinformatics, biostatistics, biotechnology, clinical project management, computational science, ecological economics, environmental science, and forensics. The programs will include internships to provide industry-based experience.

"These programs supply the labor market with highly skilled workers that are essential to the state's future economy," said CSU Chancellor Charles B. Reed.

There are about 100 Professional Master's Degree Programs across the nation, increasingly recognized as a vehicle to prepare scientists and professionals to meet the demands of top employers.

"In the first five years of this project, we anticipate preparing more than 1,100 graduates for the work force," said Keith Boyum, CSU associate vice chancellor for academic affairs, who led the system wide initiative. "Students who go through these programs will have excellent employment prospects because they will have the training needed by the state's highest-growth employment sectors."

Proposed new federal legislation-the National Innovation Act- would provide \$20 million to support the Professional Master's Degree Program as an important component in building the nation's innovation infrastructure.

The CSU is the first statewide higher education system in the nation to launch this program on multiple campuses. The 12 CSU campuses that will initially launch PSM programs are:

- Cal State East Bay
- Cal State Chico
- Cal State Dominguez Hills
- Cal State Fullerton
- Fresno State
- Cal State Los Angeles
- Cal Poly Pomona
- San Diego State
- San Francisco State
- San Jose State
- Cal State San Marcos
- Cal State Stanislaus

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