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## Grant to improve access for high schoolers

*Submitted story*

A grant that Terra Community College and other education partners have received will allow the college to assist high school students with decisions and procedures that will open college access for them.

The organization formed as a result of this grant will be the North Coast Center of Excellence, or NCCE.

"I cannot begin to tell you how thrilled we are at Terra to help coordinate the efforts of our 25 partnering organizations," said Dr. Marsha S. Bordner, Terra President. "We are all focused on one goal -- to help local students and their families navigate the higher education system and to be successful in pursuing their career goals."

The \$247,000 grant from the Ohio College Access Network and the Great Lakes Higher Education Guaranty Corporation will help support a regional effort in Erie, Huron, Ottawa, Sandusky and Seneca counties to assist students with access to college, career planning and financial aid awareness.

The grant, funded at least through June 2010, includes not only Terra but also Bowling Green State University and its Firelands campus, Heidelberg University and Tiffin University. It will fund two regional Directors of Advising Services who will be housed at Terra and BGSU Firelands and four to six College Access Advisors who will be located at the partnering school districts.

The districts involved include: Bellevue City Schools, Benton-Carroll-Salem Schools, Clyde-Green Springs Exempted Village School District, Danbury Local Schools, EHOVE Career Center, Fostoria City Schools, Fremont City Schools, Lakota Local Schools, Port Clinton City Schools, Sandusky Central Catholic Schools, Sandusky City Schools, Tiffin City Schools and Vanguard-Sentinel Career Centers.

Other partners include: North Point Educational Center, Sandusky County Economic Development Corporation, the Workforce Development Council Tech Prep Consortium and WSOS CAC.

Although the College Access Advisors will begin this August to work with seniors initially, they will eventually deal with students from seventh through twelfth grade in the schools.

They will assist student and their parents in the following:

Choosing a career and investigating the various career opportunities at career centers and colleges.

Guiding students as they select a program or a college.

Helping students understand the value in taking the appropriate academic courses and being successful in those courses.

Doing what they need to do to apply to college (ACT or SAT tests, college applications, requesting

transcripts, etc.)

Helping students to be "college ready" through activities such as ACT preparation classes or bridge courses.

Helping students understand the financial aid maze and how to research financial aid opportunities, complete the FAFSA and apply for "Last Dollar" or local scholarships.

According to a report released by The Joyce Ivy Foundation, OCAN helps fill the gap left by overly expended high school guidance counselors. The study revealed that one-third of a counselor's time is spent performing administrative work such as scheduling, testing management, maintaining student records and signing tardy slips.

Furthermore, if a student does receive post-high school planning services, counselors frequently have no more than 15 minutes of individual time with non-crisis students a semester, the report stated.

Terra is joining an OCAN network in which currently nearly 175 Ohio school districts are being assisted by College Access Advisors. These college advisors work with Ohio students to directly supplement the work of guidance counselors.

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