

Courtesy Western Nevada College

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Grant to help students jump start college careers



High school students participating in the Jump Start program thank the William N. Pennington Foundation for their awarded grants.

Hundreds of Northern Nevada high school students will receive a \$300 Jump Start College scholarship for the spring 2016 semester at Western Nevada College campuses across the region, thanks to a donation from the William N. Pennington Foundation.

The Pennington Foundation was formed by the late William N. Pennington, a gaming industry pioneer and philanthropist, and has provided grants to Northern Nevada based organizations in the areas of education, community services, health care, and medical research.

The William N. Pennington Foundation funds match those given to more than 300 Jump Start College students by the Western Nevada College Foundation for the fall 2015 semester.

Jump Start College is a partnership between Western Nevada College and 14 western Nevada high schools offering high achieving juniors and seniors the opportunity to earn up to a college associate degree prior to their high school graduation. Participating high schools include Aspire, Carson, Dayton, Churchill County, Douglas, Fernley, Pioneer, Pyramid Lake, Silver Stage, Smith Valley, Virginia City, and Yerington along with Oasis Academy and the Nevada Homeschool Network.

“The Jump Start College program presents an academically challenging option for eligible high school junior and senior students and reduces the amount of time the student spends earning college credentials, allowing students to use college level classes to complete their high school

academic graduation requirements,” said Katie Leao, director of the Western Nevada College Foundation. “Understanding the financial barriers our rural communities face, the college and foundation have committed to raise funds for scholarships to provide financial assistance to those students who would not otherwise be able to afford this program.”

The William N. Pennington Foundation supplied \$116,100 in funds to give \$300 scholarships to cover the costs of taking one of five required courses in the Jump Start College program during the spring 2016 semester. Additional funding of \$60,000 will provide 200 students a \$300 book scholarship to cover the cost of textbooks for the spring semester.

“There will be an application process for the spring book scholarship that will allow the college and school districts to identify those students who need additional support above and beyond the academic scholarship,” Leao said. “This collaborative support for the fall 2015 and spring 2016 semesters between the William N. Pennington and the WNC Foundations will fill the financial gap for students struggling to afford college.”

Leao said the Jump Start College program was implemented to increase college success rates at WNC, and to prepare students to better meet the demands of attending a postsecondary institution with the intention of graduating.

“As a partner of the Jump Start College program at WNC, the William N. Pennington Foundation has a finger on the pulse of important issues in higher education,” Leao said. “We are grateful to them for being clearly committed to enhancing opportunities for students.”

Information on contributing to the Western Nevada College Foundation’s efforts to raise funds in support of the college’s educational, cultural and service goals can be found at <http://www.wnc.edu/foundation/>.

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