

For Cleveland State Math Dept.

Bellwether Award brings accolades

When Cleveland State Community College won the Bellwether Award, Math Chair John Squires never realized it would gain such national recognition.

Squires has been contacted by 78 colleges in 21 states about the Math Redesign project that won the prestigious Bellwether Award, given annually by the Community College Futures Assembly.

The Bellwether Award was established to recognize outstanding programs that are at the forefront of innovation throughout the United States and Canada.

"This award confirms that Cleveland State Community College has stepped outside of the box to come up with innovative ways of increasing student learning and engagement, even in tough economic times," stated Gov. Phil Bredesen.

With companies like Volkswagen and Wacker Chemie bringing their business to Tennessee, we must do all that we can to ensure Tennessee students are getting the math and technological skills they need to be successful in the 21st century workplace. I applaud the administrators and faculty involved in this course redesign for making sure our students are equipped with a meaningful body of knowledge and a skill set that applies to the demands of today's workplace."

"It is flattering that so many colleges have heard about the Bellwether and have contacted us for information," stated Squires. "It is rewarding to be able to help other colleges as they try to increase student success."

Cleveland State won in the Instructional Programs and Services category, which recognizes programs and services that foster or support teaching and learning in the community college. The presentation by Cleveland State described a course redesign project the math department undertook involving developmental and college-level math courses. In addition to having very positive effects on student learning and engagement, the project has changed the department's approach to enrollment and scheduling.

State Rep. Kevin Brooks said, "It is always a pleasure to recognize our own 'home grown' talent, right here in our backyard at Cleveland State. This award reiterates the world-class academics at our own local community college. It is amazing that Cleveland State continues to set the standard in academics, in



CONGRATULATIONS — State Rep. Kevin Brooks and Gov. Phil Bredesen congratulated Cleveland State Community College President Carl Hite and math chair John Squires on the recent Bellwether Award they received from the Community College Futures Assembly. The Bellwether Award was established to recognize outstanding programs that are at the forefront of innovation throughout the United States and Canada. From left are Brooks, Bredesen, Hite and Squires.

classroom creativity and in energy research, while others state schools struggle to survive in this erratic economy."

Cleveland State's Math Department received a grant from the Tennessee Board of Regents to redesign the developmental studies program. CSCC was one of six schools out of 28 that submitted proposals that received the grant.

The Developmental Studies Program Redesign Grant enabled the Math faculty to redesign courses and to set up a mathematics lab with a 1+2 format, one hour class meeting each week and two hours of lab work, instead of the typical three hour class meeting format. With this new format, students exiting developmental math increased by 47 percent during this past fall and enrollment in college level math courses increased by 42 percent this spring. Developmental math students had an 80 percent success rate in college math courses during the fall semester.

"These numbers will definitely have a positive impact on graduation because this means that students were able to get through the math courses," stated Squires. "When people are able to get through the math courses, they become eligible for graduation. Traditionally, math is the roadblock to graduation. If you remove that roadblock, then it has to help with graduation rates."

The Math Department was so successful in their redesign that it has inspired other departments on campus to follow suit. The English Department is currently in the early stages of planning a redesign

for their developmental courses, as well. "We were really amazed by what the math department was able to accomplish with their redesign," stated Jayne Hasting, assistant professor of English. Hasting said the English department redesign will be slightly different than the math project - instead of a 1+2 format it will be in a 2+1 format (two hours of class time with one hour of lab per week).

"The courses that will be offered in this format are Basic Writing, Developmental Writing, Reading, and Learning Strategies. These are all the courses that students who have deficiencies will have to take," stated Hasting.

"The problem is that it sometimes takes so long for students to get through these courses. We are hoping these students will actually complete the work more quickly by working at their own pace and can go on and begin their college level courses, instead of lingering in the developmental courses. That is what TBR wants, too."

CSCC President Carl Hite, said, "I believe what we have done related to the math design does exactly what the governor is asking of higher education - do more, do it better, and do it with less. With the technical jobs coming to

Tennessee, we need to make sure that the citizens of this state have the math skills necessary to be successful in the workplace. Unfortunately, too many students coming to the community colleges and universities do not have the math skills they need to be successful. Our program has been successful in changing that."