TCC awarded Innovation Generation grant

Democrat Staff Report

The Motorola Foundation announced that Tallahassee Community College (TCC) partner has received an $18,700 Innovation Generation grant.

These funds were received through the TCC Foundation and will support programs that engage students in science, technology, engineering and math (STEM) to build the confidence and skills they need for success.

In 2009, the Motorola Foundation will provide $5 million in grants to support out-of-school programming, teacher training, curriculum development and other programs that spark students’ interest in STEM.

“This grant will provide valuable exposure to engaging science activities that teachers can implement immediately in their classrooms,” said Wilbert Butler, program director. “Teachers will examine their own understandings and misconceptions of science. These methods will allow teachers to create learning environments that will be beneficial for all learners.”

TCC will use the Innovation Generation grant funds to implement support programs at Havana Elementary School, in K-5 classrooms. Teachers from Havana will attend a workshop at TCC, July 20-24, and will receive support throughout the 2009-2010 school year in developing weekly STEM activities for each grade level.

The Motorola Foundation and TCC will also provide volunteers to provide technical support in the classroom. The project will be conducted in collaboration with Sherry Southerland from Florida State University's FSU-Teach program.

Through the use of explicit, reflective lessons, students will be able to learn at their own pace and be allowed the needed time to understand the science concepts. Introducing students to the real-world application of concepts they learn in the classroom strengthens problem-solving skills, increases knowledge retention and opens students’ eyes to the career possibilities in those fields.

“Innovation Generation programs make science and math both real and fun for today’s students, bringing to life what they hear from their teachers every day,” said Eileen Sweeney, director of the Motorola Foundation. “The work TCC is doing to engage students in these subjects will help our next generation to succeed in a global, knowledge-based economy where critical thinking is no longer just a benefit, but a necessity.”

This year Motorola will convene its grantees at the first annual Innovation Generation Conference. TCC will join dozens of other grantees to share best practices and cultivate the collaborative learning environment necessary to harness students’ curiosity about STEM.