



College and Community Relations
619-644-7840 fax 619-644-7090

News Release
www.grossmont.edu

CONTACT: Dr. Mary Leslie 619-644-7533 OPT
Susan A. Herney 619-644-7840 Community Relations

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Unique Training Program at Grossmont College to Host Mentor Night

El Cajon - OPT (Office Professional Training) program at Grossmont College is an intense, one-semester program offered to reentry men and women of diverse age groups and ethnic and cultural backgrounds who want to change careers and update marketable skills. The program's semi-annual Mentor Night will be held Thursday, October 23, 6 p.m. in the Grossmont College Student Center.

The reasons students enroll in the program are as varied as the students themselves. They strive to gain a level of expertise that will allow them to enter the job force for the first time or re-enter to begin a new career. Many are in the process of transitioning from welfare or unemployment. All OPT students complete course work in computer software, customer service, life skills, basic skills, business communication and job search techniques. In addition, classes in insurance and accounting are offered.

According to Grossmont College President Dr. Ted Martinez, Jr., "The OPT program is yet another unique way Grossmont College is able to meet educational and training needs of our adult population while at the same time providing skilled workers

for local employers. We are grateful for the community support and underwriting the OPT program receives, and of course, we are always looking for new partners.”

OPT has been changing lives since 1985 and has graduated almost 1,800 students. Of those graduates, up to 90 percent are working in their chosen fields within 90 days. Through the years, most graduates have advanced up the career ladder and often hire other alumni. The program has received state and industry awards for its outstanding achievements and has garnered the enthusiastic support of State Senator Dede Alpert, who has spoken at several OPT graduations. The current class will graduate January 22, 2004.

Typical of the support the program offers, Mentor Night gives current students the opportunity to meet with graduates and industry volunteers who will mentor them through the rest of the semester. Graduates will share their personal success stories, serving as an inspiration to the current students.

OPT program participants succeed due to special support services, including counseling and mentoring, provided by grant funds and private donations in addition to Grossmont College support. For example, the program maintains a “dress for success” closet stocked with professional attire the participants will need for job interviews, thanks to space provided by a local church.

The program has resources to provide the current class of 65 students with training and job placement assistance and related services. In order for OPT to continue with a spring 2004 class, the college is seeking new funding. For more information, contact Dr. Mary Leslie, (619) 644-7533.