

**TITLE:** UNITED WAY - HOPE

**TIME PERIOD:** 2008-09

**FUNDING SOURCE:** United Way

**DIRECTOR:** Fred Morgan

**ABSTRACT:** Edison College requires funding to underwrite operational and staffing expenses for current program as it is now organized. The Hope Project ("Help One Person Excel") is a continuation of a project to increase the number of workshops and other learning activities aimed at high school students as part of the program called College Readiness. The United Way allocation will enable the Edison College Foundation to expand the scope of services to Project Hope participants at the high school level.

Edison College HOPE Scholars come from family situations that predispose them to failure, but outperform their peers academically, have higher graduation rates and go on to lead productive lives, when given the chance. Our goal is to expand the circle of HOPE by reaching into the high schools and giving students, identified as "at risk" of dropping out, a promising future. According to the Office of Program Policy Analysis and Government Accountability, "Over half (55%) of all students entering Florida's public postsecondary institutions require remediation in mathematics, reading, and/or writing. Ninety-four percent of students who need remediation attend community colleges. These students are required to complete college preparatory programs before enrolling in college-level classes. Students who receive low scores on college readiness tests or who require remediation in multiple areas are particularly at risk of dropping out."

However, the report notes, students "who successfully complete college preparatory programs perform almost as well as other students in college credit foundation courses in the areas in which they received remediation. In addition, students completing college preparatory programs earn associates degrees at similar rates to other students, when the time needed to complete college preparatory courses is taken into consideration." (Report No. 07-31 May 2007)

Lee County's graduation rate, as reported by the Florida Department of Education, was 69.3% in 2005, compared to a statewide rate of 71.9%. The numbers tell a different story when examined by race. Black students graduated at a rate of only 52.3% in 2005 while 54.9% of Hispanic students graduated. Nearly a third of Edison's current degree-seeking population is eligible for financial aid. Of these, 22.6% of AA degree seekers are First Generation in College, and almost 49% of Edison students indicated that their mothers had not entered college. Some 52% said their fathers had not attended college. They also lack the academic skills to sustain them once they enroll. For example, at least 60% of entering Edison students need one or more remedial courses prior to enrolling in college level work.

This project serves 295 participants.

**EXTERNAL CONTRIBUTION:** \$25,000 (haven't received yet)