As we embark on the second year of the Title III Grant, Pearl River Community College has much to celebrate due to its successful completion of our year one initiatives. Each of our grant objectives and performance indicators were met. Dr. Lou Ann Norman, our external grant evaluator, made her site visit mid-September and offered "... the Project is to be commended for achieving its goals for year one." No major recommendations for change were made.

Words of thanks are offered to many PRCC administrators, faculty, and staff who have made a commitment to achieving our goals of student success and retention. On December 7, an appreciation luncheon was held to honor these individuals. Twenty-eight members of the Title III Project Advisory Team (PAT), the Integrated Learner Support System (ILSS) Advisory Team, and the Faculty Focus Group were in attendance.

October marked the official launch for year two of our Title III grant. There are two main goals for this year. The first goal of improved advisement services and tools is to ensure that PRCC students are successful in achieving their academic dreams. These tools are currently being test-driven by students enrolled in the newly designed College Study Skills course. Check out our online advising tools at www.prcc.edu/t3 under Resources.

The second goal for this year is the inclusion of Supplemental Instruction (SI) into one section each of Developmental English, English Comp I, and English Comp II. Institutions across the nation have incorporated these practices resulting in an increased level of student success and retention. Throughout the 2011 spring and summer semesters, the Title III staff and members of the English department, under the guidance of Dr. Grant, will collaborate in the design of these courses to be piloted in the 2011 fall semester.

Finally, plans are underway for the creation of a new Student Success Center (SSC) at the Forrest County Center. This center will be fully operational by the fall 2011 semester. The newly designed College Study Skills course will also be taught at the FCC at that time. Currently the Poplarville SSC is open, and we invite all students to use the computer lab and study areas between the hours of 8:00-4:00, Monday-Friday.
Next on the Agenda:

- Repiloting the Student Success Course in Spring 2011
- Begin Designing Supplemental Instruction (SI) for English Courses
- Begin Renovation for the New Student Success Center at the Forrest County Center

Title III Staff

- Dr. Amy Townsend, Director
- Leslie Butler, Learning Specialist
- Karen Creely, Information Systems Developer/Data Analyst
- Rhonda Ladner, Tech Support
- Casey Rawls, Administrative Assistant

Student Success Center
Crosby Hall, 2nd Floor
(601) 403-1414

The Office of Financial Aid is our featured department for this month.

The Office of Financial Aid provides comprehensive information and services to students at Pearl River Community College regarding opportunities to finance the cost of their higher education. Our mission is to educate students and their families about the financial aid options available to them and to empower them to achieve their educational and career goals by removing the obstacles blocking them from progressing toward a successful future. The staff of financial aid professionals at the Poplarville campus consists of Valerie Horne, Director of Financial Aid; Donna O’Quinn, M.Ed., Assistant Director of Financial Aid; Reynada Head, Scholarship/Work-Study Financial Aid Advisor; and Michelle Owens, Data Entry Specialist. This staff has approximately 75 years of financial aid experience in serving students and assisting them in meeting their educational goals. Approximately 85% - 90% of students entering college each semester need the assistance of the Office of Financial Aid. Though the primary responsibility for paying for the costs of a student's education still rests with the student and/or the student's family, the philosophy of student aid is to provide access and choice to students who, without such assistance, would not be able to attend an institution of higher learning.

Financial aid awards are offered by the institution as a supplement to the family contribution. However, the PRCC Office of Financial Aid does not determine who qualifies for Pell; the U.S. Department of Education determines a student’s initial eligibility for federal aid. If a student receives federal aid, he/she is responsible for maintaining their eligibility through class attendance, grades, and graduating within a specific timeframe. Students are encouraged to visit our Poplarville office during regular office hours, Monday through Friday, 8:00 am-4:00 pm, or call us at (601) 403-1029. Students at the Forrest County Center can call (601) 554-5500 Monday through Thursday, 8:00 am-8:00 pm, and Friday, 8:00 am-4:00 pm. Students who simply wish to complete the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) or who wish to apply for aid through the State of Mississippi can find links to those websites through the PRCC Financial Aid website. Current students can access our webpage by visiting http://www.prcc.edu/finaid/2002-03/index.htm, and prospective students can find information at http://www.prcc.edu/welcomeweb/financialaid.html.

Photo: The staff of the Office of Financial Aid includes (left to right) Reynada Head, Donna O’Quinn, Michelle Owens, and Valerie Horne.

Group visits Holmes Community College

GOODMAN, Miss. — On October 26 a team from PRCC made a site visit to Holmes Community College (HCC). PRCC team members included Steve Howard, Dow Ford, Brenda Wells, Rance Bedwell, and Dr. Amy Townsend. The purpose of the trip was to learn how to better implement and utilize our newly purchased Transfer Evaluation Software (TES) and also to observe ways HCC has made the most of the Banner CAPP module (degree evaluation) in the advising process. Staff from Holmes shared how they have used both of these technologies to improve student advisement and retention rates. Dr. Fran Cox, Vice President for Academic Programs, expressed how faculty and staff at HCC have found these tools very user friendly and helpful when advising students. Over the next semester, PRCC faculty and staff will have the opportunity to test drive the Degree Evaluation and TES.