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NEIU Awarded \$2.8 Million in Title V Funding to Improve Retention through Academic Literacy

CHICAGO – Northeastern Illinois University (NEIU) in Chicago is the only university in Illinois to have been awarded Title V funding this year. NEIU will receive \$2.8 million from 2007-2012 for the “Improving Retention through Academic Literacy” project. NEIU is one of only 30 colleges and universities in the nation to receive a Title V grant this year.

Funded by the U.S. Department of Education, the Developing Hispanic Serving Institutions (HSI) Program (Title V of the Higher Education Act) provides funding to HSIs to build their capacity to serve Hispanic and low-income students. An HSI is defined as a non-profit institution that has at least 25 percent Hispanic full-time equivalent enrollment.

The NEIU Title V project is part of the University’s strategy for addressing critical barriers to its mission as an urban university of excellence and access. NEIU, the only public four-year Hispanic Serving Institution in the Midwest, serves a highly diverse student population:

- 80% of all incoming freshman are first-generation students
- 56% of undergraduates attend NEIU full-time
- 26 is the average age of NEIU undergraduate students

NEIU will use this funding to create dozens of new writing intensive courses, at least one in every major course of study in the University. It will also address student retention and increase graduation rates by improving key academic literacy skills, creating a Center for Academic Literacy to provide tutoring services and writing support, revising the first-year

writing program, and implementing student writing evaluation resources to accurately assess performance.

“Writing skills are important for both academic success and professional development after graduation,” said NEIU Provost Lawrence Frank. “Because the NEIU writing program will be based in every major, it is designed to improve the overall graduation rate and to help graduates build successful careers after they complete their studies.”

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