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WKU's GameChangers program awarded \$100K grant

By AARON MUDD amudd@bgdailynews.com

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The College of Education and Behavioral Sciences, headquartered in Western Kentucky University's Gary Ransdell Hall.

Submitted

One year into its launch, a Western Kentucky University scholarship program that's aiming to create a teacher workforce that matches the diversity in Kentucky's schools is getting an upgrade.

WKU recently announced it was awarded \$100,000 to help fund its GameChangers initiative, which is the university's hallmark Educator Diversity Program.

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Launched in the summer of 2020, WKU partnered with Warren County Public Schools, the Bowling Green Independent School District and the GameChangers – a local advocacy group that supports equal employment opportunities for the African American community.

“Each (participating) district has a GameChangers representative working in the district,” College of Education and Behavioral Sciences Dean Corinne Murphy told the Daily News of the program last year. “They are actively recruiting professional staff at the district level into the program and making sure that those professional staff (members) are aware of the opportunity.”

Recruitment efforts hone in on district staff, adult learners and undergraduate students. Once enrolled, the school districts and WKU co-sponsor student participation through a shared tuition model, the College of Education and Behavioral Sciences said in a news release announcing the grant.

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Participating students complete field and student teaching experiences within a partner district and receive mentoring, advising and tutoring through WKU's Intercultural Student Enrichment Center, Literacy Center, Academic and Career Development Center, Office of Professional Education Services and Office of Financial Aid. All program participants are supported through extensive tuition scholarships, the release said.

The GameChangers program aims to boost first-time pass rates for teaching exams, participant retention, licensure, job placement, job satisfaction and participant workforce retention. Students who participate teach for at least one year for every year they benefit from the scholarship program, providing local schools with a steady supply of new educators for years to come.

– Follow education reporter Aaron Mudd on Twitter @NewsByAaron or visit bgdailynews.com.

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