

Mission Support Alliance donates \$500K to WSU Tri-Cities

By Sara Schilling, Tri-City Herald staff writer March 25, 2010

RICHLAND -- A Hanford contractor is donating \$500,000 to Washington State University Tri-Cities to help bolster the number of under-represented students studying science, technology, engineering and math.

Frank Figueroa, president and general manager of Mission Support Alliance, or MSA, which provides support services for the Hanford nuclear reservation, announced the donation Wednesday.

He said MSA wants to invest in students to build up the STEM-trained work force in the community and beyond.

"Investing in education is important to our company and to me personally," he said.

The money will be given over 10 years. The bulk of it will cover scholarships for under-represented students -- including minorities, women and first-generation college students -- who are studying STEM disciplines. Part of the donation will be used to provide tutoring for STEM students.

WSU Tri-Cities Chancellor Vicky Carwein said MSA's donation fits in with the Richland campus' goals for the future.

The campus has a growing minority population and is seeking to be designated by the federal government as a Hispanic-Serving Institution. Obtaining that designation would benefit the whole campus because it would allow for access to new programs and new funding sources, she said.

One of the qualifications is that at least a quarter of the campus' full-time students be Latino. Officials hope to have the designation in a few years.

The Richland campus is focusing on STEM education too. Carwein said there's a growing demand in the Tri-Cities and across the country for people trained in science, technology, engineering and math, and the campus has seen a great deal of interest in programs related to those fields.

Evelyn Martinez, a sophomore and student government leader at WSU Tri-Cities, said the donation will make a difference for students, especially those who need help covering tuition.

"As a student, it's really comforting to me to know we have people like this in our community who are willing to donate," she said.

About 70 percent of WSU Tri-Cities students receive some kind of financial aid, Carwein said.

She said MSA's donation is especially helpful now, at a time when education funding is shrinking across Washington because of to state cuts.

"With budgets the way they are, these kinds of financial contributions that come from external sources are even more critical," she said.

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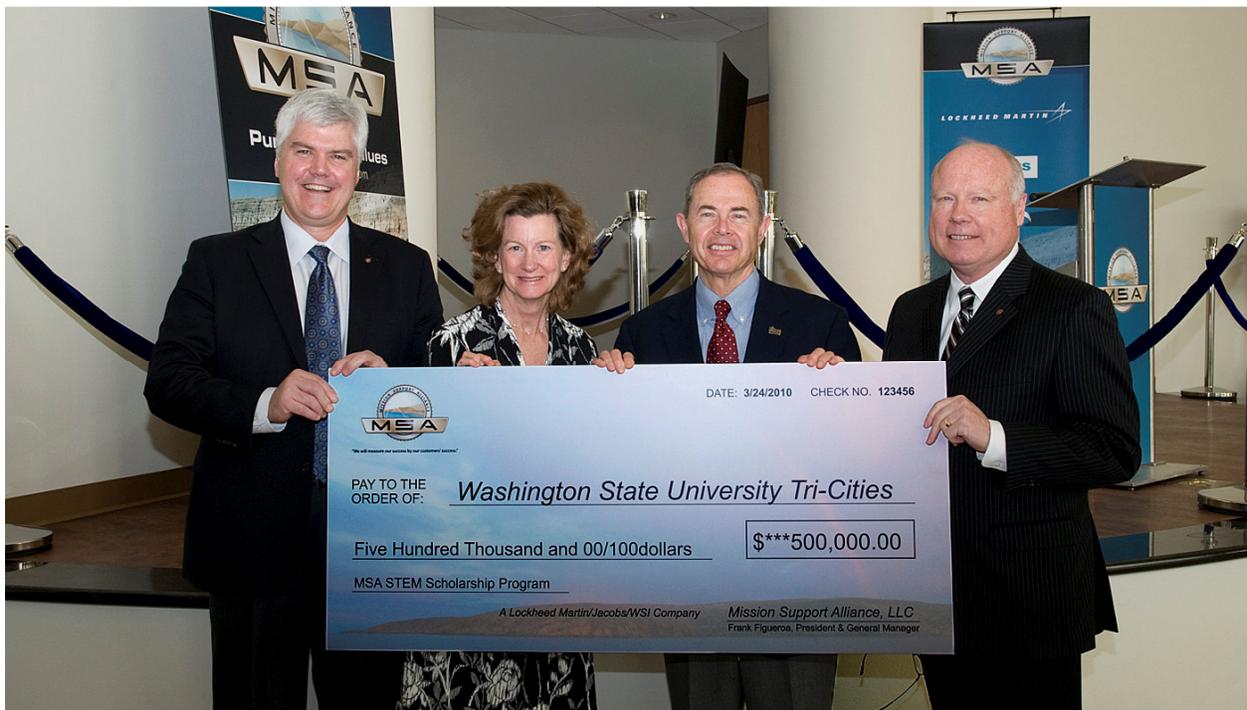
Fran Forgette, a Tri-City attorney and member of the WSU Board of Regents, said "This is a very generous donation. It allows us to take additional, significant steps toward our ultimate goals."

MSA also is making a donation of \$175,000 over five years to Columbia Basin College in Pasco. The contribution was announced last week.

The money will pay for scholarships at CBC.

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Read more: <http://www.tricityherald.com/2010/03/25/951885/mission-support-alliance-donates.html#ixzz0jE45Bks2>



MSA Press Conference, March 24, 2010, Richland, Wash. Pictured l-r: Brad Fisher, WSU Tri-Cities Advisory Council member; Vicky Carwein, WSU Tri-Cities Chancellor; Frank Figueroa, MSA President and General Manager; and local attorney and WSU Regent, Fran Forgette.

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Vicky Carwein, chancellor for Washington State University Tri-Cities discusses how MSA's donation is especially helpful now, at a time when education funding is shrinking across Washington because of state cuts.

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