UNIVERSITY OF NORTH TEXAS

Helping relieve a shortage of teachers

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A $2.4 million grant-funded program will help the University of North Texas train 60 new Fort Worth math and science teachers, further reducing the shortage of those teachers.

Teach North Texas was unveiled Friday at a news conference at the university in Denton.

The Greater Texas foundation will provide $1.4 million of the four-year UTeach grant. The National Mathematics and Science Initiative will provide an additional $1 million if UNT meets certain fundraising goals. Sponsors include ExxonMobil and the Texas High School Project.

Teach North Texas, a collaboration between the College of Arts and Sciences and the College of Education, builds on a partnership with the Fort Worth school district to produce more certified teachers.

UNT already produces nearly 1,200 certified teachers, counselors and school leaders each year. But the new program will allow the school to graduate an additional 60 students a year with math, science or computer science degrees and teacher certification.

Fred Van Valkenburg, the school district's chief of staff, said the program provides the district a new a resource for qualified math and science teachers.

"This is an opportunity to inculcate young student teachers in an urban environment, especially in terms of teacher preparation, whether they come to the Fort Worth ISD or not," Van Valkenburg said.

The program will allow students to explore the teaching profession as early as their freshman year through two free one-hour courses. Additional classes will emphasize field experience and strategies and concepts related specifically to the subjects the students will teach.

"We think our students will appreciate the connections between what they learn in TNT and the multiple field experiences that they'll have practicing their teaching skills in public schools," said John Quintanilla of UNT's mathematics department.

Quintanilla is directing the program along with Mary Harris, Meadows Chair for Excellence in Education.

Harris said UNT's new program is essential to providing more math, science and computer science teachers in North Texas because it focuses on undergraduate teacher education.

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