

# Fresno Pacific gets \$5 million to study math and science education

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Fresno Pacific University has been given a \$5 million endowment from the AIMS Center for Math and Science Education to help fund graduate students interested in science and math education in the central San Joaquin Valley.

Starting this fall, graduate students will begin studying the best ways to integrate math and science topics into classroom teaching. Most, if not all, of the students picked for the program will be credentialed teachers looking to improve their knowledge in the math and science fields. The three-year graduate program is part time, giving the teachers time to continue their day jobs while improving their skills.

Each student will receive money to cover 50% of tuition. About 30 will be admitted to the program each year.

The AIMS Center, which is located on the Fresno Pacific campus but not affiliated with the university, is hoping to fill a longtime need in the Valley for more professionals with a background in science, technology, engineering and math, or STEM, AIMS officials say.

“There’s a huge gap in math and science teachers in general,” said Lori Hamada, director at the AIMS Center. “What we’re trying to do is encourage teachers to know their content better.”

Hamada said the AIMS Center is hoping to replicate research that shows promise for improving education in the Central Valley. The graduate students will work with the center to find encouraging research, test it out in their classrooms and then share the results with other local educators.

Debbie Poochigian, chairwoman of the Fresno County Board of Supervisors, said the endowment is an important way to encourage more professionals to seek STEM teaching jobs.

“STEM education is vital to the future of the Central Valley and teaching children the importance of math and science will benefit everyone,” she said in a statement.

Fresno Pacific officials did not immediately answer a request for comment.

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