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## Grants fuels NKU student philanthropy

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**HIGHLAND HEIGHTS** - Kentucky Campus Compact, a group of Kentucky colleges that foster service learning and civic engagement, has announced that Northern Kentucky University is among four Kentucky schools selected to participate in the Learn and Serve America Pay it Forward program.

NKU will receive \$22,500 to promote student philanthropy.

"NKU has over 10 years of experience in student philanthropy and it shows," said Gayle Hilleke, executive director of Kentucky Campus Compact. "They have a faculty coordinator who will be the liaison to the faculty who teach the Pay It Forward classes. She is a mentor to the faculty concerning the philanthropy courses and will make sure all the paperwork gets done so that the faculty can concentrate on teaching the courses."

The money will fund student philanthropy which allows college students who are enrolled in an academic course to award charitable dollars to worthy organizations with strong proposals that address immediate economic needs.

"When students are first told that they get to give away money, they say 'Great, this is going to be fun!'" said Hilleke. "At the end of the course they say 'It was so difficult to decide among so many worthy nonprofits.' Some classes actually raise additional money so they can invest in more nonprofits."

The classes deciding who gets the funds will be professional sales, writing for social change, sexuality and communication and museum education and interpretation.

"For instance, if the class was a research in social work class, the professor might teach the students research methods. Students learn analysis - reviewing a grant application from a nonprofit and using criteria to judge whether or not it should get some of the funding - as well as other skills such as research, writing, interviewing, critical thinking or persuasive speaking," said Hilleke.

Hilleke noted that the program is still educational for the students and professors are involved at each step.

"The students participate in this project as part of a class, so a faculty member is involved in the entire project though they are not involved in the decision-making - that part is left entirely to the students," she said. The program also teaches the students about the needs of non-profits in the region.

"In the process of deciding which agencies will get the money, students necessarily learn a good deal about the nonprofits under consideration. They learn who is served by the nonprofit, they might meet some of the staff, they might volunteer in the agency for a few hours, they might meet some clients," said Hilleke. "Most students are amazed to learn about how many nonprofits there are in the community and how many services they provide."

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