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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Cisco College Holds Open House for Natural Science and Agricultural Research Greenhouse

Cisco, Texas - October 29, 2021 - Cisco College held an open house on Tuesday, October 12 for the new $50,000 Natural Science and Agricultural Research Greenhouse on the Cisco campus.

Construction of the greenhouse began in March of 2021 and was completed in April. Prep work included site selection, laying the foundation, and running plumbing and gas lines, all done by Cisco College maintenance staff. The foundation and electrical work was contracted to local businesses.

The structure itself sits on half the foundation. The remaining concrete area will be used for container gardens, and a place to harden off plants grown inside the greenhouse.

The fence around the structure was built by Cisco High School welding students.

The greenhouse was funded with a portion of Title V grant funding received in a cooperative agreement between Cisco College and McMurry University. The overall purpose of the 5 year Title V grant is to increase the number of students enrolling into and completing STEM majors degrees. STEM stands for Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math.

The funding is also used to develop students with the skills needed for success in STEM fields and to promote retention, transfer, and graduation rates for both Cisco College and McMurry University.

The research teams share a common support group among the faculty and staff who are involved in Title V research between both institutions. This also extends to the student researchers for both schools. The articulation agreement between Cisco and McMurry science departments provide a seamless transition for Cisco students to enroll and become McMurry students.

One Cisco College research team, named I.O.C.P, which is an acronym for Identify, Observe, Collect, and Propagate, is using the greenhouse to support their Title V research.

“Right now, we are learning various techniques in plant propagation,” said Justin Ceniceros, Biology Professor at Cisco College. “Students are honing their skills in planting, cutting, rooting, and transplanting a variety of plant species.”

“In the spring semester, they will apply their skillset to growing those plants we identified in our collections as being of economic value,” he added.

The research team is focusing its research on botanical natural history to determine plant species in Eastland County.

The team identifies what kinds of plant species occurred in Eastland County from specimens collected in the late 60s and through the 70s, and then they observe to see if those species are still around.

For those species which they find hold economic value as food, ornamental, or otherwise, they will try to propagate it.

“The long-term goal for the greenhouse is to provide a structure that can be utilized across multiple courses and departments during and after the research has concluded,” Ceniceros said. “We will use the greenhouse to enhance lecture and lab lessons by providing a hands-on learning opportunity.

“We will also use it as a place of student employment to grow native plants to return back to the community and help enhance our Cisco campus.”

In addition to the research team, the greenhouse is also utilized by Biology for Science Majors, Botany, Horticulture, Agronomy, and Cisco College Academic Cooperative courses. Soon there will also be labs for non-major courses as well.

More information about scholarships can be found at Cisco.edu.

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About Cisco College

Since first admitting students in 1940, Cisco College has offered programs and activities intended to encourage lifelong learning and enhance the quality of life in the communities it serves.

As a member of the Texas state system of publicly supported institutions of higher education, Cisco College maintains an open-door admissions policy and provides an array of learning, skill development and life experiences to motivate and challenge students. Classes are offered at two primary locations, Cisco and Abilene, in addition to several other off-campus sites. The College strives to maintain a student/faculty ratio which facilitates close interaction between faculty and students.

Cisco College is accredited by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges to award Associate level degrees.

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