

The Washtenaw Voice

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EMU program to help support single parents through college

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One of the most stressful times in your life may have just gotten easier thanks to Eastern Michigan University.

The university is set to launch a program in Summer semester called Keys to Degrees. The program will attempt to build a solid foundation around single parents attempting to earn a degree from EMU.

"The Keys to Degrees programs offers young parents with children the opportunity to earn a degree at Eastern in three years while living on-campus with support from a mentor," said EMU President Susan Martin.

The students must be originally accepted into EMU and apply separately to be admitted into the program. For the inaugural year, the program is accepting just 10 students.

"We're still reviewing applications," said Keys to Degrees Program Director Elise Buggs. "It's not yet available who (the applicants) are, but we're set to go through with the interview process."

The program will provide each student individualized and specialized care. The ideas for the program originated at Endicott College in Beverly, Mass. The program started in 1992 and has been accepting 10 students with each cycle. EMU hopes to mirror the program at Endicott, but also has goals to expand in the future.

"Endicott has about 2,300 students, while we have about 23,000," said Buggs. "The need is there for this program. I still want to market and promote it and keep up interest."

Those students in the program will be housed on campus 12 months throughout the year, participate in structured mentoring, pursue internship opportunities and actively attend academic and personal development workshops.

"The selected students are going to use support services on campus," Buggs added. "This particular part of the program is putting the structure around them."

So far, the program has received very positive feedback, according to Buggs. Alumni have been extremely interested in helping support and run the program, while EMU has provided a large portion of the funding.

In addition to EMU's funding, the program is sponsored by the W.K. Kellogg Foundation, which provided EMU with a \$400,000 grant to help start the initiative.