

St. Cloud State gets grant to fight racism

ST. CLOUD — Antiracism efforts at St. Cloud State University will get a boost from a \$24,000 grant that will pay for training for faculty members.

"We have an opportunity to be ahead of the game because issues surface more openly on our campus, and we can address them more directly," said Michael Spitzer, provost and vice president of academic affairs. "We want to address these conflicts before they get to the point where they're harmful."

The grant from the Otto Bremer Foundation is renewable for a second year if the university can provide a satisfactory progress report, Spitzer said.

Complaints of racism on St. Cloud State's 16,000-student campus go back several years. Two current and former SCSU professors — both black — sent two batches of letters to Twin Cities high schools warning black students to consider going to college elsewhere. Two reports by outside groups questioned the school's credibility in dealing with diversity. And last year, the university settled a federal lawsuit filed last year by three professors and a student alleging anti-Semitism on campus.

Most of the new workshops will be for faculty members. Attendance isn't required. But Spitzer said faculty members who complete 10 hours of training will receive a certificate, which will be one of many factors administrators will consider during personnel evaluations.