



INNOVATION ABSTRACTS

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PROVIDING EDUCATIONAL OPTIONS FOR HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS: COLLABORATION IS KEY

For 27 years, Santa Fe Community College has had a successful partnership with the School Board of Alachua County to bring high school juniors and seniors to the college campus as full-time, dual-enrollment students. Created as the area Vocational-Technical Center, the Santa Fe Dual Enrollment Program has since expanded to include full-time fine arts and college academic offerings, as well as some 30 programs in the college's technology and applied sciences division. Today, more than 450 students from eight public and six private high schools, as well as home-schooled students, attend SFCC. One unique feature of this educational option is that students may also choose to enroll in high school courses offered at the college, along with their college courses.

In addition, there are articulation agreements with school boards in more than 10 counties outside of the Santa Fe district. With permission from the community colleges that serve those counties, individual students in certain situations may dual-enroll at SFCC.

The Dual Enrollment Program predates the current trends toward magnet programs and school choice. Much negotiation and fine-tuning have taken place during the program's history to make it a financially viable option.

Students benefit from this close collaboration. Students attend the college with no tuition costs, and public school students receive their textbooks free of charge. Transportation is available to all public school students, and the free and reduced lunch program is available to those who qualify. Public school students may also take the courses required to qualify for the state Bright Futures Scholarship Program. In some program areas, high school students can complete a technical course of study, and each year a number of students obtain an associate of arts degree at the same time that they

graduate from high school. But most students finish high school with a jumpstart on a two-year college degree or certificate.

The recruitment process begins each winter when counselors from the Dual Enrollment Program visit local high schools to talk with sophomores and juniors about program options. Using a mailing list provided by the school board, program information and applications are mailed to all sophomores and juniors, along with instructions on testing and admissions procedures. Applicants return the completed application to the program office and are given a permission form to take the Computerized Placement Test (CPT), the standardized test for entering college students. Dual enrollment counselors review the test results with each student.

By April, the process of notifying students of their acceptance begins. The program director reviews the applications, counselor notes and recommendations, as well as individual student attendance, transcript, and conduct records. The majority of the students are sent a general acceptance letter detailing steps to be taken to register. Some students are tentatively accepted pending additional steps required by their programs. As a result of the reviews, some students may be asked to come in with a parent to clarify expectations held by program staff and discuss information about attendance and conduct history. It is important that students display the maturity, personal responsibility, and motivation to be successful in the college environment. The competitive nature of some of the college's program offerings may prevent an applicant from accessing a particular program.

Students register for the fall term in July and August. Appointments are scheduled to review high school graduation requirements, explain individual program requirements, plan a class schedule, enter the schedule on the computer, and explain housekeeping items such as getting books, a photo ID card, a student handbook, etc. Schedules are as individualized as possible to reflect the student's college program and high school graduation requirements, career goals, and personal needs. Evening college classes may be the perfect solution for students who are not "morning people,"



while starting classes as early as possible may help students who need to work in the afternoon and evening.

The college employs seven faculty members full-time to teach high school classes on campus. This permits students whose placement scores indicate that they are not ready for college academic classes to meet their high school graduation requirements. It also means that students whose scores are at the college level in one area, perhaps math, are permitted to move ahead in college math while taking English, American history, economics, etc., as high school courses. Some students who are eligible for all college-level classes opt to take one or two high school classes to balance a difficult load of college courses. Because all of the high school science classes are laboratory-based and have a reputation for excellence, many students who score into college courses take high school chemistry and applied physics prior to registering for college science courses.

Student academic progress is monitored. For students registered in any high school class, an attendance report is mailed out on a regular basis. Likewise, a grade report for high school classes is sent home at midpoint in the semester. A midterm progress report form is sent for each student to every college professor who has a high school student enrolled in a class. While the college faculty is under no obligation to complete and return these forms, the return rate is overwhelming. Not only do college faculty consistently return the forms, but they often follow up with phone calls, or e-mail messages, or drop by counselors' offices to discuss individual students. College faculty members want high school students to have successful experiences in their classes.

The Dual Enrollment Program director is included in county high school principals meetings, and the counselors meet with their school system counterparts. The deans and the assistant principals include a counselor from the Dual Enrollment Program in their professional meetings. The High School Dual Enrollment Program faculty and staff have the same rights, responsibilities, and benefits as other college employees. Faculty and professional staff are appointed to collegewide committees, sit on the College Senate, are active in staff development activities, and are on the same faculty and professional staff salary schedule as their colleagues. The program director participates in a number of committees and councils, which affords her the opportunity to promote and explain the program's mission to the college community. High school faculty offices are not located in the same cluster but are scattered throughout the campus with other college faculty.

Dual Enrollment high school students are also well-integrated into the college. High school classes are not

all scheduled for the same building, so there is no identifiable high school student area. A mature and responsible high school student population blends in with the college student population. Students are eligible to participate in any college activity with the exception of intercollegiate sports. High school students have been elected to the student governing body and to positions as club officers. They use the Wellness Center and gymnasium, computer labs, library facilities, and the math, reading, and writing labs. Students who qualify are also named to the academic honors list. A number of high school students take classes in the College Honors Program, and some have graduated with a college honors designation.

With college academic dual enrollment, increasing numbers of students can take advantage of opportunities to graduate from high school with associate degrees.

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