

San Mateo Community College District Academic Senate
Concurrent Enrollment Pilot Project
Mid-Year Update: 1-23-2008
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Introduction

As defined by the California State Department of Education, concurrent enrollment occurs any time a student enrolled in high school takes a college course. Concurrent enrollment takes several forms in San Mateo County; our institutions currently allow high school students to enroll in classes located at the three colleges after their school hours and during summer break. The Middle College High School programs are another example of high school students attending classes on the campuses. We also offer college courses on various high school campuses taught by our faculty. In addition, we have long standing Tech Prep agreements, funded by a number of Federal and State program grants, that allow students to receive college credit for specific vocational courses taken at their high schools. Most of these courses can be applied to certificates, degrees and/or transferred to four-year institutions. During the 2006 –2007 school year there were 3,954 concurrently enrolled high school students in our district as well as the cohort participating in the vocational technical agreements. This paper is not intended to be a comprehensive overview or evaluation of these various concurrent enrollment opportunities within the District; rather, it has been written in order to update the San Mateo County Community College District (SMCCCD) faculty, trustees, staff, and administrators on the progress that the District Senate Governing Council has made toward fulfilling their commitment to exploring the viability of the specific form of concurrent enrollment that was suggested in a Memorandum Of Understanding (MOU)

negotiated in June of 2007 between District Administration, AFT Local 1493, and the District Academic Senate.

Background

In a welcome-back speech on Opening Day of Fall 2006, SMCCCD Chancellor Ron Galatolo expressed his desire to expand concurrent enrollment opportunities between the colleges and local high schools; thus began the dialogue regarding the benefits and challenges of enrolling high school students in college level classes. An additional impetus for discussion was a 2005 San Mateo County Civil Grand Jury report that asked SMCCCD “to increase the academic opportunities available to high school students through vocational education and Middle College programs.” The Grand Jury further recommended that SMCCCD colleges “offer college level academic courses on a high school campus.” As a direct result of the Grand Jury recommendation, the SMCCCD Board of Trustees developed the following goal for 2007: The “District will encourage the Colleges to form task forces with their feeder high schools to address high school-college curriculum articulation and devise strategies for offering college classes on high school sites.” (San Mateo Community College District)

Later in 2006, the Chancellor and members of the administration in the San Mateo Union High School District introduced the possibility of converting Advanced Placement (AP) high school classes into college courses - specifically College of San Mateo (CSM) courses. In the spirit of shared governance, the CSM Academic Senate was approached and asked to explore the viability of this plan. What the “AP Plan” proposed was a new form of concurrent enrollment offerings in which the District would offer CSM courses at

the local high school, taught by qualified high school faculty, filled with high school students.

After extensive discussions among the District Academic Senate, AFT, and the District administration, an agreement was reached on how to proceed with exploring the viability of expanding concurrent enrollment specifically through allowing qualified high school teachers to teach college-approved college classes. This agreement was articulated in the MOU worked out in the summer of 2007 (Appendix A). Of primary importance is that the MOU puts exploration of the viability of the proposal in the hands of the District Senate Governing Council, and the decision to participate in the newly proposed form of concurrent enrollment in the hands of departmental faculty - the discipline experts.

The Path From High School to College

Concurrent enrollment has long been supported in the California Education Code; however, recent modifications to the Code have produced increased interest in the development of new programs. Meyers (2002) summarized the underpinnings of concurrent enrollment as authorized through the Education Code. “The formal work of the legislature was enumerated primarily in SB 292, signed into law in July, 1996, and in subsequent changes to the State Educational Code Sections 76000 - 76002 and 48800 - 48802. The Senate bill and the Code changed the way community colleges handle high school students in the following ways:

- Permitted community colleges to obtain apportionment for special part-time students,
- Permitted students to count coursework for both college and high school credit, and
- Permitted community colleges to waive enrollment fees for this special part-time population.

A key provision of the changes in the Code related to the determination that the student must have “the ability to benefit from the advanced standing work.” (pg. 207)

In response to a growing interest in concurrent enrollment, the Academic Senate for California Community Colleges (ASCCC) passed two relevant resolutions during the Fall 2007 Plenary. These well-researched resolutions called for local Senates to investigate opportunities for concurrent enrollment of high school students while emphasizing that faculty should retain primacy in curriculum/program development and evaluation. (Appendix B)

Research from across the nation shows that that while high school drop out rates are increasing, college going and college success rates are stable. (Hoffman, Vargas, Venezia, Miller, Eds.; 2007) Concurrent enrollment is being investigated as one means to improve outcomes for high school students, specifically, a means to lowering the high school drop-out rate and increasing college persistence and success rates. While interest is high, there is a paucity of consistent, longitudinal data on the topic. The research that is available identifies several program models that show a great deal of success. These models include Early College High School, funded through the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, and various Middle College High School programs that introduce college-level classes to high school students as early as ninth grade. While these programs have differences, preliminary results show that any program designed to increase student success would include intensive academic advising, college success courses, remedial or bridge courses, an intentional selection of college-level, transferable courses, and access to the full range of student support services available to regular college students. (Hoffman, et. al., 2007)

District Senate Actions on the MOU and Recommendations

Over the course of four months, the District Senate held three open forums at College of San Mateo and during their regularly scheduled meetings at the District Office. In addition, numerous discussions regarding the proposal occurred during CSM Senate Governing Council beginning early in the Spring 2007 semester. These discussions revealed that District faculty have many of the same questions about concurrent enrollment program design as national researchers do. Primarily, what kind of planning must be done prior to implementing a comprehensive concurrent enrollment program? What components are essential to increase graduation and college success rates? What can we learn from others who are farther down the path?

During the open forums some of the benefits that were articulated by participating faculty included:

- Collaboration with the high school teachers would provide the opportunity to develop a more seamless experience between HS and College.
- We could showcase the quality of District classes and, therefore, win the respect of teachers, administrators, and parents in the HSs.
- Students who are ready would have access to college transfer classes for free.
- We could generate FTES to assist in enrollment management.
- Increasing concurrent enrollment through our existing structures is a great idea.
- We could offer many more classes that the HS faculty don't have expertise in.
- HS students would become acquainted with college level work and it might ease their transition.

Some of the questions and challenges that were articulated by participating faculty include:

- Each CSM department must have control over curriculum development and course-level rigor during the pilot.
- Age of students is a factor ... students could be as young as 13; would they be prepared for college-level work?
- Would we offer transfer, not-transfer or both?
- Maturity of students is an issue; when students come to the college campus as concurrent enrollees, they are embedded in the college culture, not so at the HS.

- This plan may degrade the value of college classes if they are seen as simply an extension of HS.
- Some of the college faculty who have taught classes at the HS's have had difficulty with facilities and maintaining college-level rigor.
- HS teachers have a mandate to pass students ... college faculty need to be able to fail those who cannot perform adequately.
- How would HS faculty be chosen to participate in the project?
- The HS environment is too strong for HS teachers to be able to teach a class with a college culture.
- How would courses taught by HS faculty be evaluated initially and over time?
- District faculty are already overburdened with committee assignments and program requirements; how does this additional responsibility fit in?
- How does the CalPASS project fit into our planning?
- Pedagogically, it does not benefit the HS student to take them out of a HS class to take a college class; it may take away the opportunity for multiple exposures and depth of understanding.
- Would these courses substitute for HS courses in the HS graduation requirements as the concurrent enrollment ones do now?
- Could we go ahead and offer many more courses that the HS faculty can't currently offer?
- How do the HS faculty feel about this idea and the MOU?
- What are the results from the summer concurrent enrollment initiative? Did many of those students drop in the first week?
- There is tremendous pressure from parents in the HS's and HS teachers are vulnerable to that when college faculty should not be. What about student confidentiality rights?
- How can we better support the part-time faculty who are teaching there now?
- How will counseling, admissions, and other student services such as learning labs be made available to these students?
- Can students withdraw if they are failing? Where do they go if they drop the class?
- Students who take a course and get a C will not be able to re-take for a better grade, so it may affect their ability to get into the school of their choice.
- Offering classes in this way may affect our transfer agreements with our four-year partners negatively.
- Are there any other institutions that have implemented a model such as this, and what are the results from their program?

During and after these discussions, several departments at CSM expressed the unqualified opinion that they would not be interested in participating in further discussions regarding the implementation of the concurrent enrollment model outlined in the MOU. These departments included English, Chemistry, Math, Speech, and Foreign

Languages, and in the spirit of the MOU, this option was honored. Notably, however, these lengthy discussions provoked great enthusiasm from all faculty for the idea of working more closely with the high schools in related disciplines in order to develop a greater understanding of the relevant K-12 Content Standards, and how the high school experience could be more closely aligned with expectations for success at the college level. Discussions at Cañada and Skyline paralleled those held at CSM, though they lacked the depth and specificity due to the understanding that the proposal delineated implementation within the CSM service area with the San Mateo Union High School District.

Notably, while interest in creating a concurrent enrollment program based on the model described in the MOU was of interest to certain SMUHSD administrators in the Spring of 2007, follow-up conversations revealed that the CTA representative for the teachers in the District and the Director of Curriculum Services felt that this move was premature and they recommended that SMCCCD faculty and administrators begin conversations with teachers and administrators at Hillsdale High School, the only school in the District that currently expressed interest in expanding their students' concurrent enrollment opportunities.

As a result of these extensive discussions among faculty members, and with administrators in both the high school and college districts, it has emerged that implementing an expansion of concurrent enrollment by using high school teachers in their current positions presents more challenges than benefits. However, most SMCCCD faculty feel that a broader discussion about how to strengthen the relationship between the systems would be extremely valuable.

The District Academic Senate Governing Council makes the following recommendations:

1. That District faculty, staff, and administrators work together with their San Mateo County high school district peers in developing comprehensive plans that address the needs of high school students in order to make a more seamless transition between high school and college.
2. That these partnerships be predicated on faculty-to-faculty discussions that are supported by academic and student support administrators and staff. And that they take into consideration emerging research from the field at both the 9 – 12 and community college level on curriculum alignment and student achievement.
3. That concurrent enrollment of well-prepared high school students in college level classes be just one integral part of the plan that helps students bridge the gap between the high school and college experience, and that sufficient college preparation and success experiences be built into every plan.
4. That the 2007 MOU be allowed to expire, to allow more comprehensive conversations to flourish.

While making these recommendations, the District Academic Senate Governing Council affirms that SMCCCD faculty are committed to strengthening partnerships that expand educational opportunities for high school students and provide increasing possibilities for a successful transition between high school and college.

Resources

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San Mateo County Community College District. (2007). *Enhancing "High School-to-College" Success, Enhancing High School and College Partnerships in San Mateo County*. Retrieved 1/10/2008 from: <http://www.smccd.edu/accounts/smccd/departments/educationservices/hscpp/resources.shtml>

Appendices

Appendix A: Memorandum of Understanding

On June 27, 2007, AFT Local 1493, the SMCCC District Academic Senate Governing Council, and San Mateo County Community College District agreed to this Memorandum of Understanding (MOU).

1. The proposal to utilize qualified high school faculty to teach college courses at a high school will be a one (1) year pilot project and evaluated at the end of the pilot year in May, 2008, by the Academic Senate and AFT and District. AFT and the District will jointly review draft agreements between SMCCCD and high school districts participating in concurrent enrollment being offered at high schools.

2. The District recognizes that the Academic Senate has primacy over academic and professional matters (Board Policy 2.06). For the purposes of the one year pilot, discipline faculty at the high school and college will meet to determine whether a college course may be offered at the high school SMCCCD discipline faculty retain the curriculum, text and course evaluation rights.

3. AFT agrees that high school teachers who meet minimum qualifications and other professional standards as determined by the college's Academic Senate may teach approved college level courses in the high school. For every section taught by a high school teacher, at a minimum, an equal number of sections shall be taught by SMCCCD faculty. The District will use existing hiring procedures for these faculty. To the extent that there are insufficient SMCCCD faculty who volunteer to teach such courses or cannot be hired, this ratio will not be required.

4. SMCCCD shall assign high schools to SMCCCD colleges and shall allocate \$1,500 for each college course taught by a high school teacher to a fund under the control of the Academic Senate at the assigned college. This money shall be used for course

development, faculty collaboration, student support or any other activities related to concurrent enrollment.

5. The District will allocate \$20,000 to start the collaboration process between the Academic Senate and the high school faculty. This amount will be controlled by the Academic Senates. The use and sufficiency of resources allocated under sections 4 and 5 will be reviewed by the Academic Senate and Chancellor in January, 2008.

6. In signing this MOU AFT does not waive its position that it is legally entitled to represent all academic employees providing academic services for the District, including but not limited to all employees providing instructional or other academic services pursuant to a concurrent enrollment agreement. This excludes the high school teachers teaching concurrent enrollment classes as part of their regular load in their district.

Appendix B: Academic Senate for California Community Colleges Resolutions

4.01 F07 Expanding Opportunities for Concurrent Enrollment Catherine Cox, Mission College, Area B

Whereas, National research demonstrates that high school students who participate in concurrent/dual enrollment receive many benefits, including improved college persistence rates, higher first-year and cumulative grade point averages (see Chronicle of Higher Education, “High-School Students Are Helped by Taking College Courses, Study Finds”, October 17, 2007);

Whereas, High school students in career technical education programs may not clearly understand the potential benefits of going to college, and they are the very students most often targeted by concurrent enrollment programs;

Whereas, The students who benefit most from concurrent enrollment opportunities frequently come from underrepresented populations; and

Whereas, The recent research paper *Beyond the Open Door: Increasing Student Success in the California Community Colleges* cites numerous studies demonstrating the effect of encouraging “direct college-going after high school” on improved student success in college due to the positive “relationship between student age and likelihood of degree completion,” and recognizing that students in concurrent programs actually begin their college studies while in high school;

Resolved, That the Academic Senate for California Community Colleges encourage expanding opportunities for concurrent enrollment of high school students in California community colleges with the goal of stimulating college-going behavior and improving subsequent student success in college.

4.02 F07 Concurrent Enrollment for Secondary Students Jane Patton, Mission College, Executive Committee

Whereas, The topic of concurrent or dual enrollment for secondary students who simultaneously enroll in college courses has gained national and statewide attention, as evidenced by current legislation such as AB 1409 (as of July 18, 2007) and research conducted by the Community College Research Center at Columbia University (<http://ccrc.tc.columbia.edu>);

Whereas, California is focusing more than ever on such things as the need to link schools and colleges, especially for Career and Technical Education (CTE) or occupational students and in general to improve high school graduation rates, student preparation for college and student success in completing college programs;

Whereas, There are likely advantages and disadvantages to community colleges to modifying the current limitations on concurrent enrollment; and

Whereas, Discussions about concurrent enrollment for secondary students are underway across the state, which may or may not include the faculty voice;

Resolved, That the Academic Senate for California Community Colleges urge local senates to begin discussions at the local level on the potential expansion of concurrent enrollment for secondary students; and

Resolved, That the Academic Senate for California Community Colleges work with the System Office, the Department of Education, and other groups to ensure that all conversations around the expansion of concurrent enrollment for secondary students include the faculty voice.