



News Release

Contact: Jacob C. Farbman, (609) 392-3434 or (856) 802-0129

Date: July 5, 2005

For Immediate Release

New Jersey's High School Students Get a Head Start on College

Editor Please Note: Attached is a chart showing enrollments of high school students in college courses at all 19 community colleges in fall 2004.

TRENTON, N.J.—Keeping up with a growing national trend, this year over 5,000 New Jersey high schools students took college courses through their local community colleges while still in high school.

Nationally, approximately 813,000 high school students took college-level courses through post-secondary institutions during the 2002-2003 academic year, according to “Dual Enrollment of High School Students at Postsecondary Institutions: 2002-03,” released by the National Center for Educational Statistics in April 2005. Seventy-seven percent of these students took courses at public two-year institutions.

In New Jersey, 5,193 high school students enrolled in college-level courses at community colleges during the 2004-2005 academic year, according to a new statewide survey released today by the New Jersey Council of County Colleges.

“A little over two years ago, Commissioner William Librera of the Department of Education met with our community college presidents seeking to develop a program that offers more options for Garden State high school students,” said Council President Dr.

-more-

High School Students at Community Colleges / page two

Lawrence A. Nespoli. “We’re thrilled to see that in a short time, our community colleges have been able to develop a statewide dual enrollment program, which allows high school students to earn college credits before graduating high school.”

Nationally, 57 percent of all degree-granting institutions are enrolling high school students in their college courses, the National Center for Educational Statistics study shows. Ninety-eight percent of public two-year institutions had high school students taking courses for college credit during the 2002-2003 academic year, compared to 77 percent of public four-year institutions, 40 percent of private four-year institutions and 17 percent of private two-year institutions.

“Nationally and in New Jersey, community colleges are leading the way in providing opportunities for high school students to earn college credits,” Nespoli added.

The New Jersey DOE enthusiastically supports programs that address the varying academic and developmental needs of high school students, Commissioner Librera said.

“It is a key part of our strategy to provide multiple and diverse paths to success for our children,” he explained. “As they get older, many of them require more rigorous content in order to maintain their interest and enthusiasm for learning. In many cases, dual enrollment is just what they need in order to make their final high school years productive and challenging.”

New Jersey’s community colleges offer various types of dual enrollment programs for high school students.

-more-

High School Students at Community Colleges / page three

Fast start programs allow high school students to enroll in college-level courses for advanced and transfer credit. In some instances, these students take courses at the community college campus along with other college students.

Some counties have high tech high schools and academy programs, located on the community college campus. These high school students can make substantial progress toward completing their associate degrees prior to actually graduating from high school. For the most part, these students take their college courses as a group – that is, there are course sections just for them, with content comparable to other college courses.

Another program, which Librera was especially influential in creating, is the 12th Grade Option Program. This program allows seniors who have completed most of their graduation requirements to take college-level courses either at the high school or at the community college campus. The credits these students earn may be used toward high school and/or college requirements.

Last month, one month before receiving her high school diploma, Christine Lomiguen of Fanwood graduated from Union County College (UCC) with her associate in science degree. Through the unique program offered between the Union County Magnet High School and UCC, she was able to simultaneously pursue a college degree while earning her high school diploma.

The curriculum at the Magnet High School requires students to take a portion of their studies through UCC. In the spring of her freshman year, Lomiguen took a sociology course after school that was taught by a Magnet school teacher who also taught

High School Students at Community Colleges / page four

at UCC.

“I found the course exciting and at that point decided to make the push to also earn an associate degree,” she said.

Lomiguen will enter Rutgers University probably as a junior in September. She will major in biomedical engineering, which she hopes will open many doors for her in the field of science in the future.

In Camden County, 11th grader Alexander Blagriff of Erial took courses at Timber Creek High School through Camden County College's High School Plus Program.

This year, he took Elementary Spanish I, Biology I and United States History II, and he has already signed up to take four more courses his senior year courses – calculus, physics, government and literature.

Blagriff decided to take college courses while in high school to "get a step ahead for college. I felt that going into college having had college-level courses already would prepare me more for when I am on my own," he said.

“When I came home and told my parents that I wanted to enroll in college classes while still in high school, they encouraged me to do it,” Blagriff said. “My older sister, who went to the University of Maryland, did the same when she was in high school.”

Atisha Patel of Voorhees, a senior at Eastern Regional High School, took college classes each year of her high school career, many of them at Camden County College in Blackwood.

After her freshman year, she took a three-week Introduction to Engineering

-more-

High School Students at Community Colleges / page five

summer seminar at Drexel University. After her sophomore year, she took Basic Psychology during a summer session at Camden County College. After her junior year, she took History of Modern Medicine and Introduction to Molecules during a summer session at Johns Hopkins University.

During this school year, Patel has been taking English Composition I at Camden County College. She plans to take English Composition II this summer at Camden County College as well.

In the fall, Patel will attend Drexel University and major in biomedical engineering. She plans to become a dermatologist.

“I’ve taken college courses for a variety of reasons,” Patel said. “I took the Camden County psychology course to explore the subject, while the English courses will allow me to place out of the humanities requirement at Drexel and free my schedule so that I can have room for a minor.”

She added that taking the college courses that she has thus far also will allow her to take a lighter course load during her first semesters as a full-time college student.

In Middlesex County, Marni Zapakin, a senior at East Brunswick High School, took Calculus I and English Composition I and II at her high school, earning nine college credits in the process. Calculus I was a year-long class, while the two English composition courses were integrated into a year-long class.

“I was really interested in becoming a better writer, that’s why I wanted to take the college-level English courses,” she said. “I took high school level pre-calculus my

High School Students at Community Colleges / page six

junior year, and felt that taking college-level calculus was the next logical step.”

Zapakin will attend the Newhouse School of Public Communications at Syracuse University this fall and major in public relations. She plans to pursue a career in communications.

“By taking English composition I and II my senior year in high school, I’ve already fulfilled a writing-intensive course I’m required to take as a college freshman,” she said. “So my schedule is open to take other courses at Syracuse.”

Patrick Pangan, a senior at Dunellen High School in Dunellen, took five college-level courses through Middlesex County College. He took two biology courses, worth four credits each, at his high school and three calculus courses, worth three credits each, at Middlesex County College.

Pangan plans to attend Brown University, major in mathematics and pursue a career in business and financial management.

“Taking calculus courses at Middlesex County College gave me a good sense of the college work load,” he said. “I got a dry run of what it is going to be like having a college schedule.”

He said that he would encourage high school students to take college courses while in high school, because “it definitely prepares you for college. When the time comes to go to college, you won’t be overwhelmed.”

-more-

High School Students at Community Colleges / page seven

The New Jersey Council of County Colleges is the state association representing New Jersey's 19 community colleges. As an independent, trustee-headed organization that joins the leadership of trustees and presidents, the Council is the voice of the community college sector before the state legislature and other branches of government.

High School Students Enrolled at NJ Community Colleges

College	Number of high school students enrolled in community college courses in Fall 2004
Atlantic Cape	56
Bergen	34
Brookdale	266
Burlington	524
Camden	1,234
Cumberland	22
Essex	300
Gloucester	81
Hudson	34
Mercer	200
Middlesex	880
Morris	129
Ocean	520
Passaic	86
Raritan Valley	217
Salem	55
Sussex	236
Union	263
Warren	56
Total	5,193