

SOUTH DAKOTA BOARD OF REGENTS

Committee on Academic and Student Affairs

AGENDA ITEM: I - C

DATE: March 31-April 1, 2010

SUBJECT: Increasing Dual Credit/Postsecondary Enrollment Options in South Dakota

During the past few months there have been a series of discussions about dual credit/post secondary enrollment offerings. To move this forward, the Academic Affairs Council (AAC) was asked to identify and to address the academic policy and administrative issues that were at the center of many of these conversations. The system is changing some practices that will permit institutions to partner with regional high schools to offer more opportunities for prepared high school students to earn college credit while in high school. To support this, guidelines are being adopted that will make sure appropriate standards are established and maintained.

Within the system, all universities have enrolled high school students. Historically, these enrollments are reported in the "Fact Book". With the exception of Northern State, these enrollments are insignificant, ranging from single digits to 50 students/term. Northern State University's Rising Scholars program does enroll more than 100 students/term. It was designed to promote and to support high school based dual credit courses taught by high school teachers. The Northern State program was granted the authority to use the third-party (reduced) tuition rate since the teachers are being paid by the school district. This opportunity is being opened to other universities with BHSU, DSU and NSU serving as the primary sponsors of these efforts. Each will be expected to work with regional schools to develop and promote dual credit offerings.

AAC has developed a set of guidelines both for admissions to and administration of these dual credit offerings. The admissions guidelines were developed to make sure that students who enroll are prepared to do college level work. While it would be desirable to have students meet admissions requirements to include ACT scores that demonstrate they are college ready, the proposal will allow top students to enroll. In addition, a set of guidelines reflecting established best practices have been developed to make sure that dual credit courses offered by the universities meet expected standards. These are spelled out in the accompanying materials.

These guidelines have been reviewed and agreed to by the Council of Presidents.

(continued)

RECOMMENDED ACTION

Information Only.

Admissions to Dual Credit Offerings

There are no Regental policies that speak specifically to the admission of high school students to a regental institution with the exception of the placement requirements for enrollment in composition or mathematics course. Rather than revising the admissions policy to accommodate dual credit offerings, AAC agreed to establish guidelines which will ensure those high school students who enroll can benefit from the instruction provided. To seed the discussion, sets of guidelines were gathered from neighboring states. Following discussion, the following proposal was adopted.

High school students wishing to enroll in university courses including dual credit courses must:

- meet ACT college-ready benchmarks in all subtests; or
- meet undergraduate admissions requirements (ACT or coursework); or
- if a high school senior, rank in the upper one-half of their class or score at or above the 50th percentile on a nationally standardized, norm-referenced test, such as the ACT or SAT; or
- if a high school junior, rank in the upper one-third of their class or score at or above the 70th percentile on a nationally standardized, norm-referenced test, such as the ACT or SAT.

The first two options are preferred and these should be promoted to encourage all students to meet these high standards. However, recognizing that fewer than 30% of high school ACT testers meet the college ready benchmarks in all areas, this expectation may be too limiting. Therefore, alternatives commonly used by colleges and universities based on class rank and standardized testing outcomes are also included.

In addition, students enrolling in math or in composition must meet placement requirements established in Policy.

These guidelines will apply to all offerings including dual credit courses offered in the high school.

Guidelines that govern the approval of dual credit courses offered in the high school and taught by high school teachers

A common complaint about dual credit courses is that too often they are simply high school courses that fail to meet college standards even though college credit is given. AAC recognized this and decided to establish a set of guidelines to ensure that all dual credit coursework

developed and offered is credit worthy. In sum, these guidelines make sure that courses are taught by qualified faculty to students prepared to do college-level work, that the courses cover the materials at the expected college-level, and that the students are held to college-level standards.

As a starting point, the Council referred to the established policy and supporting guidelines that have been used to govern the acceptance of dual credit course work taught in a high school by a high school teacher. This set was modified a bit and the following guidelines were established.

1. The high school-based dual enrollment course is taught by a high school teacher who has been approved by the university and who meets the standards used by the institution to hire adjuncts in the discipline. While a Master's degree in the subject/discipline teaching is preferred, faculty typically must have a Master's degree with 15 graduate hours in the subject discipline/taught.
2. A faculty member in the discipline of the course from the credit granting university is assigned to and actively engaged as a mentor for the high school teacher.
3. The faculty of the institution granting credit developed the course syllabus. College courses require a minimum of 15 class hours (one hour equals 50 minutes) of class time for each semester credit hour. Additional class hours for science laboratories will be specified.
4. The preferred validation of student learning in the high school-based dual enrollment course for the Regental system is through the use of the national AP or CLEP exam instruments. An acceptable alternative is a student evaluation and assessment system developed jointly by the discipline faculty of the university and the high school teacher. Under this arrangement high school students are expected to demonstrate the same mastery of the college course as is required of college students who take the course on campus.
5. High school students must meet the criteria listed below in order to enroll.
 - a. Students must be juniors or seniors who:
 - i. meet undergraduate admissions requirements (ACT or coursework); or
 - ii. if a high school senior, rank in the upper one-half of their class or score at or above the 50th percentile on a nationally standardized, norm-referenced test, such as the ACT or SAT; or
 - iii. if a high school junior, rank in the upper one-third of their class or score at or above the 70th percentile on a nationally standardized, norm-referenced test, such as the ACT or SAT; and

- iv. students enrolling in math or English coursework will be expected to meet existing placement standards
 - b. Students must be admitted to the institution
- 6. All students in a dual enrollment course should be enrolled for college credit. However, since meeting this standard is a problem for the state's smaller school districts, at a minimum more than 50% of the students in a high school-based dual enrollment course must be enrolled for college credit.

The first statement establishes that any dual credit course offered must be taught by an individual qualified to teach the course. To do this, the guidelines specify that the teacher must meet the standards used by the campus when adjuncts are hired. In addition, it establishes that the university must formally approve the individual to teach the course. This guideline establishes that all dual credit courses will be taught by a faculty member qualified by education and by experience.

The second guideline requires that a faculty member on campus be assigned to serve as a mentor for the high school teacher. There are significant differences between high school-level and college-level courses and requiring the establishment of a faculty-faculty relationship supports the delivery of a college-level course that meets the standards of the university. For example, this mentoring will support the use of syllabi, texts, and assessment strategies common to those used on campus. Implementation of this guideline will provide additional assurances that these are college courses.

The third guideline requires the high school teacher to adopt the college syllabus for all courses taught. This simply assures that rather than teaching a high school course for which college credit is granted, the course taught is the common college course.

The fourth guideline requires high school students to demonstrate college-level mastery of the materials covered. As stated, AP and CLEP are nationally normed so if either of these are used, it is clear that successful students have mastered the materials. However, this is not always practical. In these cases, this guideline requires that the high school teacher and the college mentor assume shared responsibility for developing and for grading tests and other course assignments. In sum, implementation of this guideline provides assurance that students have met college-level expectations.

The fifth guideline establishes the admissions criteria discussed earlier. This guideline provides assurance that all students enrolled are prepared to do college level work.

The sixth guideline establishes the expectation that all students in the class should be expecting to participate in a college-level class. In large districts, it is possible to limit enrollment in dual credit courses to students registered for both high school and college credit. However, in smaller districts common in more rural parts of the country, this is more difficult so dual credit options can be implemented if more than 50% of the students are enrolled in the college course. In fact, the Minnesota State College System has established a policy requiring that all students be enrolled for college credit but it allows waivers if more than 50% of the students are receiving college credit. Similar policies are in place in Iowa and Nebraska. To align practice in South Dakota with offerings elsewhere, this guideline was established.

AAC agrees and COPS concurs that offerings sponsored by the institutions, primarily BHSU, DSU and NSU, will be expected to meet these standards.