

May, 2010

*Review of Dual Admissions Agreements
and Programs in the Virginia
Higher Education System*



State Council of Higher Education for Virginia

Advancing Virginia through Higher Education

Survey on Implementation of Dual Admissions Agreements and Programs for Students to be Simultaneously Accepted at Public Two- and Four-year Institutions

The State Council of Higher Education for Virginia (SCHEV) is gathering information about the extent to which dual admissions agreements and programs between two- and four-year institutions have been developed in the Commonwealth. This is in response to the State Transfer Module legislation passed in 2004 requiring that two- and four-year institutions develop dual admissions agreements and programs. According to the legislation: *A dual admissions agreement establishes dual admissions programs for qualified students to be simultaneously accepted by a two-year and four-year institution of higher education and, upon successful completion of an associate degree program, to be automatically enrolled in the four-year institution. Dual admissions agreements set forth the (1) obligations of the students accepted in such programs, including grade point average, acceptable associate degree majors, and completion timetables; and (2) the student's access to the privileges of enrollment in both institutions during the time enrolled in either institution. Dual admissions agreements are subject to the admissions requirements of the four-year institutions.*

A survey designed to ascertain the extent to which dual admissions agreements and programs have been developed was distributed to public four-year institutions in March 2010. The survey was developed by SCHEV staff with input from the Instructional Programs Advisory Committee (IPAC).

Survey Results

The survey was distributed to the 15 Virginia public four-year institutions with 100% of institutions responding. Responses to the survey questions yielded information in the following areas:

- Number of dual admissions agreements that exist in the Virginia higher education system;
- Descriptions of existing agreements, including privileges extended to student participants, and requirements and obligations for students to participate in and remain in good standing in the program;
- Challenges associated with establishing and maintaining dual admissions programs; and

- Aspects of the agreements that have resulted in successes for student participants.

Synopsis of Survey Results

- Six of 15 respondents indicated that dual admissions agreements or programs with two-year institutions have been developed. Respondents for the nine institutions without agreements or programs indicated that attempts had not been made in the past to establish such agreements.

For those six institutions with dual admissions agreements and programs:

- Five indicated that privileges, such as access to the library or athletic events, are extended to two-year college students participating in a dual admissions agreement.
- Three indicated that dual admissions students are charged fees by the four-year institution while they are enrolled in the two-year college.
- All institutions indicated that two-year students must meet specific requirements to participate in the program.
- Five have established special requirements or progression standards students must meet to remain in good standing in a dual admissions program.
- Four reported that challenges are associated with establishing such agreements.
- Three reported that challenges are associated with managing and maintaining such agreements.
- Four articulated student successes resulting from various aspects of the agreement or program.

Descriptions of Established Dual Admissions Agreements and Programs

University of Virginia-Wise (UVAW) and Mt. Empire Community College (MECC)

Title: Appalachian Inter-Mountain Scholars Program Partnership (AIMS Higher Program)

Description: Appalachian Inter-Mountain Scholars Program (AIMS) is a partnership between UVA-Wise and Mountain Empire Community College. Promising middle school students from families of modest means who live within a four-county area of the Coalfield Region of Southwest Virginia are given the opportunity to sign a contract with MECC and UVAW which will guarantee their ability to participate in college. Dual admission to MECC and UVAW is guaranteed to students upon graduation from high school who satisfy specified requirements.

Requirements: To matriculate to MECC, high school students must follow a prescribed pre-college curriculum, maintain a 2.5 grade point average (GPA), earn no grade below a "C", have no judicial or honor infractions, and perform 20 hours of community service annually. To transfer to UVAW, students must have a minimum 2.5 GPA in an appropriate curriculum.

Privileges: Students receive free tuition at MECC and at UVAW. While enrolled at MECC, UVAW offers students library privileges, free admission to athletic events, academic advising, invitations to department events, and an ID card.

Fees: MECC students pay UVAW fees for access to campus events and facilities.

Number of Participants: Sixteen students have transferred to UVAW from MECC; 20+ students are preparing to transfer.

Norfolk State University (NSU) and Virginia Community College System (VCCS) Institutions

Title: Partnership for Academic and Student Success Program (PASSport)

Description: The program is designed to assist students who want to attend NSU to become better academically prepared for college. Students who do not initially meet the NSU admissions requirements may enroll at a community college and are guaranteed admission upon successful completion of all pre-requisites.

Requirements: Selection is based on performance in high school and SAT/ACT scores. Specific courses are identified for the student participants to complete. Students attend an orientation session, sign an agreement and meet monthly with the NSU Community College Liaison and Community College PASSport Counselor. Student progression is monitored by the NSU Community College Liaison and the PASSport Community College Counselor.

Privileges: Students are issued identification cards that afford them the opportunity to participate in cultural, athletic, and social activities at NSU. An email account is assigned to students to keep them informed of NSU news and events.

Fees: Fees for participation in the program are not charged by NSU or the VCCS colleges.

Number of Participants: 30

The College of William and Mary (CWM) and Six Two-year Colleges: J. Sargeant Reynolds Community College (JSRCC), Northern Virginia Community College (NVCC), Rappahannock Community College (RCC), Thomas Nelson Community College (TNCC), Tidewater Community College (TCC), Richard Bland College (RBC)

Title: Guaranteed Admission Agreement and Co-Enrollment Agreement

Description: Two-year college students may enroll in classes at CWM and are guaranteed admission after achieving a specified minimum GPA.

Requirements: Students sign a “Letter of Intent to Matriculate at The College of William and Mary” upon completion of a minimum of 15 credits at the two-year college. The 15 credit hours must be general education courses applicable toward the Associate of Arts or Associate of Science degree at their institution. A minimum curricular GPA is required for these credits.

Privileges: Participants in the program receive a CWM ID card which provides access to the library, the Writing Resources Center, the Counseling Center (for referrals or crisis), the Career Counseling Center, and participation in the laptop loan program.

Fees: Fees for participation in the program are not charged by CWM or the two-year colleges.

Number of Participants: 23

Old Dominion University (ODU) and Thomas Nelson Community College (TNCC)

Title: Dual Admission for students in the Math and Science with Teacher Licensure Programs

Description: The agreement outlines a process for creating an ODU transcript each semester that identifies the accepted transfer courses from TNCC.

Requirements: Students who have earned a 2.8 high school GPA can be dually admitted to TNCC and ODU. Students must maintain a 2.8 GPA at TNCC and complete the appropriate associate's degree.

Privileges: Participants receive an ID card that provides access to the library, Career Management Center, and recreational sports facilities.

Fees: ODU charges a \$20.00 fee for the privileges.

Number of Participants: 0

Christopher Newport University (CNU) and VCCS Institutions

Title: Not applicable. This is not a formal agreement and is best described as a practice.

Description: The practice focuses on students who do not meet the CNU freshman admission standards. Students who attend any of the VCCS colleges for fall semester, enroll in specified courses, and earn a minimum GPA will be admitted to CNU the following spring or fall semester.

Requirements: Participants must pursue specific courses at the community college and earn a minimum number of credits with a specified minimum GPA.

Privileges: None reported

Fees: Fees for participation in the program are not charged by CNU or the two-year colleges.

Number of Participants: 10-20 annually

Virginia Commonwealth University (VCU) and J. Sargeant Reynolds Community College (JSRCC)

Title: Administration of Justice/Criminal Justice Program

Description: The program is an agreement with VCU and JSRCC in partnership with Richmond City. It is designed for the cadet students within the Richmond Police Department.

Requirements: Participants must earn a “C” or better in required courses and join a cohort taking the same courses. To remain in good standing, students must meet state and federal financial aid requirements as well as those outlined in the grant from the Richmond City Police Department.

Privileges: Participants are issued an ID card with access to residence halls, the dining plan, recreation center, and athletic activities.

Fees: Participants pay ODU fees for technology and activities equivalent to those paid by native university students.

Number of Participants: No students currently participating

Note: A dual admissions agreement or program between Virginia Commonwealth University and VCCS institutions is pending. The details are currently in discussion. The Great Aspirations Scholarship Program, Inc. (GRASP) may offset student costs not covered by VCU or VCCS institutions.

Challenges— Developing and Maintaining Dual Admissions Agreements and Programs

Institutions with dual admissions agreements or programs reported these challenges:

- Marketing and promoting awareness of the programs is complex. Communicating with the appropriate audiences can be resource intensive. Potential student participants confuse these agreements with guaranteed admission agreements. To effectively navigate in these programs, student participants need to learn policies and procedures for two institutions.
- It is difficult to determine financial aid packages and fees that are comprehensive and fair for students, but strike a balance for cost-sharing among institutions.
- Infrastructure and logistics for implementing the programs are extensive. Tracking cohorts and participants, processing financial aid and scholarships, and advising and registration pose particular problems for institutional professionals implementing the programs.

Student Successes

- Students participating in dual admissions programs adapt to the university setting as well as native students.
- Students who may not otherwise have attended college earn baccalaureate degrees.
- Dual admissions programs provide opportunities for collaboration among institutions.

Comments

- Nearly every institution with dual admissions agreements commented that the guaranteed admissions agreements serve student needs better by providing a more effective pathway to the baccalaureate degree. Over time, institutions have developed internal processes that support guaranteed admissions agreements and prefer not to add processes that will serve to add complexity.
- Input from institutional professionals implementing dual admissions agreements and from members of the State Committee on Transfer indicate that the confusion associated with these agreements does not serve to support students and institutions in establishing effective pathways to the baccalaureate degree.
- Care should be taken when examining the role of dual admissions agreements in the context of other college access programs and initiatives in Virginia. The literature regarding college access has established that confusing and

contradictory information about college is a barrier for college attendance. If additional dual admissions agreements are to be developed, they need to be implemented in such a manner that they are not confused with other state initiatives such as the guaranteed admissions agreements.