

Glendale Community College

Early College Option Leads to Business Fast Track Partnership

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Executive Summary

This program is a clear example of teamwork and smart partnerships to bridge high school to community college to university education. Recent success in early college summer options for high school students has progressed to a unique *fast track* Bachelor of Business Management Degree program with Northern Arizona University at Glendale Community College North.

Description

BACKGROUND - The Business and Information Technology Department at Glendale Community College has offered an Early College summer option for high school student cohorts since 2009 at GCC North. High school students have been offered select courses, approved by their high school administration, to meet high school course requirements while getting a jump start on their college education. This model began with one high school, Northwest Christian High School, and has expanded to include Peoria Unified School District high school students. The course offerings have also expanded to include additional CIS and BPC courses, as well as Math and English course offerings for these students. The course sections are setup to be blocked for enrollment for each high school or district until May 1st each year. If sections do not fill with students from the intended high school or district, they are opened for any GCC student to join.

ENROLLMENT PROCESS - Since high school students are enrolled with Special Admission requirements, formal information sessions are held during the month of April to assist students and their parents with the special admissions and enrollment process. Students are provided with a campus tour and are able to meet their instructors on the night of the information sessions at GCCN. The collaboration between Business and Information Technology faculty and Enrollment Services at GCCN has been an example of excellence in team work in providing customer service support to these new Glendale Community College students and their families.

BUILDING UPON SUCCESS - As a way to build upon this success and offer a clear bridge from high school to a post-secondary degree, the Business and Information Technology Department recently partnered with Northern Arizona University to offer a Fast Track Bachelor's Degree in Business Management option at GCCN. This program model will combine the summer Early College and Dual Enrollment coursework with an 8-week block course model that will allow a cohort of students to complete a Bachelor's Degree with NAU within 3 years after their high school graduation at GCCN. This program also allows an excellent opportunity for new scheduling ideas and improved resource utilization at GCCN.

The pilot program will consist of 24 participants who are current high school seniors. Students interested are being required to complete an application process, developed by GCC and NAU. The application includes letters of reference from high school teachers, a GPA requirement of 3.0, and an interview component for final candidates. Students will be admitted to both GCC and NAU when selected as a cohort participant. Plans are currently being developed to employ existing Student Success initiatives for this cohort as well. Those plans include such workshops and courses as Stress Management, Team Building, and Time Management. Local business guests and field trips are also being planned for this cohort to ensure a unique experience.

LONG TERM PLANS – Beginning fall 2013, high school students and their parents will be presented with a long term plan to transition from high school to the NAU Business Degree Fast Track program. Students will be provided with course checklists to complete during high school, through dual enrollment or summer Early College offerings. By placing course requirements to apply for acceptance into the cohort each year, the candidate pool will strengthen and become more competitive. This seamless transition from high school to community college to a university will prove to be a model for other departments on our campus and within our district to duplicate.

Criteria for Nomination

Excellence

Education

Responsibility

Quality

This program provides quality in the delivery of the courses by offering high school students a campus experience, with college faculty for their coursework. The quality in the responsibility to our community high school partnerships is also evident in this program and exudes excellence in innovative approaches to our educational model in Arizona. This model provides a transition from high school to community college to university that improves quality through small cohorts of students each year.

As students begin the Business Fast Track Degree, having completed summer Early College courses, they will be prepared academically and accustomed to fast paced coursework.

Improving the quality of resource utilization at GCCN is demonstrated in this program model.

Efficiency

Working with each individual high school district provides an efficient way to organize sections of courses that are approved by a district for their students. For example, BPC110 has been offered to students at Northwest Christian High School to meet their computer course requirement. Peoria Unified School District will only accept CIS105 as a student's high school computer course.

Cost Effectiveness

Institution: Having repeat customers in any business model is always a plus. As high school students attend summer courses and begin to work towards a degree, they are more likely to return each summer until they graduate from high school, then as full-time students to complete their four-year degree.

Adding a departmental and campus committee for faculty to be involved with the management and implementation of the fast track degree model ensures a cost effective approach for our campus.

Students: Encouraging educationally qualified students at a younger age in high school to take college courses is cost effective for them in the long-term planning of their college education. The ability to ease high school students and parents into this transition, from high school to college, helps to educate them on the benefits of attending community college before a university.

With some of the courses offered during the summer also offered as dual enrollment sections at participating high school, students are able to check out books from their high schools to keep their costs down.

Replication

As mentioned earlier, the Business and Information Technology Department has successfully delivered Early College courses during the summer for the past four years. With the upcoming summer 2013 semester expanding those course offerings to include Math and English courses, the replication is seamless to adapt in other departments and campuses.

Student and Parent Information Sessions are a cross-department effort. The Special Admissions process is completed once for students taking summer courses in more than one discipline.

The Early College summer cohort course offerings model is being considered for duplication at Communiversity for summer 2014 and can be easily replicated at other Maricopa Community Colleges.

By schedule design, the GCCN/NAU Business Fast Track Degree will be seamless for other programs to duplicate. Offering summer sections of required general education coursework provides the model for program specific coursework to continue during fall and spring. Scheduling all program specific courses during the fall and spring semesters, allows almost all departments to provide fast track 8-week

block sections to fast track a degree program.

Creativity

The creativity in the approach to bridge the education between high school, community college, and university coursework is unique and certainly creative. Beginning the course offerings as early as the end of a student's 8th grade year also provides creativity in the education approach.

The direct partnership with high school districts to identify courses that will meet a college degree requirement and a high school course requirement provides the unique opportunity for high school cohorts each summer. This in itself lends creativity to the transition from high school to college by providing learning environments, on a college campus, with peers and regular college-aged students.

The creativity in the new 8-week fast track schedule for the NAU Business Degree provides an approach to a 4-year degree to begin early in a high student's curriculum and easily apply to various degree opportunities.

Providing an excellent opportunity for new scheduling ideas and improved resource utilization at GCCN also adds to the creativity of this program model.

Timeliness

The Early College summer cohort courses have been offered at GCCN for the past 4 years. With a 98% success rate in those high school students who enroll in the courses each summer, expanding to additional high school districts and offering more to these students as they graduate from high school is crucial to our ability to retain these highly motivated students.

In an economic time when a college education often seems financially unattainable for many, this innovative approach to a 4-year degree will not only prove to strengthen the community college education, it will provide a means for highly motivated and educationally qualified students to achieve a 4-year college degree while reducing costs of that degree in a location close to home.

The timeliness of a program that maximizes classroom space is also important to mention. GCCN has almost reached capacity during peak schedule hours. The Business Fast Track Degree portion of this program will provide a unique and timely afternoon schedule for this cohort.

Learning

Our results are being shared with Communiversy to be considered for students in Dysart Unified School District high schools.

Collaboration

Departmental Collaboration – Faculty from Business, Math and English have worked together to create a summer schedule to allow students to complete more than one Early College course. A Monday/Wednesday late start summer schedule that includes BPC110, CIS120DF, CIS105, MAT212 and ENG101 has been created to provide a schedule that allows high school students to have a break between their high school calendar and the beginning of GCC's summer semester.

High School Partnership Collaboration – Working with each participating high school or district to identify the courses to be offered and approved as a high school course requirement improves the high school relationship with GCC. Working together for the benefit of students to provide unique educational opportunities that lead to university degree programs is a clear example of innovation and collaboration in this model.

University Transfer Collaboration – Clearly, this program development has involved a great amount of collaboration with Northern Arizona University to outline, explain, and begin implementation. The NAU and GCC members involved are working together to make the information sessions for potential participants a successful united front from day one. This includes dual admissions for students upon acceptance to the program and a commitment from NAU to provide a \$2,000 scholarship for students who maintain a 3.0 GPA through the community college portion of the degree.

Summary

Some of the greatest initiatives begin with a few people sitting around a table talking about a good idea. This innovative approach to education is no different. The only difference here is that we have set an example and provided a model of change in the way we educate students from high school to a four year degree. We have set the bar for those who aim to innovate to educate. When a strong partnership involves high school, community college and university faculty and administration who are motivated to make a change and a difference, innovation happens and students win. The teamwork and collaboration with our partners in education in this program is a model of excellence and responsibility in many ways. We have combined a few great ideas for students, from conversations around a table, and moved them forward!