

Stephens approves 'dual credit' pilot program

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Staff Writer

For many years, colleges and high schools have been collaborating in Missouri to offer high school students courses that can transfer as college credit through a program known as "dual credit." This year, Stephens faculty and administration have approved a pilot "dual credit" program for the school year.

"A student simultaneously receives high school credit and credit that they can transfer to a college (for the same course) when they decide to go to college," Mary Hassinger, vice president of Academic Affairs, said.

The program is similar to Advanced Placement courses offered in the high school; there are certain requirements to be able to take the class.

"A minimum GPA, certain class standing, recommendation by the teacher of the course and an administrative official of the high school," Hassinger said. "Students also must pay a certain amount per credit, and one advantage for the high school student is it's not very expensive," Hassinger said.

Students can take a number of dual credit classes and transfer those credits to the college they want to attend.

"In many cases, by combining dual credit, AP credits, and earning additional credit through summer college courses or dual enrollment in college courses taught by college faculty, students they are able to start off as a second semester freshman or first

semester sophomore," Hassinger said.

Certain qualifications are required for the high school student as well as the faculty member teaching the course.

"A faculty member in the high school to qualify to be able to teach that class, must have a masters degree and special preparation or training for teaching college classes," Hassinger said.

The pilot "Dual Credit" program is approved by the administration and faculty and is to start and be piloted for this school year only, Hassinger said. Currently, two Missouri area high schools can be awarded Stephens "dual credit."

"We are working with the Columbia Area Career Center and the Blue Valley CAPS program, which is in Overland Park (Kansas City). These programs both have a very similar curriculum to what we are teaching in our department," Kerri Yost, department chair of the film and media department, said. Yost is the faculty member who traveled to potential "dual credit" high schools to ensure their program fit with Stephens' requirements.

"I've been working with the teachers in the high schools and looking at their curriculum and syllabi to assess the work they are doing and see if it's compatible to what we are doing in our department," Yost said. "The schools we are working with are unique and very cutting edge. I'm also overseeing the program throughout the year, visiting the classes and assessing the work

they are doing to better get to know the programs and agreed to mentoring some of the young women."

For the pilot program, Stephens faculty and administration have agreed on one course of one major to be offered.

"The classes are filmmaking classes," Hassinger said. "This is an area in the Stephens program that is well-respected and that is a good match."

While students can take these "dual credit" classes and get college credit, that does not mean students are automatically admitted into Stephens or any other college in the country. Male students are also allowed to take the "dual credit" courses and receive credit from Stephens.

"The dual credit program is not an admission to Stephens College," Hassinger said. "A student will still have to apply to Stephens and be admitted in order to become a full-time student here."

"Stephens is a college accredited by the Higher Learning Commission," Hassinger said. "And if a male student in high school takes a dual credit that awards credit from Stephens, they have the option to transfer that credit to the college of their choice."

Students can receive three credits for college credit when they take a "dual credit" course.

"Being enrolled for an entire year in the high school course is normally equivalent to a one semester, three credit college course," Hassinger said.

In addition to the pilot program, a new office has opened to handle the logistics of the "dual credit" program. The office will jump start integrating the program into the system.

"Stephens has a new office of Innovations and New Initiatives and any new initiative involving a partnership outside of Stephens, that office is in charge of the development work and getting the pieces in place for students to receive credit. The Academic Vice President's office assures that for the faculty involved are working collaboratively with the schools that are partnering to improve curriculum and to do quality assurance," Hassinger said.

Stephens administration is not only looking to the pilot program to bring in future Stephens students but also create awareness and be the beginning to other partnerships in programs.

"This program will help create cooperative and bridge-building with area high schools, but also will help us recruit additional high-quality students," Hassinger said.

"The dual credit project is just one of what I hope will be a new variety of partnerships and programs that we will bring to Stephens," President Dianne Lynch said. "Those projects and programs will start with conversations with the faculty and will develop based on the faculty's interest and the degree in which those programs fit with the Stephens mission." ■

STEPHENS BRIEFLY The latest news in and around the community

DANIELLE JOHNSON
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FORUMS TO ADDRESS STUDENT CONCERNS AND OPINIONS

The Student Government Association and President Dianne Lynch will hold a student forum to give students an opportunity to comment on the Stephens community. The forums happen once a semester and will give Lynch an opportunity to address any concerns that students might have. These general topics include tuition cost, heating, mold, parking, security, off-campus living, leadership points, meal plans and the Java Café. Hannah Swopes, student advocate for SGA, encourages students to come to the forum to get their opinions heard.

TURNOUT FOR FAMILY WEEKEND EXCEEDS EXPECTATIONS

During the weekend of Sept. 24 through Sept. 25, many events and activities took place for students and their families to enjoy. Family Weekend is a Stephens tradition that consists of

two days during which students and their families spend quality time together. Some of the events this year included tie-dying T-shirts, "Are you Smarter than a Stephens Women" trivia competition and a president's breakfast. Yvonne Chamberlain, director of Leadership and Diversity, said that family weekend was a success.

"We expected 20 families to attend the president's breakfast, and there ended up being around 45 families, so there was a great turnout," she said.

PLANS FOR CAMPUS RAIN GARDEN UNDERWAY

The environmental science class in the biology department will take part in a rain garden, which is a depression in the land filled with attractive plants that is made to capture water. It controls streams and catches water before it goes into storm drains.

"Rain water carries pollutants and other harmful materials, by the rain garden catching it, the water will be absorbed therefore purifying the water before reaching the drains or streams," Jeffrey Phillips, natural sciences instructor, said.

While official plans are still being finalized, the rain garden will be built on Walnut Street where the bungalows used to be. The main construction will be done by facilities, but all students, faculty and staff are encouraged to help in the design process, as well as planting flowers and spreading mulch.

STAMPER PARKING LOT TO BE STUDENT-EXCLUSIVE

Many students will be happy to hear that more parking spaces will soon be available. The Stamper parking lot, which was once student and visitor parking, will soon be just for students. Tony Coleman, director of Campus Security, said that security gives out an average of 300 to 350 parking permits a year, which also includes renewals and lost permits. Therefore, this decision was made to benefit the students as much as possible. When Stamper parking lot spaces are no longer available to visitors, they will then park in the Silverthorne Arena parking lot. There is not a set time on when these parking changes will occur, but an e-mail will be sent to all students when these changes are finalized. ■



CARA STUBENRAUCH/Stephens Life
Sign behind Stamper Commons designates the student-only portion of the lot.