

ED C. APODACA

Ed C. Apodaca is the Vice President for Student Services and Enrollment Management at the University of Houston-Downtown. He has been involved in higher education for over forty years in the areas of student services and enrollment management. His focus has always been on helping students and their communities achieve their educational goals. Mr. Apodaca served at the University of Houston, the University of California (UC Santa Barbara, UC Riverside and Office of the President), the University of Massachusetts, Amherst, and San Francisco State University.

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Senate Higher Education and Senate Education Committee Presentation
Prepared by Ed C. Apodaca
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Good morning members of the Senate Higher Education and Senate Education Committee. My name is Ed Apodaca and I am the Vice President for Student Services and Enrollment Management at the University of Houston-Downtown. I am here today as an invited witness to provide information regarding our campus' participation in the Dual Credit program.

My charge is to discuss how the University of Houston-Downtown (UHD) provides dual credit, to give my perspective on costs, and to identify delivery issues.

The Dual Credit program allows colleges and universities to offer college level academic courses to students in the eleventh and/or twelfth grades who demonstrate college readiness. The courses may be taught on the college campus or on the high school campus, and classes may be composed of dual credit students only, or a mix of dual credit and university students.

The University of Houston-Downtown Dual Credit Program

UHD started its program in 2007 at Jeff Davis High School enrolling 13 students. The high school is located close to the UHD campus, and is one of our top feeder schools. We have a long partnership in the Project GRAD program which started at the Jeff Davis High School. Between 1997 and 2006, UHD offered its students summer programs and concurrent enrollment opportunities. As an open access campus, we have always prided ourselves for offering opportunities to all students with much of our focus on students who were less advantaged. Since we do not have large amounts of scholarship funds we have been less effective in reaching out to high achieving students. We saw the dual credit program as a way of attracting and rewarding high achieving students attending our top feeder schools which are among the neediest schools in the city.

All of the dual credit classes we offer are held on the campus and taught by university professors which enable students to acculturate to a university environment. Most of the classes are offered in the afternoon so students can commute without disrupting their other high school programs. Our view is that although students can accumulate college credits through dual credit and Advanced Placement courses, if the courses are not taught at the campus, the students miss the college experience. Participants enroll in selected classes which include no more than 50% high school students so that they can truly experience a college course shared by regular university students. Most UHD students are not aware that it is a Dual Credit section and there is no mention or special treatment given to students. UHD does provide most Dual Credit sections with paid supplemental instruction leaders who assist high school and regular university students taking the classes.

Students apply for the program using the Texas Common Application Form with a confirmation code and the application fee is waived. Applicants must take the Accuplacer to determine if they are eligible to enroll in college level courses which is a dual credit participation requirement. Students can select from the following UHD courses: English 1301, Psychology 1303, Math 1302, Sociology 1303, Political Science 2303, and Computer Science 1305.

Fall Dual Credit participants are required to attend the Freshman Summer Success Program which is an expanded week-long orientation program for incoming freshmen that fully engages students in the critical transition from high school to college by focusing specifically on academic expectations and challenges. Participants are given a \$100 book voucher to help pay for required textbooks. Dual credit participants are UHD students and are eligible for all of the services available to other students.

UHD Dual Credit History

As mentioned, the University started its Dual Credit program in 2007 at Jeff Davis High School enrolling 13 students. In Fall 2008 the number of Jeff Davis participants increased to 31, and Waltrip High School was added to the program with 12 students. During the Spring semester we enrolled 25 students and 33 students enrolled for the summer program. In Fall 2009 we

added Reagan High School to the program. For Fall 2010 we have already received requests from 105 Jeff Davis High School students, and 85 who tested qualified for at least one dual credit course offered by UHD and approved by HISD. We are still working with the Waltrip and Reagan schools in scheduling their students for the fall semester. We also have three charter schools and two public schools asking to be included in our dual credit program.

Dual Credit Program Costs

Under legislation, the state funds dual credit courses at both public high schools and colleges based on current funding levels. Colleges and universities may waive all or part of tuition and fees for students enrolled in dual credit courses, most universities waive part of the tuition and fees. UHD reduced the tuition and fees for dual credit students from around \$600 per course to \$150. For the past three years UHD has covered the reduced tuition and fees with scholarship funds. Most of the students at the three high schools participating in the UHD Dual Credit program are low-income, first generation, minority students and cannot pay for the courses, application fees, or books. Consequently, it was clear from the beginning that much of the cost would have to be covered by UHD and the high schools if it was going to serve the existing student population. The \$35 admissions application fee is waived and UHD, the high schools, and outside contributors have covered the \$29 Accuplacer test fee and the cost of books.

Because the University sees the current efforts as a means for rewarding and attracting high achieving students from our top feeder schools, cost was not a determining issue. However, it does restrict the number of students and high schools we can serve. By bringing students in the afternoon we were able to place them in sections that have spaces available, allowing us to absorb the enrollment with limited additional expenses. We were able to include them in our Summer Success Program, which is funded with outside funds and some of the high schools are paying for the Accuplacer test materials.

UHD is fully committed to expanding the Dual Credit Program and realizes that it needs to include students and high schools for which the afternoon on-campus option is not a practical one. We are considering offering dual credit courses at certain high schools using both UHD faculty and/or high school teachers who meet UHD faculty certification and are paid by UHD. With the expansion of the program, UHD will most likely have to expect dual credit student families to cover some of the cost. At this time we are considering the possibility of charging \$50 per credit hour. Current UHD students pay \$200 per credit hour so the dual credit reduced rate is a very affordable option for college credit generating courses. Hopefully we can find outside agency scholarships to help high need students.

Delivery Issues

The delivery of the program is determined by the desired results. If the intent is to serve large numbers of students, the more realistic approach is to offer the dual credit courses at the high schools and taught by high school teachers who are certified to teach the courses. More courses can be offered and they can be taught within the students' existing class schedules. However, the courses would be similar to Advanced Placement courses with little or no college related experience. A second option is to have university faculty teach dual credit classes at the high schools which offers less flexibility, and fewer courses since the university faculty will have campus commitments. Students would also not be exposed to a college related experience. And the third allowed option is to enroll the students in regular university courses at the campus where they have the full experience and work side by side with college students.

Obviously, colleges and universities can choose to use one or more of the options which meet the desired results of the universities and the participating high schools. This is an option UHD is seriously considering and expects to have two or more of the options in place within the next year.

Conclusions

UHD strongly supports and encourages the participation of high school students in dual credit programs. With the growing cost of obtaining an education, and with more and more students taking six to eight years to graduate, dual credit programs are excellent ways of addressing both of these concerns. Our participants experienced college firsthand while still enrolled in high school, earned transferable college credit hours, saved time and money towards earning a college degree, and acquired the confidence to succeed academically in college level courses. These factors not only help the students and their families, but also help our campus when they enroll as regular full time students.

One of the few negatives of the dual credit option is that participants often experience “sticker shock” after they graduate from high school and are confronted with the real costs of attending college. Although students are provided information regarding the costs of education and the availability of financial assistance, most are surprised when they receive their first tuition bill and realize that they must rely on student loans to make up the difference between the charges and the grants/scholarships they received.