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Some Students Just Can't Wait to Start College

Maryland Community Colleges See 20% Increase in Dual Enrollment

Annapolis, MD - July 30, 2015 - The Maryland Association of Community Colleges (MACC) announced today that significantly more Maryland high school students are earning college credit before graduating high school. Dual enrollments at community colleges jumped 20% in fall 2014 compared to the prior year. Dual enrollment programs allow students to simultaneously enroll in high school and college.

“Saving time and money is just part of what dual enrollment is all about,” said Dr. Bernie Sadusky, Executive Director of MACC. “Dually enrolled students, especially at-risk students, often improve high school performance, and are more likely to complete college than peers who are not dually enrolled.”

Many students enter college without a clear understanding of academic expectations, and unforeseen challenges can quickly derail college plans. This is especially true of less affluent and first generation students who may lack access to family members with college experience. Dual enrollment programs provide a test run without the high stakes and high tuition of full college enrollment.

Maryland’s dually enrolled students receive a minimum discount of 25% off community college tuition on their first four courses. Discounts vary by county, but can run as high as 50% to almost 100%, depending on additional local grant monies available. Students participating in the Free and Reduced Meal (FARM) Program receive free tuition on their first four community college courses.

During each semester of the 2014-15 academic year, over 5,000 Maryland high school students took college courses for credit at their local community colleges.

Discounted tuition, plus college credit earned in high school, can give students a head start on college and career, and can significantly improve college affordability and reduce student debt. Dual enrollment programs have a long history in Maryland, and were strongly supported by the legislature with passage of Maryland’s Career and College Readiness and College Completion Act of 2013. Dual enrollment is gaining popularity nationally as policy makers focus on improving college readiness and college completion rates.

A number of Maryland community colleges offer a special type of dual enrollment program called early or middle college. Early college programs allow enrolled students to concurrently earn both a high school diploma and an associate degree (or 60 credits toward a bachelor's degree) while they are in high school. Early college curriculums are more rigorous than regular high school, but save students both time and money because two degrees are earned concurrently. Prince George’s Community College, Hagerstown Community College, and the Community College of Baltimore County all offer early college

programs. Students enrolled in Howard Community College's early college program receive 30 credits toward their college degrees per the agreement with the Howard County Public School System.

Concern about America's widening skills gap and its effect on American global competitiveness, has focused educators and policy makers on strategies to improve 21st century workforce preparedness. Dual enrollment programs may provide support for increasing college and career readiness and ultimately American worker competencies.

About Maryland Association of Community Colleges (MACC)

At 16 Maryland community colleges, 23 campuses and more than 1000 learning sites across the state, over 500,000 community college students annually pursue academic degrees, 130+ certifications in career and technical training, and diverse courses that refresh and develop career and life skills. Community college programs are designed for both full and part-time students, and offer online learning opportunities, state-of-the-art facilities, and professional and adjunct teaching staff. Key partners in local economic development, Maryland community colleges deliver customized training designed to meet immediate, local labor needs and ensure the availability of a skilled workforce to attract new businesses and employers. MACC is an advocate for the state's community colleges and the educational needs of the students they serve. For more information about MACC and Maryland's community colleges, visit www.mdacc.org or call (410) 974-8117.

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