

“Learn and Earn Program” Helps High School Students Continue to Take RCC Courses for Free

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A curve ball thrown at the last minute by the N.C. General Assembly just before school started meant nearly 300 high school students planning to take free college-level courses at Richmond Community College had to change their schedules for fall semester. According to RCC Recruiter Jennipher Love, the number of high school students attending RCC under the dual/concurrent enrollment program dropped to 50.

High school and middle school counselors from both counties attended a Tech Prep Consortium meeting at RCC Tuesday to learn about future options for their students.

“It was a budget issue that precipitated the rule change. While we can continue to offer science and math courses that will transfer to universities, we can no longer offer Introduction to Sociology, Introduction to Psychology, and English courses that transfer under this program. We can offer selected courses if a student is planning to come to RCC for an Associate in Applied Science degree such as Business Administration or Mechanical Engineering Technology,” said Love.

Love updated the counselors on the Learn and Earn Program that does allow RCC to offer sociology, psychology, and other courses online at no charge to high school students. Students at Richmond Senior High School taking the courses during a high school block will be in a lab setting with a monitor present. Their textbooks will be paid for by the public school system. Anyone taking a course outside the school day is responsible for the cost of textbooks. All students pay a minimum activity fee.

“We are working to offer more online courses in the spring and fall. Students taking these courses are still required to take the college’s Accuplacer assessment to determine whether they qualify to take the courses.



Richmond Community College Recruiter Jennipher Love talked with middle and high school counselors from Richmond and Scotland counties Tuesday about the Learn and Earn Program where high school students can take online courses from RCC for free. She updated them on changes in the dual/concurrent enrollment program, which is also tuition-free to high school students.

The uniqueness of the Learn and Earn program is that students ninth through twelfth grades can take the online courses,” said Love.

Ellerbe Middle School Counselor Teresa Gardner said she thought this is something parents should know since the dual/concurrent enrollment program requires a student to be 16 to enroll.

“Although online courses require a student be very disciplined, it is still an option that should be promoted to parents,” she said.

The Tech Prep concept began in the mid-80s to encourage high school students to prepare for post-secondary education at the community college level by taking higher level English, math, and science courses. Articulation agreements between the public schools and RCC were developed to give high school students advanced credit at RCC for a degree or diploma to be completed there. An example is Computer Applications I at the high school means the student doesn’t have to take the required Basic PC Literacy at RCC for Associate Degree Nursing, Healthcare Management Technology, Industrial Systems Technology, or Practical Nursing.

Martha Webb, Director of Career Technical Education for Richmond County Schools, gave an update of Tech Prep Career Development Activities for this school year. The goal is to provide activities throughout a student’s educational career to expose them to various job fields and understand the need to continue an education beyond high school.

“We begin with first graders on Truck Day. We have lots of participants who bring trucks to the RCC campus and employees talk with children about their jobs. The children get to walk through or sit inside some of the trucks. For many, it’s their first visit on a college campus and an opportunity to know one is close by,” said Webb.

Third and sixth grade students participate in activities, qualified high school students take the WorkKeys test to earn Career Readiness Certification, and the Parents’ Night Out at the Cole is being revamped to better provide parents information that helps them help their children select high school courses and college pathways.

Webb said two new activities are in the works. One will introduce girls to nontraditional career fields; the other focuses on the STEM initiative that integrates science, technology, engineering, and mathematics into classroom learning. Two teams, with a student representing each area of concentration, will build small race cars from a kit and compete for a winner. They will discuss the aerodynamics and physics behind the project.

Anyone interested in the Learn and Earn Program or the dual/concurrent enrollment opportunities should contact Love at 410-1727 or jennipherl@richmondcc.edu. High school counselors can also provide information.