Statement on Dual Enrollment

(JUNE 2019)

The following statement was approved by the Association's Committee on Community Colleges in June 2019.

Introduction

For several decades, higher education institutions have permitted exceptional high school juniors and seniors to enroll in introductory college courses. Initially targeted at select high school students, such "dual-enrollment" offerings (also referred to as dual-credit or concurrent-enrollment courses) have been dramatically broadened in recent years as institutions have established whole course sections of dual-enrollment instruction taught in high schools by high school teachers. Students may receive both college and high school credit or only college credit for these courses.

According to the Education Commission of the States, forty-eight out of fifty-one educational systems (in the fifty states and the District of Columbia) have dual-enrollment policies. Only Alaska, New Hampshire, and New York do not. And among the systems with dual-enrollment policies, only the District of Columbia and Hawaii require students to take dual-enrollment courses on college campuses. The other state systems allow students to take these courses on high school campuses or through the internet. Arkansas, Colorado, Indiana, Iowa, Michigan, Minnesota, New Mexico, Oregon, South Dakota, and Texas have opened dual-enrollment courses to ninth graders. Ohio has opened dual-enrollment courses to seventh graders, and Florida has opened them to sixth graders.

Proponents of dual-enrollment programs emphasize the benefits of an early introduction to the college environment. Students will face more challenging learning experiences, they say, and will be more motivated to earn a college degree. Budget issues also come into play, with proponents arguing that these offerings make college more affordable by decreasing time to graduation.

Standards, Governance, and Academic Freedom

Increasingly, K–12 and higher education administrators and state legislators establish dual-enrollment programs without input from elected faculty leaders, thus bypassing college and university governance structures. These programs are not attached to academic departments, where authority for curriculum and faculty hiring and evaluation resides. Financial considerations stemming from decreased enrollment too often predominate over pedagogical concerns.

It is imperative that faculty members maintain academic standards in dual-enrollment classes as weakened standards in these courses affect not only the higher education institution assigning credit for the coursework but also any other institutions that accept that academic credit.

Presenting college-level course material to students younger than eighteen, and even as young as twelve or thirteen, poses instructional challenges distinct from those that arise in traditional college instruction. Anecdotal evidence suggests that senior faculty members are less satisfied with the efficacy of dual-enrollment courses and thus less willing to teach them. As a result, untenured faculty members and high school teachers have been disproportionately assigned to teach these courses. Administrators tasked with expanding dual-enrollment programs exert undue influence on those junior faculty members, pressuring them to agree to requests from high schools regarding curriculum delivery. Faculty control over the curriculum is weakened further in courses taught online when high schools provide on-site aides and exam proctors without input from the faculty.

Governance and academic freedom sustain the integrity of the curriculum. Our departments, faculty senates, and faculty councils should be making the

decisions about course content and quality control. As the 1966 *Statement on Government of Colleges and Universities* observes, "The faculty has primary responsibility for such fundamental areas as curriculum, subject matter and methods of instruction, research, faculty status, and those aspects of student life which relate to the educational process."

We present these comments, observations, and recommendations on the basis of an ongoing commitment to academic quality and the integrity of course offerings, the academic freedom of the classroom instructor, and the principles of shared governance.

Recommendations for Good Practice in Dual-Enrollment Instruction

We realize that dual-enrollment programs vary across the country and that some of the recommendations below will not apply in all cases. Nevertheless, we offer the following guidelines for the establishment and implementation of such offerings.

1. The higher education faculty, in accordance with AAUP-supported standards of academic governance, should be involved in the decision-making process when an institution decides to offer dual-enrollment instruction. Faculty members should meet regularly with state and national higher education officials to share their perspectives on the merits and demerits of dual-enrollment instruction.
2. Higher education faculty members designing and teaching dual-enrollment courses should determine the course materials, without interference or influence from high school staff, higher education administrators, government officials, or parents.
3. Faculty from the higher education institutions should choose instructors for dual-enrollment courses using established criteria and standards and without interference or influence from high school staff or parents. Faculty members teaching dual-enrollment courses (whether at the higher education institution, at a high school, or through the internet) should undergo the same peer evaluation process as all other faculty members at the higher education institution. Dual-enrollment instructors should enjoy the same employment rights afforded other faculty members at the college or university.
4. Higher education faculty members should use shared governance structures to advise higher education administrators on dual-enrollment programs. Informed and reasoned debate about the efficacy of dual enrollment is in the best interest of students. The institution's faculty should recommend changes in or termination of these programs.
5. The higher education faculty should have a role in creating agreements between the institution offering dual-enrollment instruction and partnering high schools based on guidelines that shared governance bodies have established for such issues as textbooks and curriculum delivery, evaluation of student performance, and expected student conduct. The faculty should be involved in the annual review of the agreement or memorandum of understanding.
6. Faculty members at the institution of higher education allowing dual enrollment should inform high school administrators, students, and parents that regardless of extracurricular activities in which students may participate, dual-enrollment course standards are determined in accordance with the policies and practices of the higher education institution.
7. Higher education institutions should defer to their own faculty when structuring dual-enrollment offerings to ensure that the instruction is of college or university quality. The faculty at the higher education institution should determine the high school grade requirements necessary for admission into the dual-enrollment course. This is essential because appropriate social and cognitive development in students is necessary for them to succeed in college-level coursework.
8. Faculty should ensure that higher education institutions work with high schools to devise appropriate standards for accepting students into dual-enrollment courses while remaining sensitive to students' socioeconomic circumstances. ■