High School to College: Collin College helps area high school students fast-track to degrees

Is there a way to be smarter about college? Can you reduce the time to degree? Where can you turn for help to make sense of the different college options?

Kim Rahebi and Christina Shafer will tell you the answers you are looking for can be found at Collin College. Both of these women blurred the lines between high school and college and got a jump start on their college degrees with the college’s dual credit program.

Currently a senior premed student at The University of Texas at Dallas (UTD), Rahebi graduated from Allen High School a year early by taking Collin College dual credit classes. She earned her associate of science degree at Collin College in May 2009. Today she is trying to decide whether she wants to graduate with a biology degree, one year ahead of her peers, or earn a neuroscience degree before attending medical school.

“There is no reason not to take dual credit classes. It makes perfect sense. I liked the flexibility of choosing the times and professors. You experience the college environment. It is an opportunity to prove to your parents that you are responsible,” she said.

Rahebi, who plans to become an anesthesiologist, says she prefers dual credit classes to Advanced Placement (AP) classes.

“If you score high on your AP test, there is no guarantee that the university you choose to attend will take the credit. I never had a problem transferring my Collin College dual credit classes.”

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Students discover asteroid and receive NASA award

Three Collin College students discovered a four-and-a-half-billion-year-old rock that most likely formed at the beginning of the solar system. Competing with students from nine countries on four continents, Adrian Boysselle, David Golynskiy and Deepak Joseph identified asteroid 2010 CK12. They will receive NASA research awards for their discovery as part of the International Asteroid Search Campaign (IASC). In addition, the Minor Planet Center, an office of the International Astronomical Union located at the Harvard-Smithsonian Center for Astrophysics, will publish their names with their finding.

A premed student majoring in biology and criminology, Golynskiy says he and his fellow students participated in the asteroid search as part of a Center for Advanced Studies in Mathematics and Natural Sciences (CASMNS) project with physics professors Dr. Mike Broyles and Dr. Greg Sherman.

“It is an important discovery because we found an asteroid in the main belt, the region between Mars and Jupiter, which could have an effect on Earth.”

The students’ finding was substantiated with follow up images from the Russian Academy of Sciences. The students also provided new orbit information for two additional near-Earth objects.

Joseph, who plans to pursue a degree in astronautical engineering, says the process was challenging because of interference and pixilation, though he notes that the satellite images from the new Wide-Field Infrared Survey Explorer were much easier to analyze.

“We had one potential asteroid that passed through a star on the third image. We could not separate the brightness of the star from the brightness of the asteroid.”

The students presented their discovery to the Society of Physics Students at the joint Texas meeting of the American Physical Society, the American Association of Physics Teachers and the Society of Physics Students in Austin.

For Boysselle, a future astronautical engineer, the undergraduate research experience and discovery coalesce with his perpetual curiosity about the universe.

“I’ve always been fascinated with anything outside of our atmosphere. Did you know that to get a satellite to Mars in 12 months, you have to send it 2,500 miles per hour?”

High School Student Programs from Collin College

Collin College is dedicated to helping college-bound students succeed. Check out these offerings for high school students.

Dual Credit
High school juniors or seniors take Collin College courses to satisfy high school requirements and earn college credit at the same time. Contact dualcredit@collin.edu.

Destination College
Helps students prepare for and succeed in college. Workshops, assistance and planning. www.collin.edu/destinationcollege.

Global EDGE Tech Prep program
Select high school courses, ranging from marketing to criminal justice, transfer to Collin College. www.collin.edu/globaledge.

Biotech in a Box
Free science experiment kits for area high schools. High school teachers contact biotech@collin.edu.

Youth Leadership Academy
Free, three-part series focusing on contemporary leadership topics. Email ylab@collin.edu.

Math Summer Bridge program

A Day of Science
Want to start the college experience even earlier? Designed for middle school students, parents, siblings, teachers and staff. Annual, interactive day of experiments. Contact rshin@collin.edu.
have indicated that 'hands-on' research is a proven method of engaging students in academia," she said.

Dr. Rich concurred, "Our undergraduate research promotes student engagement in course work, provides an opportunity to explore a topic area of interest in depth, cultivates analytical and technical skills and develops communication skills," Rich said, noting that each research project is mentored by a professor. "Undergraduate research enhances professional and academic credentials. It also clarifies a career path and provides mentoring and networking with professionals who may help with career decisions and serve as references for future endeavors."

In addition, Collin College has a number of programs and events involving research for students of many majors. Cultivating Scholars is an annual event in which students studying any field present research projects and practice their presentation skills. Collin College students can also spark their intellectual interest while learning how to bridge the gap between knowledge and experience at the college’s annual Interdisciplinary Undergraduate Student Research Conference.

“Our undergraduate research at Collin College is unique in that it is designed to encourage students who have never been interested in research before to do scholarly work,” Brett Adams, professor of history, said. “Students are encouraged to develop their own interests, and the hope is that participation will spark an intellectual interest that will continue throughout their college careers.”

To learn more about all of Collin College’s undergraduate research opportunities, visit www.collin.edu.
Collin College dental hygiene students received first- and third-place honors for their table clinics at the Texas Dental Hygiene Educator’s Association and Student Dental Hygiene Association annual meeting. The first-place table clinic was titled, “Saliva as a Diagnostic Tool: Early Cancer Detection.” The topic was researched by Jennifer Jackson and Shaina Dickson. Jackson received a certificate of recognition and a trip to present at the American Dental Hygiene National meeting in Las Vegas. The third place went to Bridget Blashock and Jowlyn Dodge for their table titled “Coenzyme Q10 in Periodontal Therapy.”

The Mock Trial Team received a bid to the opening round championship in St. Louis due to their results in the Houston Regional Tournament. Competition included more than 600 teams in regional tournaments around the country. Until last year, no two-year institution had advanced in the American Mock Trial Association collegiate tournament. Collin College has received the invitation for the second year in a row.

Members of Collin College’s chapter of Sigma Kappa Delta – Kirsten Bloss, Philip Fullman, Meghan Nelson, Richard Poindexter III, and David Winn – were accepted to present their work at the Sigma Tau Delta/Sigma Kappa Delta International Convention in St. Louis.

Charles Collins, nursing student, was elected as the northern director of the Texas Nursing Student Association at a conference in San Antonio.

Texas Highways magazine published a photo by Collin College photographer student Chris Burt, titled “Route 66 Remnants.”

Wolfram Research published an online demonstration by students Mita Are and Daniel Relix from the Center for Advanced Studies in Mathematics and Natural Sciences. The demonstration is titled, “Strips of Equal Width on a Sphere Have Equal Surface Areas.” Search it for it at http://demonstrations.wolfram.com/.

Collin College student Frances DeArman has been chosen as Mrs. Collin County Interna- tional 2010. DeArman represented Collin County at the 2010 Mrs. Texas International Pageant in San Antonio, where she competed for $15,000 in cash and prizes and a chance to advance to the Mrs. International competition in July. DeArman serves as the treasurer/FR representative for the Active Minds student organization at Collin College.

The Phi Theta Kappa Honor Society chapter won five Pinnacle Awards; the maximum amount for a chapter in one year. Collin College’s chapter is the largest in Texas and the third largest in the United States.


Elaine Wilkinson, chair and professor of child development, received her doctorate from Texas Woman’s University after a successful defense of her dissertation, “All About Me: Child Development and Early Childhood Education Students.”

Dr. Chris Grooms, professor of English, contributed to a new archive of traditional Welsh music for Smithsonian Folkways. The song title was Blodauedd: Song of the Flowers. Dr. Grooms was the only American invited to contribute to this anthology of native Welsh music and song. Dr. Grooms also won the 2009 Independent Music Award for “Best World Traditional Album.”

Sherry Schumann, associate vice president of Distance and Weekend College, received her doctorate from the University of North Texas after successfully defending her dissertation, “The Relationship of Student Characteristics, Help Seeking Behavior, Academic and Environmental Variables with Student Course Completion in Community College Online Courses: An Application of a Conceptual Model.”

Lisa Huang, the allied health sciences librarian at the Central Park Campus, has been named the Librarian of the Year by the HealthLINE, a Metroplex organization of librarians involved in the health and medical library field. HealthLINE includes institutional members such as UT Southwestern Medical Library, UNT Health Science Library, Cancer Resource Center and corporate members such as Alcon.

Amy Cooper, associate dean of recruitment and programs for new students, was elected to serve as vice president for administration for the Texas Association for College and University Student Personnel Administrators.

The Collin College Child Development program received the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) two-year college accreditation. It is currently the only child development program to receive the NAEYC accreditation and “exemplary” status from the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board.

Pam Love-White, counselor, received the Distinguished Service Award for Outstanding Service and Leadership at the annual Dallas Counseling Association conference in Dallas.
College During High School
Collin County public school students enrolled in dual credit fall 2009

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Collin College’s dual credit classes allow high school students to take college classes and earn high school and college credit simultaneously. This year, the college started a new dual-credit, service-learning government class, allowing high school students to serve the community while earning high school and college credit. In fall 2009, more than 2,000 students from close to 30 high schools were participating in the college’s dual credit program.

Christina Shafer, a senior architecture major at Texas A&M University, says she enjoyed the fact that her classes at Collin College usually had somewhere between 20 and 30 people.

“I got a lot of one-on-one time with the professors at Collin College. I wouldn’t have graduated on time with my architecture degree without dual credit. All the credits from Collin College transferred, and dual credit helped me to keep my class load to 15 credit hours or less each semester. I definitely wish I had taken dual credit classes my junior year of high school,” said Shafer, who is currently applying to graduate schools.

According to Dr. Rick Reedy, Frisco Independent School District superintendent of schools, studies show that students who earn college credit before graduating from high school are more likely to earn a college degree. All three of Dr. Reedy’s sons took dual credit classes at Collin College before graduating from Frisco High School.

“All of my sons lessened the load on four-year tuition by having college credit prior to entering college. Dual credit classes are really popular at FISD, which is always a test of whether something is well-received. The courses are interesting and in line with the full-time program they will have as college students. Students are better prepared if they have a taste of college before they leave high school,” he said.

Dr. Rick Reedy, Frisco ISD superintendent:
Studies show that students who earn college credit before graduating from high school are more likely to earn a college degree. (All three of Reedy’s sons took dual credit classes at Collin College before graduating from Frisco High School.)

Still, planning and preparing for college can be a confusing and frustrating experience. That is why in 2006, Collin College unveiled Destination College, a program designed to help parents and students prepare for and succeed in college no matter where they go. The program offers free workshops throughout the year that cover a variety of topics including scholarship essay writing, ACT versus SAT and preparing to send your child to college.

“Though my husband and I have three college graduates, we found the parent workshop information to be a helpful refresher course for our current high school sophomore. I can vouch for the accuracy of the preparation hints that President Israel gave. I also appreciated all the speakers encouraging parents to de-stress the process, as well as to back away from the helicopter role. We have encouraged many people to attend Collin College. It offers great classes, and the value is terrific,” Ellen Ellwood said.

Visit www.collin.edu/destinationcollege for more info.