

KCC to offer free courses for eligible

ADVANCED DIPLOMA PROGRAM COVERS COST OF TUITION FEES

Qualifying high school seniors in Klamath County will be eligible to take one year of courses at Klamath Community College at no charge as the result of an agreement signed between KCC and local school districts. Both the city and county schools will offer the Advanced Diploma program, which will cover the cost of tuition, fees and textbooks for accepted students. In order to remain eligible for the program throughout the year, students must meet with their academic adviser at least once per term and must remain in academic good standing at KCC.

“If we are going to make positive education advancements, these types of partnerships are critically important,” said KCC President Roberto Gutierrez at a press conference held at the KCC campus. “This is a win for the student, the parents, the community and the taxpayer.

Research has shown that students who participate in these programs have higher rates of completion and are more likely to transfer to four-year institutions, Gutierrez said. The program could also allow students who would otherwise not have taken college courses to pursue higher education.

“A lot of the students are college ready, but they see college as insurmountable because of the rising costs,” said Jeff Bullock principal of Klamath Union. “This is an opportunity where college-ready kids can have access to a program where the cost is not the issue.”

The program also has the added benefit of bolstering KCC’s recently lagging enrollment, which was down 25 percent this fall. Currently, state funding is based on enrollment numbers and declining enrollment means declining revenue.

Funding for the program will come from the money the K-12 schools receive from the state, which amounts to \$6,000 per student in most cases, said Greg Thede, superintendent of the Klamath County School District.

The districts will then use that money, which they still receive even though the students, in many cases, won’t be attending the high schools, to refund the college for the cost of the course work taken by the seniors, Thede said.

The students are required to take twelve credits per term up to a maximum of 39 credits for the year. At \$83 per credit hours, the program could save each student \$3,237. The program also covers fees, which would be \$483 throughout the year on average, as well as the cost of textbooks.

The free first year of college would also save the student the expense of attending other schools. At Rogue Community College, 39 credits would cost \$3,393. At Central Oregon Community College, it would cost \$3,198. The savings are even greater if the student has plans to attend a four-year university. A year at OIT costs \$7,260. At Southern Oregon University a year costs \$7,215. At the University of Oregon, it is \$8,789.

The graduation rates for the high schools will take a hit with the fourth-year students staying on the books for a fifth year, but they will recoup the losses when the fifth year seniors completing the program graduate. The temporary fall in graduation rates will still show up in the state’s report, but it is worth it to give the students a chance at a year of free college-level education, Thede said.

“This is the beginning of lots of cooperation between K-12 schools and KCC,” Thede said.

Advanced Diploma Program

In order to qualify for the advanced Diploma program, students must complete all requirements of a standard diploma from their individual high school by the end of their senior year, must apply for admission to Klamath Community College and to their high school’s Advanced Diploma program, be accepted into the program and must enroll in at least twelve credit hours per term at KCC.

In order to remain eligible for the program throughout the year, students must meet with their academic adviser at least once per term and must remain in academic good standing at KCC.

As long as they have met all of the requirements, participating students will still be able to walk with their high school class during commencement.