**SPURS:**

**Students Partnering for Undergraduate Success**

**Mission**

Through enhanced writing curriculum developed for university undergraduates, the mission of the Students Partnering for Undergraduate Rhetoric Success (SPURS) Program is to improve the college readiness of students from Texas high schools that are underrepresented in postsecondary institutions.

**Program Overview**

Students Partnering for Undergraduate Rhetoric Success (SPURS) was developed in 2005 to offer college preparatory writing experiences to high schools that are underrepresented in postsecondary institutions. SPURS implemented a dual-credit pilot during the 2011-12 academic year that allowed high school juniors and seniors to earn three hours of college credit for Rhetoric and Writing (RHE 306) via web-based curriculum at their high school campuses. SPURS provides high school students with college-level instruction in writing and critical thinking that will equip them with advanced preparation in communication and analysis. Six lower-division writing courses at the university were paired with the six participating high schools.

SPURS is a collaborative partnership among participating Texas high schools, the Department of Rhetoric and Writing and the Division of Diversity and Community Engagement at The University of Texas at Austin.

**Program Elements**

**SPURS consists of the following main elements:**

- A two-semester dual-credit opportunity for high school juniors and seniors that offers Rhetoric and Writing (RHE 306), a course that is a requirement for first year undergraduates at the university and corresponds to ENGL 1301 in the Texas Common Course Numbering system.
- Week-long summer and two-day winter teacher professional development workshops that focus on course curriculum, pedagogy, technology components and program procedures.
- Visits to participating high school classes by the SPURS Curriculum/Program Coordinator.
- High school student full-day visitation to The University of Texas at Austin that offers both academic and college awareness activities.
- Essay-writing assessments from University of Texas at Austin Rhetoric and Writing instructors, and college-skill collaborations between high school students and University of Texas at Austin undergraduates.

**SPURS 2011–2012 Participant Demographic Information**

The SPURS dual-credit pilot served 125 students during the 2011-12 academic year. Six Texas high schools in Austin, Beaumont, the Rio Grande Valley and San Antonio participated in the program. Of SPURS senior questionnaire respondents, 100% matriculated to a postsecondary institution immediately following high school graduation by Fall 2012.

**Participating Schools**

District | High School
---|---
Austin ISD | Crockett
Beaumont ISD | Central
IDEA Public Schools | Pioneer, Mission, Quest, San Juan
San Antonio ISD | Brandeis

**Program Participants by Ethnicity**

- Hispanic/Latino/Asian American/Pacific Islander 76%
- Caucasian 14%
- African American 2%
- Pacific Islander 1%
- Other 5%

**Student Performance Outcomes**

- 98% earned college credit
- 1% received a Q-drop instead of a grade.

**Math Masters**

**Mission**

The mission of the Math Masters Program is to prepare underrepresented high school students for success in college through the implementation of a three-year mathematics cohort program.

**Program Overview**

The three-year Math Masters pilot launched in the fall of 2011 as a collaborative partnership between the Division of Diversity and Community Engagement (DDCE) and the Charles A. Dana Center at The University of Texas at Austin. Math Masters is designed to prepare students from underrepresented Texas high schools with the skills necessary for successful completion of college-level math courses. Using online curriculum and college readiness standards provided by the Texas Education Agency, the first year of the program assists participating students in achieving mastery in Algebra II. Additionally, students are provided with strategies that reshape their academic identities and enhance their engagement in learning through the Academic Youth Development program. The second year of the program provides online curriculum in Pre-calculus or Advanced Quantitative Reasoning. The third year of the program provides online curriculum for Calculus, Statistics or an advanced dual-credit math course.

**Participating Schools**

- Austin ISD
- Beaumont ISD
- IDEA Public Schools
- Austin ISD

**Program Participants by Ethnicity**

- Hispanic/Latino/Asian American/Pacific Islander 76%
- Caucasian 14%
- African American 2%
- Other 5%

**Student Performance Outcomes**

- 84% earned college credit

**Longitudinal Review**

Cohort data will be collected over a three-year period to assess student outcomes in the areas of mathematical college readiness and college matriculation.