

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-skills collaboration between high school students and University of Texas at Austin undergraduates

SPURS 2011–2012

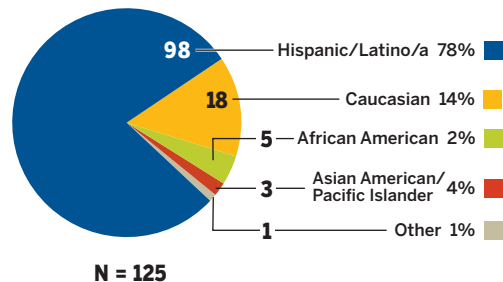
Participant Demographic Information

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.

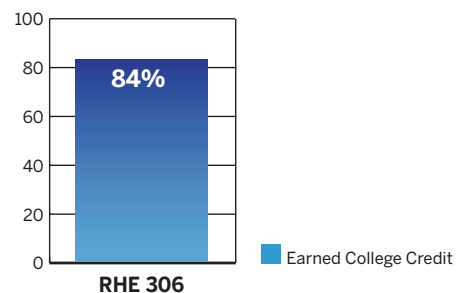
Participating Schools

DISTRICT	HIGH SCHOOL
Austin ISD	Crockett
Beaumont ISD	Central
IDEA Public Schools	Frontier, Mission, Quest, San Juan
San Antonio ISD	Brackenridge

Program Participants by Ethnicity



Student Performance Outcomes



Students who were not able to complete the course received a Q-drop instead of a grade.