



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

Feb. 8, 2017

dhe.mo.gov

CONTACT:

Liz Coleman

Phone: 573-522-1463

liz.coleman@dhe.mo.gov

Pilot programs focus on helping more students finish a degree in less time

Guided Pathways, Concurrent Enrollment can reduce overall college costs

Ten Missouri colleges and universities are participating in two programs that aim to reduce college costs and help students earn a degree in less time.

The Department of Higher Education is set to begin pilot projects for Guided Pathways to Success and Concurrent Enrollment programs.

“These programs focus on helping more students graduate on time, making college more affordable for thousands of Missouri families,” said Zora Mulligan, Missouri commissioner of higher education.

Currently, less than one third of students in Missouri complete the 30 or more credit hours per year necessary to earn an associate degree in two years or a bachelor’s degree in four years. The cost of attending an extra year in college – including tuition, fees, room and board, books, and the wages a student would have earned at a job after earning a degree – can top \$50,000.

Guided Pathways to Success

The Guided Pathways to Success program helps schools develop clear “degree pathways” designed to keep students on track to graduate on time. Colleges and universities participating in the program can implement a variety of strategies, including:

- Organizing semester-by-semester sets of courses for each degree program, making it easier for students to take the classes they need.
- Establishing meta-majors, which encourage students who have not yet decided on a specific degree program to take classes in a general area of study that interests them. Meta-majors can minimize the number of credits that don’t count toward a degree when students decide on a major or change their major.
- Guaranteeing required courses are available when students need to take them.

The program can help students avoid accumulating and paying for more credit hours than they need for their degree. On average, Missouri students earn about 14 more credit hours than needed for an associate degree and about nine more credit hours than needed for a bachelor’s degree.

Schools participating in the program are:

- Metropolitan Community College
- North Central Missouri College
- Ozarks Technical Community College
- Southeast Missouri State University
- University of Missouri-Kansas City

Concurrent Enrollment

The Concurrent Enrollment program will allow students who meet the admissions requirements of any two-year college or any four-year university in the state to be admitted to both schools. The program gives students the flexibility to take courses at both schools at the same time and allows them to access a larger selection of courses and schedules to better fit their needs.

Students also would have the ability to complete an associate degree from a community college while working toward a bachelor's degree.

The pilot program pairs up one or more four-year universities with one or more two-year colleges. Schools participating in the program are:

- Missouri University of Science and Technology and East Central College
- Northwest Missouri State University and Metropolitan Community College
- Southeast Missouri State University, Jefferson College and Three Rivers College

Legislation approved in 2016 directed the department to establish the Guided Pathways to Success and Concurrent Enrollment pilot programs. Results of the programs will be reported to the governor and the General Assembly by Jan. 1, 2020.

####