

NEW YORK CITY'S COLLEGE NOW PROGRAM PROFILE¹

As previously described in the Accelerating Student Success Through Credit-Based Transition Programs October 2004 site profiles,² the CBTP in New York City is operated through a partnership between New York City Community College and New York City High School. This partnership is one within the larger College Now program, which in its entirety is composed of all the City University of New York (CUNY) colleges and approximately 200 secondary schools. The goals of College Now include improving the academic skills and achievement of high school students and ensuring that graduating students are prepared to do college-level work.³ The colleges offer a tailored program of academic and preparatory courses and workshops to their partnering high schools.

New York City Community College offers 43 programs that can lead to one of three degrees: the Associate in Arts (AA), Associate in Science (AS), and the Associate in Applied Science (AAS). The college also offers two certificate programs. Other offerings include continuing education; cooperative and distance education; and a variety of student services, student life activities; and campus programs.

New York City Community College enrolls students originally from over 120 countries. In 2003, the college enrolled 12,768 students, 7,366 of whom were full-time. Full-time faculty members comprise approximately 37 percent of the college's employee roster. Among the current faculty and executive staff, about half have been at the college for more than 15 years.

New York City High School first opened its doors in the 1930s and many members of the faculty and staff have taught at the school for 20 years or more.⁴ The school's four-story Gregorian architecture style building is set within a residential neighborhood containing both apartment buildings and older single- and multifamily homes.

The high school's enrollment has steadily increased in recent years, so that the school has become severely overcrowded. During the 2003–04 school year, enrollment was 3,255, with an average class size of 33 students. In order to accommodate these numbers, the school operated on a double session schedule for the 2003–04 school year, with 11th- and 12th-graders attending classes from approximately 8 a.m. to 2 p.m. and ninth and 10th-graders attending classes from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. In the fall of 2004, the school day was extended to a three-session day, with classes meeting from 7:20 a.m. to 5:30 p.m.

¹ In order to give the study participants anonymity, the specific research sites were given pseudonyms. However, the name of the general program is used in some cases.

² Please see the Accelerating Student Success Through Credit-Based Transition Programs study's Web page on the U.S. Department of Education's Web site to download and view two-page profiles of each of the study's five case sites at: www.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ovae/pi/cclo/cbtrans/index.html.

³ Please also see on the study Web page, listed above, the program description for more information on dual enrollment.

⁴ This descriptive information is provided so the reader has a better understanding of the program environment.

New York City High School's student population displays great language, ethnic, and socioeconomic diversity. Twenty-three percent of the students were eligible for free lunch in 2003. Approximately 45 percent of the students are white, which includes many immigrants from former Soviet states, 11 percent are African-American, 21 percent are Hispanic, and 22 percent are Asian. About 13 percent immigrated to the United States within the last three years, and 14 percent are ELLs.

A large proportion of New York City High School graduates attend CUNY and State University of New York (SUNY) institutions, for a variety of academic, cultural, and economic reasons.

Curriculum and Program

In general, College Now strives to create an educational experience for middle-range students that complements and extends what they are already receiving. College Now offers a sequence of courses that upgrades students' critical thinking and writing skills, helping them be successful on their high school exit exams (Regents exams) and earn college credit. Among the many College Now partnerships between individual high schools and New York City Community College, the particular courses and enrichment activities offered to students are determined at the school level. The college-based coordinator shares the college course catalogue with the high school principal and College Now liaison, and makes recommendations on which courses to offer, based on the needs of the students at that particular high school, and also on which courses tend to transfer

easily. The interests and qualifications of the high school faculty also are considered. Courses cannot be offered at high schools that do not have the faculty to teach them. High school faculty must meet the requirements for adjunct faculty, which generally means having a master's degree in the subject area.

New York City High School's College Now program offers the full range of remediation, college preparatory, college credit, and enrichment activities, and while students may choose from among these offerings, they are encouraged to take a developmental sequence of courses. While the recommended sequence typically yields a combination of high school and college credits, the New York City High School College Now program does not offer dual credit. Students receive high school or college credit for any particular course, but not both.

A possible sequence of courses could be as follows: a course for Regents exam prep, a course that counts towards fulfilling the college developmental English requirement (college prep), a course that yields college credit at the participating college, and courses that likely yield transferable college credit (such as Introduction to Sociology).

The courses tend to meet two or three times weekly, for an hour and a half at a time. Most of the course work occurs at the high school, but some courses alternate between the high school and college locations. Those students whose courses are at the high school may visit the college campus at least once, to

tour the facilities. College Now teachers encourage the use of the college’s library for research and term assignments. College Now students have access to these facilities and others on the New York City Community College campus through a student ID, which they are able to receive once they begin participation in the College Now program.

Precollege Curriculum and Program

As noted above, each College Now partnership works collaboratively to develop a program to meet the needs of the particular high school student. To help address the needs of the ELL population at New York City High School, College Now faculty at the high school and the college created the Learner’s Academy. The Learner’s Academy offers a yearlong 10th-grade English and a yearlong 11th-grade social studies courses especially for ELL students. Both courses are for high school credit only. The classes meet twice a week during school hours, once at the high school and once at the college, and are team-taught by high school and college instructors. The goal of the courses is to increase the Regents exam pass rate of the school’s ELL students, as well as prepare participants for college classes. Course content and pedagogy focus on the analysis of literature as well as the development of writing skills. Current events and world issues such as human rights are used as curriculum organizing themes.

Another entry point into the program is English 99 (also called Basic Writing). This course meets after school at the high school and is open to any student at the high school. It offers one high school credit and its purpose is to strengthen students’ writing

Exhibit A-8: Prerequisites for College Now Noncollege Credit Courses

Prerequisites	Placement	Precollege Offerings
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Student is identified as an English Language Learner ■ Teacher Recommendation 	Learner’s Academy	College Now Enrichment Program
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Scoring range of 55–74 on the English Regents exam <p style="text-align: center;">OR</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ GPA of 65–75 in English and social studies courses ■ Good attendance ■ Teacher recommendation 	Basic Writing (English 99)	Courses that do not qualify for college credit

skills so that they not only pass their Regents exam, but can place out of any college remediation courses.

Exhibit A-8 summarizes the prerequisites for the programs’ precollege credit offerings.

College Credit Curriculum and Program

Five courses are offered after the school day that students can take for college credit. These are: Literacy and Propaganda, Critical Thinking, Sociology, English, and Oral Communication (a public speaking class). These courses have the same content as their counterparts at the college. The first two courses yield credit at New York City Community College but may not transfer to other colleges while Sociology, English and Public Speaking tend to be generally transferable.

All of the courses emphasize thoughtful discussion and writing. Instruction time often includes a lecture portion as well as small group discussions. In particular, courses include a portion of time dedicated to the development, critique, and revision of written work. In the College Now sociology course, this portion is organized around open-ended discussion questions pertaining to the lesson presented. In other courses, classroom discussion centers around discussion questions and course writing assignments that are or will be submitted as part of the students' course grade.

Exhibit A-9: Prerequisites for College Now Credit-Bearing Classes

Prerequisites	College Offering	Transferability
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Scoring range of 65–74 on English Regents exam <p style="text-align: center;">OR</p>	<p>Literacy and Propaganda 3 credits</p> <p>Critical Thinking 3 credits</p>	Courses that may transfer as elective credit
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 70+ English and Social Studies Grade Point Average Good attendance <p style="text-align: center;">OR</p>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 480 Scholastic Assessment Test Verbal or 48 Preliminary Scholastic Assessment Test Verbal 		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 75+ English Language Arts Regents 480 Scholastic Assessment Test Verbal or 48 Preliminary Scholastic Assessment Test Verbal Good attendance 	<p>Composition I 3 credits</p> <p>Oral Communication 3 credits</p> <p>Introduction to Sociology 3 credits</p>	Courses that transfer as general education credit

College Course Selection Process

Students are eligible to apply for enrollment in a College Now course if they meet the prerequisites shown in the above table. For College Now credit-bearing courses, students who do not possess the required scores or who have not had the opportunity to take the specified examinations may be granted permission to enroll in the courses through alternative pathways. For example, a student who has successfully completed Basic Writing, yet does not possess the required prerequisite scores, may still enroll in Literacy and Propaganda or Critical Thinking if they receive a recommendation from their Basic Writing teacher. In order to enroll in Composition I, Oral Communication, or Introduction to Sociology, students who do not possess the required prerequisite scores but have gone through a developmental sequence of non credit and credit-bearing courses must receive a recommendation from one of their teachers.

Recruitment and Target Population

The program coordinator and program instructors take responsibility for student recruitment, which is primarily accomplished through classroom visits and word of mouth. For the noncollege credit courses, the high school's academic counseling staff assists the coordinator in identifying students who would benefit from participating. In general, students in the middle range of academic achievement are primarily targeted, although, because most of the courses take place after the school day, students must be particularly motivated to enroll.

Approximately 300 students out of the school population take College Now classes each semester. Some courses have more interested students than for whom they have space, which is one of the reasons that students in the program are limited by New York City Community College to one class per semester.

Once students apply and are enrolled, a letter is sent to their parents inviting them to an information evening at the high school. Parents of the Learner's Academy students are invited to an additional evening for a dinner during which they are able to meet Learner's Academy staff and have their questions about the program answered.

Supporting Student Transition

Counseling

While there are no counseling services specific to the College Now program, participating students do take advantage of the school's general counseling services. Academic counseling and college counseling are available. Students begin to receive advising from the New York City High School's college counselor in the spring of their 11th-grade year and continue throughout their 12th-grade year. The college counselor assists students in obtaining materials from state and city colleges and universities and making decisions about which institutions are most appropriate for them. The counselor writes letters of recommendation for every student who requests one, coordinates college fairs and financial aid nights each year, and arranges appointments with parents to talk about the college choice and admissions process.

College Awareness and Preparation

Students have a number of opportunities to visit the college. Activities that take place at the college often include tours of key college facilities such as the library and computer labs. College Now students are issued a New York City Community College ID and are able to use facilities such as libraries and computer labs just as regularly matriculating New York City Community College students.

In addition to becoming comfortable on a college campus, students begin to understand the nature of college courses. The pedagogy of many of the College Now teachers differs from the classroom management and teaching style they employ in their regular high school classes. The more relaxed classroom environment and workshop-style discussion and lessons allow students and teachers to develop relationships. The teaching styles as described by the teachers also help students engage in the kinds of student-teacher interactions (e.g., office hours, student-initiated academic conversation, and student-initiated conversation surrounding career and college advancement) that have been shown to be imperative to postsecondary success.

Many College Now courses also are designed to provide scaffolding to students as they encounter the increased expectations of self-management associated with postsecondary education. College Now teachers give their students course syllabi at the beginning of the semester, and they expect students to use online technologies to manage class assignments and course-related

communication. Additionally, the decisions that students must make related to course selection and continuing with after-school classes for which they are receiving only college credit—as opposed to dual high school and college credit—in the face of other academic and social commitments is a self-management skill that College Now instructors feel is invaluable.

Other Enrichment Activities

Students have a number of opportunities to experience curriculum extending and enrichment activities on the New York City Community College campus and through field trips. The college-based and high school-based College Now program coordinators work collaboratively with New York Community College professors and New York City High School College Now teachers to plan, organize, and supervise regular events that occur outside of the high school setting both during the week and on some weekends.

The English department at New York City Community College and the New York City High School College Now teachers work closely together to provide experiences such as writer’s workshops that bring the students to the New York City Community College campus. For the workshops, authors and researchers are invited to speak about their written work (which the students have usually read in their classes) and the writing process and to participate in a cooperative activity that includes sharing student work and ideas.

Other academic departments of the college also provide opportunities for College Now

students to extend their learning outside of New York City High School. Weekend programming may include trips to plays or community or government agencies to bring students closer to the issues or literature they are studying in their College Now courses. Many of the courses offer special events at the college and off-site, such as human rights discussion forums hosted by the United Nations and Amnesty International.

Professional Development and Collaboration

The high school teachers are selected for the program by the high school-based program coordinator. The coordinator has more teachers interested than can be involved, and it is generally seen as an honor to be selected. Once chosen and approved by the college, the teachers become adjunct faculty of the college. There is a great deal of collaboration among the high school teachers participating in the program; between the high school teachers and the college faculty; and among all the high school teachers, college faculty, and College Now central faculty and staff. The high school-based coordinator meets with the college coordinator at least once a month, and the entire team meets at least once a semester.

While the high-school based College Now teachers do follow a college-approved curriculum, and are observed once a semester by someone from the college, they also speak of the tremendous amount of academic freedom and creativity they can use in planning and teaching their College Now courses. Many of the College Now teachers described their teaching style in program

courses as more relaxed and emphasizing the development of skills that students show a need for, such as critical thinking and writing.

Funding

A portion of CUNY’s operating budget is devoted to the College Now program, which is free to students. CUNY pays for students’

tuition and provides them with free textbooks that must be returned at the end of the semester.

Because College Now is an after-school program, the high school does not lose any of its Average Daily Attendance (ADA) funding.

Exhibit A-10: New York City Community College, College Now Outcomes, 2003–04

Student Outcomes^a
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ The total enrollment at New York City High School was 3,255 students. 23.1 percent of the students were eligible for the National School Lunch Program’s free or reduced price lunches.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Fourteen percent of New York City High School entering ninth- and 10th-graders were English Language Learners (450 students).
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ New York City High School graduated 715 students in 2003–04. The four-year graduation rate for this cohort was 75 percent.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ During the 2003–04 school year, 511 students from New York City High School were enrolled in the College Now program. One hundred and sixty-nine were enrolled in college credit courses.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Seventy-nine percent of the students enrolled in credit-bearing College Now courses from New York City Community College during summer 2003, fall 2003, and spring 2004 completed courses with either an A, B, or C. Each of these students received three credits per course.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ During the summer 2003, fall 2003, and spring 2004 academic year students from New York City High School who participated in College Now earned 423 credits.

^a All data come from school staff and were not validated externally.