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September 14, 2009

MEMORANDUM

TO: Legislative Education Study Committee

FR: David Harrell

RE: STAFF REPORT: DUAL CREDIT PROGRAM REPORT

INTRODUCTION

Dual credit programs allow high school students to take a single course offered through a postsecondary educational institution and earn credit at the high school level and the college level simultaneously. Beyond this fundamental concept, dual credit is often said to fulfill a number of purposes and produce a number of benefits, among them:

- providing high school students an introduction to college life – or, in the words of one researcher, “demystifying [the college] experience for students”;
- affording high school students access to college-level material;
- shortening the time – and thereby the expense – required to complete a postsecondary degree;
- suggesting college as a possibility for students who had not considered it as they see their classmates enrolling in dual credit classes;
- providing, in the words of one study, “an early warning mechanism to signal whether students are prepared for college”;
- enhancing the academic and vocational offerings of the school district;
- serving as a recruitment tool for postsecondary educational institutions; and
- leading to better completion rates for students in both high school and college.

On this last point, the Higher Education Department (HED) has described dual credit as “one of the most effective policy tools for student retention in high school, increased high school graduation rates, and preparation for college.”

LESC INTEREST IN DUAL CREDIT

Testimony and Legislation

As explained more fully under “Background,” below, the Legislative Education Study Committee (LESC) has taken a formal interest in dual credit – sometimes called dual enrollment or concurrent enrollment – at least since the 2003 interim. More recently, in 2007 the LESL endorsed successful legislation to create, for the first time, a dual credit program in state law. With LESL-endorsed amendments in 2008, this legislation:

- defined the term “dual credit program” as “a program that allows high school students to enroll in college-level courses offered by a public post-secondary educational institution that may be academic or career-technical but not remedial or developmental, and simultaneously to earn credit toward high school graduation and a post-secondary degree or certificate”;
- established two eligibility criteria for students wishing to participate in the program:
 - enrollment in a regular public school, charter school, or state-supported school in one-half or more of the minimum course requirements; and
 - permission from a school counselor, the school principal, or the head administrator of a charter school;
- required the school district, charter school, or state-supported school to pay for required textbooks and any course supplies through purchase arrangements with the bookstore at the postsecondary institution or some other cost-efficient method;
- required the public postsecondary educational institution to waive all general fees;
- required HED to revise procedures in the higher education funding formula to address enrollments in dual credit courses and to encourage institutions to waive tuition for students taking those courses; and
- required HED and the Public Education Department (PED) to promulgate rules to evaluate the dual credit program and to make annual reports, including recommendations, to the Governor and the Legislature.

The fiscal impact of the legislation is based upon the premise that each party in the process – the secondary school, the postsecondary institution, and the student and his or her family – should make an investment in the program. The responsibilities of the secondary and postsecondary schools are explicit, but the responsibilities of the student are implicit. That is, by making no provision for transportation to the site of a dual credit course or payment of course-specific fees, the legislation assigns that responsibility to the student or his or her family.

As reported in testimony to the LESC in 2008, the method that HED selected to facilitate the tuition waiver was to exclude from the calculation of tuition revenue credits in the higher education funding formula those dual credit hours for which institutions waive tuition – so that those hours are not counted against the institution in determining state funding levels.

During the 2009 session, the LESC addressed another dual credit issue: the fiscal impact of the secondary schools' responsibility to provide the textbooks and course supplies for high school students taking classes for dual credit. The "Background" section, below, provides more information about this issue. At this point, suffice it to say that LESC-endorsed legislation to create the Dual Credit Textbook Fund and to prescribe a method for PED to distribute funds did not pass; however, the appropriation of \$1.5 million for this purpose did pass as part of the *General Appropriation Act of 2009*, creating what might be called "a funded unmandate."

Support for the Program

The dual credit program has proved to be quite popular. From estimated figures of 6,000 to 7,000 during school year 2007-2008, actual enrollment during school year 2008-2009 grew to almost 10,000, with nearly 2,000 of those students taking two or more classes. In addition, respondents to an LESC questionnaire indicate both the breadth and the depth of support for the program across all school levels:

- "We want to continue a wonderful program" (Cibola High School, Albuquerque Public Schools);
- "Dual credit is an excellent means of getting students interested in higher education and providing many students a head start on accumulating university credit hours. The legislature was right on when passing the dual credit legislation" (Belen High School);
- "Dual credit is important to the students and families we serve" (Western New Mexico University);
- Speaking of the courses in agriculture in particular, Eastern New Mexico University describes dual credit courses as "extremely important as they target a population of high school students for whom a college education may not seem relevant or attainable"; and
- "The whole dual credit thing is getting very interesting" (Alma d'Arte Charter School, Las Cruces).

Staff Review of the Implementation of the Dual Credit Program

With legislation and agency rules in effect during the summer of 2008, school year 2008-2009 marked the first year of implementation for the new program; therefore, the 2009 interim seems to be a good time to examine how the program is developing. As much of this report shows, however, in some ways school year 2008-2009 was as much a transition year as it was an implementation year.

At any rate, to examine the progress of dual credit so far, LESC staff consulted with staff from HED and PED involved with the dual credit program on a daily basis; reviewed a variety of documentation – rules, forms, correspondence, reports – related to the dual credit program;

fielded and initiated questions from a number of participants in the dual credit program; and sent a brief questionnaire to each of the 24 public institutions of higher education in New Mexico offering classes for dual credit (response rate of 96 percent), the superintendents of the state-supported schools (response rate of 100 percent), and a sample of traditional high schools (response rate of 52 percent) and charter high schools (response rate of 45 percent).

This questionnaire is not offered as a scientific survey, merely an indication of the sorts of experiences with the dual credit program occurring at the school level throughout New Mexico. For that reason, the report does not contain a statistical analysis of the responses, but it does employ data or remarks from those responses as illustrations of points raised in the report and as part of the basis for the policy option presented near the end.

Finally, this LESC staff examination of the dual credit program begins with the two fundamental issues that prompted the 2007 legislation in the first place, as expressed in testimony in 2003:

1. the need for reliable data; and
2. the need for uniformity in program features and requirements, including student eligibility, courses offered, uniform master agreements, course locations, and compensation for high school teachers.

The report will show that, while progress has been made on both fronts – the need for reliable data in particular – issues remain in each case.

In its other main sections, the report also discusses:

- the status of the appropriation for textbooks and course supplies;
- the special circumstances of state-supported schools;
- barriers encountered and changes suggested by respondents to the questionnaires;
- evaluation of the dual credit program by HED and PED;
- policy option; and
- as noted above, background.

Finally, supplementing the report proper are (1) an appendix that provides brief accounts of several other issues affecting the implementation of the dual credit program; and (2) a companion document prepared by HED, “New Mexico Dual Credit Program for Academic Year 08-09,” which illustrates some of the data now available for the dual credit program.

THE NEED FOR RELIABLE DATA

As this report will illustrate, much more data are available now than before enactment of the dual credit legislation and promulgation of the agency rules. Whereas in the past, neither PED nor HED could provide a definitive answer to such basic questions as the number of students enrolled in dual credit classes, the two agencies have now begun to collect, compile, and disseminate data that answer not only basic questions but also more refined questions related to student demographics, student success, institutional participation levels, and other points.

This progress notwithstanding, however, the two agencies are still not in agreement on the basic point of the number of students enrolled in dual credit classes. They have come closer than in the past but they are still not quite together. As PED has stated, “[t]he number differences between HED and PED data are significant.”

Part of the problem seems to stem from the number of reporting entities. That is, HED receives dual credit data from 24 institutions of higher education, whereas PED receives data from 89 school districts and a growing number of charter high schools. Reporting rates are another cause: whereas HED has received reports from all postsecondary institutions, as of early September 2009, PED reported that the department had received only 50 percent, approximately, of the dual credit data that should be reported by school districts and charter schools. And even when districts have reported their dual credit data, discrepancies sometimes occur. One district, for example, reported receiving from PED a multi-page list of students to verify for dual credit status. When the district reviewed the list, it found that: (1) while they were all district students, none of them had registered for dual credit classes; and (2) none of the 245 students whose dual credit registrations the district had submitted were included in the list. Through ongoing verification of dual credit data, PED is attempting to resolve such discrepancies.

Another dimension to the problem, HED suggests, is that the postsecondary institutions have an incentive for timely and accurate reporting that the secondary schools do not: unless the postsecondary institutions report the dual credit classes for which they have waived tuition, their allocations through the higher education funding formula will be reduced by those amounts.

For these reasons, both HED and PED have agreed that, for the time being, the data collected and reported by HED are the more reliable. For the sake of this report, then, all the data reported come from HED unless otherwise indicated.

The HED document “New Mexico Dual Credit Program for Academic Year 08-09” shows that much is now known about the dual credit program. Whereas in the past there was no certainty even about the number of students taking classes for dual credit, HED can now report not only the number of students but also their gender, ethnicity, high school grade level, number of classes taken, frequency of subjects taken, and grades earned (by gender and ethnicity). At the institutional level, HED data reveal numbers and percentages of dual credit enrollment, methods of course delivery and locations of courses, average GPA per course location, and average GPA per course location and institution. Details from these data will appear throughout the rest of this report.

THE NEED FOR UNIFORMITY IN PROGRAM FEATURES AND REQUIREMENTS

Provisions for Uniformity in Current Law or Rule

A number of provisions and requirements are in effect to facilitate the uniform management of dual credit throughout the state.

- The two state agencies that administer the program – HED and PED – have promulgated identical rules to address the details of the program, and they collaborate

on any proposed amendments. These rules also created the Dual Credit Council (discussed more fully in the Appendix), a six-member group that hears appeals from secondary or postsecondary schools and that considers issues not covered by the rules.

- Both state law and agency rules require the use of a uniform master agreement, a document signed by representatives of the secondary and postsecondary schools that enumerates the responsibilities of the parties involved and that, through an appendix, lists the courses approved for dual credit between those two institutions. Pursuant to agency rules, this agreement “specifies the means by which the state will provide equal opportunities to all public high school students who wish to participate in the dual credit program” (emphasis added).
- In addition to the course and student eligibility requirements noted earlier, agency rules require each student wishing to participate in the dual credit program to complete a student request form, which requires a variety of standard demographic information, including the PED-issued student ID number (see another LESC staff report for September 2009, “P-20 Longitudinal Data System Update: Implementation of Provisions in Law,” for a discussion of the common student ID as it pertains to the dual credit program).

Despite these provisions to facilitate uniformity, however, considerable variety still exists in the ways that dual credit courses are handled. Of course, given the diverse nature of the state and the educational institutions and opportunities it provides, absolute uniformity in every detail is neither possible nor even desirable. As one high school counselor observed: “Once everything becomes black and white, you’re not dealing with kids anymore because they’re not black and white.” Nonetheless, the practices reported through the LESC questionnaire and through data collected by HED suggest that uniformity, even in the major provisions, is a goal yet to be achieved.

Varied Practices

Student Eligibility

As noted earlier, state law provides two criteria for student eligibility to participate in the dual credit program: enrollment in at least half of the required credits and permission of the secondary school. In addition, agency rules require the secondary and postsecondary schools to collaborate with each other in determining “the required academic standing of each student eligible to participate in the dual credit program.” Sometimes this standing is determined by a minimum GPA – from 2.0 to 3.0; other times by minimum scores on placement exams such as Compass and Accuplacer or standardized exams such as the ACT and SAT; and still other times by a student’s grade level: 10th grade or above, or 11th or 12th grade only.

In some cases, secondary schools have placed other conditions or restrictions on students’ eligibility for dual credit courses:

- Because of fiscal constraints, the cost of textbooks, and a desire to make some dual credit experience available to as many students as possible, Roswell Independent Schools limited each student to one class under the dual credit program; however, students could take additional classes as concurrent enrollment (see “Multiple Terms,”

in the Appendix). Under that arrangement, the students paid for the books, Eastern New Mexico University (ENMU)-Roswell still waived tuition, and the students still earned dual credit.

- Because of the limited success of its students in dual credit courses in the past, Los Puentes Charter School in Albuquerque required its students to take as a prerequisite a college success class taught at the charter school to help their students develop the skills and awareness necessary in college-level work.

As a final point about student eligibility, almost all of the postsecondary institutions reported that, in general, dual credit students seemed prepared for their courses. One of the two exceptions was University of New Mexico (UNM)-Gallup: “many students in our geographical area are simply not ready for the rigor of college level academics.” As a case in point, this representative cited the example of several AP English students from one of the area high schools who tested into transitional studies, a developmental course. Other perspectives came from New Mexico State University (NMSU)-Grants, which reported that unprepared students generally demonstrate a lack of maturity; and from UNM-Los Alamos: “The students who are unsuccessful seem to be uncommitted rather than unprepared.”

Courses Offered

While state law requires that courses offered for dual credit be academic or career-technical in nature, agency rules specify that, for the most part, the courses be for elective credit rather than core credit. Exceptions exist through appeals (see “Dual Credit Council,” in the Appendix) and through a sort of temporary hold harmless provision in rule that, until school year 2009-2010, allowed the continuation of pre-existing agreements to offer courses for core credit.

Perhaps the most notable variation in terms of courses offered is that, despite the prohibition in law, approximately 600 students enrolled in remedial or development courses under the dual credit program in school year 2008-2009. Pursuant to law, however, HED did not fund those classes; and the number declined from 368 in fall 2008 to 327 in spring 2009 (see slides 7 and 8 in the HED data report).

Even courses that earn high school and college credit have raised some questions. As slides 7 and 8 in the HED data report show, the greatest numbers of enrollments were in such academic areas as computer and information services, English, mathematics, health, and physical science. Responses to the questionnaires indicate similar patterns. Although courses in physical education represent a small proportion of the courses overall, they have raised questions about suitability for dual credit, at both HED and PED. At issue are physical activity courses like yoga, bowling, and leisure walking. Although such courses are probably beneficial in some ways, HED and PED have questioned whether they fulfill any of the intended purposes of dual credit. Consequently, both agencies have proposed amending their rules to allow funding only for content-related PE courses, not the activity courses. Such a rule, however, HED suggests, may create a hardship for charter schools that have relied on the facilities of postsecondary institutions. On this point, although the sample is quite small, two of the five charter schools responding to the questionnaire reported PE classes among the top three most frequently taken.

Uniform Master Agreements

The staff review of the uniform master agreements on file at PED has revealed some other variations. While the appendices in some of the agreements are limited to a handful of courses, others – Clovis Community College, Central New Mexico Community College (CNM), ENMU-Ruidoso, Luna Community College, NMSU-Alamogordo, NMSU-Carlsbad, NMSU-Grants, Santa Fe Community College (SFCC), and UNM-main – seem to include all or large portions of the course catalog. The agreement between UNM and Albuquerque Public Schools (APS), for example, contains 36 pages of course offerings even though, as HED data slides 13 and 14 show, fewer than 50 students (a negligible percentage) enrolled in dual credit courses during school year 2008-2009. And in its questionnaire response, CNM reported making 4,553 course sections available for dual credit in school year 2008-2009. Although it might be argued that such an approach broadens the opportunities for students, it seems unlikely that any secondary school or its students would ever need such a wide array of offerings; nor does it seem likely that each of the courses in such a list had been subjected to the sort of scrutiny that agency rules require.

In addition, some districts and postsecondary institutions have adopted other forms of agreement or amended the uniform master agreement in significant ways. The agreement between Santa Fe Community College and Santa Fe Public Schools, for example, was amended so that the district pays the course-specific fees and does not require students to return the textbooks because the district “found both practices confusing and cumbersome for students and staff.”

Some of the confusion over multiple agreements seems to stem from the transitional nature of school year 2008-2009. For example, prior to the implementation of the dual credit program, Moriarty-Edgewood Schools had an articulation agreement with Mesalands Community College that was mistakenly re-filed for school years 2008-2009 and 2009-2010. The schools are in the process of reconciling those discrepancies. In another case, involving Aztec High School and San Juan College, the district superintendent refused to sign a uniform master agreement during school year 2008-2009 because too many details remained unresolved (see “Articulated Courses,” in the Appendix).

Course Locations

As slide 15 in the HED data compilation shows, 50 percent of the dual credit courses in school year 2008-2009 were taught on high school campuses and 50 percent on college campuses. This ratio probably supports the goal of increasing access to college-level content, but one might question whether it satisfies the goal of providing students a college experience. There may also be some question about the relative rigor of the courses offered at the two locations. Slide 17 in the HED data packet shows an average GPA of 2.86 for dual credit courses taught on college campuses and an average GPA of 3.16 for those courses taught on high school campuses: a difference, in terms of letter grades, between a C+ and a B-.

Regarding dual credit classes taught on a high school campus, responses to the questionnaires indicate that:

- more of the classes are taught by college faculty than by high school faculty;
- most, though not all, of the high school teachers hold post-baccalaureate degrees;

- most, though not all, hold adjunct faculty status with the postsecondary institution;
- most of the classes are offered during the regular school day; and
- most of the classes are offered either as separate sections or mixed classes rather than entire classes converted to dual credit status.

In the case of mixed classes, some students are earning dual credit by doing additional work or meeting higher standards and others are earning only high school credit by doing only secondary-level work. New Mexico Highlands University, which offered three dual credit classes on high school campuses during school year 2008-2009, has questioned whether the course content for dual credit students really is more rigorous than that assigned to students taking the class for high school credit only.

Responses to the questionnaires indicate divided opinions of the value of offering dual credit classes on high school campuses. To illustrate:

- Las Cruces Public Schools said, “We want students to have the college experience and . . . therefore are going to minimize offerings in our high schools”; and
- UNM-Gallup observed, “Some argue that ideally the courses should be taught on the college campus for a ‘true’ college experience, but given our geographical location (one high school is two and a half hours away) this is unrealistic.”

Finally, as explained more fully under “Restricted Courses” in the Appendix, course location can be a factor in funding so that only under certain conditions will the higher education funding formula support dual credit classes offered on a high school campus.

Compensation for High School Teachers

Just as there is variation in the status of high school teachers who teach courses for dual credit, there is also variation in their rates of compensation. In fact, the reported rates range from a high of \$1,650 per class of 16 students or more (per agreement between Mesalands Community College and Moriarty-Edgewood Schools) to a low of no compensation whatsoever at several postsecondary institutions. Between those extremes, stipends of \$200 or \$250 per course are the most common although New Mexico Junior College pays \$100 per course, and some of the NMSU branches more than \$800.

Among other variations:

- ENMU-Ruidoso reported paying \$250 for classes of fewer than 10 students and \$500 for classes with 10 or more;
- the stipends at ENMU main campus are \$200 for courses with one to nine students and \$400 for courses with 10 or more students; and
- CNM paid high school teachers a stipend of \$250 (to be increased to \$500 in school year 2009-2010) and noted that the stipend is paid to the high school, which “directs the stipend to the teacher through the regular high school payroll.” This arrangement is based on a memorandum of agreement, at least in the case of CNM and Albuquerque Public Schools.

Perhaps the most unusual compensation arrangement is the one used by UNM-Valencia. High school teachers who cooperate with a college instructor in dual credit courses (most of which are offered online) are paid the greater of (1) a \$100 stipend, per course, per semester; or (2) a per-student stipend as follows:

- \$5.00 per student, for each student initially enrolled in the course; and
- an additional \$10.00 for each student who successfully completes the course (grade of C or higher).

For fall 2008, these stipends at UNM-Valencia averaged \$147 per teacher; for spring 2009, \$258 per teacher.

THE STATUS OF THE APPROPRIATION FOR TEXTBOOKS AND COURSE SUPPLIES

In response to the “funded unmandate” regarding dual credit textbooks and course supplies, in April 2009 the Chair and Vice Chair of the LESC sent letters to the Secretary of Public Education asking her to honor the intent of the unsuccessful legislation in allocating and distributing the \$1.5 million that the 2009 Legislature had appropriated for that purpose. Among other provisions, this legislation would have required PED to notify districts of their allocation by April and to distribute the funds by July 2009 (for other details, see “Background,” below). The letters from the Chair and Vice Chair also reaffirmed the LESC’s awareness of the need that this appropriation was intended to address, a need frequently noted in the responses to the LESC questionnaire (see “Barriers Encountered and Changes Suggested by Respondents to the Questionnaires,” below).

During the review of legislation at the May 2009 meeting of the LESC, PED announced that the department had asked a representative group of district superintendents to recommend a method for distributing the appropriation. Then in late August 2009, the Secretary of Public Education sent a memorandum to the superintendents of school districts and the directors of charter schools outlining the process for distributing the funds.

- The first step occurred during the annual program budget questionnaire, which asked districts and charter schools to include the amount spent for “dual credit materials” during school year 2008-2009 and the amount estimated for school year 2009-2010.
- In September 2009, once students have registered for and remained in dual credit classes, PED will award the first half of each district’s request through invoices for reimbursement. On September 10, PED announced the allocation of approximately \$1.0 million of the \$1.5 million appropriation to 79 school districts, 23 locally chartered charter schools, and three state-chartered charter schools. The other districts and charter schools, PED reported, had not requested any of the funds. The week of September 14 the PED budget unit will review the allocations and, by late October or early November, the districts and charter schools should begin receiving their award letters and their funds.
- Then in February 2010, districts will be reimbursed through the same process for their students who have enrolled for the second semester. “Any remaining funds,” the memo

further explains, “will be used to reimburse districts for summer dual credit course material.”

Although the first distribution may arrive in time to provide some relief for school districts and charter schools in the fall 2009 semester, the greater benefit will come in spring 2010. In the meantime, secondary schools will probably continue the varied practices that they reported employing during school year 2008-2009: buying the books for the students, requiring the students to buy the books, lending books to the students, using high school textbooks, or reimbursing students and parents for the cost of textbooks. As an example of the last approach, APS employed a multi-step process involving a reimbursement packet, W-9 taxpayer identification forms, receipts from the bookstore at UNM or CNM, and delivery of all materials to the district’s accounting department. The district also offered an alternate method by which the students charged their books at the college bookstore, which then sent an invoice to APS.

THE SPECIAL CIRCUMSTANCES OF STATE-SUPPORTED SCHOOLS

Included in the dual credit program through the amendments in 2008, state-supported schools present unique circumstances and challenges in participating in the dual credit program. For one thing, although their students are assigned PED-issued ID numbers, neither PED nor HED received dual credit data from the state-supported schools during school year 2008-2009. There are plans, however, for these data to be reported for school year 2009-2010. For another thing, the students served at these schools have needs and circumstances not often found among secondary students in general.

Although it has signed a uniform master agreement with NMSU-Alamogordo, the New Mexico School for the Blind and Visually Impaired has not yet enrolled students in the dual credit program; but the other state-supported schools have enrolled students, though in small numbers.

Schools Operated by the Children, Youth and Families Department

The schools operated by the Children, Youth and Families Department (CYFD) have encountered some unique issues with the dual credit program. As the Superintendent of Education for CYFD explains, because “Juvenile Justice students may not leave the facility grounds,” they are able to access dual credit courses only online. While this option is available to all students, it has become somewhat problematic for the CYFD schools for several reasons. For one, the high mobility of the students complicates their participation in the statewide cyber academy because of a requirement in law that the CYFD schools must “enter into a contract with the school district in which the facility is located.” For another, despite the facility-bound nature of the students, college instructors have on occasion insisted on the students’ appearing at other locations. Finally, few students in the juvenile justice system possess the skills, including typing, to take full advantage of online education.

CYFD schools have also had some difficulty dealing with the variety of admissions standards among the postsecondary institutions across the state and the use of waitlists by some community colleges. The latter point, according to the superintendent, has required CYFD teachers to check their students’ enrollment status daily and to buy textbooks on a contingency basis, with no assurance that the student will be able to use the book after all or that a bookstore

will refund the cost. Another issue with textbooks is that the instructors must buy them on behalf of the students using agency purchase orders, which are not always smoothly processed.

New Mexico School for the Deaf

Preliminary responses to the LESC questionnaire indicated that SFCC was charging the New Mexico School for the Deaf (NMSD) for the tuition of four NMSD students enrolled in dual credit classes at SFCC. However, a series of emails among NMSD, SFCC, and the LESC staff determined that these students were not enrolled pursuant to a uniform master agreement and that, therefore, SFCC was entitled to charge tuition. Now, with more direct communication, the two educational institutions are likely to have a better understanding of the terms. Even so, both institutions indicate lingering issues with the provision and quality of interpreters in American Sign Language.

BARRIERS ENCOUNTERED AND CHANGES SUGGESTED BY RESPONDENTS TO THE QUESTIONNAIRES

Barriers to the Program

In response to the question asking about any problems with or barriers to the dual credit program, several points were cited repeatedly by secondary and postsecondary respondents alike:

- the high cost of textbooks and cumbersome logistics of obtaining them;
- difficulties of students' obtaining transportation to the site of a dual credit class;
- lack of sufficient and timely communication between secondary and postsecondary schools, between HED and PED, and between the two agencies and their respective institutions;
- frequent, and often eleventh-hour, changes in agency rules or practices; and
- the paperwork burden, especially as created by the student request forms with their required signatures.

In addition, respondents from both secondary and postsecondary schools expressed concern about what they saw as a conflict between dual credit and Advanced Placement, whether in terms of competing for human resources or credit hours. And some postsecondary institutions reported that high school officials were often unfamiliar with the features and requirements of the dual credit program. In fact, one of these institutions, Northern New Mexico College, found high school officials sometimes resistant to enrolling students in dual credit, partly because of the cost of textbooks and partly because of the fear of an adverse effect on the high school enrollment numbers.

Looking ahead to participation in the dual credit program in the future, the New Mexico School for the Blind and Visually Impaired anticipates instructional materials as a barrier. However, the school also anticipates providing materials in Braille as needed by producing the Braille in-house.

Suggested Changes to the Program

When asked what components or requirements of the dual credit program they would change, if any, the one recommendation made by both secondary and postsecondary schools was to increase the availability of core courses for dual credit. Among their other suggestions, in addition to removing the barriers identified above:

- secondary schools recommended more dual credit offerings on the high school campuses;
- two charter schools recommended allowing developmental courses to be taken under the dual credit program;
- postsecondary institutions called for more oversight of the program; and
- two postsecondary institutions recommended giving students more of a stake in the process.

On this last point, NMSU-Alamogordo said, “From years of experience prior to the current dual credit incarnation, we believe that students should have to contribute to their textbooks and supplies (perhaps not at the full cost, but something). Students tend to have more commitment when they have a financial stake in the matter.”

EVALUATION OF THE DUAL CREDIT PROGRAM BY HED AND PED

Some of the issues raised in this report and the Appendix may come under further scrutiny during an upcoming evaluation of the dual credit program. As one of its provisions, the dual credit legislation requires HED and PED to “evaluate the dual credit program in terms of its accessibility to students statewide and its effect on:

1. student achievement in secondary education;
2. student enrollment and completion of higher education; and
3. school districts, charter schools, state-supported schools and public post-secondary educational institutions.”

At least since July 2009, the two agencies have been conferring on their upcoming evaluation of the program; and one of the tools they are considering is a dual credit governance workplan, which, now in draft form, addresses a variety of project objectives and strategies for achieving them, as well as potential obstacles to those objectives. The LESC expects to receive the first annual evaluation in November or December 2009.

POLICY OPTION

Despite its popularity and broad support, dual credit is not for everyone. As the 2007 legislation was being debated, the New Mexico Military Institute asked to be excluded from the program because of the unique academic programs at the institute. Then in 2009, a bill to exclude the Middle College High School in Gallup from the dual credit program was found to be unnecessary because of the unique academic program at that school. A similar school being

proposed by Las Cruces Public Schools may not be a good fit for the dual credit program either.

Given these points, together with the competition and confusion among programs that this report and others have noted, the committee may wish to consider the following policy option:

Introduce a memorial requesting that HED and PED convene a broadly representative work group to develop a master plan for accelerated learning that would offer high school students a number of options for study at the postsecondary level. This plan for accelerated learning could not only address the issues related to dual credit as identified in this report and the appendix (and perhaps in the subsequent evaluation of the program by HED and PED); but it could also identify ways in which the various programs – dual credit, Advanced Placement, articulated courses, concurrent enrollment, and middle college high school – could complement rather than compete with each other in the P-20 system by identifying the population and circumstances that each program can serve most effectively. The plan could also include the necessary agency oversight to ensure faithful and effective implementation.

BACKGROUND

Until enactment of the legislation discussed above, dual credit agreements in New Mexico were governed almost entirely by agency rule (HED and PED) rather than statute. In fact, the only statutory provision was enacted in 1990, when the Legislature amended several sections of statute governing two-year public postsecondary institutions to require a school district to transfer to the community college, the branch community college, the parent institution of an off-campus instructional program, the technical and vocational institute, or the area vocational school the tuition and fees for any student enrolled in classes for dual credit – although the statute never uses the term “dual credit” or “concurrent enrollment.” An advisory committee that testified to the LESC in 2003 recommended amending statute to apply similar provisions to four-year postsecondary institutions, and the LESC endorsed legislation to do so in 2004. The original bill was amended to add the following condition to the transfer of funds, to two-year and four-year postsecondary institutions alike: unless the school district and the postsecondary institution have agreed to waive or reduce tuition or fees. The LESC endorsed this legislation as amended in 2005 and again in 2006; but none of the bills ever passed.

During the December 2006 meeting, the LESC asked the staff to suggest legislation for funding and administering dual credit. In response to that request, staff reviewed the work of previous work groups on dual credit, the rules of HED and PED, legislation introduced during previous sessions, the practices in a number of other states, and other information. The bill that was introduced in 2007 reflected this work as well as the recommendations of a small group convened by the LESC to represent secondary and postsecondary education and additional recommendations by staff at HED and PED.

Once the 2007 legislation was enacted, secondary schools expressed some concern about the fiscal impact of the requirement that they provide the textbooks and course supplies for their students enrolled in the dual credit program. To help offset that impact for school year 2008-2009, the Legislature increased the FY 09 appropriation to the Instructional Material Fund by \$1.3 million.

To produce a long-term solution, during the 2008 interim the LESC Chair asked the Director to convene a work group to determine the amount of money needed and a methodology for distributing the funds. Through its study and research, this work group recommended the creation of the Dual Credit Textbook Fund, an appropriation of \$1.5 million for FY 09, and a distribution method somewhat like the process used in the *Instructional Material Law*, except that the allocations would be based on a school's or district's actual enrollment in dual credit courses during the preceding calendar year and that PED would distribute 100 percent of those allocations, to the extent that funds are available, by July 1 of each year.

APPENDIX

OTHER DUAL CREDIT ISSUES

Activities and Rulings of the Dual Credit Council

Created by agency rules (HED and PED), the Dual Credit Council comprises six members: three each from HED and PED, appointed by the respective cabinet secretaries. As prescribed in rule, the council administers an appeals process for secondary and postsecondary schools “to address issues outside the scope of the [uniform master] agreement, including the determination of alignment of course content to determine the appropriate credit ratio.” The council also makes recommendations to the two department secretaries “on issues not addressed in the agreement.”

During meetings in 2008 and 2009, the Dual Credit Council has discussed such issues and questions as the effect of grades in dual credit classes on a student’s eligibility for the lottery scholarship; instances of additional requirements imposed by high schools – requiring students to make deposits, for example, or restricting the number of classes; and the participation of tribal colleges in the dual credit program. The council has also drafted a workplan and issued rulings in two cases brought on appeal:

- In an appeal brought by New Mexico Junior College and five school districts in Lea County (Eunice Public Schools, Hobbs Municipal Schools, Jal Public Schools, Lovington Municipal Schools, and Tatum Municipal Schools), the council recommended further study of the alignment of PED standards with the higher education competencies for several courses and rejected some requested variations in course transcripting ratios (that is, the number of college credit hours and high school units earned by a given course).
- In an appeal brought by Clovis Community College and Clovis Municipal Schools, the council rejected a request to allow a transcripting ratio of 6:1 (that is, six college credits for one high school unit) for certain courses in social sciences and English.

The Dual Credit Council was not mentioned often in the responses to the questionnaires, but one of the postsecondary respondents questioned the membership of the council, suggesting the addition of school representatives.

Geographic Areas of Responsibility

Created by HED rule in 2007, the geographic areas of responsibility (GARs) apply to two-year postsecondary institutions, somewhat as district boundaries apply to school districts. The purpose of the GARs, as explained in rule, is “to facilitate the effective planning and delivery of public two-year postsecondary educational programs and services throughout New Mexico, with due regard for economy and efficiency of delivery and the avoidance of unnecessary program duplication.” As far as dual credit courses are concerned, the GARs might be reflected in the parties to the uniform master agreements.

That is, if a school district sought a particular course for dual credit – beginning diesel mechanics, for example – it would enter into an agreement with the two-year school in whose GAR the district was located, called the host institution.

The rule further provides that the GAR designations establish a right of first refusal. That is, in the example of the beginning diesel mechanics class, if the host two-year institution declined, in writing, to offer the class, another institution, called a partner institution, could offer it. The rule also provides a grandfather clause applicable to “existing programs” – that is, those programs offered before January 1, 2006, without regard to GARs.

These provisions notwithstanding, however, responses to the questionnaire indicate that the GARs are a sensitive issue that, in practice, may have prevented some dual credit courses from being offered. One institution in particular provided an account of having been approached by a school district outside its GAR to offer courses from one of its well-established programs, only to have the host institution raise an objection. The host institution then announced plans to develop courses in the requested program although it seems not to have done so. In another case, a two-year institution had a pre-existing agreement with a school district outside its GAR but chose not to assert its right to maintain that agreement in the face of opposition from the host institution.

Finally, the exclusion of four-year institutions from the GAR designations is a point of contention with some two-year institutions, as reflected in some responses to the questionnaire.

Restricted Courses

HED rule identifies certain courses as “restricted” – that is, they are courses whose expenses are funded through certain restricted sources, like grants or contracts, or courses that are offered at locations not accessible to the general public. As such, they are not eligible for funding through the higher education funding formula.

To help ensure “responsible and equitable use of public funds,” an internal policy at HED extends the concept of restricted courses to dual credit courses offered only at a high school campus. “However,” this policy continues, “offering a course at a restricted location such as a high school campus does not automatically restrict the course from funding.” That is, a dual credit course offered at a high school could still be funded if “another section of the course [is] offered at an unrestricted location where access to the general public is not inhibited” and if it is offered in the same semester as the course on the high school campus. Exceptions are granted, on appeal to HED, for postsecondary institutions located more than 40 miles from the high school in question.

Overall, the responses to the questionnaire called little attention to this policy; however, ENMU-Ruidoso offered an extended argument against it.

Articulated Courses

Predating the dual credit program is another form of collaboration between secondary and postsecondary schools known as articulated courses. Under this agreement, typically, the course is taught at the high school by the high school teacher, often in consultation with a postsecondary faculty member; and, through arrangement with the college, students can demonstrate college-level competency and, after enrolling, earn college credit without repeating a similar course at the college. As HED explains, a key difference between articulated courses and dual credit courses is “the timeline for credit earning(s).” That is, whereas dual credit can earn a student credit at both levels simultaneously, the college credit through an articulation agreement is earned afterward, once the student enrolls in the postsecondary institution that was party to the articulation agreement. Arguably, then, articulated courses are not eligible for funding under the dual credit program. Be that as it may, districts and postsecondary institutions with a history of articulation agreements have attempted to make those agreements conform to the terms of the dual credit program, a process that, in the words of an official at San Juan College, is “akin to fitting a round peg into a square hole.”

One of the issues to emerge from this attempt is disagreement between high school and college faculty over the assignment of a student’s final course grade. The dual credit regulations require the school district to record on the student’s transcript, unchanged, the grade given by the postsecondary institution. However, especially when there is a history of agreements for articulated classes, as with Aztec High School and San Juan College, the high school teachers have sometimes objected to this practice. Having done most of the teaching, they question the appropriateness of a final grade assigned by a postsecondary faculty member who has had little involvement with the class. For its part, the college contends that the classes have been taught “under the direction of college faculty.”

Multiple Terms

During 2001 and 2002, staff from the Commission on Higher Education and the State Department of Education (the precursors, respectively, of HED and PED) studied the issue of concurrent enrollment, the prevalent term at that time, and surveyed school district superintendents and administrators at the state’s postsecondary educational institutions. Among other findings, this study found ambiguity and inconsistency in the use of the terms “concurrent enrollment,” “dual enrollment,” and “dual credit.”

The distinctions in meaning have become somewhat clearer since 2007. As noted in the report, state law now defines the dual credit program; and agency rules define “concurrent enrollment” as “enrollment of high school students in courses at the postsecondary level that are not designated as dual credit.” (Under concurrent enrollment, then, the student typically earns credit at the college level but not at the high school level.) These definitions notwithstanding, the three terms – including the undefined “dual enrollment” – are still used almost interchangeably, as illustrated in oral and written comments from school officials at all levels. Such confusion is likely a factor in the miscommunications that seem to characterize dual credit activities.

Recruitment Efforts

Most of the postsecondary institutions reported that they actively recruit students for their dual credit classes. Among the common recruitment tactics are:

- site visits to high schools;
- participation in college night activities, open houses, and career fairs;
- contacts with school counselors, especially by dual credit coordinators;
- college websites; and
- radio and newspaper advertisements and direct-mail campaigns.

In other recruitment efforts:

- both New Mexico Junior College and UNM-Alamogordo collaborate with county associations; and
- ENMU-Ruidoso has designated a student as the dual credit liaison to visit area high schools on a regular basis to provide information and assistance not only to students but also to high school faculty and staff.

The institutions that do recruit students believe that their efforts have been successful. Slides 13 and 14 in the HED data collection suggest some correlation between recruitment and numbers or percentages of dual credit students enrolled, but the correlation is limited. To illustrate, all three of the institutions with over 1,000 dual credit enrollments in either semester of school year 2008-2009 – CNM, NMJC, and NMSU-Doña Ana – described active and effective recruitment efforts; however, two of the five for which dual credit enrollment constituted 15 percent or more of their total enrollment reported that they did no recruitment whatsoever. One might infer that the recruitment efforts of NMJC were the most effective of all because it is the only school with more than 1,000 students and more than 15 percent of its students enrolled in dual credit courses.

NEW MEXICO DUAL CREDIT PROGRAM FOR ACADEMIC YEAR 08-09

Legislative Education Study Committee: Senator Cynthia Nava, Chair
September 15, 2009
New Mexico Higher Education Department

Types of Dual Credit Data Collected

2

- SSN
- STARS ID
- Demographic
 - ▣ Name
 - ▣ Ethnicity
 - ▣ Gender
 - ▣ Birth date
- High School
- Postsecondary Institution
- Type of Courses Taken
- Credit Hours
- Grades
- Census Enrollment
- Year of High School Graduation
- Methods of Course Delivery
- Course Location (Spring 2009)

Higher Education data collection is based on an enrollment snapshot taken on the census date. Census dates occur usually on the 21st day after the beginning of the semester.

Dual Credit Enrollment Information

3

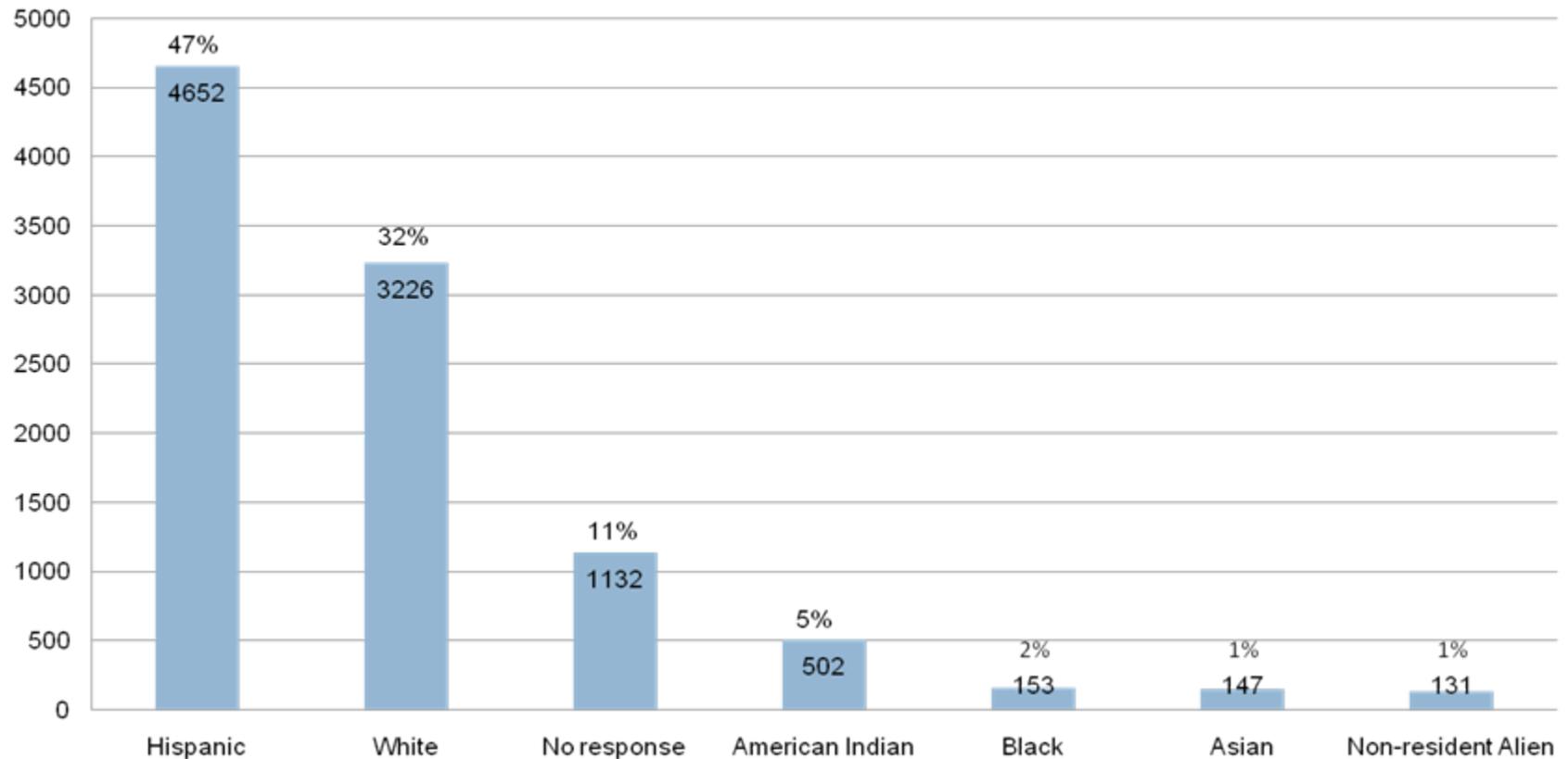
- Fall 2008
 - 1,287 Courses
 - 6,615 Students
 - 10,496 Records
 - Spring 2009
 - 1,420 Courses
 - 7,086 Students
 - 11,957 Records
- 
- Academic Year 2008-2009
 - 9,951 Unique Students (Census +)
 - 5,171 Female Students (Census Only)
 - 4,608 Male Students (Census Only)

The term “records” refers to the combination of courses and students. A single student can enroll in two classes, which will result in two records.

Dual Credit Enrollment By Ethnicity

4

Academic Year 2008-2009

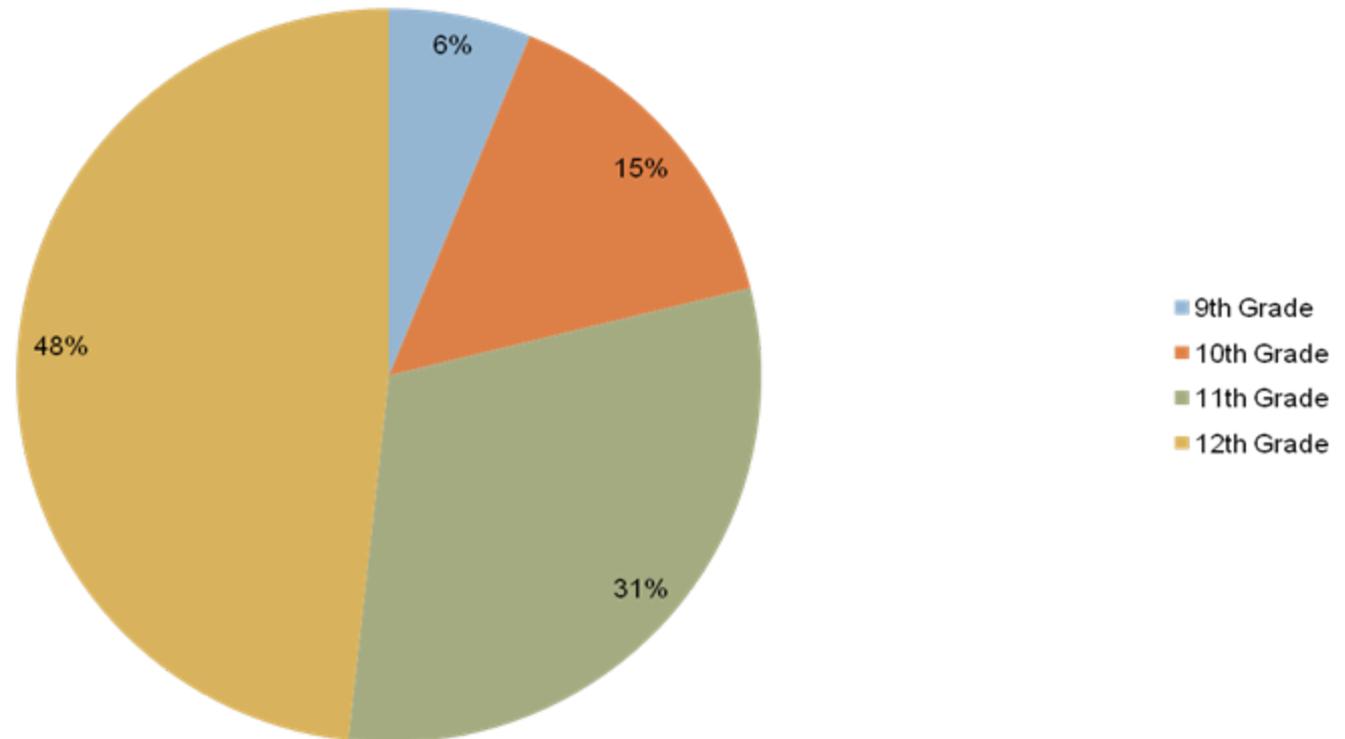


The term “non-resident alien” generally refers to students who are not U.S. citizens or do not have permanent resident status.

Dual Credit High School Grade Level

5

Academic Year 2008-2009

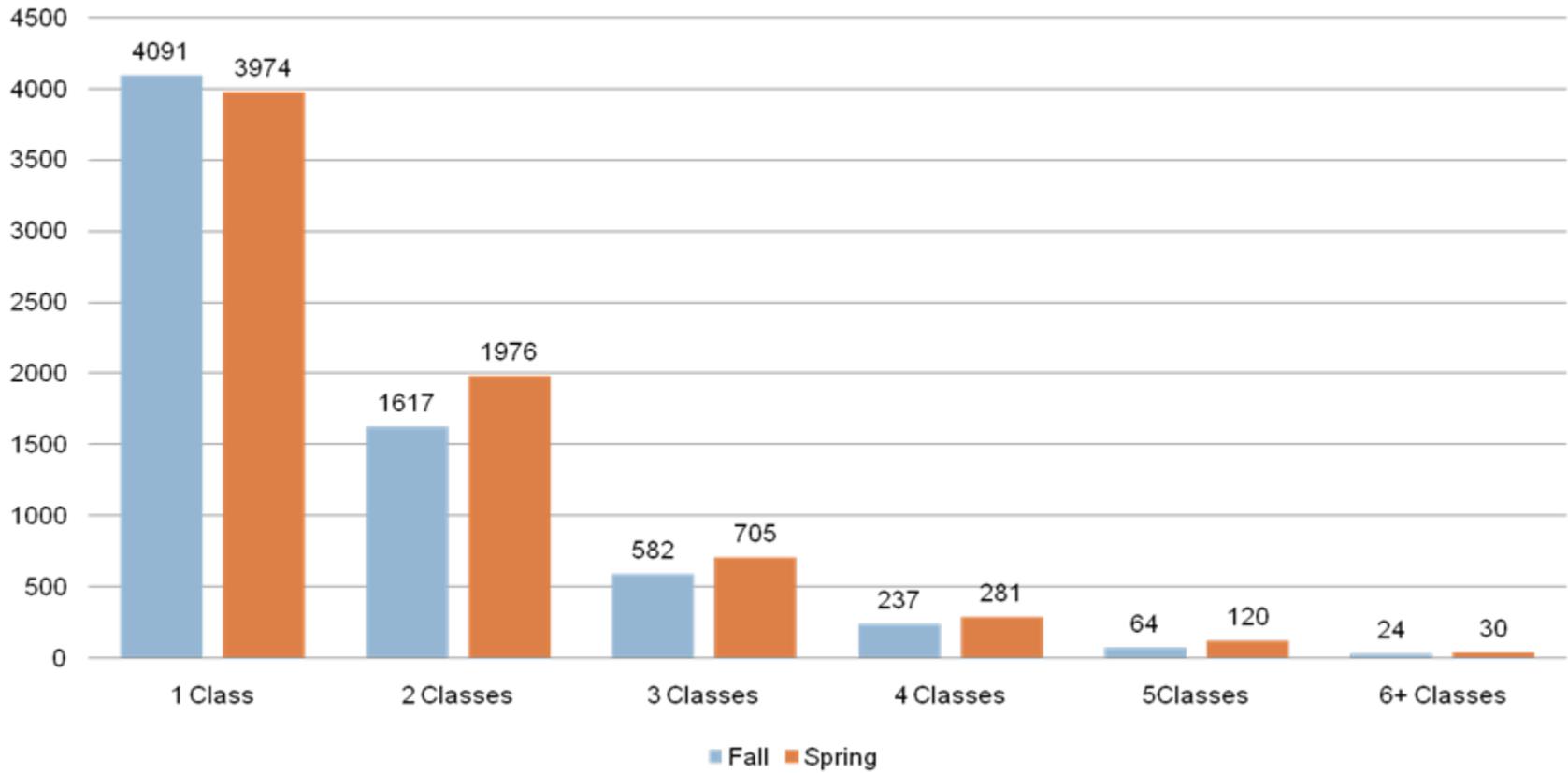


Source: HED and PED data match

Number of Classes Taken

6

Academic Year 2008-2009



Subject Areas of Dual Credit Courses: Fall 2008

7

CIP Codes	Title	Enrollment
01	Agriculture and related sciences	171
03	Natural resources and conservation	27
04	Architecture and related services	1
05	Area ethnic cultural and gender studies	8
09	Communication and journalism	281
11	Computer and information sciences	728
12	Personal and culinary services	208
13	Education	224
14	Engineering	552
16	Foreign language, literatures, linguistics	465
19	Family and consumer / human science	93
22	Legal profession and studies	18
23	English language and literature / letters	834
24	Liberal arts, general studies, humanities	263
26	Biological and biomedical science	437
27	Mathematics and statistics	693
30	Multi / interdisciplinary studies	2
31	Park, recreation, leisure, and fitness	67

CIP Codes	Title	Enrollment
32	Basic skills	368
36	Leisure and recreational	147
37	Personal awareness and self improvement	4
38	Philosophy and religious studies	39
40	Physical science	455
41	Science technology / technicians	5
42	Psychology	371
43	Security and protective services	192
44	Public administration and social service professions	14
45	Social science	494
46	Construction trades	313
47	Mechanic and repair technologies / technicians	349
48	Precision production	433
50	Visual and performing arts	471
51	Health profession and related clinical sciences	758
52	Business, management, marketing, and related	508
54	History	330

CIP refers to Classification of Instructional Program, a federal classification system of courses by subject area.

Subject Areas of Dual Credit Courses: Spring 2009

8

CIP Codes	Title	Enrollment
01	Agriculture and related sciences	173
03	Natural resources and conservation	9
04	Architecture and related services	1
05	Area ethnic cultural and gender studies	2
09	Communication and journalism	126
10	Communications technologies	181
11	Computer and information sciences	683
12	Personal and culinary services	192
13	Education	262
14	Engineering	94
15	Engineering technologies / technicians	485
16	Foreign language, literatures, linguistics	548
19	Family and consumer / human science	67
22	Legal profession and studies	13
23	English language and literature / letters	1056
24	Liberal arts, general studies, humanities	275
26	Biological and biomedical science	382
27	Mathematics and statistics	736
30	Multi / interdisciplinary studies	1
31	Park, recreation, leisure, and fitness	112

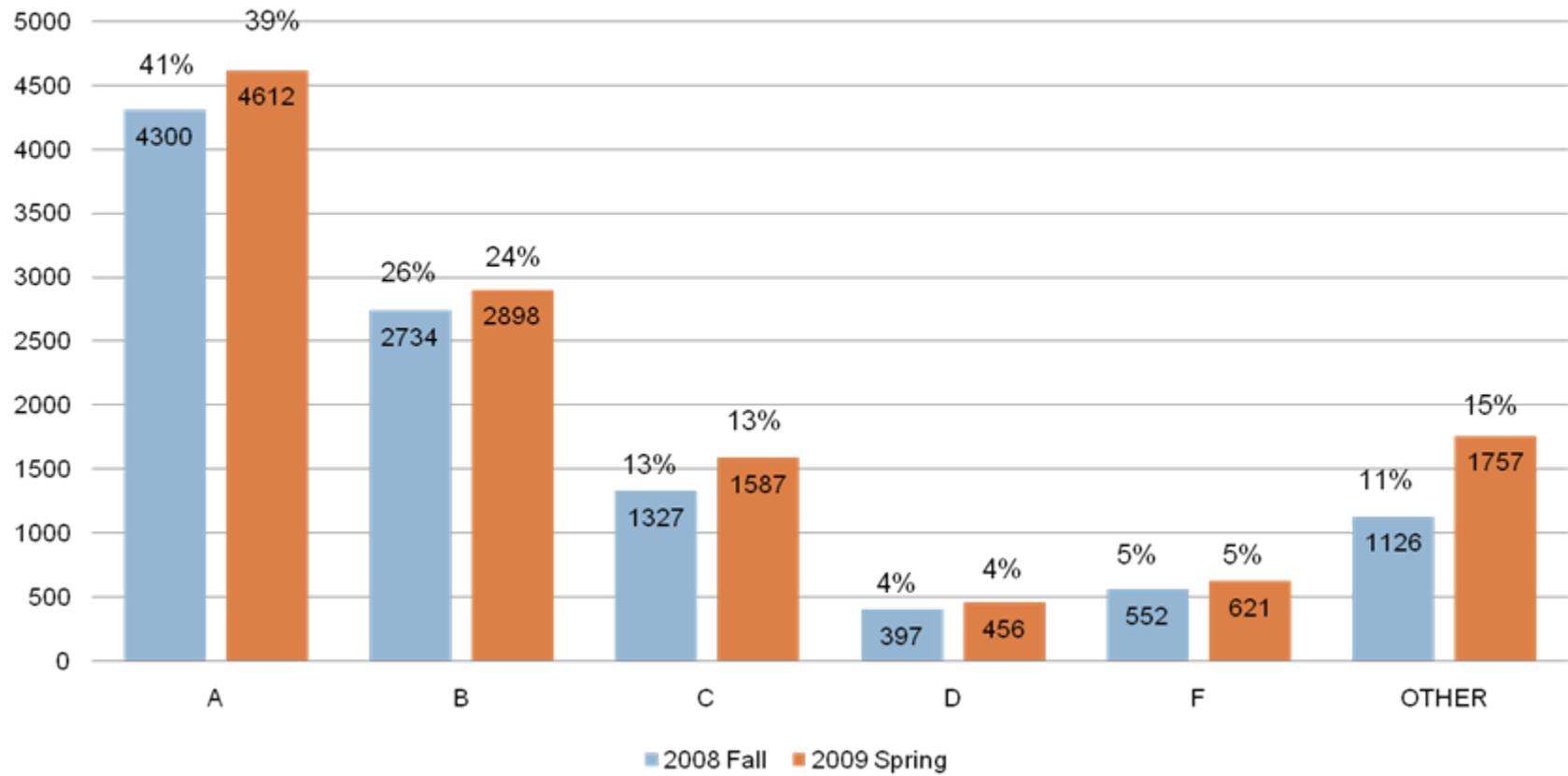
CIP Codes	Title	Enrollment
32	Basic skills	237
36	Leisure and recreational	166
37	Personal awareness and self improvement	35
38	Philosophy and religious studies	76
40	Physical science	756
42	Psychology	506
43	Security and protective services	201
44	Public administration and social service professions	2
45	Social science	511
46	Construction trades	416
47	Mechanic and repair technologies / technicians	395
48	Precision production	368
49	Transportation and materials moving	1
50	Visual and performing arts	486
51	Health profession and related clinical sciences	936
52	Business, management, marketing, and related	490
54	History	539

CIP refers to Classification of Instructional Program, a federal classification system of courses by subject area.

Course Grade Distribution

9

Academic Year 2008-2009

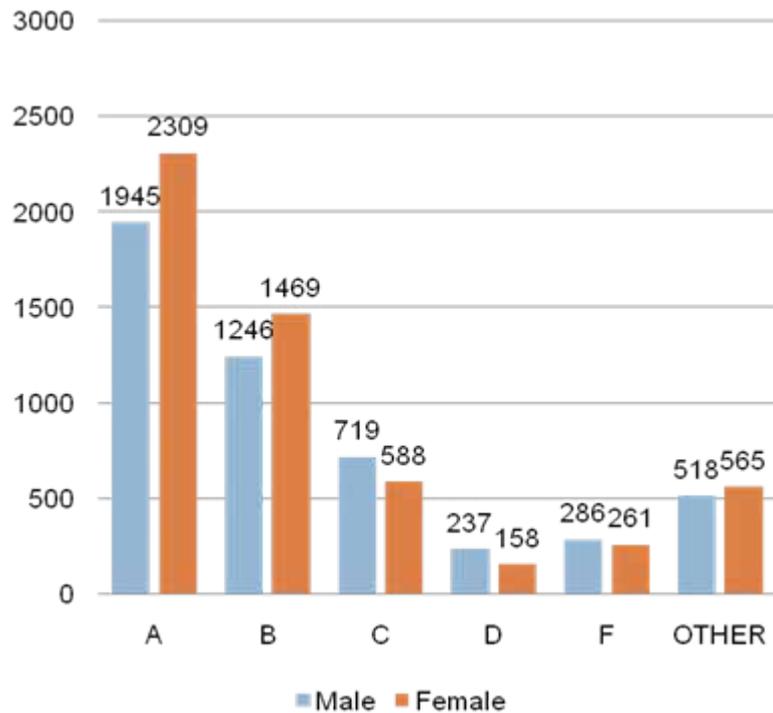


The term "other" includes Pass / Fail, Credit / No Credit, Withdrawals, No Grade, etc.

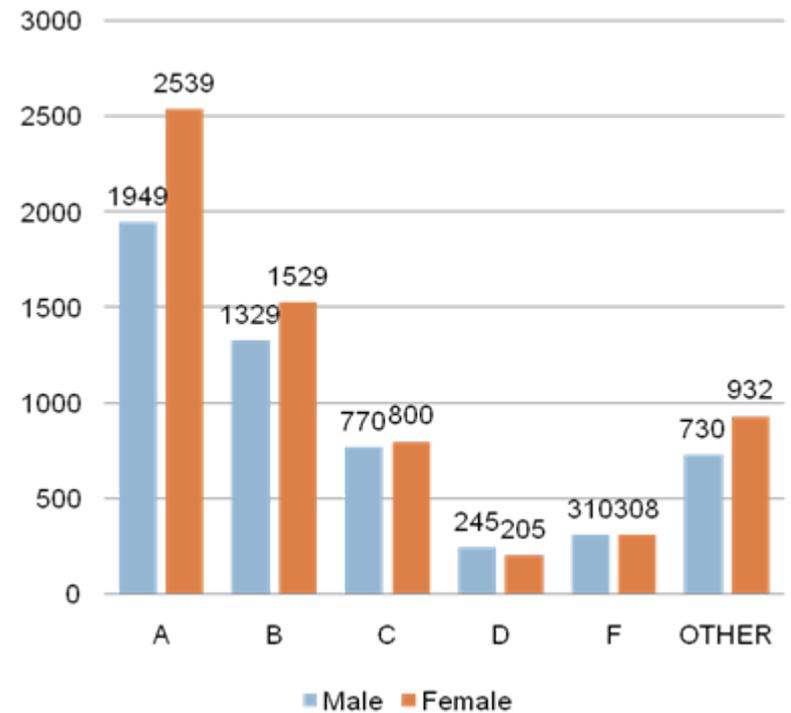
Course Grade Distribution by Gender

10

Fall 2008



Spring 2009

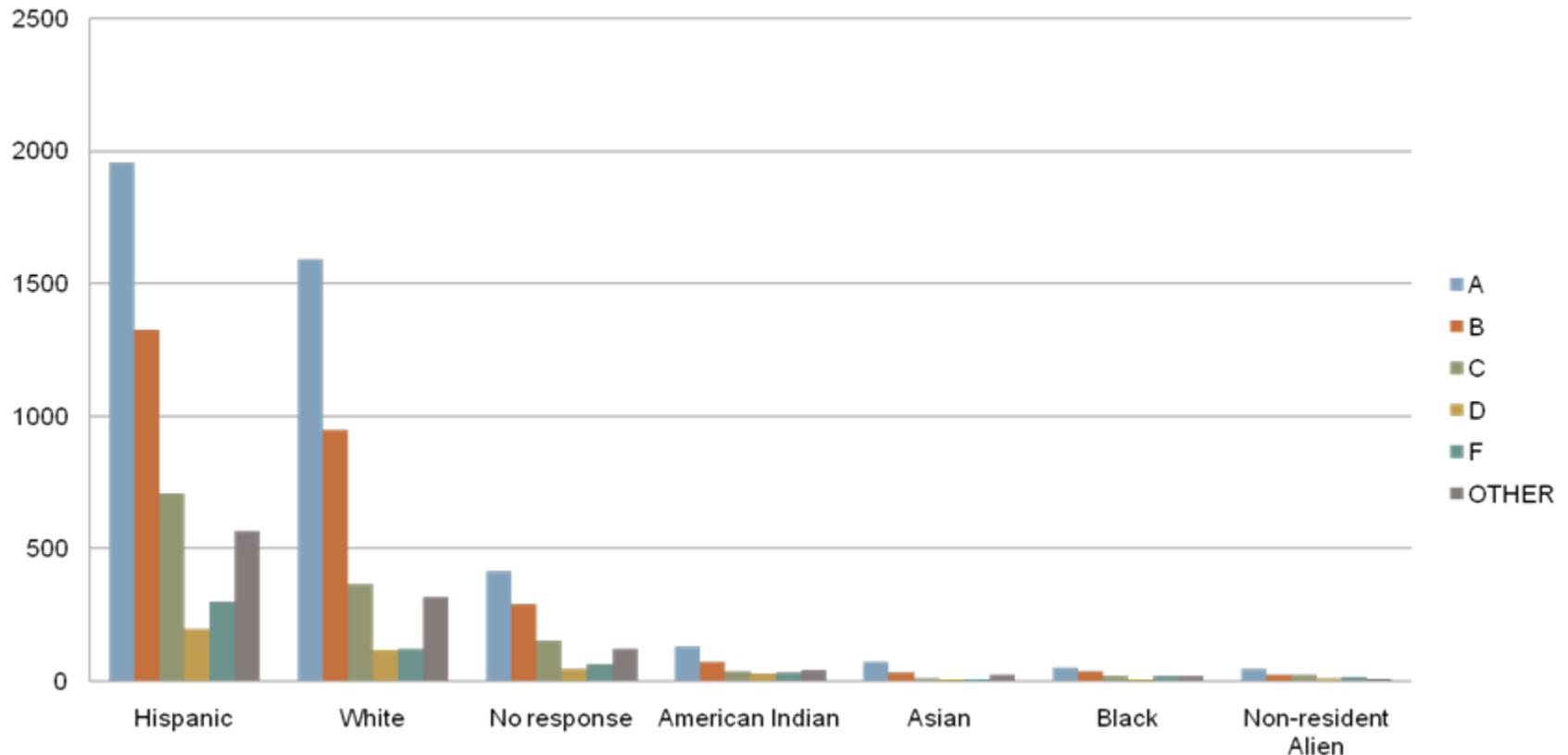


The term "other" includes Pass / Fail, Credit / No Credit, Withdrawals, No Grade, etc.

Course Grades Distribution By Ethnicity

11

Fall 208 Dual Credit Data



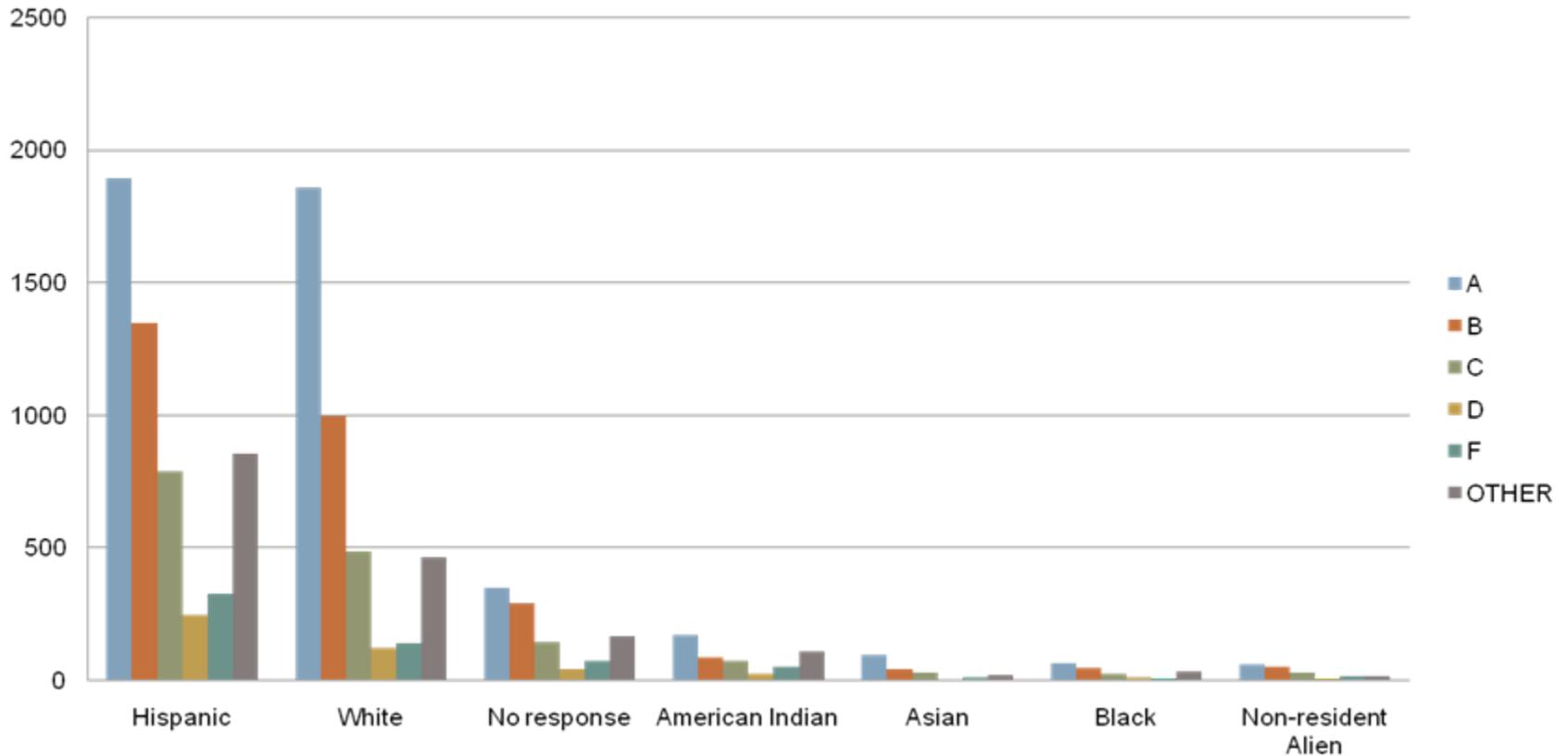
The term "other" includes Pass / Fail, Credit / No Credit, Withdrawals, No Grade, etc.

The term "non-resident alien" generally refers to students who are not U.S. citizens or do not have permanent resident status.

Spring 2009 Dual Credit Data

12

Grades Distribution By Ethnicity



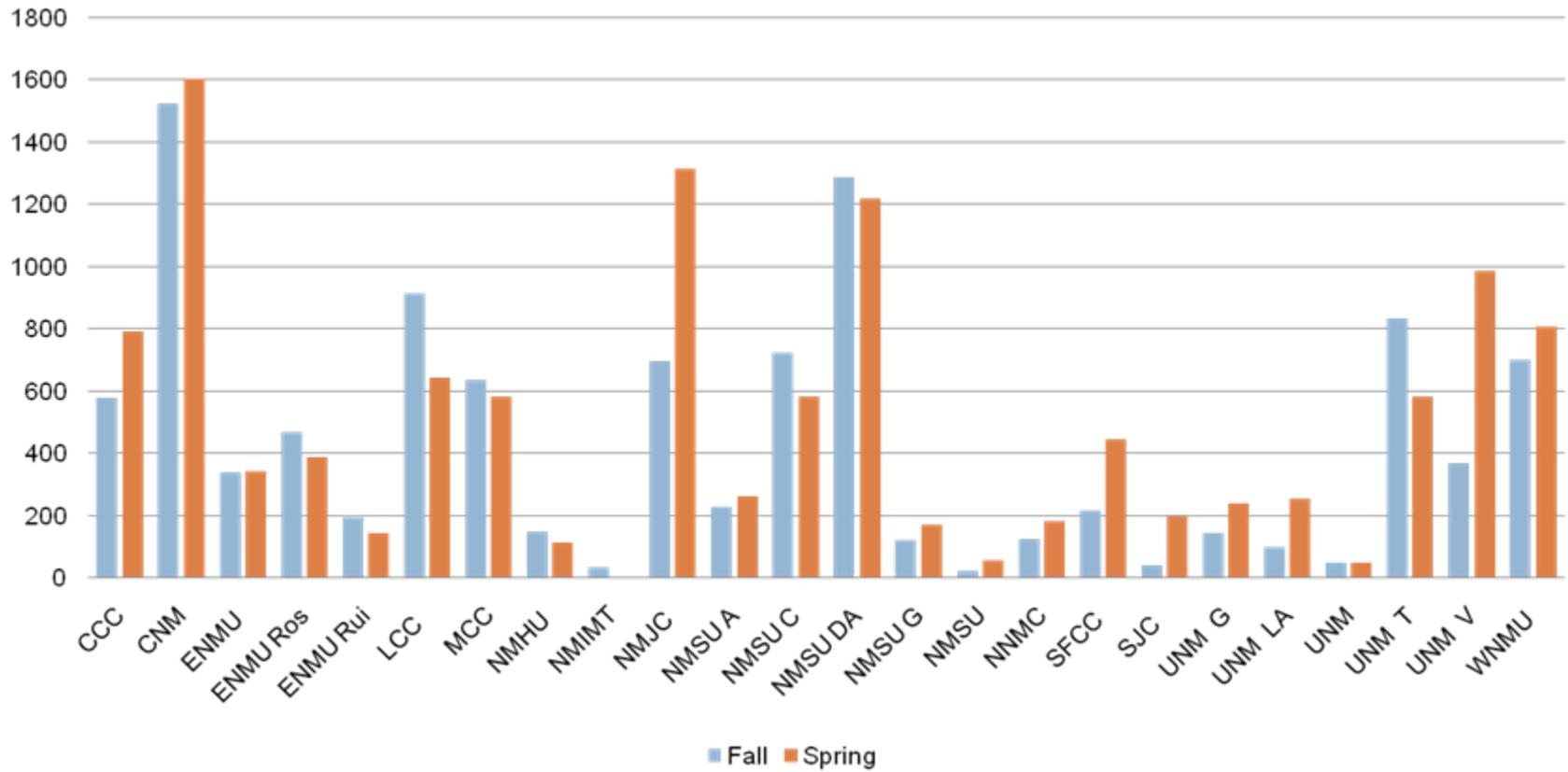
The term "other" includes Pass / Fail, Credit / No Credit, Withdrawals, No Grade, etc.

The term "non-resident alien" generally refers to students who are not U.S. citizens or do not have permanent resident status.

Dual Credit Enrollment at Postsecondary Institutions

13

Academic Year 2008-2009

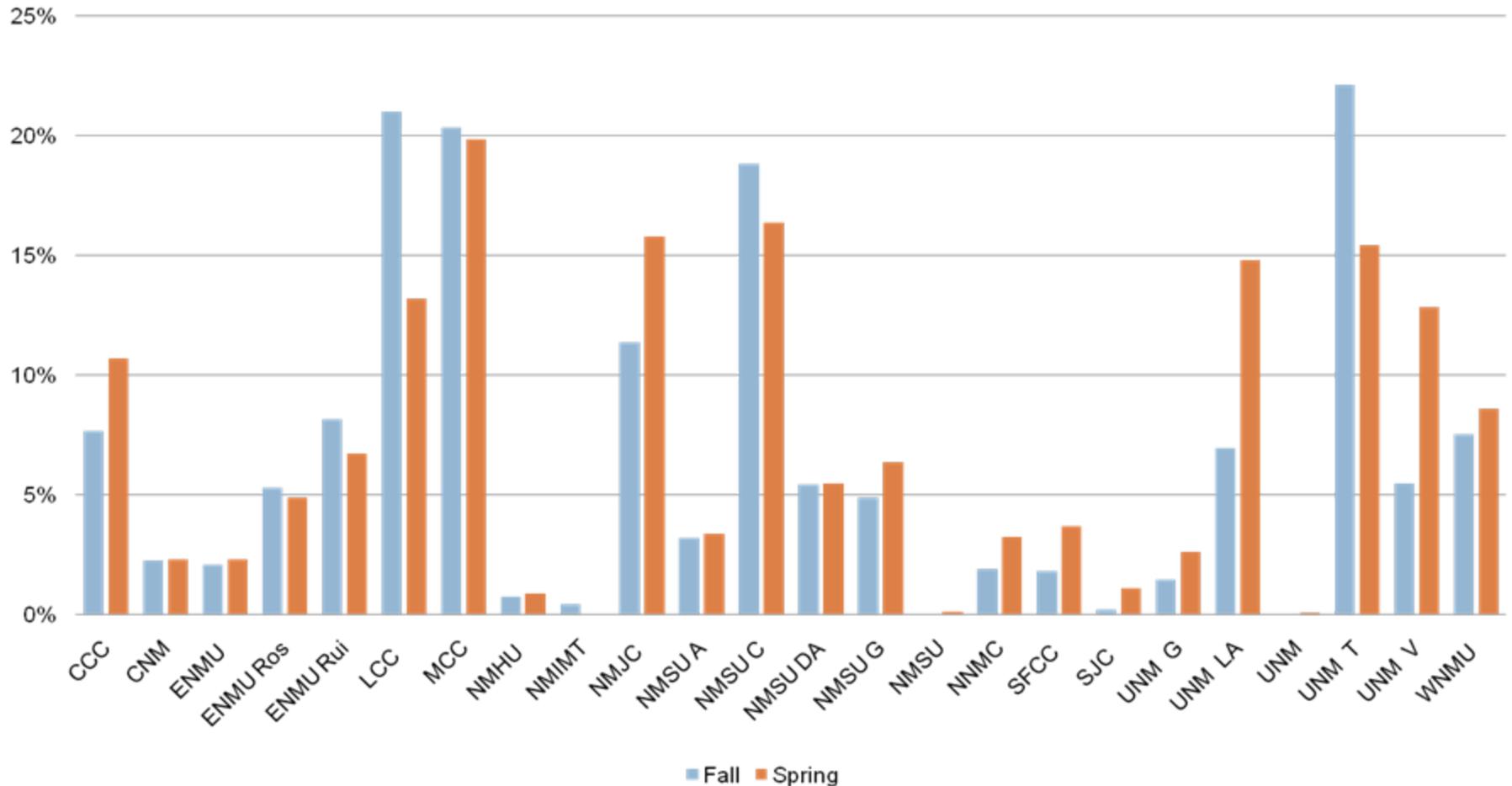


A complete list of institutional abbreviations is available as the last slide of this presentation.

Dual Credit Hours as a Percentage of Total Institution Credit Hours

14

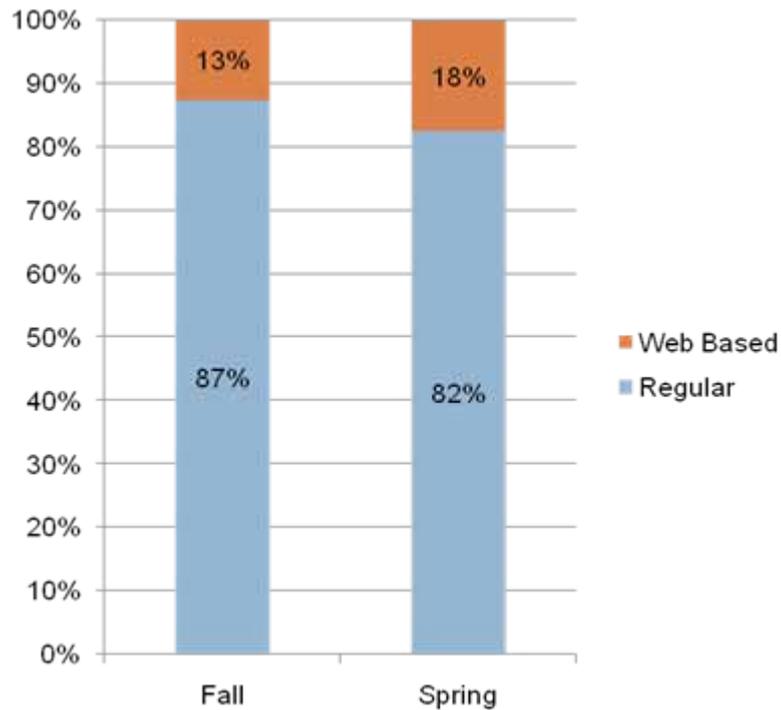
Academic Year 2008-2009



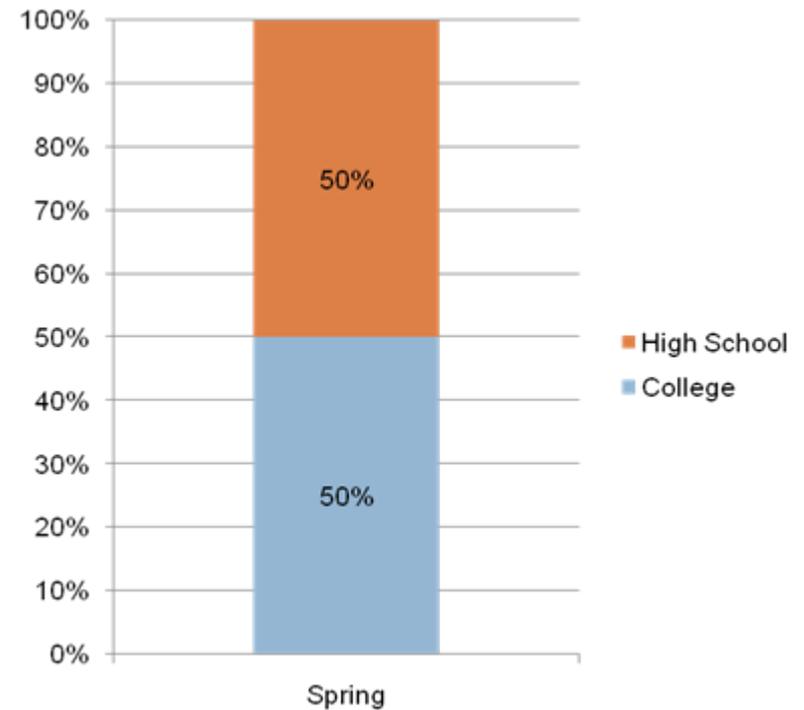
Course Delivery and Course Location

15

Online vs. Regular Instruction



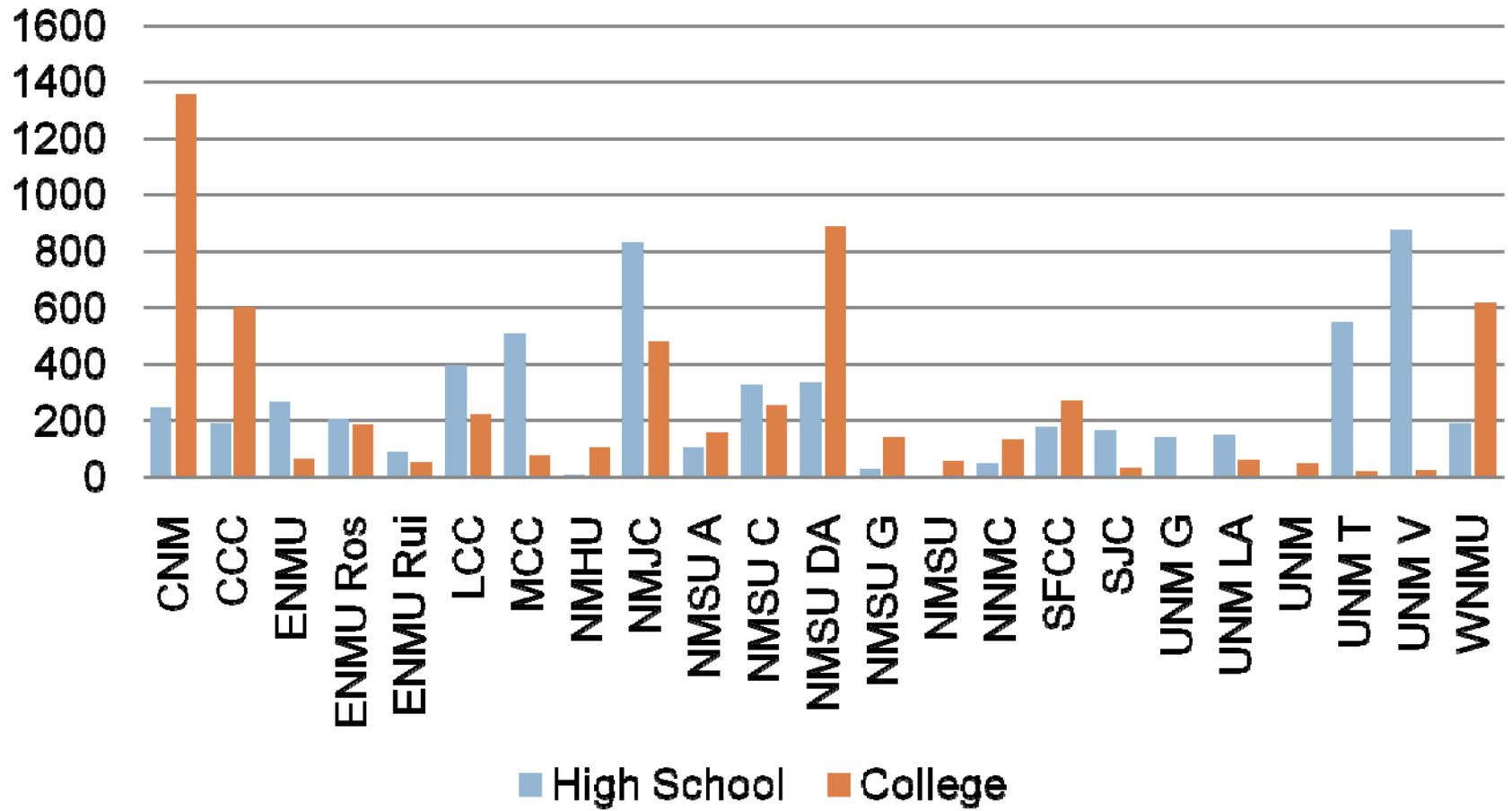
High School vs. College Campus



Location data collection began in Spring 2009.

Course Location by Postsecondary Institution

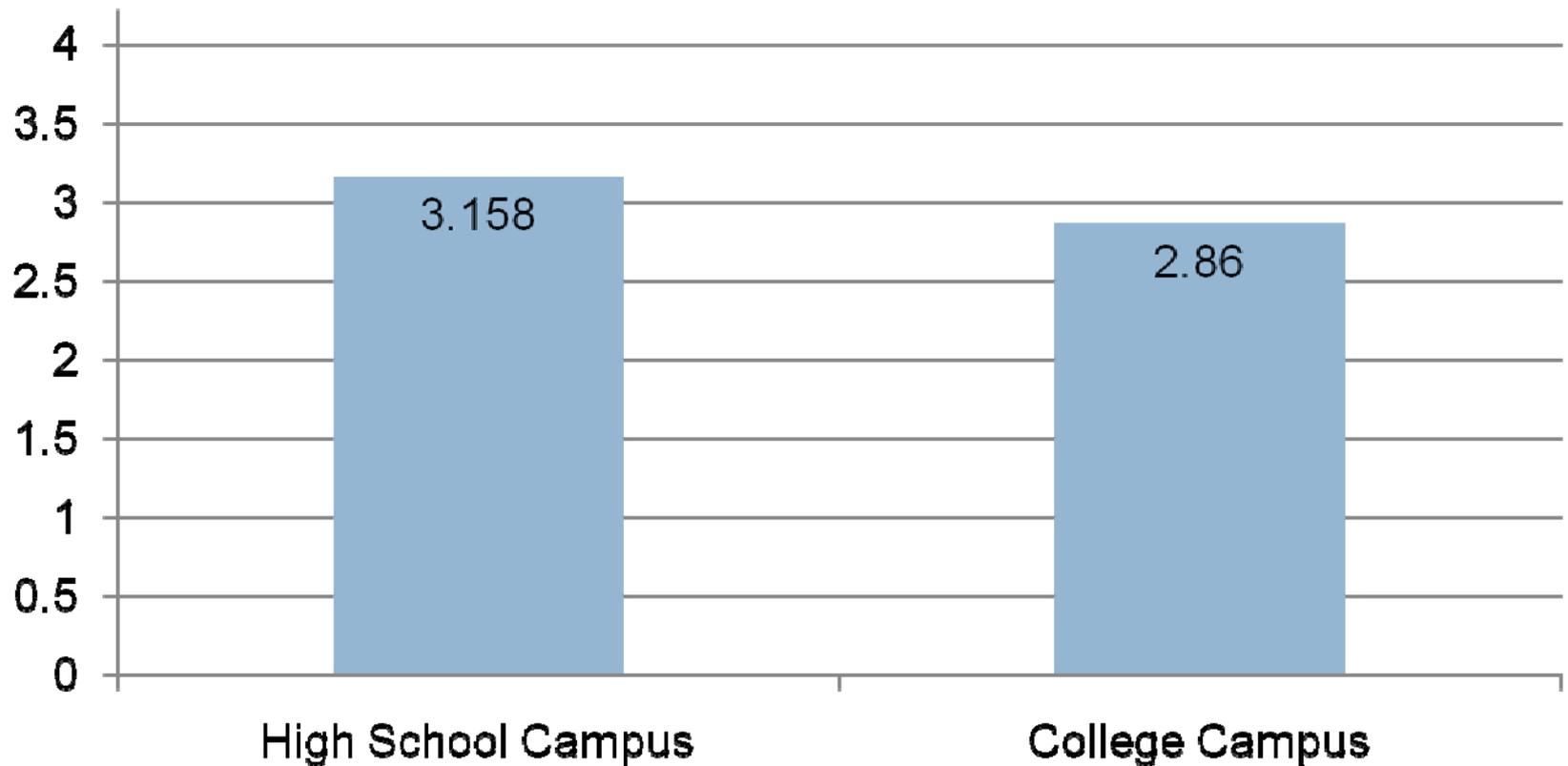
16



Average GPA per Course Location

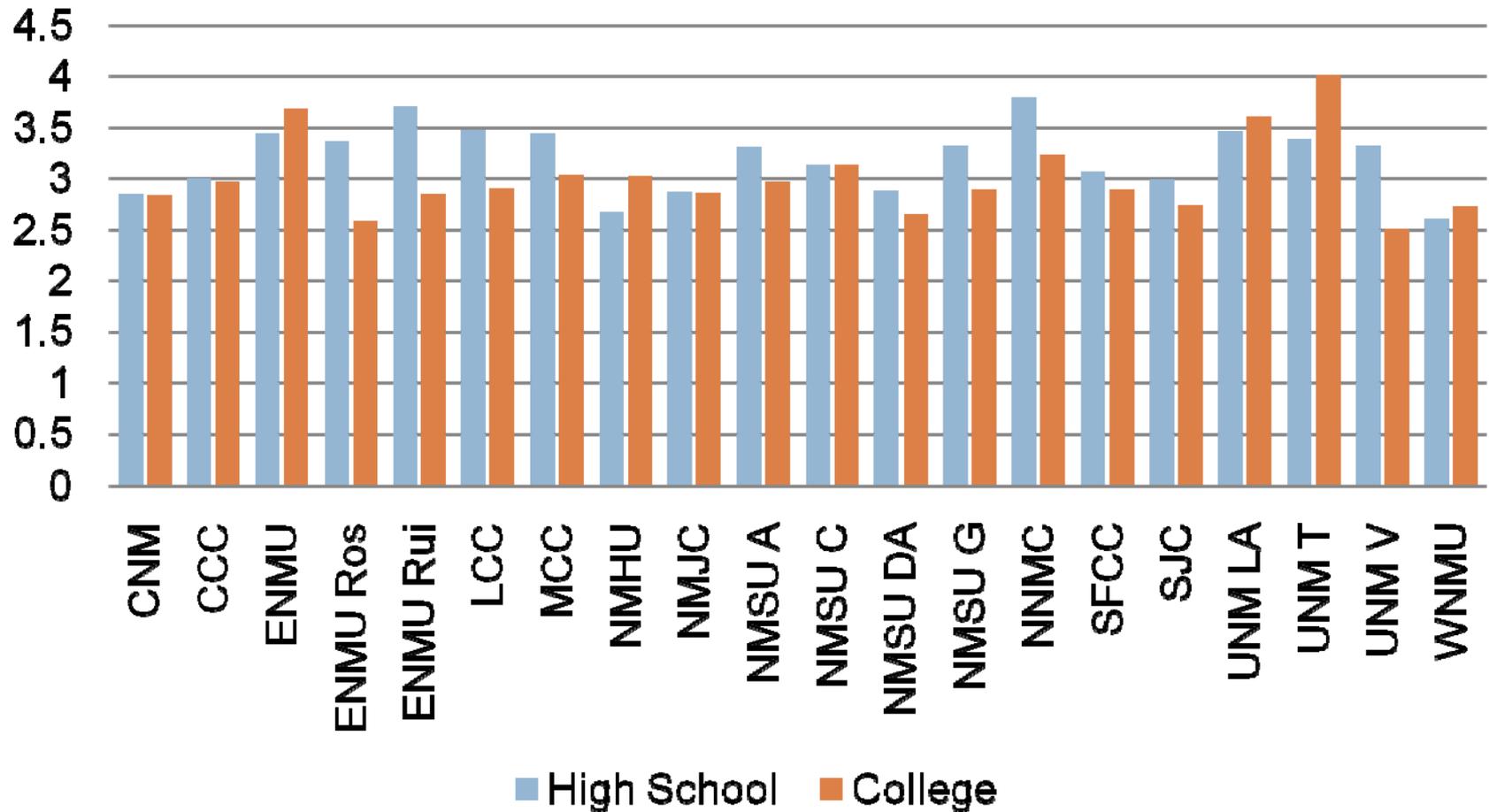
17

Average GPA Spring 2009



Dual Credit Average GPA per Institution and Course Location

18



Institutional Abbreviation

Abbreviation		Institution and Campus Name	
Institution	Campus	Institution	Campus
CCC		Clovis Community College	Main
CNM		Central New Mexico Community College	Main
ENMU		Eastern New Mexico University	Main
ENMU	Ros	Eastern New Mexico University	Roswell Branch
ENMU	Rui	Eastern New Mexico University	Ruidoso Center
LCC		Luna Community College	Main
MCC		Mesalands Community College	Main
NMHU		New Mexico Highlands University	Main
NMIMT		New Mexico Institute of Mining & Tech	Main
NMJC		New Mexico Junior College	Main
NMSU		New Mexico State University	Main
NMSU	A	New Mexico State University	Alamogordo Branch
NMSU	C	New Mexico State University	Carlsbad Branch
NMSU	G	New Mexico State University	Grants Branch
NMSU	DA	New Mexico State University	Doña Ana Branch
NNMC		Northern New Mexico College	Main
SFCC		Santa Fe Community College	Main
SJC		San Juan College	Main
UNM		University of New Mexico	Main
UNM	G	University of New Mexico	Gallup Branch
UNM	LA	University of New Mexico	Los Alamos Branch
UNM	V	University of New Mexico	Valencia Branch
UNM	T	University of New Mexico	Taos Branch
WNMU		Western New Mexico University	Main