Cerritos College Launches Middle College Scholars Academy Program allows high school students to get college head start

Cerritos College launched its President's Middle College Scholars Academy in partnership with ABC, Bellflower, Downey, and Norwalk-La Mirada unified school districts this fall. The pilot program allows selected high school students who are interested in teaching careers to take college courses, focusing on STEM (science, technology, engineering, and math) fields at Cerritos College.

"The academy was developed to address the high demand for math and science teachers and ever-increasing focus on STEM education," said Sue Parson, associate professor of mathematics and director of Educational Partnerships and Programs. "Many believe that college is a far-off dream. The academy empowers students by providing a challenging, yet supportive learning environment and helps make college a reality for them."

Thirty high school students were selected from the District’s partner schools. Scholars will take STEM courses, go on field trips and enjoy internships. "This program is an extraordinary opportunity for our students," said Stephanie Burrus, whose 15-year-old daughter attends Mayfair High School in the Bellflower Unified School District. "I was excited as soon as I heard about the opportunity. Thanks to Cerritos College for having a vision and following through with a plan."

From Monday through Thursday the scholars will attend their home campuses in the morning and Cerritos College in the afternoon during their junior and senior year of high school. On Fridays they gain teaching experience by tutoring at elementary or middle schools. Students are enrolled in classes that are programmed into the Academy as cohort. The program features Scholar Time, which allows students to meet with two STEM counselors on a weekly basis. Students will have access to all Cerritos College resources, including counseling, library and the campus' Success Center.
At the end of the two-year academy, scholars will have completed a minimum of 20.5 college units including three science courses that are required for future STE< teachers and transferable to any California State University or University of California campus.

"The goal of the academy is to continue to close the gap in college and career readiness and increase both student access, persistence, graduation rates, and success in higher education," said Cerritos College President/Superintendent Dr. Linda Lacy. "We strive to provide a learning environment that represents community interests and student needs. Collaborating with parents and the community in an education partnership is crucial to student success."

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