

## Virginia Public Higher Education Policy on the Offering of “Dual Enrollment” Courses in Public School Districts by Four-year and Two-year Institutions of Higher Education

October 2013

### I. Operating Definition of “Dual Enrollment” and Limitation in the Scope of Policy

A. For purposes of this policy, “Dual Enrollment” refers to coursework taken by high school students under the aegis of an agreement between a public school or district and a public institution of higher education, wherein a student takes coursework that both (i) counts toward high school graduation requirements and (ii) is designed to result in earned college credits. The pedagogy associated with such coursework may take place in the high school, on a college campus, at a third location, online, or in any combination of the above.

B. The scope of this policy is restricted to issues of institutional prerogative and procedures for resolving potential and actual conflicts among institutions. It offers no prescriptions as to course design, academic content, faculty qualifications, credit validation procedures, or any other purely academic policy. All such matters are governed by each college’s standing policies and procedures for assuring and assessing academic quality.

### II. Code of Virginia §23-221:

*In any area served by a comprehensive community college, no institution of higher learning which conducts extension programs shall, after July 1, 1966, offer courses of study similar to those offered by a comprehensive community college, except as authorized by the State Council of Higher Education.*

- “Extension programs” does not have a formal definition in the Code of Virginia. Patterns of usage in code indicate that the phrase refers to any instruction not occurring on the main campus, or an established branch, of an institution within Virginia.
- “Courses of study” does not have a formal definition in the Code of Virginia. Common parlance indicates that the phrase refers to degree programs or coherent groupings of courses (including, but not necessarily

limited to, certificates), but logic does not prevent it referring to individual courses.

- The offering of dual enrollment courses by four-year institutions in public schools is subject to authorization by Council, as per §23-221.
- The offering of dual enrollment courses by four-year institutions that occurs solely on the campus of the four-year institution and/or online does not technically fall under the scope of §23-221. However, Council recommends that four-year institutions voluntarily follow the authorization process under section VI below for such offerings as well.

**III. The Virginia Department of Education and the Virginia Community College System have signed an agreement that gives a statewide framework for dual enrollment arrangements between the public schools and community colleges** ([http://www.doe.virginia.gov/administrators/superintendents\\_memos/2008/inf153a.pdf](http://www.doe.virginia.gov/administrators/superintendents_memos/2008/inf153a.pdf)).

**IV. Code of Virginia 22.1-253.13:1 D.10 states that each local school board shall implement**

*An agreement for postsecondary degree attainment with a community college in the Commonwealth specifying the options for students to complete an associate's degree or a one-year Uniform Certificate of General Studies from a community college concurrent with a high school diploma. Such agreement shall specify the credit available for dual enrollment courses and Advanced Placement courses with qualifying exam scores of three or higher.*

- As of August 2013, agreements required by 22.1-253.13:1 D.10 have been established by every school district.
- 22.1-253.13:1 does not prohibit four-year institutions from offering dual enrollment courses in high schools. This section of code does suggest a default assumption that community colleges are the primary dual enrollment providers in public school districts, particularly for “courses of study” that consist of an associate degree or certification.

**V. Policy Principles**

A. In the interest of efficiency, appropriate mission differentiation, and consonance with Code of Virginia 22.1-253.13:1, community colleges should be

considered the default providers of dual enrollment in Virginia public school districts.

B. There is, however, a valuable role for public four-year institutions and Richard Bland College to offer dual enrollment courses in public high schools. Such offerings should maximize educational opportunity that is not otherwise available through the local community college. Specific circumstances include, but are not necessarily limited to

- offerings that promote specific pathways to four-year programs, especially in high-demand areas;
- offerings that support the specialized mission of an individual high school (e.g., Governor's schools, Governor's STEM Academies, or district specialty schools).

## **VI. Authorization Process**

A. A four-year institution considering entering into a dual enrollment relationship with a public district or school should, before finalizing the relationship, provide notice to the local community college, and seek mutual agreement as to the scope of dual enrollment offerings it will provide. The agreement should be embodied in writing and signed by the president of each institution. Subsequent changes to the four-year institution's scope of offerings should also be agreed on, embodied in writing, and signed by both presidents.

B. In cases where notice has been provided but the two institutions cannot come to agreement, the matter shall, as per Code of Virginia §23-221, be referred to SCHEV by the four-year institution. The four-year institution shall submit to the SCHEV Director of Academic Affairs the following information:

- description of dual enrollment offerings it would like to offer;
- description of points of agreement and disagreement between the four-year institution and the community college;

- summary explanation of why it would be desirable for the four-year institution, rather than the local community college, to offer the disputed coursework in the school or district; and
- signed statement from the school or school district of its motivation in seeking a dual enrollment relationship with the four-year institution.

C. Upon receipt of the four-year institution's submission, SCHEV will solicit a response from the community college, and make a final decision as to authorization, by action of Council. SCHEV deliberation shall take into account all relevant factors, including but not necessarily limited to the following:

- efficiency;
- mission appropriateness in relation to the community college, the four-year institution, and the school or district;
- relevant special circumstances, such as particular historical, educational, and regional relationships among the institutions and the school or district involved.

*Approved by Council, October 29, 2013*