

COLLEGE NOW, NEW YORK- SYNOPSIS

The College Now program began at Kingsborough College in 1984, and was specifically targeted to high school moderate achievers who could potentially attend college if given the right opportunities. It offered testing to all high school juniors, originally the Freshman Skills Assessment Program test, and used the results to counsel students to participate in either developmental coursework (non-credit) or college level coursework (college credit only) during the senior year. In either case, courses were structured to give students experience in college level work requirements and expectations. Classes met before and after regular school hours, and were taught by high school teachers credentialed as adjunct college faculty.

Key elements

1. College Now employees speak to all first semester high school juniors during a fall recruitment campaign.
2. All interested students are admitted. Those who meet certain criteria can take college level courses: 75% or above on the Regents Test, 480 or above on the SAT English test; or (as a fall-back) those who pass the CUNY placement test.
3. All incoming students are counseled individually about their options and then registered for courses.
 - Students who are not eligible for college classes can take one or more of 5 non-credit, skills-building classes. After each of these classes, students take the CUNY placement exam.
 - Those ready for college level work can take one or more of the 5 college credit classes. This set of classes has been designed to transfer without difficulty. Only one has a CTE focus.
4. Classes can now be taken 2nd semester of junior year and/or senior year, depending on the school's preferences.
5. Whenever possible, College Now is separated from the school day, with classes meeting before or after the regular school day. This seems to be mainly an employment issue—making sure that teachers can treat it as a separate job.
6. Teachers are generally hired by the college, from the faculty at the high school, through a competitive application process. This reduces friction and perceptions of favoritism within the school.
7. All teachers receive orientation and on-going professional development, to insure that they are running a class with college-level expectations. Their classes are observed by their college supervisors during the semester. Teacher turn-over is very low.
8. Each school has a paid Program Coordinator (62 hours/semester), Counselor (3/5-4.5 hours per week) and Representative (20 hours/week), and an office.
9. College credit is awarded and transcripts are generated.
10. Some, but not all high schools, offer high school credit.

Results

The program has been evaluated and shown to be effective in increasing rates of college entry, retention and completion, even when other factors (related to high school performance) are taken into account (Crook, 1990).