

**Frequently Asked Questions:  
Answers for Houston Community College Instructors  
Teaching Challenge Early College High School Students**

**QUESTION: How did we get involved in this arrangement with HISD?**

ANSWER: According to the Application for Admissions to the Challenge Early College:  
"In July 2003, the Houston Independent School District, Houston Community College Systems and Houston A+ Challenge jointly created the Challenge Early College High School (CECHS). This unique school is specifically designed to provide students the opportunity to begin college after the tenth or during the eleventh grade. The school redefines the typical comprehensive high school experience in a small school setting housed on a community college campus. This program enables students to move progress [sic] in five years from the ninth grade through the first two years of college in five years, earning the associate of arts (A.A.) degree."  
Also, please read the document titled "[A Basic Guide for Houston Community College Instructors Teaching Challenge Early College High School Students.](#)"

**QUESTION: How long will we have CEC students embedded in our classes?**

ANSWER: The relationship between HCC-SW and HISD's Challenge Early College High School is here to stay. We will have CEC students embedded in our classes for the very long term. There will probably be CEC students embedded in our classes long after some of us have retired.

**QUESTION: I didn't get my advanced degree in order to teach high school! Do I have any choice in this matter?**

ANSWER: Not really. However, you might want to discuss this with your Department Chair. Furthermore, you are not teaching high school. Each of us is mandated to teach our courses with the same academic rigor we always bring to our classroom. **We are teaching college courses** regardless of the ages of the students in our classrooms. Moreover the CEC students have the same skill qualifications in terms of reading, writing, and math as other HCC students.

We are going to be involved in this program for a long time; therefore, it is up to us, the faculty, to make this project work.

Being angry or resentful about this situation is not going to make it go away, so we need to learn to live with it and make it belong to us.

**FAQ for HCC Instructors Teaching CEC Students**

**QUESTION:** At the beginning of every semester since this arrangement began, we have had a mess to deal with in terms of students in the wrong classes, inaccurate CRNs, traditional students in Dual Credit classes, CEC students enrolled as traditional students, no roll sheets for students who are actually sitting in our classroom, course caps being arbitrarily raised so that there are many more students in our classes than there should be, etc. What is being done to correct all of these problems?

**ANSWER:** There is now a single CRN for each course that you will be teaching, and there is no identifying information on the roll sheets concerning CEC students. In other words, we will not have separate CRNs for the CEC students and they will be treated, in all respects, just like our traditional students.

As far as course caps are concerned, that is between you and your Department Chair.

**QUESTION:** Sometimes the CEC students don't have their required textbooks and course material. What is being done about this?

**ANSWER:** That problem has been solved by HISD. CEC students now get their books and course materials from the West Loop bookstore in the same way that traditional students do. If there are problems with textbooks, that problem exists with the bookstore itself. Contact your Department Chair if the bookstore does not have the books or has an insufficient number of books.

**QUESTION:** I've heard rumors that HISD will have control over what we do in the classroom.

**ANSWER:** The CEC students are in HCC's classes and HCC's rules apply to everything that goes on in our classrooms. We teach our curricula, under our academic calendar, following our rules as stated in both the most current HCC Faculty Handbook and the most current HCCS Student Handbook.

**QUESTION:** Is there extra paperwork or record-keeping associated with teaching the high school students?

**ANSWER:** No. There is no extra paperwork or record-keeping. The 12<sup>th</sup> day rolls, which are the official date-of-record, green roll sheets, have grading sheets attached for each CRN, with students' names listed just as they are listed on the roll sheet.

**QUESTION:** Do I have to make any changes to the way I teach my classes?

**ANSWER:** No. Our classes are college-level classes irrespective of the age of the student body. We must not "dumb down" our course material or make any special accommodations, other than those that we would make for traditional students. We are teaching college; we are not teaching high school, or glorified high school. Freshman and sophomore courses at HCC are not 13<sup>th</sup> and 14<sup>th</sup> grade!

**QUESTION: How many high school students will be in our classes?**

ANSWER: Dean Neal Tannahill, the Department Chairs, the Campus Coordinator, and the faculty, in collaboration with the CEC have determined that our goal is that **there will be no more than five** CEC students embedded into any given course for which they are eligible, and that the total number of students (CEC and traditional students combined) will not exceed the course caps set by the Academic Dean and Department Chair. It is between each of us and our individual Department Chairs to determine how many courses with embedded CEC students we will be teaching each semester.

**QUESTION: What do I do if there are discipline problems with the CEC students?**

ANSWER: Discipline problems should be handled no differently with the CEC students than with our traditional students. If the discipline problem is serious enough, and you are sure the student **is** a CEC student, contact Ruth Dunn, your Department Chair and contact Justin Fuentes and Bridget Beyer from the CEC so that they can intervene with the student.

**QUESTION: Sometimes the CEC students show a lack of maturity that effects their classroom performance, and that makes it obvious that they don't belong in college. What is being done about this problem?**

ANSWER: We are implementing specialized training for the CEC students that will mitigate some of the problems that come with immaturity. But please remember that these students **do** belong in college. The CEC students have exactly the same qualifications for admissions to HCC as our traditional students.

Please consider this: if you didn't know for certain they were high school students, would you think of them as noticeably different from our traditional students who exhibit many of the same behaviors?

Furthermore, the CEC students are comparable to, and in some cases outpace, our traditional students in terms of grades and course completion rates.

**QUESTION: How do the CEC students compare to our traditional HCC students?**

ANSWER:

<b>Challenge Early College Student Dual Credit Grade Distribution, Fall 2005</b>		
<b>Letter Grade</b>	<b>Challenge Students</b>	<b>All SWC Students</b>
A	17.4 %	24.4 %
B	33.7%	25.2%

C	22.5%	18.0%
D	5.9%	4.5%
F	4.4%	4.9%
W	14.4%	18.9%
I	1.1%	1.1%
IP	0.4%	3.0%
# of duplicated students	270	32,576

**QUESTION:** I've heard that the high school has a different grading system. Do I need to be concerned about this?

**ANSWER:** No. HCC's standard grading scale applies to all students enrolled in academic and/or workforce courses at HCC. 90-100=A; 80-89=B; 70-79=C; 60-69=D; below 60=F. Withdrawal (W), Incomplete (I), and In Progress (IP) grades are at the discretion of the instructor insofar as all grading falls within the policies of HCC as stated in the most current [HCC Faculty Handbook](#). HCC faculty produces our standard, end-of-semester grade sheets for each CRN. There is no separate grading or grading scale at our end, and whatever adjustments need to be made at the high school level are made there and are of no concern to our everyday practices. The 12<sup>th</sup> day rolls, which are the official date-of-record, green roll sheets, have grading sheets attached for each CRN, with students' names listed just as they are listed on the roll sheet.

**QUESTION:** HISD starts earlier than we do and has different holidays and different amounts of time off. How does this effect us?

**ANSWER:** It doesn't. The embedded CEC students follow the [HCC academic calendar](#). HCC faculty are not effected in any way by HISD's academic calendar with the possible exception of CEC student absences on days when they are required to take state or district-mandated standardized tests, in which case HCC faculty will be notified via e-mail.

**QUESTION: Who do I contact if I have any problems or any questions?**

**ANSWER:** The following list should help you. In general, contact your Department Chair, Ruth Dunn, and anyone on the list (on the following page) that you think can help you.

**Essential Contact Information for Challenge Early College**

(as of Friday, August 25, 2006)

Ruth Dunn, Instructor of Sociology/HCC-CEC Faculty Liaison

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Sabrena Belz, Dual Credit Liaison (HCC Southwest College)

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