



**Wharton County  
Junior College**

Office of Marketing and Communications  
911 Boling Highway  
Wharton, Texas 77488

# NEWS RELEASE

Toll free: 1.800.561.9252, ext. 6322

Office: 979.532.6322

Fax: 979.532.6493

## **OPENING THE DOORS OF EDUCATION**

*WCJC waives dual-credit tuition for benefit of high school students, taxpayers*

WHARTON, TEXAS – Thanks to a dual-credit program offered by Wharton County Junior College, area high school students have been able to obtain college credit before they graduate. This current school year, they've been able to do that once again – and at a reduced cost.

WCJC's Board of Trustees this past summer approved waiving tuition for all in-district dual credit students, which includes those attending high schools in Wharton County and Needville Independent School District. With in-district tuition costing \$32 per semester hour, that translates to a \$96 reduction per typical three-hour course. Students will still be responsible for paying applicable fees.

Considering that 2,763 semester hours of dual credit were offered by WCJC in the 2013-2014 academic year, the waiver is anticipated to amount to an \$88,416 reduction in tuition revenue for the 2014-2015 year.

"We are doing this to save the taxpayers of Wharton County some money," said Bryce Kocian, WCJC's vice-president of administrative services. "It will also be an incentive for more students to take these classes."

Although regular college students can apply for financial aid, dual credit students don't qualify as they are still enrolled in high school, Kocian said. The tuition waiver is a means to overcome this situation by providing them with some financial relief.

Increased enrollment in the dual credit program is anticipated.

"Hopefully, this reduction (in revenue) will be mitigated by more students taking dual credit courses," Kocian said.

Wharton Independent School District officials said they appreciate WCJC's financial sacrifice. The district had requested the college consider such action.

"We are thrilled that WCJC supported our request to lower dual credit cost in an effort to provide all WISD, Wharton County (and Needville ISD) students with a more cost effective program," said WISD Superintendent King Davis. "As a result, we expect that more students will access the dual credit program, and consequently, the community at large will benefit."

During the 2013-2014 school year, 45 Wharton ISD students participated in the dual credit program, taking a total of 105 courses. This year, 67 students are enrolled in dual credit courses.

The program is offered to 11<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> grade students who pass a testing requirement. Courses cover various basic college-level subjects, including everything from U.S. history to pre-calculus. Students are limited to no more than two courses per semester.

The bulk of the classes are taught on the WISD campus, primarily by district faculty. Kocian said high school teachers must have the same credentials as college-level faculty in order to teach the courses. Instructors receive a stipend of \$600 per semester hour. That translates to around \$1,800 for a three-hour course.

“We will be expanding (the program) as our teachers acquire the necessary credentials to deliver the instruction,” Davis said.

Davis noted that the tuition waiver will “open the doors” of higher education to students who otherwise would likely never have such opportunity.

“The district believes the benefits of a dual credit program have been well documented and that high school students who graduate with any number of college hours are much more likely to continue their postsecondary education with completion of an associate’s or bachelor’s degree,” Davis said.

# # #