

Question Time

Has there been a systematic study done to assess the impact of dual credit on IPFW students? If not, would it be possible for Office of Institutional Research to carry out such a project? If yes, where can we see the results?

From talking to other faculty who have been at IPFW for a while, there is anecdotal evidence that our students are becoming less and less prepared to deal with challenges of 100- and 200-level classes. Anecdotal evidence suggests that dual credit may be responsible for this—students bypass IPFW-based introductory classes and miss out on important content knowledge and introduction to college study skills. Even if students receive the necessary content knowledge, they are not prepared for the kind of independent work required/expected at the college level.

We also have students who take their introductory classes at Ivy Tech to “save money,” and then transfer to IPFW. They often don’t have any introductory classes left to take, and often find themselves struggling in upper level classes.

Since anecdotal data is not real data, it would be nice if we could have some data to get a better understanding of the situation.

For example, it would be nice to see how a student who took the first class in a formal sequence through dual credit or at Ivy Tech did in subsequent classes in the sequence. This can be checked by looking at the Math sequences (exploring a number of different possible paths), English sequence (ENG W131 and ENG W233), Spanish sequence, and possibly the science sequences (if appropriate).

In addition to these formal sequences, it would be nice to see how students did in disciplines without strict sequences (PSY 120 and upper level Psychology classes; 100-level History class and upper level History classes; 100-level POLS class and upper level POLS classes, etc.)

It would also be good to analyze the dual credit impact taking into account the university through which dual credit was done, so we can differentiate dual credit through IPFW from other institutions.

If the data shows that students do better in more advanced classes if they take introductory classes at IPFW (rather than dual credit or Ivy Tech), and/or students are better prepared for upper level classes after doing their dual credit through IPFW rather than other local colleges, this may give us “ammunition” to help promote IPFW to local area students. This is particularly important, since at least some of our enrollment problems are due to students not taking classes with IPFW because they already have done them through dual credit.

(I realize that part of the problem is the Core Transfer Library and our findings are unlikely to do anything with that. But we would still be able to promote our classes as being more effective at preparing students.)

A. Livschiz