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Higher Ed, Pathways

# Expanding Dual Enrollment for All Students

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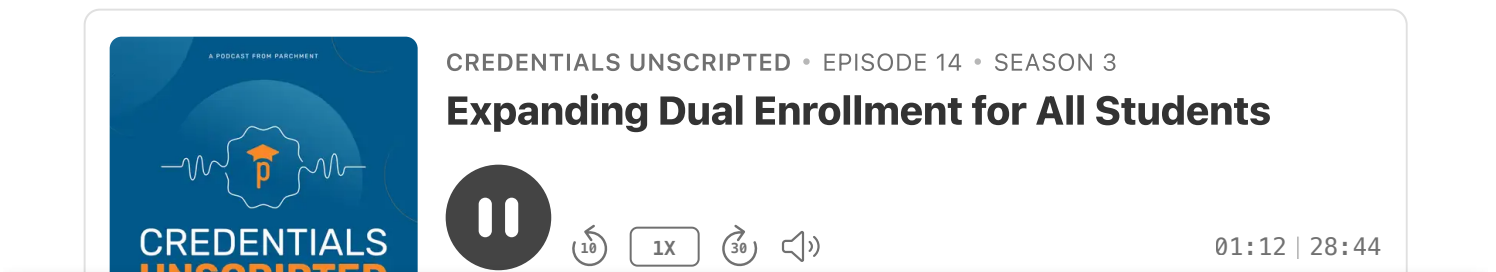
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Megan Garvy, Dual Enrollment Supervisor at Mesa Community College, shares the work they're doing with "Early College On-Ramps to Maricopa Pathways" to expand access to dual enrollment opportunities. Historically, dual enrollment has been dubbed a "program of privilege". Megan describes how they've increased access to college credit for students pursuing work-based certificates and CTE programs with success. You can learn more about Megan's work at her website – <https://sites.google.com/view/levelupeducpathways>



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All right, I'm here with Megan Garvey, dual enrollment supervisor at Mesa Community College, which is part of Maricopa Community College system. Megan, welcome to the podcast.



Megan Garvy (00:12.718)



Thank you for having me.



Matthew Sterenberg (00:14.716)

So Megan, you do a lot of different things, but today I wanna talk about dual enrollment, your work there. Give us the rundown of your efforts at Mesa Community Colleges and the work that you're doing.

Megan Garvy (00:29.294)

Sure, I stepped into this space more than a decade ago when dual enrollment was, it was housed primarily with student affairs and due to our accreditation process and a new lens that our accrediting body was applying to dual enrollment, there was a request for faculty input.

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random acts of course offerings is kind of what it was. And also like really inconsistent practices with the course evaluations, the relationship between different departments in our high school district, and certainly very limited strategy for the types of courses that were offered.



So initially for the first five years, it was all about kind of that integrity and that structure piece. And so we went from a decentralized process to a central academic planning process with a lot of input from department chairs and faculty colleagues, and then tried to make everything work within existing practices, scheduling practices, timelines for approving instructors, working with.



HR to document things correctly. I attended the NAISP conference with the partner superintendent and we looked at how do we you know how do we implement an evaluation process that isn't punitive that actually like fosters a collaborative partnership between the community college and the high school partners and so we collaborated on that process and institutionalized it. That also brought

Megan Garvy (02:48.654)

additional discipline faculty into our program so that it became more of a collaborative opportunity and then for accreditation so that we could document that that was happening. But my work also centered around when Maricopa went through the Guided Pathways Transformation, which was a remarkable initiative that started at Mesa Community College.

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program level student learning outcomes. And we develop those, you know, they talk about the knowledge skills habits in mind that students would need to complete a degree. And what was really helpful when we developed those pathways, I was part of that pathway process. So we, we kind of identified early, mid, late courses. So as that was going on, I was also working in du enrollment and kind of landed in a space because I work with



developing the schedules where we wanted to bring the pathways to the schools, right? Because it makes sense to have early college on -ramps. And I coined the project Early College On -Ramps to Maricopa Pathways. And impetus of it was a request from our high school partner to look at the automotive program so that we could embed.



these kind of micro certificates for students to gain momentum towards completion. And during that initial convening, we brought together automotive faculty, the dean and the high school CTE leader to talk about the curriculum. And that really like kind of launched a new way of offering courses.

Megan Garvy (05:09.294)

That was strategic, not only for key academic courses, but also in the occupational areas. And that was kind of the springboard to review. We've reviewed probably over 40 programs now that are offered in Arizona through the Arizona Department of Education, CTE. But what we did is we used the high school curriculum.



as kind of the foundation where faculty would review the high school



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Matthew Sterenberg (05:53.82)

I love what you're doing because you're basically tackling the two big, I get  criticisms of dual enrollment, which is what you highlighted, like random access of dual enrollment, right? Taking courses that don't end up shortening time to degree or don't actually get you to a degree, the degree that you want. 

And then you also are thinking about dual enrollment. Other criticism is  programs of privilege, right? That's just reserved for students that would go to college or university anyways. And it's just basically like the students that  taking AP are just now taking dual enrollment. And you're thinking about it. How do we actually increase access and opportunity for students that are in, you know, programs that historically haven't participated in dual enrollment, right? So.

As you think about the clusters of courses that you're trying to develop for those occupations, what challenges did you run into as you're trying to develop and get the courses necessary for those types of students?

Megan Garvy (07:06.862)

You froze up a little bit on me there. Okay, so yeah, yeah, yeah. Hopefully I can hear everything.

Yeah, so you know, we we've heard the term programs of privilege with dual enrollment and you're trying to obviously increase access and opportunity. And historically, dual enrollment has been students that maybe would have otherwise taken an AP course or something like that. Right. And now you're focusing on these certificate programs, which is really, really awesome. What challenges did you run into and how?



How much did you have to actually change the curriculum to accommodate what they needed?



Megan Garvy (07:51.886)

So there are minor shifts in curriculum changes. So it goes from these random random acts of course offerings that it's easy to say we're going to offer English 101 in an honors or AP kind of platform or the math STEM sequence. Like you said, we've been doing that. We've been doing those things for years. When you talk about

opening access to earn credit, then we think more holistically about the programs that we're offering and that high school includes, you know, this blend of occupational, career and technical education and academic course offerings. And what we know for workforce development is that there are high demand, high wage jobs in our community.

that relate to those career and technical education pathways. And so it is

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process and understanding, you know, where all of that was housed to to easily access it.

And then also knowing that all of our, the majority of our occupational certificates are also part of associate's degrees. So when you have that combination of your occupational courses and your academic courses, you're making progress now towards completing a degree. And what's really important.



Matthew Sterenberg (10:05.596)

And I love that, like the framing for a lot of states at this point is you see this, you know, governors will come out and they'll say, we, every student is going to be on some pathway, some track, and it's like military or college or career. What I really love about what you're doing is it's not, it's, it's both and right. It's not career or college. You're doing a career and college because.

Megan Garvy (10:28.078)

Yeah.



I'm getting my certificates, and I'm also getting college credit. I get that associates. And then I can actually start thinking about what a bachelor's looks like. Even if it's not today, it's in the future. I think that's the binary approach: are you a college or are you a career student? I think going to be problematic. And I like that you're framing it up into no, we shouldn't be putting it in either box. Students can do both and we're trying to give them both.



Megan Garvy (11:31.502)



Yeah, one of the most, one of like the, I feel like one of the most important discoveries in all of that was our math course offerings. And so we tend to offer a STEM pathway for dual enrollment specifically, which is that kind of privileged space where there's this mindset that students who are university bound or college bound are on that STEM math pathway.

Right, which means that we know every high school student has to complete Algebra 2, or two years of Algebra. But there's a group of students that are in Honors Algebra, Honors Algebra STEM, and they're the ones who seem to have access to the college credit. So an important thing that we kind of discovered is, and it's just through conversation and looking at the curriculum, is that college math, which is,

College math is actually one of the more critical or as critical courses to offer on a high school campus. And that course is primarily, I'm sure that exists across the country. It is primarily statistics and finance. And it tends to be the

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STEM pathway, which is your algebra sequence of math, but your degrees that don't require that, which is.

a large amount of degrees, including all of these occupational pathways, almost all of them. That college math course is the terminal course. And in Arizona, high school students are required to complete four years of mat' And typically, Algebra 2 happens at the latest year, junior year. And there's a fourth year for a math elective. And so we have shifted.



Megan Garvy (13:53.23)

to encourage all of our partners, and we actually do this with all of our partners at Mesa, are all offering college math as that fourth year math course. Because I feel like let's offer a course that won't be harmful in any way, that actually could be the only math class that a student needs to complete a college degree. And now we've totally opened the gates to students who maybe aren't completing a college degree because of math, because we know it's a huge barrier.

And now they're actually completing it as a fourth year math elective. And it either could be a prerequisite to a higher level course, or it could be that terminal math course that actually applies to all of these, I hate to say it again, non-STEM, non-STEM non-business degrees. So that was a really big shift. And I told you that I would share a data point. So even in doing that, so I did some...

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because that means that the high school partners are leveraging their qualified instructors to get the earlier algebra classes and the math, the college math class offered on their campus, right? Instead of only putting your most qualified instructors in that STEM sequence. So that's a really important shift



Matthew Sterenberg (15:37.244)



So just by offering basically statistics you had a statistics or college math, you basically got a 90 % increase in the participation in those types of courses like math courses



Megan Garvy (15:41.486)

Statistics and that, yeah, yeah, or this is funny.

Megan Garvy (15:50.606)

And of course, that is a, it is a terminal math course for many degrees, you know, that are actually related to high demand, high wage jobs in our community.

That's amazing. I think that's a good segue into, you know, in terms of the audience of people that listen to this podcast, of the millions of people that listen to this podcast. That's a joke. Okay, moving on. So, but the people that listen to this, it's people that work in higher ed, it's K -12 school counselors. let's say I'm a K -12 school counselor, I'm listening to this.



Megan Garvy (16:09.198)



Yeah, it was a huge shift.



Matthew Sterenberg (16:33.596)

And I really want to grow my program. I want dual enrollment. I want it to be accessible for everybody. The challenging thing about dual enrollment is that it's this partnership. I've got to have a community college partner. Where are these courses being taught? You know, getting teachers certified. There's a lot of different challenges, a lot of collaboration, but like if I'm a K -12 school counselor. What do you recommend for me? Like, how do I get this started? You know, who do I need to reach out to?

Like if I'm listening to this, I want to do part of what you're doing. What are some solid next steps? And then also if I'm a community college listening to this as well, what can I do to reach out to my partners? Give us some practical

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go from here:

Megan Garvy (17:29.71)



So for high school counselors, for this specific audience, one thing I'll share over the winter break, right at the kind of winter part of this academic year, I did some contract work where I'm engaged with research. I teach classes at university in the doctoral program, and I've been involved with some mixed methods research. And so for...



Over the winter break, I led focus groups with students, parents, counselors, and administrators. And one thing that was overwhelming that the students were saying is, we're not ready to make these decisions our freshman year. The kids were telling us this. You know, the kids were saying, and if you look at any kind of research on transformation and sense of belonging, there are some pivotal points.

kind of like in that academic journey and that transition to high school, many kids are just trying to figure out how to do high school. It's a totally different environment. And many of the students indicated that their sophomore year was more of a pivotal time that they would even think about kind of college, career, moving in that direction. And overwhelmingly, the students also,

talked about some of the students, how good it was that the counselors continued to encourage them to make choices throughout the high school career, which felt counter to what we sometimes talk about, about these different tracks that happen where students get placed within a particular

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some self-efficacy.



Megan Garvy (19:50.702)



and some intrinsic motivation that I am a college student and I have some credit. And there's more than one way to do that. And so one thing that I do is look at, be aware if I'm a counselor in the occupational programs of industry recognized credentials are part of that program and speak to students about how those credentials apply in many instances as earned college credit.



That's a really big deal, right? Like, and it costs, in Maricopa, it costs nothing.

Matthew Sterenberg (20:21.18)

Yeah, it is. And I think it's, yeah.

Yeah, you're talking about kind of a prior learning assessment, exercise. Yeah.

Megan Garvy (20:28.942)

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Is that pretty standard? Like I'm just thinking of it. Obviously you're doing that work of students that are getting certificates through their CTE program or you have the structure in place to give them college credit. Do you think that's widely common among K -12 school districts that they're actually doing that work to give college credit for their work -based certificates or is what you're doing unique? I know it's hard for you to speak for everybody, but.



Megan Garvy (21:18.478)



So what I am familiar with is that high school students are completing work -based certificates and that many colleges offer college credit if a student submits those to the college. There is more work to be done in the college space to kind of institutionalize that process.

Matthew Sterenberg (21:36.124)

Yeah.

Megan Garvy (21:48.302)

and to socialize that to the community as a recruitment practice. So there's

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Yeah.



Matthew Sterenberg (22:03.548)



I think it's a huge piece for accessibility.



Megan Garvy (22:17.518)



and I have a, I'll soon have two high school students. But what I notice even among my son and his peers is that some of his buddies are in the advanced, the honors math STEM class, and they're earning, you know, low Cs and Ds in that class. And for some reason, they're still in that honors class, and they're thinking about going into Calc.

And really that fourth year of math, I think it would probably be perhaps more advantageous for them their senior year to earn college credit for college math. Instead of like hanging on, it feels like they're hanging on to this like honor STEM pathway for some reason, when in reality that may not be.

Matthew Sterenberg (23:00.956)

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they're university bound. And that college math course could actually be the math, the last math class that they actually need and they could finish it in high school. So I feel like there is for some reason a disconnect at the high schools about.



Matthew Sterenberg (23:36.732)



You're literally telling my story. Like I was in honors, but I wasn't that great math, but I was like kind of on the cusp and I didn't get great grades in the honors class. So then eventually I went down to like the regular math class. This is too much information for people, but, and then I was like, the regular math class was way too easy. The honors was not easy for me. And I probably would have been, and I took stats in college.



Megan Garvy (23:39.694)

Right?

Megan Garvy (23:52.078)

Yes.

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Matthew Sterenberg (24:06.812)

That probably would have been the best route for me is to, to get that credit and to take a course that just fit me a little bit better. But I, you know, I didn't think about that option or I didn't have that option. So I. Yeah.



Megan Garvy (24:19.214)



Yeah, I was an elementary education major and I failed college algebra twice and I didn't even need it. Right? Yeah, so I really, you know, part of that is an administration strategy. Administrators need to, and you're talking about your school registrar, right, who's working with department chairs to build the high school master schedule.



Matthew Sterenberg (24:26.3)

Yeah. Yeah.

Megan Garvy (24:45.294)

So you take your most qualified high school teachers who would be your

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Matthew Sterenberg (25:00.092)

Yeah.



Megan Garvy (25:11.95)



to different degrees. And it's not harmful, right? I always talk about, let's do things that are not harmful to students. Let's say a student does then wa  go into a pathway that's that algebra sequence of courses that leads to your calculus courses. It's not going to be harmful to have that college math course under their belt. It's a good win to build a stronger math foundation.

Matthew Sterenberg (25:12.572)

Yeah. Yeah.

Matthew Sterenberg (25:36.092)

Yeah. Yeah. Yeah. So just to kind of cover what we've addressed so far, what you've addressed, you know, you started the guided pathways in Maricopa,

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Or is there anything else we didn't cover that you'd really like people to know? Anything that you've seen be really impactful. You're such a, you know, you're invested in this.



You've invested your career in this really. What else should we be talking about related to this space?



Megan Garvy (26:41.774)



I would say there's there's there are two things that have been helpful in making progress. One is when we when we look at strategy for earned college credit that it encompasses students earning credit through prior learning assessment and we have always looked at

accepting AP and IB scores for earned college credit. And that is one avenue to earn it. I, in many instances, we spent some time looking at, well, what, you know, why would we offer AP and dual, right? It's kind of like a weird thing to try to make sense of. And I will continue to encourage schools to look at your data. If we have a...

65 % national pass rate of the calculus exam, then it could be helpful to also offer that course for dual enrollment credit. As a parent, I'm not banking on a 65 % pass rate. I would like my student to be evaluated. We call it multiple measures for placement at the college where we take GPA, right, or an exam score to place a student.

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not year year

Megan Garvy (28:16.59)



It would be failing. Yeah. For some courses, right, for some courses that national, that national percentage, that pass rate isn't very promising to me. When we have a, over a 90 % successful course completion in dual enrollment courses, that's, that's remarkable, right? That, that is, students are likely to take the college credit if it's offered for dual enrollment credit. But,



Matthew Sterenberg (28:37.02)

Yeah.

Megan Garvy (28:44.782)

I also share that in this space, you know, we need to look at three things. So we look at prior learning assessment, both in academic and occupational areas. And there is much work to do on the part of colleges and communication with our high school partners about leveraging work-based certificate as earned college credit and credit where it's very clear to students how that credit

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modality, right, or online. And I bring up regularly that we learn so much from the pandemic, that it's not location doesn't matter. So what we do is we build our strategy based on the key, what are the key academic courses. When we talk about student access that every student should have access to earn credit, regardless of location. So regardless of if I have a qualified instructor on a high school campus,



All students are going to have access to earning English 101 or 102 credit, which means if this year I don't have the qualified instructor, that I have a strong enough relationship with my partner college that then we bring an instructor to our campus, a college instructor. We bus the students to the college, or I take my most, my MVPs on my high school campus are my qualified instructors.



and maybe we give them a six fifths contract or we have a zero or an eighth hour. And our strategy is about always providing the opportunity, not restricting it based on the variables that we know are always going to exist, you know, by having, by the criteria that we need to make sure we have the program integrity. And so I share that. I think that's a really important piece when any person is looking at strategy is looking at those three things.

Matthew Sterenberg (31:11.676)

And Megan, you mentioned earlier, you do some consulting work for organizations that are thinking about how we create, you know, a better workforce. How do we scale up our programs? Where can people reach you if they want to get in contact?

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that's a business that you can find on the internet or if you could share my contact information via this podcast, that would be really helpful. You know, I work full time at the college, but I really am invested in helping different partners with where they're at.



with implementation strategy just because I'm energized by this work to increase access to earn credit.



Matthew Sterenberg (32:08.828)



Well, thank you so much for joining us and sharing your expertise and your insights. I think this is a really interesting topic. And for goodness sake, start offering college math. That's the big takeaway, the easiest win if you can get from this podcast. College math people, open up the access and opportunity for all students. But really appreciate you joining me. I really enjoyed our conversation.

Megan Garvy (32:31.246)

Thank you, I appreciate the opportunity.