



Ensuring Academic Quality

Recognizing Syracuse University Courses Taken Through Project Advance



DEAR COLLEAGUE

This document is intended to offer evidence that Syracuse University Project Advance (SUPA) offers a rigorous, accredited concurrent enrollment program (CEP) that enables qualified high school students to experience a university course in accordance with the exact same standards expected of all Syracuse University courses.

SUPA students who complete a course with a passing grade are awarded SU credit, just as if they took the course on the Syracuse campus.

We respectfully request that these credits be considered for transfer to your institution.

Higher education advocates and critics alike acknowledge that a college degree is key to success in today's society. With such emphasis on the undergraduate degree, education reformers are addressing a variety of issues related to access, cost, and college readiness.

At SUPA, we welcome the fact that CEPs are being held up by these reformers as examples of how secondary and post-secondary institutions are working together to give students access to advanced learning and the tools they need for post-

secondary success at a much lower cost-per-credit than the on-campus rate.

In fact, rigorous, accredited CEPs such as Project Advance are a multidimensional reform strategy. Not only do they offer innovative and challenging university courses to qualified high school students and college readiness programs and services, as you will learn in this document, they also provide continuous professional development for high school teachers and conduct extensive, ongoing research and evaluation so that their programs systematically improve over time.

If you have any questions about our program, the quality of SU courses taught through it, or our research and evaluation methods and results, do not hesitate to contact me.

Sincerely,

Gerald Edmonds, Ph.D.

Director, Syracuse University Project Advance
gedmonds@syr.edu
315.443.2404

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Ensuring the Academic Quality of SU Courses in the High Schools	3
Teacher Qualifications & Selection Process	4
Adjunct Instructor Certification	4
Ongoing Teacher Professional Development	5
Syracuse University Syllabi Requirements	6
Regular Onsite Class Visits	6
Additional Academic & Professional Resources	6
Placement Criteria, Registration Requirements, & Support Services	7
Program Research & Evaluation	8
History of SUPA	10
SUPA's Mission	10
Supplemental Notes	11

ENSURING THE ACADEMIC QUALITY OF SU COURSES IN HIGH SCHOOLS

Syracuse University courses offered through Project Advance are designed to be as identical as possible to their on-campus counterparts, and SUPA has well-established mechanisms and policies in place to ensure their academic quality, including:

- ▶ Course offerings are strictly limited to regular SU courses in the university catalog.
- ▶ Departmental review and approval of new schools, as well as of new instructors for Summer Institute training by SU faculty.
- ▶ Mandatory professional development requirements for teacher certification developed by SU faculty and SUPA (high school teachers must become SU adjunct instructors before they can teach SU courses).
- ▶ Ongoing professional development requirements for all high school teachers trained as SU adjunct instructors, to ensure continued certification.
- ▶ Submission of syllabi each semester by SU adjunct instructors in the high schools and syllabi review by university faculty and program administrators.
- ▶ Regular campus visits (minimally once a semester) by SU faculty and SUPA administrators, to meet with students and instructors and to review student work
- ▶ Shared resources for SUPA instructors (including, exam templates, assignment rubrics, shared readings, etc.)
- ▶ Student placement criteria, registration requirements, and support services.
- ▶ Standard assessment practices, including course evaluations.
- ▶ Regular impact studies, including post-graduate student surveys.

SUPA is the only program affiliated with a private research university in the Northeast to be accredited by the National Alliance of Concurrent Enrollment Partnerships.



TEACHER QUALIFICATIONS & SELECTION PROCESS

School administrators at partner high schools typically nominate teachers to become Syracuse University adjunct instructors based on their teaching qualifications, their content-area knowledge, and their willingness to take on the additional demands of teaching a university course.

Once nominated, teachers officially apply to enter the program and are required to submit letters of recommendation from school supervisors as well as their complete undergraduate and graduate transcripts and records of their teaching history.

The faculty coordinator—an SU faculty member who oversees the academic quality of the courses offered through SUPA on behalf of her/his home department—evaluates these credentials and decides if the candidates are academically qualified to teach the courses.

If they are, SUPA officially invites the teachers to the SUPA Summer Institute. (In some cases, faculty may require an additional interview with the applicant.)

High school faculty who teach SU courses must meet the academic requirements for instructors in the academic departments whose courses they teach. In most cases they must have at least a master's degree and five years of successful teaching experience in the subject area.

While core curriculum courses, such as first-year academic writing, are commonly taught by new TAs at many colleges and universities, SUPA instructors often have the added benefit of being highly experienced veteran teachers, who bring their subject-area expertise, master's background, and years of instructional practice to the teaching of these SU courses.

These instructors are thus uniquely positioned to work with SU faculty to offer these advanced courses in their high schools.

ADJUNCT INSTRUCTOR CERTIFICATION

Teachers who meet the requirements to attend the Project Advance Summer Institute are required to participate in an intensive, week-long, course-specific summer workshop, during which they familiarize themselves with course pedagogy, materials, methodologies, assessment practices, and grading standards.

Upon successful completion of the workshop, qualified high school teachers receive SU adjunct instructor appointments and are able to teach the SU course on their own campus as part of their regular high school teaching schedule.

Attendance at the Summer Institute workshops is mandatory. The workshops are held on the SU campus and led by SU faculty members.

Participants typically meet with SU faculty for a full week on an all-day schedule (i.e., 9 a.m. to 4 p.m.). These are very hands-on, collaborative workshops in which instructors are required to model course pedagogy in practice, develop supplemental heuristics, review required textbooks, etc.

In order to become fully certified as an SU adjunct instructor through SUPA, participants must submit completed syllabi (in adherence to SU syllabi templates) and all other workshop

assignments for review and feedback by the SU faculty coordinator.

Participants are responsible for any syllabus revisions or additional coursework required by the faculty coordinator.

High school faculty who teach SU courses must meet the academic requirements for instructors in the academic departments whose courses they teach.

ONGOING TEACHER PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Professional development for Syracuse University adjunct instructors continues after they have completed the Project Advance Summer Institute.

All instructors are required to attend and participate in subject-specific seminars each semester in order to maintain their SU certification.

These one-day seminars are facilitated by SU faculty and SUPA program administrators. They provide a space for ongoing professional dialogue between high school and university faculty.

Seminars enable adjunct instructors to remain current in course pedagogy and in new developments in their fields, to exchange best practices, to maintain common grading standards, and to ensure that their students have the same academic experience as students on campus.

SUPA seminars frequently feature guest speakers who are recognized leaders in their profession. Often, they are leading scholars whose work is changing the fundamentals of their disciplines, bringing new critical viewpoints, developing new technology, or offering new answers to questions that are central to a field of study.

Recent examples include:

“Applied Writing Projects in Calculus: What, Why, & How,”
P. Gavin LaRose, Department of Mathematics, University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, MI

“The Future of Human Embryonic Stem Cell Research: Addressing Ethical Conflict with Responsible Scientific Research,” David M. Gilbert, SUNY Upstate Medical University, Syracuse, NY

“Issues of Plagiarism,” Becky Howard, The Writing Program, Syracuse University

“New York State Economy,” Jason Bram & Richard Dietz, Federal Reserve Bank of New York, NY

Adjunct instructors have additional opportunities for professional development in their course content areas through SU and SUPA, including online graduate courses and advanced summer workshops for graduate credit and/or professional development experience, such as this year’s “Research in the Digital Age” and “Teaching and Writing Creative Nonfiction” courses.

Many SUPA instructors take advantage of these continuing education opportunities, and in doing so they model for their students what it means to be a life-long learner.

As the titles for these workshops indicate, the courses also have practical applications for classroom teaching and often inform instructors’ pedagogy.

“Project Advance is the reason I have stayed in education for 30 years. I get to tap the enormous experience of SU faculty, and I stay in touch with my profession and discover new ways to challenge my students.”—Christine Scharf, Rome (NY) Free Academy



SYRACUSE UNIVERSITY SYLLABI REQUIREMENTS

Typically, Project Advance instructors are asked to develop a course syllabus based on a provided Syracuse University template and to submit an official updated copy to SU every semester that they teach an SU course. Instructors must distribute syllabi on the first day of classes, just as they would on campus.

In some cases, course syllabi will be virtually identical to the on-campus version in terms of reading assignments, project requirements, exam formats, etc.

In other courses, such as English and writing, instructors may have some room to supplement the core course readings and assignments (with prior approval of the SU faculty coordinator).

However, the basic learning objectives and requirements—including grade distributions, rubrics, and course design—remain identical to those used on campus.

All syllabi are subject to review by an SU faculty coordinator, faculty visitors, and program administrators and must reflect the fact that the courses being taught are first and foremost SU courses.

Schools that do not adhere to SU policies and departmental requirements are subject to termination.

REGULAR ONSITE CLASS VISITS

At least once each semester, Syracuse University faculty members, as well as Project Advance administrators, visit each section to:

- ▶ Confirm that the section is functioning as an SU class.
- ▶ Participate in classroom discussions or provide lectures on course content.
- ▶ Talk with students about college culture and academics.
- ▶ Engage in ongoing professional development with the instructor.
- ▶ Discuss overall administration of the program with high school representatives.

SU faculty also read student work and review tests that students have completed for their SU courses to ensure that the grading standards applied are consistent with those on campus.

In addition to site visits, SU faculty members and SUPA administrators are available as resources for high school instructors and their students via phone, Skype, and e-mail.

ADDITIONAL ACADEMIC & PROFESSIONAL RESOURCES

Project Advance instructors also have access to a variety of resource-sharing sites and listservs.

The SU Writing Program invites SUPA English instructors, for example, to share in resource materials specifically designed by faculty and staff for WRT 105. These materials are regularly updated and made available online.

Such connections to a large network of Writing Program faculty and to university teaching resources, as part of their

partnership with a four-year research institution, allow SUPA instructors to remain on the cutting edge of composition pedagogy and to put these practices to work in their SU classrooms.

PLACEMENT CRITERIA, REGISTRATION REQUIREMENTS, & SUPPORT SERVICES

Typically, students earning a grade of B or better in their high school courses—who have the recommendation of their school instructors and guidance department (based on test scores, such as the SAT or ACT; sample writing; instructor interviews; or other local criteria), and who are motivated to challenge themselves in their senior year—are eligible to take Syracuse University courses through Project Advance.

As with other advanced programs, such as AP, for which students can earn transfer credit recognition, SUPA registrants are not designated as degree-seeking students.

Through SUPA, high school students register as part-time, non-matriculated students of SU and earn SU credit and a transcript for their coursework. They are financially responsible for the (reduced) tuition for these courses.

Adjunct instructors utilize multiple and varied assessments (appropriate to the discipline) throughout a course to evaluate student work. Students earn SU credit by virtue of the quality of work they produce each day in class, rather than by how well they do on a single high-stakes exam.

The course curriculum is defined by SU standards, not test writers, and instructors evaluate student work on the basis of the course learning objectives and the established grading rubrics.

All SUPA students are provided with an SU ID that grants them access to the SU library system and are expected to become familiar with its databases and research tools for relevant coursework.

Students and instructors may contact SU librarians for support at anytime via the library's chat features, e-mail system, or other channels. In addition, virtual, hands-on library instruction is readily available to all SUPA classes to support multiple literacies for students, including basic information literacy.

SUPA also provides partner schools with access to technology for the classrooms, including wikispaces, blog-hosting capabilities, and learning management systems, as well as a "strategic learning" website for student self-assessment.

SUPA instructors utilize multiple and varied assessments to evaluate student work. Students earn SU credit by virtue of the quality of work they produce each day in class, rather than by how well they do on a single high-stakes exam.

PROGRAM RESEARCH & EVALUATION

Project Advance regularly engages in program assessment to evaluate its efficacy for various constituencies and to help develop innovative academic programming and support services. SUPA's research and design team:

- ▶ Administers student evaluations of every course section the program offers in the high schools each semester.
- ▶ Solicits instructor feedback on SUPA professional development activities.
- ▶ Surveys secondary administrators and faculty in a "SUPA Impact Study" conducted every three years.
- ▶ Conducts an annual postgraduate survey of former SUPA students one year out of high school, asking about the effects of SUPA on postsecondary experiences.
- ▶ Every three years, surveys former SUPA students four years out from high school graduation to assess how SU courses offered through SUPA affected their overall college experience.

Nearly 40 years of student surveys have shown that when students who take an SU course through SUPA go on to take the advanced course in the same subject area at SU or another university, *their grades are equal to or higher than their initial SU grade*. In other words, their SUPA experience has prepared these students for success at the college level.ⁱ

SUPA students enrolled in SU courses routinely report back that they are required to be much more independent thinkers and writers in them than in their regular high school courses and that they must learn to adapt to a much faster-paced schedule, with a significantly greater amount of work assigned.ⁱⁱ

SUPA's annual Postgraduate Survey Study, as noted above, examines graduates' attempts to transfer or gain recognition for credit, as well as their assessment of the academic impact of their SU courses on their current college experiences.

Of the students who responded to the *2011 Postgraduate Survey of SUPA Class of 2010*, for example, the majority of respondents (97%) evaluated their overall academic experience of these SU courses taken in high school to be in the "excellent" to "good" range. Results are comparable in this category for earlier postgraduate surveys.

Students also are asked to assess the SUPA program and the SU courses they have taken in terms of how much they prepared them for college and provided a realistic expectation of the academic challenges of college, along with five other categories.

In the *2011 Postgraduate Survey of SUPA Class of 2010*, 88% of SUPA students said the program better prepared them for college ("agree"/"strongly agree"); 67% said they gained better study habits; and 87.2% said they gained useful analytical skills through SUPA.

In these surveys, students' open-ended comments address a range of subjects: course instruction, the curriculum, content and time-management skills learned, credit transfer/recognition attempts, etc.

For more information about SUPA postgraduate surveys and to see sample reports, contact Dr. Rob Pusch, Associate Director of Research & Evaluation, at rpusch@syr.edu.

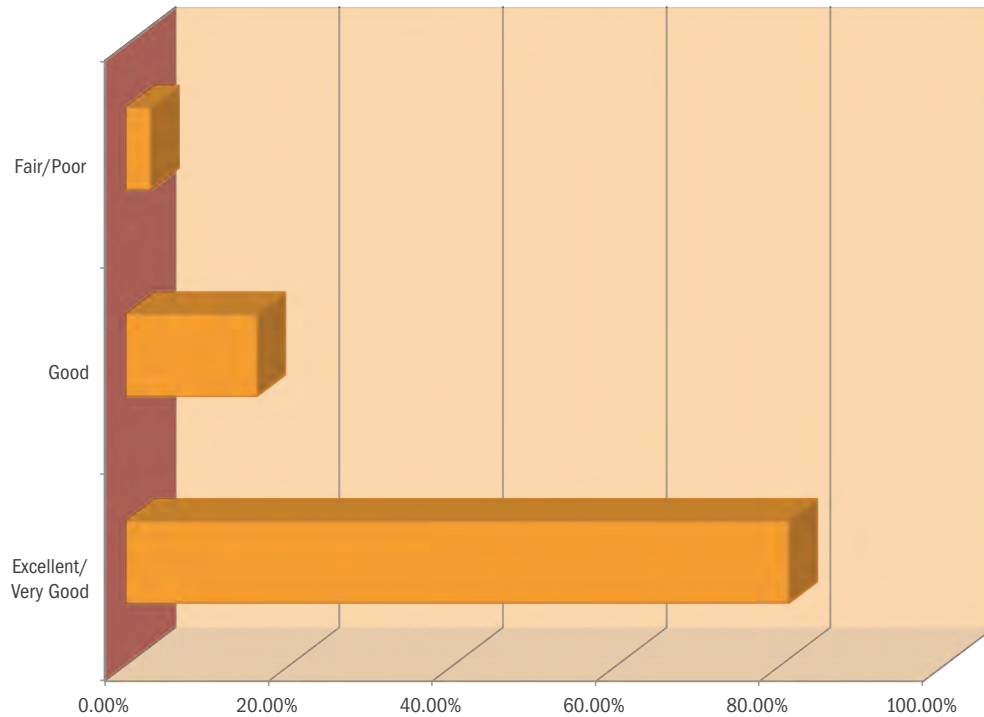
SUPA students enrolled in SU courses routinely report back that they are required to be much more independent thinkers and writers in them than in their regular high school courses.



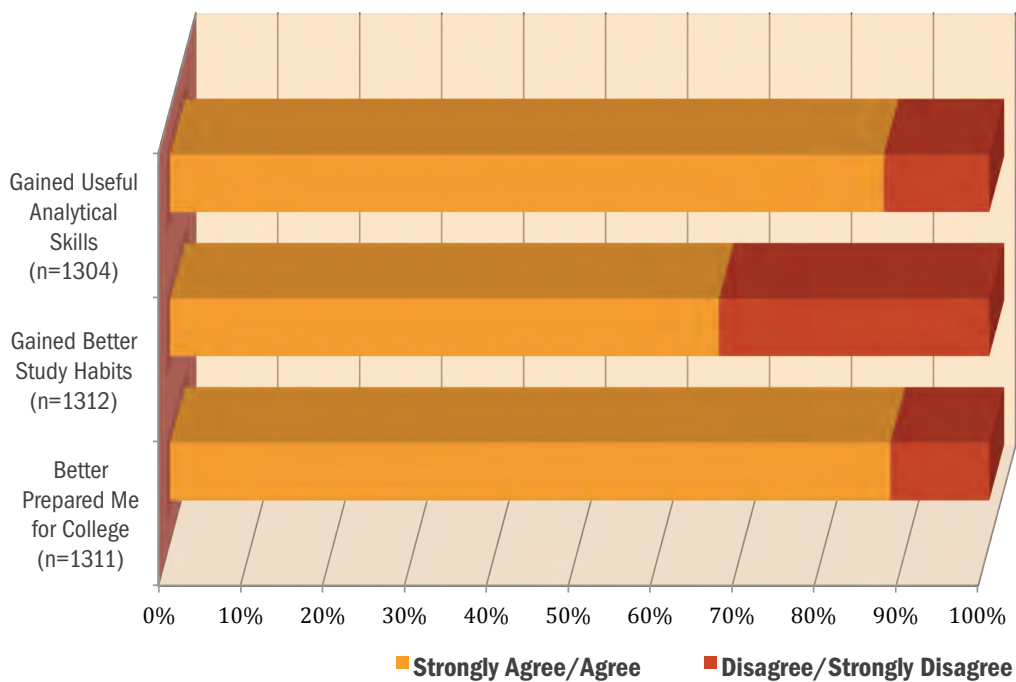
PROGRAM RESEARCH & EVALUATION

2011 Postgraduate Survey of SUPA Class of 2010
Assessment of SUPA Experience

n = 1095



2011 Postgraduate Survey of SUPA Class of 2010
Assessment of College Preparation



HISTORY OF SUPA

Currently in its 40th year, Project Advance is one of the oldest and most respected concurrent enrollment programs in the country.

- ▶ SUPA has served as a model for other programs nationally, including those at Indiana University and the University of Pittsburgh.
- ▶ SUPA is the only program affiliated with a private research university in the Northeast to be accredited by NACEP. Accreditation is based on a comprehensive peer review conducted by NACEP to ensure that a program meets or exceeds the organization's 17 national standards for program quality in the areas of curriculum, faculty, students, assessment, and program evaluation.ⁱⁱⁱ
- ▶ SUPA recently was awarded reaccreditation by NACEP, the National Alliance of Concurrent Enrollment Partnerships.
- ▶ SUPA has received many honors over the years from the American Association for Higher Education, the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching, the National Commission on Excellence in Education, and other national and state organizations.
- ▶ Consistently, around 90% of SUPA graduates report receiving recognition for their SU courses at colleges and universities across the US and Canada.

Nationally, concurrent/dual enrollment programs have grown rapidly in number, though not all concurrent enrollment programs are alike.

SUPA prides itself on exceeding the standards established by NACEP for concurrent/dual enrollment programs and for insisting upon the need for strict national standards to ensure that college courses do not become diluted in the high schools and that the credit actually reflects university academic standards and expectations.

Students who have completed SU courses through SUPA report credit transfer recognition at a variety of colleges

and universities across in the US and Canada, including: American University, Bucknell University, Central and Eastern Michigan universities, Clarkson University, Emory University, Florida State University, George Mason University, George Washington University, Gettysburg College, Indiana State University, Indiana University, James Madison University, McGill University, Northeastern University, Oberlin College, Ohio State University, Penn State University, Rochester Institute of Technology, Rutgers State University, St. Lawrence University, SUNY colleges and universities, University of Toronto, University of Vermont, and University of Washington.^{iv}

SUPA'S MISSION

Project Advance is neither a recruiting tool for Syracuse University nor a for-profit program. Since 1972, SUPA's basic mission has been:

- ▶ To offer innovative and challenging SU courses to qualified high school students at their local high schools, during their regularly scheduled high school day;
- ▶ To increase students' college readiness by providing college readiness tools, programs, and services;
- ▶ To provide continuous professional development for teachers and ongoing dialogue between university faculty and high school teachers;
- ▶ To conduct extensive ongoing research and evaluation in support of systemically improving instruction and smoothing the transition from high school to post-secondary education.

SUPA currently partners with close to 200 high schools in New York, New Jersey, Massachusetts, Maine, Michigan, and internationally, to offer qualified high school students more than 38 different SU courses from a variety of academic disciplines, including first-year academic writing; American

history; calculus; economics; forensic science; information technologies; intermediate-level French, Italian, and Spanish; Latin; psychology; public affairs; etc. These courses are all regular SU courses listed in the university's catalog.

SUPPLEMENTAL NOTES

ⁱ See Dutkowsky, D., Evensky, J., & Edmonds, J. (2006). Teaching college economics in the high schools: The role of concurrent enrollment programs. *Journal of Economic Education*, 37(4), 477-482.

Professors Dutkowsky and Evensky, from SU's Department of Economics, along with SUPA Director Dr. Jerry Edmonds, conducted a comparative study of student scores on the Test of Economic Literacy for students enrolled in SUPA's SU economics course and those taking AP economics.

They observed that high school students taking the SU one-semester micro/macro principles of economics course through SUPA "average[d] nearly 1 percentage point higher than do the Advanced Placement/honors economics group and score[d] considerably better in fundamentals and international economics. By cognitive levels, CEP students score over 4 percentage points in the knowledge area and exhibit better performance on application questions" (477).

See also the section entitled "Systematic Program Evaluation" in Bonesteel, M., & Sperry, S. (May 2002). Building a better bridge. *Principal Leadership*, 2(9), 39-43.

ⁱⁱ Sample student comments from evaluations of SU courses taken through SUPA:

Accounting was challenging, and I learned a lot of information that I will use in the real world.

American history was really intriguing and eye-opening. I had to work very hard, but now as I look back, I actually enjoyed what I've learned!

The rigorous nature of American history helped me learn a lot through the use of essays, book reports, and projects. It was a unique experience because the tests in the class did not focus on multiple choice questions but on the expression of creative ideas through essays.

This course was a very interesting experience because it was very hands-on, and we were able to understand the full extent of how forensic science works and how everything connects.

I really liked how chemistry was handled like a college course even though we were in high school because I feel it prepared me for my future. I learned that I am in control of my own learning and from here on out, it is my responsibility to get things done. I now know what to expect when I go to college.

My economics teacher's enthusiasm for the material was contagious. Class discussions were always interesting, and I often left with some new movie or or article to check out. I felt like the point of the class was to learn, and thoughts about grades came second.

Although older students have raved about SU economics, I couldn't appreciate how such a challenging class could not only be engaging but fun until I experienced it myself!

English and writing has allowed me to grow as a writer in two semesters more so than in my first three years of high school.

SU English and writing has helped me to think critically and explore my world in new ways.

My English and writing courses have opened a gateway into a world of knowledge that's far beyond anything I have known before.

This was the first English class in high school in which I was forced to think for myself rather than being coddled.

I had no idea how important forensic science was. What also struck me is that what we did in this class are some of the same tests used by actual scientists.

Sociology really opened my eyes to a new perspective. I can apply the information I learned to other classes, so it was very helpful.

My sociology instructor always pushed us to think rather than have the answers given to us. He made us employ our own minds toward finding a solution or figuring something out. We were not fed answers, and this made us analyze the topics.

Sociology gave me a whole new outlook; I don't look at the world the same way now. I notice the tactics of advertisers, how people socialize themselves, and how they achieve higher status. I learned why certain people think the way they do and how labeling people changes their lives.

ETS 142 helped to shape me as a thinker and to realize the type of person I want to be.

ⁱⁱⁱ See nacep.org for more information on the National Alliance of Concurrent Enrollment Partnerships (NACEP). SUPA has been a pioneer in the standards movement for CEPs and was awarded continued accreditation in 2011 by NACEP. Then-NACEP President Lynn Burbank remarked:

Through NACEP's rigorous accreditation peer-review process, Syracuse University has once again demonstrated that it integrates high quality standards-based practices across its concurrent enrollment program. As one of the initial cohort of programs to earn NACEP accreditation in 2004, we are pleased to award continued accreditation to Syracuse University Project Advance. Project Advance is one of the first four programs to earn continued accreditation from NACEP and one of only 66 programs nationwide accredited by NACEP.

Dr. Kristine Hansen, in her article "The Composition Marketplace: Shopping for Credit versus Learning to Write" in *College Credit for Writing In High School: The "Taking Care of" Business* (eds. K. Hansen & Christine Farris, Urbana, IL: NCTE, 2010) observes that:

If the NACEP standards were met by all C[oncurrent] E[nrollment] courses, I think they would rapidly become the best market alternative to taking First-Year Composition on a college campus because students would be assured they were receiving the same kind and level of instruction they would if they had gone to the campus of the college offering the course ... There would not be the same worries about teacher preparation, equivalence of assignments, depth and breadth of student knowledge, or relevance or currency of pedagogical and evaluation methods that can arise with the IB and AP brands. (p. 28)

Dr. Hansen is a professor of English, former director of the English Composition Program, and associate dean of undergraduate education at Brigham Young University. She has published widely on college composition studies programs.

^{iv} There are a number of national organizations advocating for strong CEPs that increase collaboration between secondary and postsecondary institutions in order to improve school rigor and promote college readiness, including the National Center for Public Policy and Higher Education (highereducation.org), Indiana University's Center for Evaluation and Educational Policy (ceep.indiana.edu), American Youth Policy Forum (aypf.org), etc.

Project Advance[®]

SYRACUSE UNIVERSITY

For more information about SUPA contact:

400 Ostrom Ave.

Syracuse NY 13244-3250

T 315.443.2404

F 315.443.1626

W supa.syr.edu

E help@supa.syr.edu

[facebook.com/projectadvance](https://www.facebook.com/projectadvance)

twitter.com/projectadvance

