

Office of the President

TO MEMBERS OF THE ACADEMIC AND STUDENT AFFAIRS COMMITTEE:

DISCUSSION ITEM

For Meeting of September 20, 2023

EXPANDING OPPORTUNITIES FOR COLLEGE CREDIT IN HIGH SCHOOL: THE UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA IN PARTNERSHIP WITH THE NATIONAL EDUCATION EQUITY LAB

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The University of California (UC) has joined the National Education Equity Lab (NEEL) as a partner to provide college courses online to high school students across the nation who are enrolled in Title I schools.¹ The University plans to make its initial courses available in 2024. The University of California is the first public research university system to collaborate with NEEL.

This discussion item provides a broad overview of the approach the University will take in this new partnership, with the aim of helping more students from first-generation, low-income, and underrepresented communities prepare for college through rigorous curriculum and strong academic supports. Students will gain confidence in their ability to engage in college-level work and will learn more about preparing for and succeeding in higher education.

BACKGROUND

The University provides a robust set of academic preparation supports to students in California public schools to help them achieve eligibility for college. In addition to academic-preparation outreach programs that help students increase college knowledge as well as apply for admission and financial aid, the University also supports A–G completion by providing UC-approved A–G, honors, and Advanced Placement courses online for high school credit.

The University’s partnership with National Education Equity Lab (NEEL) is intended to expand opportunities students’ access to a rigorous curriculum by joining with other institutions across the country to provide University-level courses to high school students for credit.

NEEL offers a “college-in-high-school” model, which delivers online, credit-bearing courses from top universities to classrooms across the country. University faculty develop and organize the courses, which are cofacilitated by high school teachers and supported by University teaching

¹ Title I is a federal education program that supports low-income students throughout the nation. The Title I designation is determined by the number of students who qualify for free or reduced lunch.

fellows—undergraduate and graduate students as well as alumni—who provide synchronous tutorials, moderated discussions, office hours, and other academic support for students. Through this lens, the teaching fellows help students understand more about college and campus life. Courses are further scaffolded with the support of the NEEL team so that the pace of the college course is appropriate to the needs of the high school classroom while the rigor of a college-level course is maintained. Currently, NEEL offers courses to more than fifteen thousand students in three hundred schools in twenty-nine states.

School districts with Title I schools are invited by NEEL to participate. School principals then select the high school teachers who will co-facilitate the courses with the University faculty offering the course. Each course has an average of 25 students, most of whom are juniors and seniors. All courses are free for students. Schools pay a small fee to NEEL (\$250/student) to cover administrative and support costs. Colleges provide the faculty member, the teaching fellows, and the course curriculum.

Courses are offered in a variety of disciplines, including humanities, STEM, business, and social sciences. Offerings include Environmental Studies and Justice from Howard University, Introduction to Sociology from Arizona State University, Poetry in America from Harvard University, Bioengineering from Stanford University, and Big Data for Big Policy Problems from Cornell University.

Current NEEL Partners

Arizona State University	Cornell University	Howard University	Stanford University
Barnard College	Georgetown University	Princeton University	Wesleyan University
Brown University	Harvard University	Spelman University	Wharton – University of Pennsylvania

The University plans to offer two courses in the 2024 winter/spring term. University faculty are responsible for establishing the course syllabus, creating course materials for the students (including recorded lectures), developing assessments, selecting and managing the teaching fellows, and engaging with the students at key points during the course. The teaching fellows lead synchronous Zoom sessions, (including moderated discussions), answer course content questions, grade student work and provide feedback, and connect experiences within the course to those expected in a collegiate setting. Classroom teachers will be selected by their principals to cofacilitate the course, focused on supporting pedagogy, technology, and student success.

CONCLUSION

UC’s partnership with the National Education Equity Lab offers a means by which the University can expand opportunity and access for more students in low-income schools. The university courses that will be offered to students beginning in 2024 will complement existing online courses available to high school students for completing A–G requirements while providing unique exposure for students in California and beyond to rigorous curriculum and college knowledge.

KEY TO ACRONYMS

NEEL	National Education Equity Lab
STEM	Science, Technology, Engineering, Mathematics