SOUTHWEST
MINNESOTA STATE UNIVERSITY

College Now

Student Handbook

New Student Handbook

Welcome - Overview of the Program

Southwest Minnesota State University partners with over 100 school districts and more than 5,000 students in the College Now program. We offer over 30 different courses and work with more than 300 different teachers around the state. Our College Now program provides numerous advantages to our students, including:

- It allows students to earn college and high school credit simultaneously
- It's a great transition and introduction to university study
- It allows for more flexible scheduling upon enrollment at the university
- It allows earlier completion of general education requirements
- It's a demonstration of a commitment to university admissions officials
- Unlike AP, it concludes with a college grade on a college transcript; AP courses are high school courses that teach to a "one shot" test and may not even count toward general education requirements

StarID Information

A StarID is a username assigned to individuals for the purpose of logging into system-based programs. It is unique across the MN State College and University system (MinnState), so individuals should only have one StarID that is assigned to them upon applying. Once a student has applied to any MinnState institution, whether online or through a paper copy, a StarID is created for them in the system. Students should use this StarID whenever they are applying to or logging into any MinnState program.

Students can use the StarID Self Service page if they forget either their StarID or the password. To use this site, students should complete the following steps:

1.) Go to the StarID Self Service page (starid.minnstate.edu and choose StarID Self Service)
2.) Choose the "Reset Password" option
3.) Select the "I know my email address" option
4.) Enter the email used when the StarID account was created and hit "Continue"
5.) Retrieve that email and copy the verification code. Then paste it into the Verification code box and type in the last name in the last name/email box. The verification code is only valid for one hour.
6.) At this point, students will be able to reset their StarID password. The passwords are case sensitive, must be at least eight characters long, and requires the use of 3 of the following four items: upper case letters, lower case letters, numbers, and special characters. Please also choose a preferred email address, and check the acknowledgement check box. Then click "Continue".
7.) The password has been reset and the StarID will appear on the screen.

Eligibility Requirements for College Now Students

Seniors - need to have a 3.0 GPA or above and be in the top half of their graduating class*
Juniors - need to have a 3.0 GPA or above and be in the top third of their graduating class*
Sophomores - need to be in the top 10% of their graduating class and have scored in the 90th percentile on a nationally standardized test. Transcripts and test scores must be sent to the College Now Office to verify sophomore eligibility.

Note: Test scores from a nationally standardized test can be used to replace class rank if needed. Students will still be required to meet the 3.0 GPA to go along with their test scores. Seniors need to score over the 50th percentile and juniors need to score over the 70th percentile.

Appeal Process

We do have an appeal process in place for students who are interested in taking a course through College Now but do not meet the set requirements for eligibility. Below are the items we will need to receive in order to complete the Student Appeal Process:

1. A completed Student Appeal Form
2. A personal letter from the student
3. Letter/letters of recommendation from teachers and/or administrators
4. High school transcripts (must include final grades for the semester/trimester/quarter immediately prior to the requested College Now course.)

Application Process

Students are encouraged to complete the application process the semester prior to the start of the course or as soon as they plan to enroll in a College Now course. This will help make the actual registration process go a little smoother for the both the students and the teachers.

Important: If a student already has a StarID from another MinnState institution, they should use this to log into their application account instead of creating a new StarID. Failure to do so will result in complications later in the process. Students who have already applied to the SMSU College Now program, do not need to complete a new application. One application is all that is needed during a student's time as a high school student.

A Step-by-Step Guide to the E-Application Process can be found online at: E-Application Process.

Course Eligibility

Some college courses may require a student to take a pre-requisite course prior to being able to enroll in that class. The majority of College Now courses do not have a pre-requisite listed for the course; however, there are five that do:

1. Math 110
2. Math 150
3. Math 151
4. Spanish 201
5. Spanish 202

If students plan to take any of these courses, please refer to our Academic Catalog for additional information regarding these specific requirements.

Assuming general eligibility requirements are met, none of our College Now classes require pre-testing prior to enrollment in the course.

Course Load

College Now students are allowed to enroll in a maximum of 18 credits per semester. This includes all concurrent enrollment or PSEO credits from either SMSU or any other MinnState institution. Students exceeding this limit will be notified of the issue and will be required to choose which courses they would like to remain enrolled in for college credit.

Registration Process

Registration for a course takes place within the first 10 days of the class. Registration is our term for enrolling in the College Now course in order to receive college credit. Students will need to be admitted to the SMSU College Now program before they attempt to register for a course. Students will not be able to e-apply and then immediately attempt to register, as it does take up to two business days for an application to be processed on our end.

A Step-by-Step Guide to the Registration Process can be found online at: Registration Process.

Trouble Shooting

The College Now Office has put together a listing of the most common questions or issues that arise during the application and registration process. This list is available online on the Troubleshooting Resource page and is meant to act as a reference for students and teachers as they work through each of these processes.

However, if you are still having issues, please have the teacher or counselor contact us to report the issue. Please include as much information as possible so we can easily find a solution.

Drop/Withdrawal

There is a significant difference between the drop and withdrawal of a College Now course. It is important that students are aware of this difference when making their decision regarding courses.

A drop happens within the first 10 days of the course and it will not be recorded on a college transcript for the student. The high school will also not be charged for that student when billings are sent out. Students process the drop directly through E-services using the following steps:

1.) Log into E-Services
2.) Select "Courses and Registration"
3.) Select "View/Modify Schedule"
4.) Click on the "x" button to the left of the course title that will be dropped
5.) Enter the student's password
6.) Hit the "Drop/Withdraw" button
7.) Select "View/Modify Schedule" tab again and verify the course is no longer listed on the schedule

A withdrawal happens after the initial 10-day registration window, but before the withdrawal deadline for the course. Students have the first 80% of the class to withdraw from the course. A "W" will appear on the student's transcript, but it does not count towards their college GPA. It will, however, count towards their overall completion rates. The high school will still be responsible for the tuition of this student when billings are sent.

Withdrawals will need to be processed by the College Now office at SMSU. We request an email be sent directly from the teacher or the counselor at the high school and it should include the student's name, the course they are withdrawing from, and their last date of attendance. This email will serve as documentation for their request and will be entered into their student file.

E-Services

E-Services is an account where students will register for classes, look up grades, and pull unofficial transcripts. It is the responsibility of the student to register for a course and to verify that the registration is complete. Failure to take these steps, could result in a student not earning college credit for the course.

To verify registration, a student should first log into E-Services using their StarID and password. They will then select the "Courses and Registration" tab on the left side. From there, students will choose the "View/Modify Schedule". If the correct course is listed, then the student is registered. If not, then they will need to contact their counselor/teacher regarding the situation.

E-Services is also where students will gain access to an unofficial transcript. This can be found under the "Grades and Transcripts" tab and then "Academic Record". An unofficial transcript can be used for scholarship purposes or possibly as a registration tool come a student's freshman year of college. An unofficial transcript cannot be used however for the transfer of SMSU credits to another institution. The transferring of credits would require a student to complete an official transcript request through our Records and Registration office. Here is a link to the site: E-Services.

D2L Brightspace

D2L Brightspace is a student portal to online course materials. Some mentoring professors encourage their high school teachers and students to use this program, while others do not. Those that use it will post supporting materials, online tests and quizzes, and some will host online discussions as well. Only students who are registered for the course will have access to the class in D2L Brightspace. Please note, the system does have an overnight update, so a student will not see the course appear in their account until the day after they have successfully registered for the course. Students will access the D2L Brightspace account using their StarID and password. Here is a link to the site: D2L Brightspace.

College Now ID Cards

As part of our College Now program, we want students to recognize that they are SMSU students. For this reason, we provide all students with a College Now student ID card. This ID card will provide free admittance for students into many Southwest Minnesota State University events including general athletic events, band and choir concerts, and theatre productions.

The ID cards are provided to students during their first semester as a College Now student and will remain valid through their senior year. The back of the card provides information on how to transfer SMSU credits to other institutions. The process of officially sending a transcript from SMSU to another school is done online. The back of this card, along with the Mustang ID on the front, should make this a smooth and easy process.

Campus Resources

College Now students have access to the numerous resources that are available through SMSU. The library, Writing Center, and tutoring services are all available online for students to use throughout the year.

Students can access the library at www.smsu.edu/library. Registered students will use their StarID and password to log into the SMSU online library resources. If a student is unable to log into the library, please verify registration via E-Services.

The SMSU Writing Center can work with students on identifying a topic, organizing ideas, learning how to cite appropriately, or how to use punctuation correctly. Online appointments and e-tutoring are available for College Now students.

Tutoring is also available online by contacting the SMSU Academic Commons at linda.nelson@smsu.edu.

SMSU does provide services for students with disabilities and IEPs at the high school. However, accommodations may vary from what is available at the high school, as we will not provide accommodations in the IEP that are considered a fundamental alteration at the college or university level. At the university level, a 504 plan or IEP are tools to assist the Office of Disability Services and student in determining reasonable and appropriate accommodations. If a student taking a College Now course in their high school would like consideration of accommodations from their plan, a copy of the plan needs to be submitted to the College Now Office along with a letter from the diagnostician (Doctor, Therapist, Social Worker, Psychiatrist, etc.) as to what assessments (WAIS, Woodcock Johnson, Interview, DSM …) were done to come to the conclusion that this individual has a disability and what major life activity is substantially limited. Please contact the College Now Office regarding the process for determining the appropriate accommodations for a student.

Course Syllabi

A college syllabus is an outline or summary of the topics to be covered within the course. It will list many items including the course title and number, the SMSU mentoring professor, the required book for the class, the description of the course, a layout of the tests/quizzes for the course, the grading policy, any attendance policies in place, and much more. The syllabus should also include information about the academic honesty policy we have at SMSU and our plagiarism policy.

Students should keep any syllabus that they receive for their College Now courses. A copy of the syllabus may be requested when a student is attempting to transfer college credits to another institution.

Grading Process

Once a College Now course is complete, grades will be sent by the high school teacher to the mentoring professor for review. This process can take up to two weeks before the grades will be posted in the system. Students can check SMSU grades by logging into E-Services and choosing the "Academic Records" tab. Students will want to ensure that the correct semester is selected for their course, and then hit "Get Grades". This should pull up the grades posted for that semester. The grade listed is the final grade for the course and it is what will appear on the student's permanent SMSU transcript.

If a student has a question or feels there is a discrepancy with the grade that appears, their first contact should be with the high school teacher for the course. It is possible for the high school grade to vary from the college grade, so students will want to make sure they have this discussion with the high school teacher first. Although most schools find it easier to have one grade for both levels, some schools choose to offer a separate grading scale to allow for an alternate grade at the high school level. This information should be addressed with the students at the start of the class.

It is important for students to be aware that final grades are permanent and will remain on their official transcript.

Transferability of Credits

The transferability of credits is ultimately up to the receiving institution. However, many of the College Now courses we offer fall under what is called the Minnesota Transfer Curriculum. This is an agreed upon set of general courses that are required at all Minnesota State Colleges and University institutions. Here is a link for additional information about the general requirements: MN Transfer Curriculum.

Students going outside of the MN State Colleges and Universities system may find the Transferology website helpful to determine how their credits will transfer to other institutions. Although this site does not have a complete listing of all colleges and universities, it does have several to choose from in the region.

If any student encounters difficulty with the transfer of SMSU credits, they are encouraged to contact the College Now Director at Kim.Guenther@SMSU.edu or 507-537-6708.

Transcript Request Process

Students continuing at SMSU do not need to request a transcript.

Students transferring credits to another school within the MinnState system do not need to request a transcript. They just need to inform the Registration and Records Office at their new institution of their previous course work with SMSU.

All other students will need to complete an official transcript request after completing their senior year of high school and all grades have been posted. This can be completed by going to www.SMSU.edu/go/transcripts.

Should a student have a form that must accompany their SMSU transcript, please order the transcript online and upload the form to the National Student Clearinghouse.

Questions about ordering transcripts can be directed to: transcripts@smsu.edu or 507-537-6207.

Course Cancellation

Although rare, cancellation of a College Now course could happen for the following reasons:

1.) less than 51% of the course is taking the class for college credit
2.) less than five students are enrolled in the course
3.) high school personnel does not successfully complete the course objectives required for the class

Surveys

For accreditation purposes, the College Now program is required to conduct several surveys of the different individuals involved with our concurrent enrollment program. Links to all of our surveys can be found online on the SMSU College Now Survey site.

The Student Satisfaction survey is completed at the end of each college course. The survey is not an evaluation of the high school teacher itself, it is merely used as a tool to ensure that we are offering a strong program that meets the needs of the students.

For those taking either our COMM 110 or English 151 courses, there is another discipline-specific survey that we ask students to complete in addition to the Student Satisfaction survey at the end of the course.

Two additional surveys that we conduct include both a one-year and four-year out alumni survey of past participants in the College Now program. From these surveys we look to gain an understanding of how our credits transferred to other institutions and what our past students experienced in their post high school education. Please be aware that these survey opportunities will be coming in the future.

Student Rights and Responsibilities and Conduct

SMSU College Now students will receive the same rights and are held to the same expectations as are traditional on-campus students. A full listing of these rights and expectations is available in our SMSU Student Handbook.

Below is information regarding our Academic Honesty policy and our Plagiarism policy. These two policies should be included on any SMSU syllabi for College Now courses. A full listing of the policy can be found at: http://www.smsu.edu/resources/webspaces/nca/policies/A-032.pdf.

Academic Honesty Policy:
The aim of the academic honesty policy is to maintain the academic integrity of Southwest Minnesota State University and promote an intellectual climate of honesty and integrity. To maintain an environment of academic integrity all students are required to accept personal responsibility for their work at Southwest Minnesota State University. Any offense against the academic honesty policy compromises the educational integrity of Southwest Minnesota State University and will be considered a grave offense. Offenses against academic honesty are acts which unjustly advance one's academic standing at Southwest Minnesota State University and include knowingly permitting or knowingly aiding a person in an offense against the academic policy.

Plagiarism Policy: Presenting someone else's work or ideas as your own. Plagiarism will include, but not be limited to:
1. Submitting someone else's work or ideas as your own, including but not limited to homework assignments, term papers, research reports, lab reports, group projects, artistic works, tests, or class presentations.
2. Submitting someone else's electronic work as your own, including but not limited to video clips, audio clips, electronic files, electronic programs, and any other copied electronic page, document, article, review, etc.
3. Submitting someone else's work as your own with minor alterations. Paraphrasing without proper citation is also plagiarism.
4. Submitting someone else's work without appropriate use of quotations, paraphrases, footnotes, or references.

Violations of either policy should first be brought to the attention of the mentoring faculty. As the faculty of record, it is their decision if the situation should be handled officially or unofficially. If handled unofficially, the mentoring faculty and the high school teacher will work together to determine an appropriate course-related sanction that will be imposed.

If handled officially, the mentor will complete paperwork documenting the incident that is filed and recorded with the Dean. The Dean will review the documentation and determine if the sanction is justified or if additional sanctions are deemed necessary. This documentation is then kept on file for three years. Students will have an opportunity to appeal the faculty decision of documented cases to a faculty appeal committee if they so choose.

Another policy for College Now students to be aware of is our SMSU Grievance/Complaint policy. Additional information about this policy can be found at: www.smsu.edu/resources/webspaces/nca/policies/G-011.pdf

SMSU Grievance/Complaint Policy and Procedure: No retaliation of any kind shall be taken against a student for participating, or refusing to participate, in a grievance. Retaliation may be subject to action under appropriate student or employee policies.

1.   Students shall first attempt to resolve complaints informally at the point of the dispute.
2.   If the dispute cannot be resolved informally, students shall submit, in writing, their grievance/complaint to the Office of the Provost and Vice President for Academic and Student Affairs.

3. The Provost and Vice President for Academic and Student Affairs may refer a grievance/complaint to an appropriate staff member ("designee") for investigation and/or disposition of the grievance/complaint.
4. The Provost and Vice President for Academic and Student Affairs or her/his designee will meet with the student within ten (10) class days to discuss the student's grievance/complaint.
5. The grievance/complaint will be investigated and resolved in a timely manner. Only in exceptional circumstances will this take more than thirty (30) class days. All documentation regarding the grievance/complaint shall be kept in the Office of the Provost and Vice President for Academic and Student Affairs.
6. Once an inquiry into a grievance/complaint has reached a conclusion, the Provost and Vice President for Academic and Student Affairs or her/his designee will meet with the student and inform him/her of the outcome of the grievance/complaint.
7. If a student wishes to file an appeal of a grievance/complaint, that student will have to do so within five (5) class days of the closing meeting. Appeals from this grievance procedure shall be routed to the Office of the President for consideration.
8. Following the determination by the university President, a student wishing to further pursue an appeal may do so by contacting the System Director for Policy and Procedure at Gary.Hunter@minnstate.edu or by contacting the Higher Learning Commission at www.hlcommission.org/Student-Resources/complaints.html

Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA)

According to the US Department of Education, the FERPA policy regarding concurrent enrollment students states:

"If a student is attending a postsecondary institution - at any age - the rights under FERPA have transferred to the student. However, in a situation where a student is enrolled in both a high school and a postsecondary institution, the two schools may exchange information on that student. If the student is under 18, the parents still retain the rights under FERPA at the high school and may inspect and review any records sent by the postsecondary institution to the high school. Additionally, the postsecondary institution may disclose personally identifiable information from the student's education records to the parents, without the consent of the eligible student, if the student is a dependent for tax purposes under the IRS rules."

SMSU's practice regarding FERPA is to exercise caution and we may request additional information from the student before talking with or releasing specific information to anyone other than the student themselves.

For additional information please see the US Department of Education website at: http://www2.ed.gov/policy/gen/guid/fpco/ferpa/index.html

Students Continuing at SMSU

Although College Now students are considered SMSU students already, they are not officially admitted as an undergraduate student should they be looking to continue their education at SMSU after high school. For these students, we will require them to go through an official admission process. For more information about this process, please go to our admission website at: SMSU Admission.

Since College Now students are some of the best and brightest students at the high school level, we have developed a special scholarship specifically for our College Now participants. College Now students can earn an additional $2,000-$4,000 in scholarships should they choose to continue at SMSU as a freshman. Additional information about the scholarship can be found online at: Mustang Scholarship Packages.

Below are additional links students may find useful as they learn more about SMSU and all that we have to offer:
[Academic Catalog](#)
[Campus Map](#)
[Financial Aid](#)
[Residence Life](#)

Contact Information

For issues related to concerns with mentors, academic misconduct, student appeals, and any general issues or concerns with the SMSU College Now program, contact:

Kim Guenther – Director of Concurrent Enrollment
507-537-6708
Kim.Guenther@smsu.edu

For issues on registration including e-applications, course registration, roster verifications, New Teacher Applications, and course requests, contact:

Jessica Mensink – Assistant Director of College Now
507-537-6390
Jessica.Mensink@smsu.edu