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DSU's Planned Early College HS Approved by State Board

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The Delaware State Board of Education has notified Delaware State University that it can go ahead with its plans to establish an Early College High School on the campus of DSU.

The state Board of Education approved DSU?s application for the charter school during its May 17 meeting.

The planned charter high school will be the state?s first Early College High School, which will be designed specifically to serve first generation college-bound students. The Early College High School is a nationally recognized school design brought to Delaware through a partnership between Innovative Schools, a Delaware-based non-profit public school support organization, and EdWorks,

DSU and Innovative Schools submitted the charter school application to the Delaware Department of Education in December 2011. After several meetings with the DOE?s Charter School Accountability Committee and a May 8 public hearing, the committee recommended the approval of the application. The State Board followed that recommendation and approved the charter school.

?We are excited about the opportunity to provide an exceptional secondary/post-secondary educational experience to Delawareans,? said Dr. Alton Thompson, DSU provost and vice president of Academic Affairs. ?As the first early college high school in the state, we are partnering with the DOE to implement a rigorous curriculum and other support services to ensure our students are competitive on an international level.?

The University has included the Early College High School as part of its development of a new Facilities Master Plan, which is expected to be finalized by the fall of 2012. The location of the charter school will be determined by the master plan. Dr. Thompson said the University plans to enroll students in the school by the 2013-2014 school year.

In the Early College model, high school and college combine to form a coherent educational program in which students work toward a high school diploma and up to two years of college credits in four years of high school. Located on a college campus, the model directly challenges the belief system of under-prepared poor and minority students about their ability to do college level work and get a postsecondary degree.

Housing a high school on the DSU campus is not unprecedented in the University?s history. In the 1893-94 school year, the then-State College for Colored Students established a two-year preparatory school to help students get ready for a college education. In 1917, a Model Grade School was established by DSU, which granted a high school diploma to graduates. Capital improvement donations by philanthropist Pierre du Pont in the 1920s included funding to construct a new school building named the Du Pont Building. That building served as the only high school facility for African Americans in Kent County until 1952.

?Adding an Early College High School on DSU?s campus is consistent with the University?s

historic mission and would strengthen the University?s ability to serve first generation college-bound students and underrepresented minorities from the greater Dover area,? said Dr. Thompson.

Students participating in the Early College High School model launched by EdWorks in Ohio have an average graduation rate of 91% and outperform state averages in high stakes graduation tests for reading, writing, and mathematics. At the completion of four years of high school, 100% of students attending Early College High Schools have earned a minimum of 30 hours of college credit, and as many as 60% of students earn an associate?s degree, or the equivalent of 45-60 college credits.

The University intends to blend the Early College Charter High School with its existing STEM (science, technology, engineering, and math) Initiative.

?The Early College High School at DSU will be an innovative learning environment designed to inspire students who have the potential and motivation to be the first in their families to graduate from college,? said Dr. Thompson. ?We are committed to making this school a good fit for our community.?

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