Entry Point Project broadens CIS audience

College in the Schools launched the Entry Point Project (EPP) in fall 2009 as a means of broadening the range of students it serves. The University’s Department of Postsecondary Teaching and Learning and Department of Writing Studies are partners in this effort.

Pedagogy accommodates wide range of learning styles and student backgrounds

EPP comprises four regular credit-bearing University courses: WRIT 1201-Writing Studio; PSTL 1006 – College Algebra through Modeling; PSTL 1163 - Physics by Inquiry; and PSTL 1211 - Sociological Perspectives: A Multicultural America. All four courses employ Universal Instructional Design, pedagogy that:

- Integrates development of skills (e.g. critical thinking, problem-solving, written and oral communication) with the acquisition of content knowledge;
- Communicates clear expectations and provides constructive feedback;
- Promotes interaction among and between teachers and students;
- Uses teaching methods that consider diverse learning styles, abilities, ways of knowing, previous experience, and background knowledge;
- Articulates a commitment to diversity and integrates multicultural perspectives into all aspects of the learning process.

Intended audience includes promising students who are . . .

- In the top 50th – 80th percentile of their high school class
- Multilingual/ELL
- Members of racial or ethnic minorities
- First generation college-bound students and/or
- From families of low to moderate income

Enrollment requirement

At least 60% of the class seats must be filled by students meeting the required student qualifications for each course (see descriptions on the next page) AND belong to one or more of the intended audiences (see above). Teachers and schools may exercise discretion in targeting particular groups mentioned above who are currently underserved in their schools, giving priority to students in those groups.
Entry Point Project courses

NOTE: Significantly more information about each EPP course, as well as the more than 30 other CIS courses, is found on the CIS Web site at http://www.cce.umn.edu/CIS/.

College Algebra through Modeling (PSTL 1006)

- Credits: Three University of Minnesota semester credits.
- U of M requirements met with this course: Meets a U of M liberal education requirement in Mathematical Thinking. Counts as a fourth year of high school mathematics for students seeking admission to the University of Minnesota, Twin Cities, starting fall 2015.
- U of M catalog description: Math modeling, including linear, polynomial, rational, exponential, and logarithmic functions, counting and probability. Excel or calculators used to develop equations/graphs from theoretical/real interdisciplinary data. Projects enable students to use models to examine trends, make predictions.
- Additional course information: PSTL 1006 is a capstone algebra course and may be suitable for replacing a high school algebra III course. It does not, however, include trigonometry, which differentiates it from precalculus.
- Student qualifications: Students must have completed high school Algebra I and II courses with grades of at least a C+.

Physics by Inquiry (PSTL 1163)

- Credits: Four University of Minnesota semester credits.
- U of M requirements met with this course: Meets U of M liberal education requirements in Physical Science with Lab Core and in the Environment Theme.
- U of M catalog description: Lecture/lab introductory class. Forces, energy, and small particle theory. Performing experiments similar to real scientific investigations. Nature of science knowledge and learning about science.
- Additional course information: The goals of PSTL 1163 are to help students (1) create their own understanding of some fundamental concepts in physics by working in a way similar to scientists, (2) use those physics concepts to understand environmental issues and develop solutions to environmental problems, and (3) develop skills for scientific argumentation, i.e., justifying a claim with evidence. Students will learn science through working in small groups to perform experiments, creating and refining explanatory models for how things work, and discussing their results with peers to develop consensus models. This process of making observations of experiments, developing models, and discussing the results with peers is the essence of what scientists do. Interwoven with the lab experience will be mini-lectures and other in-class activities in which students will see how the physics they are learning can be applied to understanding and solving problems related to environmental issues.
- Lab equipment: Most necessary equipment is relatively inexpensive. Expensive items (such as balances) may already be owned by the school or can be shared with other science classes.
- Student qualifications: Students should be in the 11th or 12th grade and have earned a passing grade in Algebra I.
Writing Studio (WRIT 1201)

- Credits: Four University of Minnesota semester credits.
- U of M requirements met with this course: WRIT 1201 may be used to meet elective requirements.
- Student qualifications: Students enrolling in WRIT 1201 should have a GPA of 3.0 or better; have already passed MCA exams in writing and reading; have a teacher or counselor recommendation; and be a junior or senior in high school. (Eligible 9th and 10th graders may apply if they are needed to fill the class, but must have the instructor’s permission to enroll.)

Sociological Perspectives: A Multicultural America (PSTL 1211)

- Credits: Four University of Minnesota semester credits.
- U of M requirements met with this course: This course meets a U of M liberal education requirement in the Social Science Core and in the Diversity and Social Justice Theme.
- U of M catalog description: Introduction to sociological thinking through engaged, active learning, including service in community. Interaction of race, class, gender, age with greater societal institutions. Apply foundational understanding of sociology to real world situations.
- Student qualifications: Students should be in the 11th or 12th grade.