News

Free Course Opens Doors to Low Income Locals
November 19, 2013
Category: Academics

In the spring of 1997, when Cedar City was first selected as a site for a training school, the founders envisioned a place for those in southern Utah to be involved in experiential education, empowering them to become productive citizens, responsibly leaders and lifelong learners. And 16 years later, Southern Utah University administrators are staying true to their roots, especially with the Venture course.

Beginning in fall 2010, SUU partnered with the Utah Humanities Council (UHC) to bring multi-disciplinary college courses free of charge to low-income adults in southern Utah. Through Venture, SUU opened a door to low-income individuals to fill the ever-increasing need for a college education.

Designed to “develop critical thinking, intellectual confidence and community engagement among people who typically are disconnected and uninsured in their communities.”

Now in its fourth year, the two-semester, eight-credit course covers five areas of study: art history, philosophy, literature, American history and critical thinking. Tuition for the course, as well as books and day care, is provided at no cost to Venture students.

According to Lindsay Fullerton, SUU Venture course director, the majority of Venture students matriculate into full-time Thunderbirds. “Many of these students are the first in the family to take a college course. And their confidence skyrocketed when they learn they can not only handle it, but also succeed. They soon become addicted and want to continue.”

Applications are now being accepted for SUU’s Venture winter semester. Registration will be open until the course is filled. Applications may be completed online at www.utahhumanities.org/Venture.htm or by contacting Lindsay Fullerton: venture@isu.edu or (435) 658-6630.

The Venture program is limited to 22-25 students and is taught by five SUU professors. Venture program eligibility is based on the following requirements: 1) registrants must be 18 years or older; 2) registrants annual income must be considered low income by the state; 3) registrants must have a basic understanding of English, a desire to obtain a further education and a commitment to finish the two-semester course.

Venture has been offered since 2005, and now has three partners: Weber State University, Westminster College and Southern Utah University. Venture has been made available to UHC through a five-year grant from Alternative Visions of the Chicago Community Trust.

Modeled after Earl Shum’s 1955 Clemente Course in New York City, Utah’s Venture course is similar to other Clemente-style courses offered in 18 other U.S. states and many other countries.

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