



**NEWS RELEASE – February 14, 2014**

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**College of Western Idaho Helps Alternative High School Students Gain College Credit**

*Students Earn 264 College Credits through New Program*

**Nampa, Idaho** – The College of Western Idaho (CWI) Dual Credit program has launched a ground breaking new initiative, which has already helped Spanish speaking students from local alternative high schools acquire 264 college credits. The new initiative funded through the J.A. & Kathryn Albertson Foundation’s College Readiness grant is utilizing College Level Examination Program (CLEP) testing to help at-risk students earn college credits.

“Our goal with this initiative is to change the culture of alternative high schools by empowering students who have been often underserved so they might see their potential as they move beyond the secondary system,” says CWI Dual Enrollment Director, Dr. Eric Studebaker. “We want to advocate for students to the best of our ability. We knew these students could benefit from securing the credits, therefore it was our responsibility to support the initiative.”

The CLEP exam, which is recognized by 2,900 colleges and universities nationwide, provides an opportunity to earn college credit through proficiency testing. Through the new College Readiness CLEP initiative, CWI has already helped facilitate the exam for 25 students from two Nampa high schools. In January, 15 students from Ridgeline High School and 10 students from Parkview High School participated and their results were tremendous, as they earned 136 and 128 college credits, respectively.

“The opportunity for these students to take the CLEP and succeed at the rate they are will only help to strengthen the bridge between high school and postsecondary education,” says Coordinator for the CWI College Readiness Project, Stephen Crumrine. “The CLEP has now become an instrument of motivation for students who, realistically, were not considering college. We could not be more proud of their success.”

In total, 11 students have earned 16 college credits (Spanish 101, 102, 201, and 202), and another 12 students have received eight college credits (Spanish 101 and 102).

In addition to paying for students to take the exam, the College Readiness Project also provided transportation, lunch, and a campus tour. CWI’s goal is to continue providing these opportunities for all 10 of the alternative high schools currently served through the College Readiness grant.

The CLEP testing initiative is the latest success story for the College Readiness Project. This past fall, in just the fourth year of the program, CWI helped 162 alternative school students earn credit in college-level courses. The College has also received data from the first College Readiness class, which has seen 23 percent of its students continue on to college; which is higher than the state average.

In January, CWI received a one-year funding extension to the grant. Due to the overwhelming success of the initiative, CWI is actively working to make the College Readiness Project sustainable beyond the life of the grant. For more

information on the program please visit the [CWI Dual Credit website](#), and if you are interested in supporting the program please contact the CWI Foundation at 208.562.3100.

**CLEP Exam Participant Feedback:**

“I was able to earn 16 college credits, which made me feel incredible,” says Parkview student, Stephanie Almeida. “The opportunity was truly awesome.”

“Earning college credits through the [CLEP] test changed my thoughts about college,” says Ridgeline student, Daniel Gomez. “I never thought about college before but now it feels possible.”

“Thank you to the Albertson Foundation and CWI for encouraging us and walking us through this amazing opportunity,” says Parkview Counselor, Jodi Endicott. “The possibility of earning college credit while still in high school has completely changed the mindset of many of our students.”

“I was not really thinking about college before I started taking dual credit classes,” says Parkview HS student, Lisa Villarreal. “Taking the CLEP test and being successful was really exciting for me. It makes me feel more responsible for my future. I think it provides me with so many new opportunities.”

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**About the College of Western Idaho:**

The College of Western Idaho is a public, open-access, and comprehensive community college committed to providing affordable access to quality teaching and learning opportunities to the residents of its service area in western Idaho. CWI has seven campus locations throughout Southwest Idaho providing higher education and 21st Century technical skills acquisition. The college is dedicated to improving the community’s economic well-being by responding with highly-educated and productive graduates. The foundation for the area’s only community college was created by a supermajority of voters in Ada and Canyon counties on May 22, 2007. For more information about the college, visit [www.cwidaho.cc](http://www.cwidaho.cc) or call (208) 562-3000.

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