

News

FEWER CLASSES, MORE STUDENTS: DELTA COLLEGE OFFICIALS WARN OF REGISTRATION PROCRASTINATION

By **Alex Breitler**
April 07, 2010
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STOCKTON - Planning to attend Delta next fall? You'll have to move fast.

No longer can prospective San Joaquin Delta College students wait until the last minute to sign up for classes.

"We can't be the fallback plan anymore," said Catherine Mooney, Delta's director of admissions and records.

On Monday, the clock started ticking on a process to admit and register next fall's flock of freshmen and returning students. Those just out of high school are already at a disadvantage, since they have no college credits and have a lower registration priority.

Here's what high school students and their parents should know about getting into Delta this fall.

What's the problem?

Less money. Fewer classes. More students.

Hundreds of classes have been canceled at Delta over the past year because of budget cuts. Twenty-two instructors are taking early retirement to help the college avoid layoffs, so more belt-tightening is certain come fall.

Consider: While fall registration may be "open" for months, Delta's courses this spring were 95 percent full after just 10 days of registration.

Students turned away from the state's struggling public universities will only increase demand. Those students may be more likely to plan ahead and may displace those who don't.

"The students who aren't on top of it - and might be those first-generation students whose parents don't know what to do - those are the kids that really could be adversely affected by these changes," Mooney said.

What should I be doing now?

Delta began accepting online applications for fall 2010 on Monday. Applicants must also come in for a short placement test and orientation workshop.

Starting April 26, those who have applied can reserve a much-needed registration date.

Class sign-ups for those students who reserved a date will take place May 10-20. Open registration continues after that, but if spring semester was any indication, most classes may be full.

Even with advance planning, it will be difficult for college freshmen to land all the classes they might want, Mooney said. For freshmen, most math and English classes may already be gone.

What else can high school students do?

Even high school juniors might consider taking action now to put them in better position come 2011.

Delta is taking part in a pilot program in which high school juniors taking standardized tests this spring can agree to have those test scores shared with community colleges as well as four-year universities.

If students excel at those tests, they could be eligible to take classes at Delta during their senior year.

This would give them college credit, bumping them ahead of their peers when the time comes to register at Delta in 2011.

"It may be worth it to get their foot in the door," said Matt Wetstein, Delta's dean of planning, research and institutional effectiveness.

What are current Delta students saying?

The same thing as administrators: Plan ahead.

Harjot Singh, 20, and his brother Manpreet, 24, waited too long last summer, and the only English class they could find last fall was at the college's new Mountain House campus.

They were lucky. Officials say it'll be even tougher for incoming freshmen in 2010.

"It's a clog-up," Manpreet Singh said. "I don't know how it's going to work out."

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To learn more about San Joaquin Delta College's application process, and to apply for admission in the fall, visit www.deltacollege.edu and look under "News & Features" for the fall registration calendar.