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Oscar Sanchez
photo by Nick Young



Time Sensitive Education

By Heather Darrow

FRISCO RESIDENT Oscar Sanchez's life changed drastically in a matter of seconds. A police officer, Mr. Sanchez was responding to a call when a drunk driver ran a red light. The car smashed into the police car and pushed the engine into the passenger side of the car, right next to Mr. Sanchez.

"I was in a coma for three months and had to learn to walk and talk again. I am missing a quarter of my brain. You could see it on the CT scan. That part of my brain affects my right side, which was my strong side. Now, my strong side is my left side. I am lucky to be alive," Mr. Sanchez said.

After a year of rehabilitation, Mr.

Sanchez learned to walk again. Today, he does not take anything for granted, especially time. His new philosophy to never stop learning has spurred him on to pursue a law degree. Because he has a new appreciation for time, he is a strong advocate for the Weekend College program at Collin College.

FULL-TIME JOB AND WEEKEND COLLEGE

High school students can take dual credit classes and accelerate the time it takes to earn a degree by earning credit before they graduate from high school, but how do people working full-time jobs get ahead? In addition to night, Internet and

express classes, Collin College students can take maymester or wintermester two-week classes or take classes on the weekend year round. Weekend College offers express blocks with three-weekend classes, extended blocks with eight-week classes offered on Saturdays or 16-week classes that meet one day a week (Friday night, Saturday morning, Saturday afternoon or Sunday afternoon).

While Collin College has offered weekend classes for more than 20 years, students have been able to attend school full time on the weekends since fall 2005.

IS FASTER BETTER?

Mr. Sanchez is taking prerequisites at Collin College and pursuing a bachelor's degree in criminology at The University of Texas at Dallas.

"I think you learn more in a Weekend College course because it is more intense and you get more involved. You tend to get an older crowd because the young people don't want to give up their weekends. I get all A's in Weekend College. In the semester-long courses, I tend to postpone things. If I didn't have those weekend classes, I wouldn't be able to transfer yet. It is so much quicker. I saved easily a year and a half," Mr. Sanchez said.

Mr. Sanchez says Weekend College classes fit his lifestyle. A field inspector for AAA, he inspects houses, cars and watercraft. His weekends are slower in February, April and November and that is when he takes Weekend College express blocks. In the summer, he spends his weekends working and attends college at night.

WHAT MAKES WEEKEND COLLEGE UNIQUE?

According to Sherry Schumann,

Katie Auld
photo by Nick Young

associate vice president of distance and Weekend College, flexibility is key for both students and faculty. Ms. Schumann created a special first block of weekend classes that provides an extra weekend off to allow students to finish projects.

“It is an option in flexibility more than an option in speed. Weekend College has had the biggest influence on people who have typically taken longer to earn a degree, students who are taking classes at night, via distance learning or on the weekend. It is not a one-size fits all program and that has allowed Collin College’s Weekend College to flourish,” Ms. Schumann said.

Collin College students can complete the entire core curriculum for an associate of arts, associate of science or associate of arts in teaching degree by taking classes on Friday nights, Saturday mornings or afternoons or Sunday afternoons according to Ms. Schumann.

With the express classes, you get the classes out of the way so quickly. You have two or three weeks of pain and it is over with.

Each semester, 121 Weekend College classes are offered between Friday night and Sunday afternoon. Student services including advising, financial aid, admission information and ID card generation are available on certain Saturdays each semester and a Weekend College administrator is available to assist students.

BUT GIVING UP WINTER BREAK!

Frisco resident Katie Auld is pursuing a degree in early elementary school education and plans to transfer to the



University of North Texas in the fall. Ms. Auld is taking a three-weekend express block in public speaking and a semester-long world literature class. Previously, she took a summer weekend express class in psychology, but her favorite classes are the wintermester and maymester classes.

“I like wintermester or maymester better because they are just two weeks. With wintermester you attend class for a week, have a week of winter break and then attend class for a week. Your winter break won’t be as long as it is for other students, but you get three credit hours out of the way,” Ms. Auld said.

“With the express classes, you get the classes out of the way so quickly. You have two or three weeks of pain and it is over with. I felt like I learned a lot better. You get all of the information at once and then go to the next class and you don’t forget. They have one big test over a whole week’s worth of materials.

It is still fresh in your mind,” Ms. Auld explained.

Ms. Auld also felt as though she was behind in her courses because when she first started college she did not take many classes and she dropped a few classes along the way.

IS WEEKEND COLLEGE MORE EFFICIENT?

Communication Studies Professor Diana Sage is an enthusiastic supporter of Weekend College express classes. She says if these classes had been available when she was in college she would have gotten her degree much more quickly. Prof. Sage points out that Weekend College express classes require the same amount of work as traditional classes in a format that is often more conducive to learning.

“I use the same syllabus, require the same assignments, including the same group project and term paper and give



Bryan Apacible

photo by Nick Young

the same tests; students just do it a lot faster,” Prof. Sage said. She also abides by the theory that the intense schedule of Weekend College classes positively contributes to student learning.

“It is kind of like total immersion. Your brain really is focused on this material. I find that students make connections easier because they just learned it the same day. In a long semester, we learned it four weeks ago. I remind my students that I know it is exhausting, but after the first weekend you are five weeks into the semester. The grades are consistently higher in Weekend College. I think that is because very highly motivated people take these classes. Being in a class with motivated people also motivates the rest of the class,” Prof. Sage points out.

Prof. Sage also notes that students who exclusively take Weekend College classes are taking the classes one at a time. It is easier for the students and more enjoyable for the professor who gets their full attention.

“It’s a more effective way to learn. Attrition is lower in Weekend College classes. In a long semester too much can happen; cars break down and people get sick. In four weeks, there is not as much time for bad luck to hit. These classes bond and students help each other out,” Prof. Sage said.

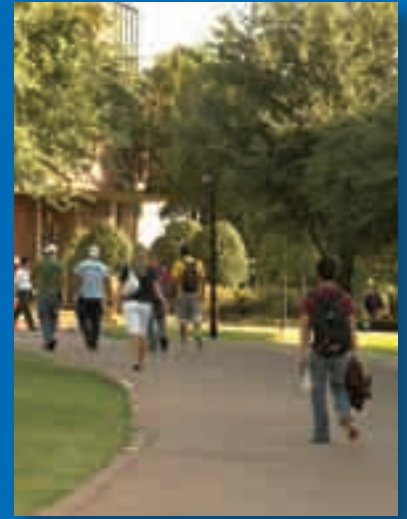
WHO SHOULD TAKE ACCELERATED CLASSES?

Frisco resident Bryan Apacible is majoring in criminal justice and plans to become a police officer. Mr. Apacible was able to reduce his 40-hour workweek to 32 hours for three weekends so he could take a Weekend College class in addition to the two traditional classes.

“At first I was wondering how a speech class would be on the weekend, but the teacher is fun. You could never daydream in this class. We sit in a circle, so we can see each other when we talk. Before I was afraid to go to the front of the classroom and talk, but now it’s not so bad. This weekend I am looking forward to class. I wonder what’s going to be next,” Mr. Apacible said.

“It is a faster pace. If it were a semester long, it would be the same amount of work, but you get some slack doing it in a full semester. You can’t miss one day of this class. It is time consuming and stressful, but if you have patience you can work it out. It is the thing to do if you are trying to graduate a little earlier. Some people don’t want to give up their weekends, but if you really want a degree, you’ll do anything,” Mr. Apacible said.

Heather Darrow is a writer for Collin College.



Dallas Baptist University – North Short Course Options

Since 1974, Dallas Baptist University (DBU) has been serving the working adult and helping students achieve their dream of earning a degree. With innovative and flexible scheduling and experiential learning credit for life and work experience, DBU serves each adult student to fulfill his/her needs as a learner. As part of this commitment, DBU offers numerous weekend, evening, mini-term, and online undergraduate and graduate courses.

Students at DBU-North in Frisco can select from at least 12 different weekend or mini-term semesters to expedite their degree completion, while receiving the same academic quality as a regular term course. Many of DBU’s weekend terms meet only seven times throughout the semester on alternating Fridays or Saturdays or one weekend (Friday-Saturday) a month. The mini-term semester options allow students to complete an entire course in one-week, two-weeks or four-weeks. DBU’s commitment to the adult learner helps ensure that students can often complete their degree while attending college part-time in the same amount of time as a full-time student.