

Benefits of Attending CHESS over Community College.

Saving money is important, but not the only reason.

Locally, homeschooling parents of older teens have a decision to make: continue with high school classes or enroll their students at either Northern Virginia Community College (NOVA) or at Lord Fairfax CC in Warrenton through dual enrollment. When high school students dual enroll, they can simultaneously earn high school and college credit. And, on the surface, dual enrollment appears attractive.

But making an informed decision isn't as simple as you think. Cost is a major concern, but learning how dual enrollment works should also be taken into account. Finally, the CHESS experience is far different than the community college campus experience – academically, socially and spiritually.

Money matters

We all like to save money. Dual enrollment sounds like a great way to whittle down college costs. But does it?

The table below shows how prices compare for three typical upper-level courses.¹ NOVA course names are in parenthesis.

- Chemistry Lecture/Lab (Chemistry 111)
- Effective Writing/Honors (English 111/Honors)
- Pre-calculus (Math 166)

The bottom line: CHESS saves you money. Taking these three classes at CHESS with available discounts, plus additional book fees and parking, you could save \$1,086 over NOVA.

Courses	CHESS Lowest Price ²	CHESS With Discount	CHESS Regular Price	NOVA	CHESS Book Fees	NOVA Book Fees	CHESS Parking	NOVA Parking
Chemistry Lecture/Lab	\$561	\$686	\$710	\$748	\$84	\$115-132	Free	\$80
Effective Writing, Honors	\$318	\$443	\$467	\$561	\$25	\$60-90		
Pre-calculus	\$572	\$697	\$734	\$935	\$50	\$100-150		

¹ NVCC and CHESS rates as of 02/25 for 2019/20. NOVA In-State rates.

² 5% discount + volunteer price

Dual enrollment challenges

Dual enrollment allows high school students (public, private, or homeschooled) to earn college credit and high school credit simultaneously. In that sense, dual enrollment can save a family on future tuition, but it's more complicated than it sounds.

Personal experience has taught many a homeschool family that careful planning on a student-by-student basis is required.

Here are three questions that should be considered when taking dual enrollment classes.

Will my student's credits be accepted?

Not every college or university accepts community college credits. Some accept only general education requirements, while others only accept credits if they have a course they consider equivalent to the community college course. Some will not accept credits in the student's major.

Every college that will accept credits from a Virginia community college has its own "Articulation Agreement" with the community college, outlining what credits it will accept. So students should identify universities they hope to attend and study those universities' policies on accepting transfer credits.

In addition, students should consider their future major. They should study the policy on accepting transfer credits for the department they hope to major in. For example, one homeschooled student did not investigate transferring credits, and took several engineering classes at NVCC, then had to repeat them at his four-year college.

Will my student take calculus/above math courses?

Math courses below calculus taken at community college will not count toward a bachelor's degree. Precalculus, trigonometry, geometry, and algebra will not count towards a degree.

Will dual enrollment endanger my student's freshman status?

Transferring college credits to a four-year institution can affect your freshman status. This can limit your eligibility for scholarships, sports, and perhaps even dorm assignments. Consider whether your teen is ready to transfer in as a sophomore.

CHESS offers a very different experience from community college

CHESS not only offers financial advantages, but also offers a significant academic, social and spiritual experience. One overall difference when homeschooling through CHESS is a more homeschool friendly environment compared to the typical community college experience.

Use the comparison below to help your family determine which environment is best suited for your student.

Environment	CHESS	NOVA	Advantage
Length of class/pace	Year	Semester	CHESS gives students more time to study and master a course. Parents are involved in the process.
Teaching format	Typically interactive and personal	Typically lecture	CHESS offers a variety of participatory classes where students get to know their teachers.
Class size	Typically 5-12	Can be large	CHESS offers greater class participation through smaller average class sizes.
Student ages	12-18	16 and up	CHESS has a teen-only population, versus upper teens and adults with adult attitudes and behaviors.
Teachers	Christian	Christian/Non-Christian	CHESS teachers sign a statement of Christian faith who do not oppose or challenge a student's beliefs.
Paperwork	Less Complex	More Complex	CHESS avoids a more complex bureaucracy for students and parents to navigate.
Academic Calendars	Easter break April 15-19	Spring break March 12-18	Will dual calendars complicate your student's learning experience or your family's plans for travel?

Many CHESS students have dual enrolled and done well. While dual enrollment at a community college can be a good way to transition to college, not every homeschooled teen is ready for college life, even while living at home.