

DMACC graduates can earn U of I degrees under deal

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Add black and gold to the blue and white school colors at Des Moines Area Community College.

DMACC students can parlay two-year diplomas into University of Iowa bachelor's degrees without moving to Iowa City.

A new agreement between the two schools allows students who receive associate of arts or associate of applied science degrees at one of DMACC's six campuses to continue with U of I classes. Most classes are online.

The U of I will offer four areas of study at DMACC campuses: general studies, nonprofit management, entrepreneurial management and justice studies.

The program targets community college students who crave more education but are bound by jobs, families and other commitments, officials said.

"They are very able people, but they are not about to pick up their roots and come to Iowa City," said Chet Rzonca, dean of the U of I's continuing education division.

The agreement began this semester. The presidents of the schools spoke at a presentation Friday at DMACC's Ankeny campus.

DMACC President Rob Denson and U of I President Sally Mason referenced the economy while describing the need for collaboration between the schools.

"We're always looking for better ways to serve students of Iowa ... so students waste no time, no money while moving forward with their degrees," Denson said.

The new program formalizes a long-standing relationship between the schools, said Kimberly Linduska, executive vice president of academic affairs at DMACC.

"It allows our students to see a clearer track," she said. "That's really important in this economy. Every class they don't have to take or duplicate saves money for them."

As for how the partnership benefits the schools, Rzonca said, "As the state university for Iowa, we're supposed to provide services across the state. ... I think it's a wise use of state expenditures and it's going to pay off for students."