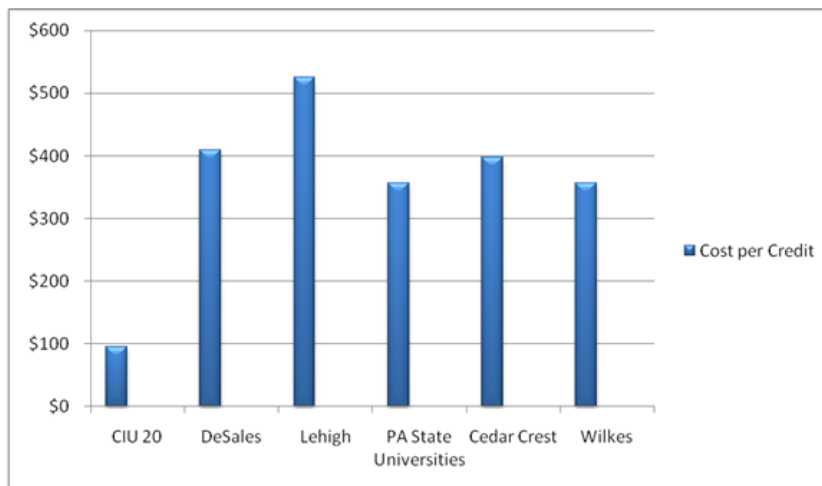


Course for Credit Program Offers Cost-Savings and Rigorous Content to District Professionals

BY LINDSEY SMITH, *Coordinator of Professional Development*

The CIU 20 Continuing Professional Education (CPE) course for credit program provides member districts with cost saving the local needs of educators. By utilizing local resources and area educators, CPE courses greatly reduce the cost paid for similar studies at colleges/universities.

The cost per credit of a CIU 20 CPE course for credit is \$95 (not including applicable materials/texts), which can provide hundreds of dollars in cost savings per student per credit in comparison to higher tuition rates and fees charged at the university level (for a price comparison, please see the accompanying chart). These graduate-level courses, taught throughout the CIU 20 coverage area and online, are offered on a variety of topics based on local need in order to provide educators with an alternative to often pricy or geographically inconvenient graduate opportunities.



This graph represents the cost per credit charged by some Pennsylvania universities. This information was obtained from university websites. Tuition rates at the graduate level are subject to change.

In order to maintain the quality of graduate level rigor in graduate level courses, all instructors must successfully complete an interview and reference check in order to be considered for graduate level course instruction. CIU 20 requires references from current supervisors who are often superintendents and other central office/building administrators. After completing this process, selected course instructors then develop a course proposal using guidelines set forth by the Pennsylvania Department of Education. Upon completion, the proposal is reviewed by a member of the CIU 20 Course Design Team (IU 20 and school district administrators) for changes or revisions. Once the Design Team has approved the proposal it is submitted to PDE for final approval before the course may be taught.

The CIU 20 CPE Course program also considers regional data analysis as well as school district input when selecting the course topics. Currently, CIU 20 is working with some approved instructors to design individual courses and series of courses to provide support to local initiatives and select audiences (e.g., Guidance Counselor course series, Career Pathways courses). All CPE courses are related to achievement of the PA Academic Standards and each a course is standards-based. The program aims to provide tailored instruction to enhance the skill set of educators throughout the region, making the program useful to the teaching process and the needs of school districts throughout Northampton, Monroe and Pike counties.

Intermediate Units are the only entities besides colleges/universities, as set forth by the Pennsylvania Department of Education, able to award credits for graduate level courses. Colonial Intermediate Unit 20's program, in particular, has existed since the 70's; however, development of new process and procedure for course submission and instruction in recent years has improved course rigor and quality.

An informational brochure on the CPE course program is available on the CIU 20 website for additional information. Please visit <http://www.ciu20.org/curriculum-Services/continuing-professional-education-courses.aspx> to review the CPE Course Brochure.