

One of LA's best-kept secrets: the Early Entrance Program at CSULA.

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Do you have or know of a young teenager who is unhappy in school? Bright, but an under-achiever or bored? Perhaps they belong in college rather than high school or middle school, joining 150 of their intellectual peers.

The Early Entrance Program (EEP) at California State University, Los Angeles (CSULA) is a unique educational program specifically designed to permit young, highly gifted students enter college as full time students up to six years earlier than normal.

From the program's modest beginnings with only a handful of early entrants in 1982, the EEP at CSULA has become a potential national model for educational alternatives, and has helped educate hundreds of LA's most academically talented and educationally underserved gifted student population. In brief, the program allows qualified students as young as 11 the opportunity to excel at the university level. The average entering age is 13.5 years and all EEP students must be admitted prior to their 16th birthday. The program currently maintains a population of 150 full-time highly gifted teenage students who are among the finest students at the University.

How fortunate LA students are to have this unique opportunity. There are only four of these programs nationwide, and LA's is the largest! This year families have moved from Nevada, Texas and Florida just so their children can attend EEP.

Why consider such an out-of-norm path?

Highly gifted students often require a more challenging and focused scholastic environment, without the drill

and repetition that is offered at most secondary schools. These students also need a setting in which they can associate with their true intellectual peers. The resulting kinship encourages more than academic excellence; it removes the stigma so often attached to giftedness by creating a place where these young students can develop and flourish together.

The EEP Admission Process

The EEP reaches prospective students in the LA vicinity by conducting a biannual talent search, utilizing the Washington Pre-College test, which provides estimated SAT I scores. The average qualifying score for EEP students is well over 1200, which is higher than the UC-wide average for incoming freshmen.

Every prospective EEP student must successfully complete a provisional quarter at CSULA, taking two college courses of their choice. This summer provisional quarter allows both the EEP staff and the students and their families a chance to determine if the EEP is actually a good choice; it does not disrupt the normal flow of a student's education if the EEP is deemed not to be the optimal choice for that particular student. The provisional student must maintain at least a 3.0 average in the two courses, and then the applicant is evaluated by a CSULA Faculty Admission committee. Although formal acceptance is not extended until early September when final grades are posted, this is rather late for planning purposes. Therefore, a preliminary assessment is made in early August, after midterms, when approximately 30 of the usual 100 applicants are Advanced to Candidacy.

While this is a long, several month process, it has been found that only through such first-hand experience of the actual quarter term academic requirements and through interaction with the other EEP students can the applicant decide whether this is a path he/she wants. Successful candidates usually are mature and self-motivated, with supportive parents, and have a strong desire to attempt a challenging educational program.

What is life like at EEP?

In many ways, the EEP experience is quite similar to a typical high school experience. Entering freshmen have a common schedule of curriculum including the following classes designed to simulate a normal secondary school curriculum: science, history, English and mathematics. EEP students are encouraged to maintain a presence in the EEP lounge (six connecting rooms on campus) to facilitate the development of friendships and inclusion in campus events and activities. The students in the EEP are also encouraged to maintain the relationships they formed with their friends at their previous schools and often participate in their traditional school activities, such as sports, dances, and of course, the prom. Furthermore, there are 500 other teenagers on campus attending the LACHSA program, and interaction between the groups is encouraged.

EEP students are also very active in campus life including participation in events, organizations, clubs, governing bodies, social programs and, of course, university academic departments and research efforts. EEP students have participated in intramural sports, CSULA orchestra-jazz ensembles, University Times campus newspaper, ASI student government, Model

