

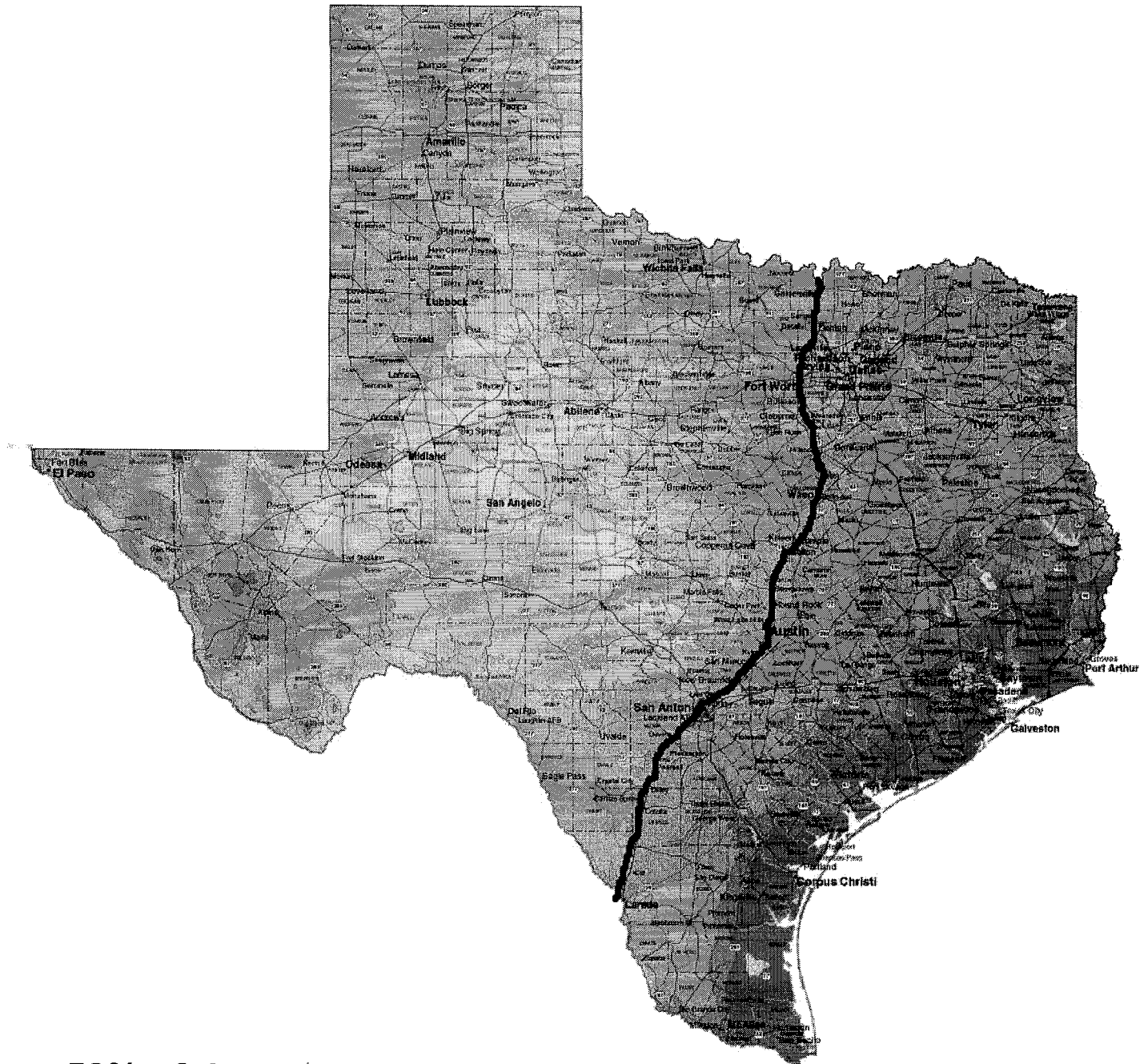
Testimony of  
Dr. Cheryl Sparks  
President, Howard College  
Chair, TACC e-Learning Committee  
Senate Higher Education  
September 23, 2010

1001 Birdwell Lane  
Big Spring, Texas 78720  
(432) 264-5000  
csparks@howardcollege.edu

- Background of Virtual College of Texas (VCT)
  - Planning began in 1997
  - Service began in fall of 1999:
    - 56,314 course enrollments
    - 34,878 individual students
    - 13,418 courses (duplicated count)
  
- The success and experiences of VCT in providing college courses to college students.
  - Since 1999
  
- The usage of VCT in the delivery of dual credit opportunities.
  
- The expanding role of community colleges in dual credit
  - Texas Virtual School Network (TxVSN) role in delivering dual credit opportunities.
  - Dual Credit Texas (DCT) role in delivering dual credit opportunities.
  
- Current challenges in the delivery of e-Learning dual credit opportunities
  - Dual credit had grown faster than the current system of governance.
  - This has created tension as the delivery “system” has attempted to respond to demand.
  - The current governance model is overly diffused .

- TEA may have too large of a role in the college curriculum related to dual credit offerings through TxVSN based on accreditation standards.
- Funding mechanism created for TxVSN to offer dual credit courses.
- Recommendations:
  1. Do away with end of course exams for dual credit classes.
  2. Do away with the requirement for TEKS alignment in dual credit courses.
  3. Focus dual credit governance in higher education: Move oversight from TEA to Coordinating Board.
  4. The funds for dual credit should not flow to TEA for VSN but rather to VCT.

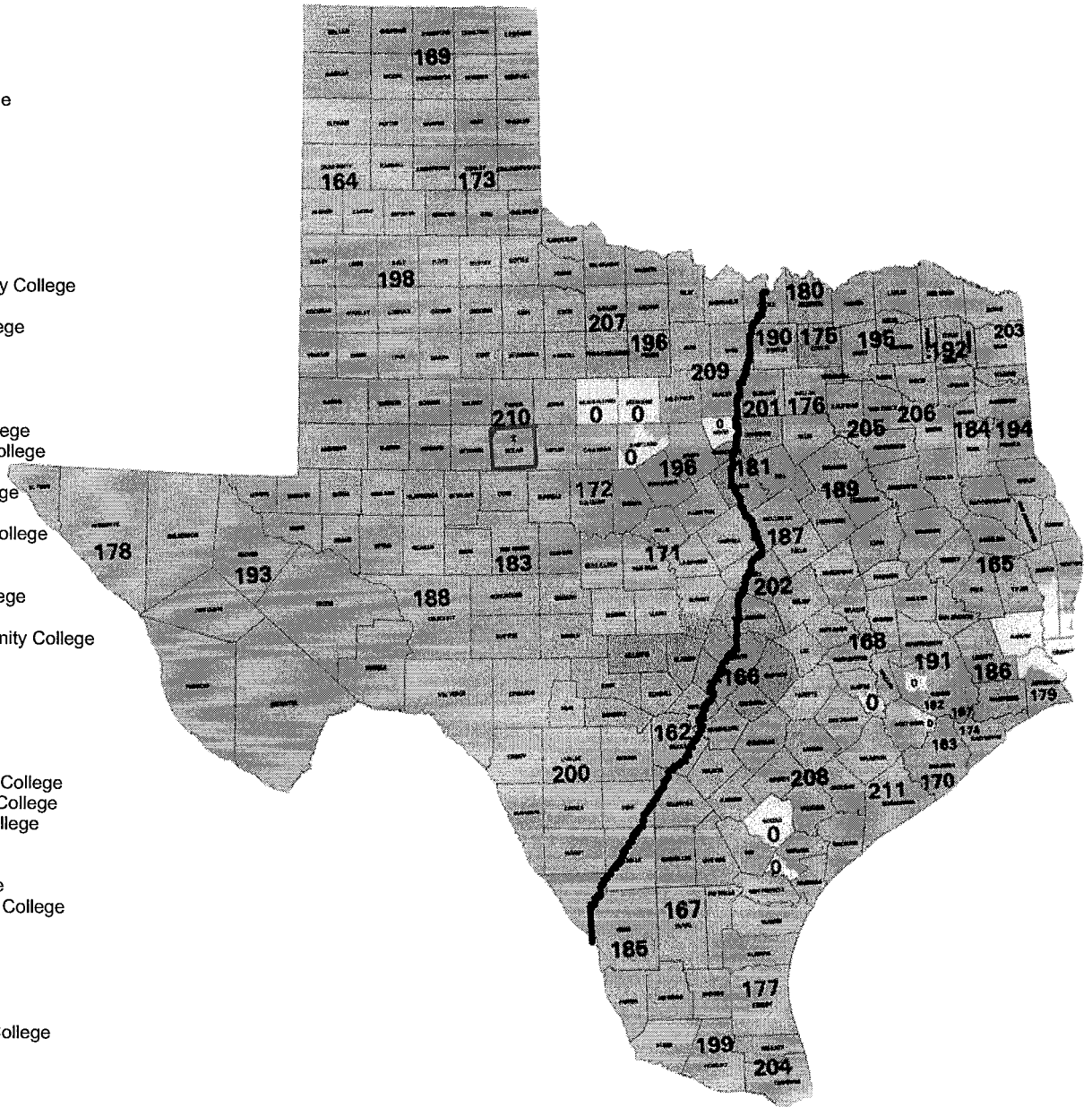
# Where You Live In Texas Makes a Difference !



- **58% of the state live in the 10 largest counties**
- **66% live in the largest 15 counties**
- **92% live on or near I-35 and east of I-35**
- **Of those living west of I-35, 90% live in one of the urban areas (MSAs)**

# Community College Service Areas

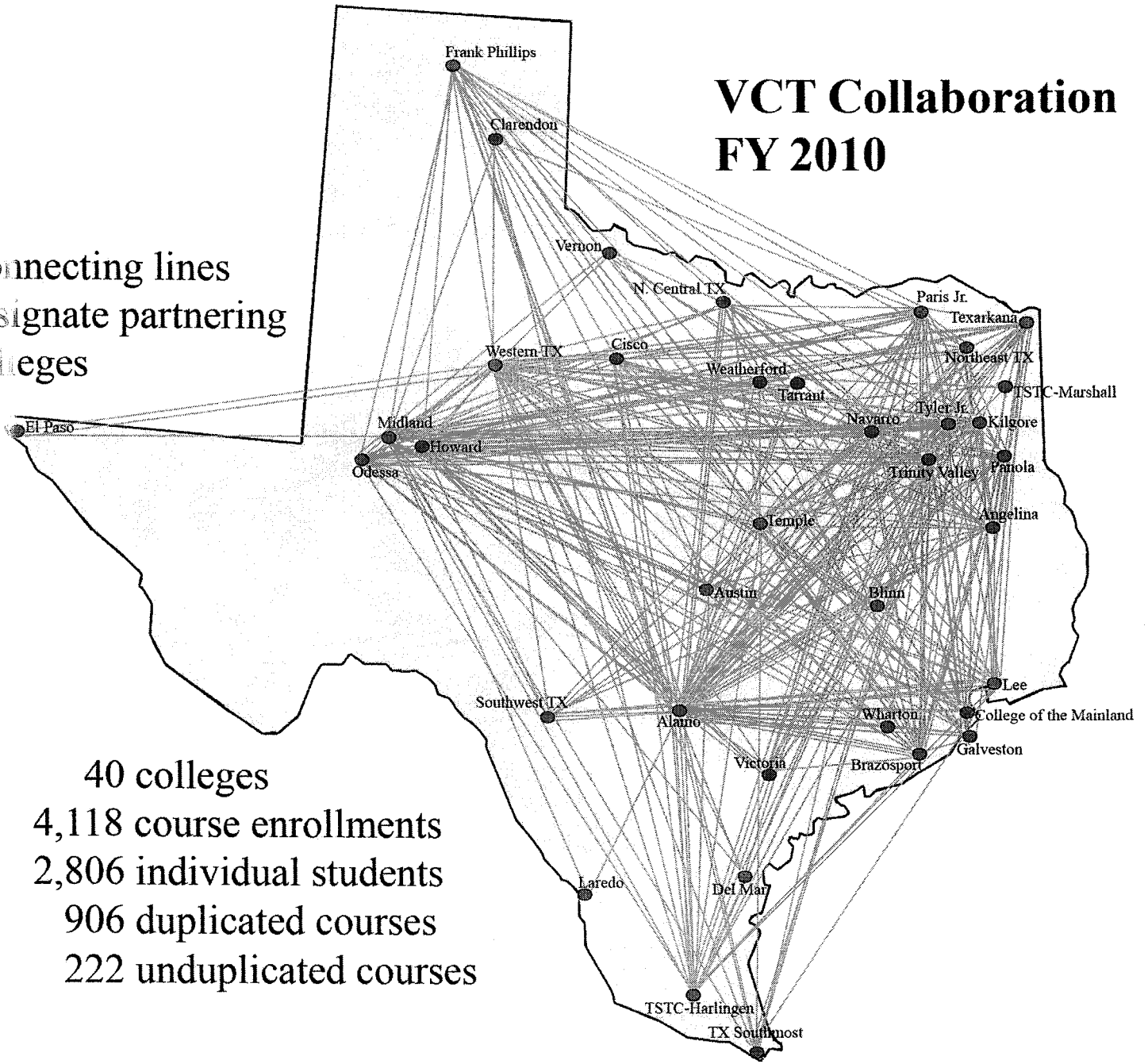
- 162 Aramo Colleges
- 163 Arvin Community College
- 164 Amarillo College
- 165 Angelina College
- 166 Austin Community College
- 167 Coastal Bend College
- 168 Binn College
- 170 Brazosport College
- 171 Central Texas College
- 172 Cisco Junior College
- 173 Clarendon College
- 174 College of the Mainland
- 175 Collin College
- 176 Dallas County Community College
- 177 Del Mar College
- 178 El Paso Community College
- 169 Frank Phillips College
- 179 Galveston College
- 180 Grayson County College
- 181 Hill College
- 182 Houston Community College
- 183 Howard County Junior College
- 184 Kilgore College
- 185 Laredo Community College
- 186 Lee College
- 187 McLennan Community College
- 188 Midland College
- 189 Navarro College
- 190 North Central Texas College
- 191 LoneStar
- 192 Northeast Texas Community College
- 193 Odessa College
- 194 Panola College
- 195 Paris Junior College
- 196 Ranger College
- 197 San Jacinto College
- 198 South Plains College
- 199 South Texas Community College
- 200 Southwest Texas Junior College
- 201 Tarrant County Junior College
- 202 Temple Junior College
- 203 Texarkana College
- 204 Texas Southmost College
- 205 Trinity Valley Community College
- 206 Tyler Junior College
- 207 Vernon College
- 208 Victoria College
- 209 Weatherford College
- 210 Western Texas College
- 211 Wharton County Junior College
- \* TSTC West Texas



Source: Texas Comptroller of Public Accounts

# VCT Collaboration FY 2010

Connecting lines  
designate partnering  
colleges



40 colleges  
4,118 course enrollments  
2,806 individual students  
906 duplicated courses  
222 unduplicated courses

# Virtual College of Texas

## Mission, Benefits, Governance, Organization and Management

**VCT Mission:** To increase access to higher education and improve student success through sharing of eLearning resources among Texas two-year colleges. Resources include faculty, courses, support services, and technology.

*The Virtual College of Texas' Host-Provider Model of operations has been approved by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools, the accrediting agency for higher education institutions in the southern region of the United States.*

### **Benefits to Students:**

- They have access to a statewide online distance learning course schedule created by VCT's member colleges, making it less likely that they will lack access to critical courses at a critical points in their educational plan.
- They are supported with quality, locally-delivered student services.
- They pay in-district tuition if they are in-district students, irrespective of which colleges provide courses taken through VCT.
- While courses from multiple colleges throughout Texas may be taken through VCT, all courses are maintained on a single transcript at the Host college.

### **VCT Organization and Management**

VCT functions as a collaborative of all public two-year colleges in Texas.

**Governance:** VCT governance authority is held by The Texas Association of Community Colleges (TACC), which is comprised of each two-year college in Texas. The TACC eLearning Committee provides executive oversight and guidance to VCT, with the consent and approval of the general membership. Immediate supervision is provided by the President of TACC. Through a TACC eLearning Committee, the association provides overall direction to VCT. The TACC general membership holds final approval authority regarding VCT initiatives and plans.

**TACC eLearning Council:** VCT operates with the counsel of a TACC-appointed statewide eLearning Council. It is comprised of distance-learning, instructional, support services, and technical administrators from colleges of all sizes and regions throughout Texas. The Council makes recommendations to the TACC eLearning Committee regarding new initiatives, policies and procedures and provides guidance to VCT on emerging issues.

**College Personnel:** Day-to-day VCT operations at member colleges are accomplished by VCT Coordinators and various college offices, e.g., instructional departments, registrars, and business offices. Coordinators hold responsibility for general oversight of VCT affairs at their respective colleges and ensure that college actions are taken as required for VCT operations. Host college counselors and other staff ensure that VCT-enrolled students receive the same support services that other college-enrolled student receive.

**VCT Staff:** VCT operations are facilitated by a small staff: a Director and a VCT Support Specialist, supplemented with contract services and temporary assistance as needed. The staff maintains communications with member colleges regarding policies, procedures, and activities; maintains the VCT website; produces reports; writes and assists with proposals; undertakes new initiatives as directed; and organizes and conducts statewide meetings and retreats. Representing VCT in regard to operational matters, the VCT Director works directly with the TACC eLearning Committee and association staff and reports to the president of TACC.

# Virtual College of Texas – Texas Virtual School Network – Dual Credit Texas

## Executive Primer

**VCT Operational Model:** The Virtual College of Texas operates in accordance with the *Host-Provider Model*. Succinctly stated, Provider colleges originate courses; Host colleges receive them and transcript them, paying the Provider an instructional fee. The model was conceived by the TACC Telecommunications Committee specifically to support inter-institutional sharing of distance learning courses in a manner that respects service areas. The basic operational principles of the model are given below.

### Host-Provider Model Basics

#### The Provider College--

- lists in the VCT Schedule courses it teaches in which Host colleges' students may enroll;
- makes available for reviewing online: syllabi (for students and Host faculty/administrators) and faculty credentials (for Host administrators);
- teaches courses per usual, with its own instructors teaching class sections with students from their own and other colleges (Hosts); and
- sets and collects a per-student instructional fee from each Host college with students enrolled in courses it provides through VCT.

#### The Host College--

- selects courses to host after reviewing Providers' course syllabi and faculty credentials;
- enrolls students in hosted courses (Providers' courses);
- supports students enrolled through VCT with services identical to those provided other students;
- collects tuition, fees, and contact-hour funding;
- pays Providers' per-student instructional fee; and
- transcripts hosted courses.

*Inter-institutional transactions related to course schedules, enrollments, Day of Record Rosters, Final Grade Reports, instructional fees, and other matters are facilitated by custom-programmed applications at the VCT website.*

### How VCT Works with TxVSN

Two sets of practices apply when courses are offered through VCT-TxVSN collaboration:

1. **Usual VCT Host-Provider practices** outlined above, plus:

2. **Unique VCT-TxVSN collaboration practices** described below.

- a. Each college in the Host-Provider model serves as a *Provider* to TxVSN. This means that both the VCT Provider and the VCT Host list a given course as a TxVSN Provider in the TxVSN Catalog. To distinguish between the two types of TxVSN Providers, these names are used:

**TxVSN Owner-Provider:** A VCT Provider college that offers a course through VCT and also lists it in the TxVSN catalog. The VCT Provider owns and originates the course.

**TxVSN Host-Provider:** A VCT Host college that lists a VCT Provider's course in the TxVSN Catalog, along with the VCT Provider college.

With both Owner-Provider and Host-Provider colleges listing a course in the TxVSN catalog, students in the service areas of both colleges may enroll in the course at their home colleges and benefit from tuition breaks made possible by the TxVSN allotment.

- b. The Owner-Provider submits the course to TxVSN for review and revises it as necessary to meet TxVSN requirements regarding TEKS and course quality.



# Dual Credit Texas

## Dual Credit Texas is--

- a statewide collaborative strategy and service that helps colleges address the Dual Credit needs of their service area ISDs and Charter Schools
- an initiative that complements community colleges' dual credit marketing efforts
- an online clearinghouse of courses delivered via *all modes of instruction*, including face-to-face, online, interactive video, and hybrid
- a forum for demonstrating Texas Community Colleges' Dual Credit prominence and solidarity
- a statewide Dual Credit web presence for Texas' community colleges

## Using Dual Credit Texas for Collaboration

Per established practice, colleges use their own resources as the primary means for satisfying Dual Credit course requests. If a requested course is not available at a particular service area college, or it's not offered in the requested delivery mode, the college may arrange to get it from a DCT partner that offers the course.

Partnering arrangements may take various forms:

- If the course is available through VCT, get it there.
- If a partner college offers it online but not through VCT, get the partner to make it VCT-available to your college only, using a special provision already programmed into the VCT website. (providing your college is SACS-approved for VCT).
- If a partner college offers a requested course online but your college isn't SACS-approved for VCT, contract with the partner college to get it under any terms both parties can agree to.
- If a full face-to-face class is needed, contract with another college to offer it under any terms that both parties agree to, including use of the VCT Host-provider Model if your college is SACS approved for VCT.
- As a last resort, refer the requesting party to a DCT partner college that can fulfill the request.

## DCT Website: [www.DualCreditTexas.org](http://www.DualCreditTexas.org)

The Dual Credit Texas website serves Independent School Districts, community college Dual Credit personnel, students, parents, and others interested in Dual Credit. The site offers two views: a *public view* and a *college view*.

### The DCT website *public view*--

- provides information about dual credit and displays a list of all Dual Credit Courses offered by all Texas community colleges (lists courses by ACGM course number and name only, omitting the names of colleges providing the courses);
- directs public viewers interested in Dual Credit courses to their respective local community college's website, where they find—
  - contact information for Dual Credit staff
  - clear instructions on how to enroll in a Dual Credit course.

### The DCT website *college view*--

- displays courses listed by ACGM and WECM numbers and names as seen in the public view;
- includes additional information not seen in the public view: the name of each college offering each Dual Credit Course and the delivery formats in which it is offered, e.g., online, classroom, interactive video;
- includes a VCT Dual Credit Course Schedule; and
- provides contact information for all DCT partnering colleges' DCT contact(s).