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# Four PBHS Graduates Receive Dual Degrees and Diplomas

MAY 29TH 2013 BY BETH FARRAH

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*Submitted by  
Beth Farrah, SMT Writer*

**Poplar Bluff, Missouri** - Graduating high school is an important milestone; getting one's degree is a major accomplishment. But for four Poplar Bluff students who capped off their high school careers last Thursday, those events won't be years apart. Instead, thanks to a new partnership between PBHS and Three Rivers College, they'll be rewarded for achieving the incredible: obtaining a high school diploma and an associate degree simultaneously.

Adrienne Burfield, Zachary Miller, Vicky Bottorff and Shallyn Ward are all participants in the new College Now program, a groundbreaking partnership between the two institutions. The program, which is an extension of the "dual credit" partnerships Three Rivers maintains with over 40 area high schools, allows qualifying PBHS students to complete their general education requirements during their normal class schedules, and at a vastly discounted rate.

While a total of seven graduates from the PBHS Class of 2013 participated in College Now, only Burfield, Miller, Bottorff and Ward went above and beyond the program's normal requirements to complete full associate degree coursework. In addition to the classwork mandated by College Now, all four grads ended up taking on even heavier course loads in order to meet the 62-credit hour requirement for an associate degree.

“I’ve taken online classes, summer classes, winter classes, Maymester classes... Last semester I took 21 credits,” said Burfield, who will be attending the University of Alabama in the fall to study Pre-Medicine. “My nose has pretty much not left a book.”

In return for their hard work, the College Now graduates will receive a significant leg up on their college careers, shaving one to two years off their time in higher education, for a third of what the same degree would cost outside the program. According to Three Rivers, dual credit courses are becoming an increasingly popular option with college-minded high school students.

“Beyond the educational advantages, students are learning how to survive the real world and transition into becoming a college student,” said Manda Reynolds, Coordinator of Academic and Career Outreach for Three Rivers. “This program attracts a lot of high-achieving students. It’s something that they can take pride in. And we, in turn, are very proud of these graduates.”

While selection for the 2013-2014 College Now program is closed, Reynolds said that registration for dual credit courses is still open at many local high schools. Registration for summer classes also remains open for those wanting to get ahead in college while on break from high school. Registration for Fall 2013 classes is also now available. For more information about dual credit courses or the College Now program, call 573-840-9619 or email [\*\*mreynolds@trcc.edu\*\*](mailto:mreynolds@trcc.edu).

Three Rivers College is committed to contributing to the quality of life in Southeast Missouri with quality, affordable higher education opportunities and community services that support and encourage the economic, civic, and cultural vitality of the region. For more information about college and workforce programs and upcoming events, visit [trcc.edu](http://trcc.edu).

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