

# 'Charging Ahead' to UNH classes

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A new set of West Haven High School students has enrolled in classes at the University of New Haven, becoming the second group to participate in the Charging Ahead program and jumpstart their college careers.

The 20 WHHS juniors and seniors began taking one class each this month at no charge and will still take a full or near-

ly full course load at the high school. The program started in the fall semester with 21 Westies and offers a chance to take a more rigorous class, as well as sample the academic resources and student activities of a college campus.

"It's a great opportunity, and I'm honored to be a part of it," said Kaussaur Rahman, a WHHS senior looking to major in cellular and molecular biology in college. "My main motivation was to get college credit

and save money for my family. Instead of doing introductory courses when I get to college, I can take one now and then go right to the next level."

Charging Ahead, named after the UNH Chargers mascot, is one aspect of an expanded partnership announced last spring between the West Haven school district and UNH. The other major component is the Charge into the Future initiative, which allows West Haven High School graduates to receive

half-tuition scholarships if they are accepted to and attend UNH as full-time undergraduates.

WHHS notified all students who were eligible for Charging Ahead and collected applications from those who were interested, according to WHHS school counselor Holly Benedetti, who helps oversee the program. Students qualified based on grades and attendance records and met with a UNH admissions representative.

Participants were then chosen from a lottery system and selected one course each from a list of introductory classes on topics such as criminal justice, world history, economics, human communications and sociology. They can drive themselves to the UNH campus after their classes end at WHHS, or take a school bus.

Since the Charging Ahead program is still new, those involved are continuing to

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improve and expand services offered to students. For example, Benedetti organized a Q&A session last week between fall semester participants and those starting classes this month.

At the Q&A session, WHHS senior Mia Sumra and junior Jakub Grubski, who took a physics class at UNH, advised their peers on the basics of college academics.

They answered questions on everything from the online course management tool UNH uses, to on-campus clubs and first-year group activities, to buying and renting textbooks and joining study groups.

"If you take honors classes here (at WHHS), college is similar to that," Sumra told this semester's honorary Chargers. Sumra, who took an introductory criminal justice course at UNH last semester and is taking another criminal justice class this spring, has already been accepted to UNH as an under-

graduate for next year.

Sumra said she made friends in her class, joined the golf and bowling clubs at UNH, and even attended a movie night that was held on campus for first-year students.

Some Charging Ahead students have had previous experiences on college campuses. Sarah Flynn, a junior, has been involved in a two-week program at Yale University for the past few summers.

"I've always been adamant about trying to get the best edu-

cation I can possibly get," Flynn said.

"When this opportunity to take a class at UNH came along, Holly said I should apply. If I didn't think I was ready, I would have turned it down."

The classes might be a lot of work, but students see the Charging Ahead program as a chance they can't pass up.

"I've been reading my old book from my fall course. I want to stay ahead and not fall behind," Sumra said, "because this is my future career."

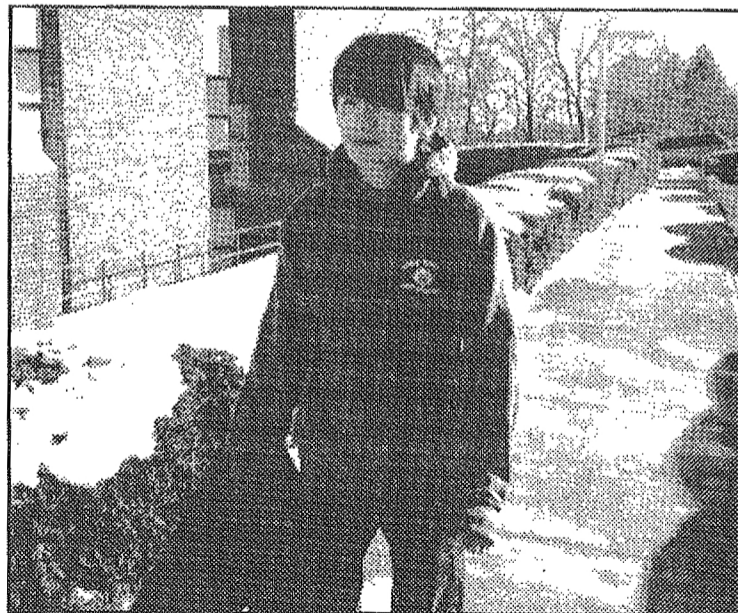


Photo by Susan Misur

Filai Anuar, a WHHS senior, walks to his Calculus II class at the University of New Haven Jan. 24. Anuar and 19 other WHHS students are taking one course each at UNH during the spring semester as part of the Charging Ahead program, which was developed through a partnership between West Haven Public Schools and UNH.