Administrators from six Syracuse-area high schools approach Syracuse University about creating a program to offer university courses to qualified high school seniors, as a cure for “senioritis” in their schools. Then Assistant Vice Chancellor and Director of SU’s Center for Instructional Development Robert M. Diamond takes up the challenge.

Warmest congratulations to SU’s Project Advance and its staff on 40 years of providing real opportunities for motivated high school seniors to begin their transformation into diligent and ambitious college students and future leaders. It’s been no small amount of young lives transformed—impressively, more than 200,000 over four decades.

SUPA was a pioneer in the concurrent enrollment movement, and today we can look proudly on a program that is the biggest and best of its kind and a template for other colleges to follow.

It remains a pioneer—and a pathfinder—connecting with new student and teacher constituencies overseas, in other states, and in our inner cities. Like Syracuse University as a whole, SUPA is providing paths to access and success for underserved student populations—in schools such as WATCH HS in Brooklyn, NY; Murry Bergtraum HS in NYC; Memorial HS in West New York, NJ; and in the Syracuse City School District in Syracuse, NY.

By partnering with SUPA, these schools are showing genuine commitment to their students, showing them that if they study hard and apply themselves, they can benefit from all that SUPA provides them: well-trained teachers; leading-edge instructional and library tools; a rigorous, challenging curriculum; university credit; and, perhaps most importantly, increased confidence in their ability to succeed in college.

These benefits are provided with the support of some of the best faculty in the country. One way to illustrate SUPA’s success is with a simple observation: it attracts great SU professors. In fact, four of the 38 faculty currently involved in SUPA are Laura J. and L. Douglas Meredith Professors, recognized for their teaching excellence. Of course, SUPA benefits our faculty too, challenging them to constantly find new ways to translate the innovations of their disciplines into course materials that inspire new generations.

SUPA’s faculty advisors travel every semester to partner schools to meet students and mentor teachers, sharing with them the latest in research and pedagogy. To me, the creation of this professional bridge between high school teachers and college professors is the most significant and sustained accomplishment in 40 years of Project Advance.
Syracuse University Project Advance proved the perfect fit for Debra LaVine, who found the position happenstance after finishing two years of college and searching for a rewarding full-time job. Since the day she joined the staff in 1978, LaVine has been an important and consistent part of SUPA’s administrative team.

“When I started, Project Advance was a grass roots effort partnering with a few schools in central and western New York. To have been a part of its growth into a nationally recognized program—the first concurrent enrollment program to enter global partnerships—has been a challenging and exciting experience.”

LaVine is a great supporter of Project Advance’s mission, firmly believing that, “Giving students a start in their college careers is one of the most important steps a university can take toward creating an increasingly productive and successful future for the upcoming generations.” She feels proud to have been a part of the progress SUPA has made over the years as the program continues to improve and evolve its services in support of SU’s courses.

In the end, LaVine says, SUPA’s achievements come down to the success of the workplace’s warm and productive environment. “I have worked with an incredible team these past 34 years, and if we didn’t have the support and the special camaraderie that exists between us, I don’t think our program would be as successful as it is today.”

We could have put SUPA on auto-pilot at that point, but instead we have responded to new trends in demographics and education and by doing so we have climbed to new heights.

Today, the pool of students looking to succeed in college has greatly expanded, and the diversity of SUPA’s partnerships and their geographic reach have expanded also. Today, the focus is on moving students on a clear path from college eligibility to college/career readiness to college/career success. To give students the core skills and experiences they need to do this, we are constantly improving services, aligning our curricula with those of high schools, developing more professional development opportunities, and strengthening our partnerships.

Forty years later, our “enhanced concurrent enrollment program” model includes learning strategies workshops, the latest online instructional tools, and assistance to schools on administrative and evaluation functions. These demographic and educational trends—the focus on paths to success and the increasingly diverse pool of SUPA students—will continue to evolve, as will SUPA, not just regionally but internationally as well.

Thank you to the teachers, faculty, staff, administrators—and most of all the students—who have contributed to our accomplishments!

Great Expectations Lead To Great Accomplishments
A Message from SUPA’s Director
Dr. Gerald Edmonds
Director, SU Project Advance
Adjunct Professor, SU School of Education

Project Advance’s growth over these past 40 years hasn’t just been a matter of posting ever-rising enrollment numbers. We have added and continue to add key enhancements that contribute to the intellectual growth of students, the professional development of teachers, and the strengthening of learning communities within schools.

When I joined as a graduate assistant in 1991, SUPA already had a stellar reputation, thanks to the solid foundation laid by Bob Diamond and many others. As it had been since the early 1970s, SUPA then was about increasing the rigor of high school, delivering excellent university-level courses, helping students make the high-school-to-college transition, and offering teachers discipline-specific professional development.

Five SU courses—English, Psychology, Religion, Mass Communications, and Perspective on Drugs—proceed through the initial development process and are field-tested in nine schools. At the same time, Project Advance develops the evaluations, school/university collaborations, and instructional support materials that are still a hallmark of the program.

PRUD OF THE PROGRESS
Debra LaVine, Student Records Administrator, SU Project Advance

Syracuse University Project Advance proved the perfect fit for Debbie LaVine, who found the position happenstance after finishing two years of college and searching for a rewarding full-time job. Since the day she joined the staff in 1978, LaVine has been an important and consistent part of SUPA’s administrative team.

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Top: SUPA biology students closely examine a sample, in 1992.
Bottom: SUPA students from Bronx, NY High School hard at work in chemistry class, November 2010.
High Standards, Dedication, & Vision
A Message of Congratulations from NACEP
Lynn Burbank
Interim Director, Continuing Education & Director, Continuing Education Credit & Noncredit Programs, University of Minnesota-Duluth
President, National Alliance of Concurrent Enrollment Partnerships

On behalf of the National Alliance of Concurrent Enrollment Partnerships (NACEP), I extend congratulations to Syracuse University and Project Advance on its 40th year of providing concurrent enrollment courses to eligible high school students.

During that time, the field of concurrent enrollment has changed significantly in scope and depth. What has remained constant is SUPA's dedication to program standards and rigorous courses, resulting in widespread transferability of the SU credits earned by participating students.

NACEP and its member institutions owe a debt of gratitude to SU and SUPA on many levels. The first national meeting of the concurrent enrollment professionals who ultimately founded NACEP was convened by SU at the American Association for Higher Education conference in March 1997. Two years later, SUPA was one of 20 founding concurrent enrollment programs that adopted NACEP's bylaws and mission statement.

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From the beginning, SUPA has shared its best practices, policies, and materials to assist concurrent enrollment providers across the country with program start-ups and enhancements. For example, the student, teacher, counselor, and principal surveys used by most NACEP members were largely based on those created by SUPA. Many of NACEP’s 17 standards for faculty, students, curriculum, assessment, and evaluation were built on SUPA’s processes and procedures.

SUPA gained its reputation and status by working unceasingly to maintain the quality of its offerings. The program gained NACEP accreditation in 2004, the first year it was available. Reaccreditation was earned in 2011—again, the first year reaccreditation was possible.

SUPA not only has led by example but also by volunteering the services of staff members to assist with governing the NACEP organization. SUPA employees have served on the Board of Directors at various times as president, past president, vice president, treasurer, members at large, and chairs of the research, communication, and governmental relations committees.

Now SUPA once again leads the way by collaborating with international partners in offering enhanced concurrent enrollment courses overseas. While most of us ask “How do they do that?” we also know the answer ... with high standards, dedication, and vision.

1974

After field testing with Syracuse schools in 1973, Project Advance officially launches, offering SU courses in more than 40 high schools, from Long Island to Buffalo, NY. In 1975-1976, SUPA students enrolled in more than 235 higher education institutions, successfully transferring credit in all but two cases.
PROJECT ADVANCE
BY THE NUMBERS

40 Years of Sustainable Growth!

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FOND MEMORIES

Dr. Leo M. Lambert, President, Elon University, Elon, NC

Despite a full schedule as the president of a liberal arts university, Dr. Leo Lambert still manages to visit Syracuse University from time-to-time, where he received his Ph.D. from the School of Education, and Project Advance, where he worked as a graduate assistant and then as associate director of research and evaluation.

“I came to SUPA in 1982, after completing my doctoral coursework and then stayed on, helping with evaluation projects and with setting up the computer engineering and calculus curricula,” says Lambert, adding, “so I’ve done my share of driving the Long Island Expressway!”

Lambert’s stint at SUPA laid the foundation of a distinguished education career. That and his work on SU’s fledgling Teaching Assistant program (“Which was born in SUPA’s offices,” he says) led to a job as associate dean and then acting dean of SU’s graduate school. From there Lambert moved to the University of Wisconsin at Lacrosse, becoming associate vice chancellor then provost before taking Elon’s helm in 1999.

“I have fond memories of SUPA,” says Lambert. “I especially recall what it meant to good secondary school teachers. Here was an opportunity for them to teach university-level courses and engage with bright students, which is a joy for them. That’s one of SUPA’s unsung accomplishments.”

For students, says Lambert, “SUPA offers transformational experiences.” He wonders if SUPA’s staff realize how many thousands of young people they have influenced over the past 40 years and how many students chose the careers they did because of the program. “The staff would be amazed at their impact,” he surmises. “Far more than providing university credit, SUPA is about keeping the best and brightest intellectually challenged.”

An animated Gerard Moses, SU emeritus drama faculty member, addresses a SUPA English conference in October 2007. To his left, Peggy Bonesteel looks on; until her retirement, Bonesteel was a SUPA associate director who oversaw English and writing.

[The Other Side of the Desk]

FORMER SUPA STUDENT: Andy Fried

NOW TEACHING: English & Presentational Speaking
at Irvington High School in Irvington, NY

What memory stands out from your experience as a SUPA student?
I have many fond memories. I remember feeling special and very adult, and I still remember the wonderful literature I read in English—Baldwin’s “Sonny’s Blues,” Faulkner’s “A Rose for Emily,” and Richler’s “The Summer My Grandmother was Supposed to Die.”

What’s it like to be teaching what you took as a SUPA student?
I was the first person to teach SUPA English after taking it as a student. The course in which I trained was entirely different to the literature-based course I took. The literary theory was new to me, and I had so much to learn! This is a good thing. SUPA constantly reinvigorates my teaching.

How did taking an SU course in high school prepare you for college?
SUPA is the best way for a student to prepare for college. Unlike the AP program, SUPA offers bona fide university classes. I really knew what to expect from college due to my experience in SUPA. My peers in AP didn’t have that benefit.

What has changed for high schoolers since you were a student?
The entire paradigm has shifted. When I graduated in 1983, there was no cottage industry of college prep that we see today. Students seem to be obsessed with the status of the college they attend. The mindset back in the 1980s was different because not everyone was expected to go to college. It also seems as if we respected multiple intelligence theory more back then, even though we didn’t acknowledge it.

What does SUPA mean to you?
I cannot imagine what my teaching career would be like without SUPA. My involvement in the English program has kept me on the cutting edge of my field. My SUPA family—the wonderful people I have met in the program—are very important to me.

2002

The New York State Assembly passes a resolution recognizing Project Advance for “... the significance of its contributions to the quality and diversity of educational opportunities in the State of New York” and for “being heralded by prominent educators and national organizations as one of the most successful models for high school/college cooperative programming in the country.”

Professor Marvin Druger of SU’s biology department directs attention.
FORMER SUPA STUDENT: Scott Kaplan
NOW TEACHING: SU Economics at Suffern Senior High School, Suffern, NY

What memory stands out from your experience as a SUPA student?
I really learned how to become a more accomplished writer in SUPA English. Entering undergraduate school at the University of Rochester, I was advanced compared to everyone else in my classes. I also remember my economics teacher, Mr. Rauer. He was the person who took my interest level in this subject to new heights.

What’s it like to be teaching what you took as a SUPA student?
Being on the other side of the desk is a unique experience. I get to show my students the value of these courses, and I really feel as though I’m making a difference.

How did taking an SU course in high school prepare you for college?
It developed my mind to think abstractly, and they prepared me to handle the workload I had in college.

What has changed for high schoolers since you were a student?
The major aspect that has changed is the amount of information available to students at a click. They do not realize the power that they have and what they can do with this information.

What does SUPA mean to you?
It’s very near and dear to my heart. I am very honored to work with such outstanding professionals, and I’m blown away by their support. Never have I felt so wanted or understood in academics. SUPA has a proud tradition of academic excellence.

2003
Project Advance becomes one of a select few private four-year universities accredited by the National Alliance of Concurrent Enrollment Partnerships (NACEP). Accreditation is awarded after a comprehensive peer review ensures a program meets or exceeds NACEP’s 17 national standards for program quality in the areas of curriculum, faculty, students, assessment, and program evaluation. Re-accreditation was awarded in 2011.

A SUPA student gets to grips with an early desktop computer, 1992.
What memory stands out from your experience as a SUPA student?

My SU English class was small and allowed for a lot of collaborative learning from other students and more individual attention from my teacher.

What’s it like to be teaching what you took as a SUPA student?

Being on the other side of the desk is wonderful! I have already experienced the numerous benefits of taking the course and can speak to my students about it benefits.

What has changed for high schoolers since you were a student?

Technology. Communication is a part of that, but in terms of accessing information and trying to figure out what is and isn’t viable research, students have many more challenges but also many more options.

What does SUPA mean to you?

SUPA means a higher level of thinking, learning, work ethic, and, above all, commitment to education. I valued it as a high school student and continue to value it as a teacher. I have grown because of SUPA, and I hope to continue this growth throughout my years of teaching.
Project Advance celebrates its 40th year of providing enhanced concurrent enrollment university courses to high school students in five states and abroad. New opportunities in courses for students and professional development for teachers continue to be created and carefully tested.

Top to bottom:

Fowler High School (Syracuse, NY) chemistry teacher Gwendolyn Raeford runs through some SUPA paperwork with a student in January 2008.

Early logo, 1974.

High school teachers at Summer Institute 1992 take a well-earned break.

Bill Readings at Lubin House in 1990.

An excerpt from the original SUPA student guide, 1974.

Professor David Lisner demonstrates calculus, 1992.