

Destination: Dona Ana Branch Community College

April 19, 2006

Eleven seniors and two parents from Gadsden High School toured the Dona Ana Branch Community College in Las Cruces on April 19th for an orientation to help them prepare for success in post secondary education. This is the first of many events exploring post secondary education arranged through a cooperative effort of Mentoring Diverse Abilities team at the New Mexico Division of Vocational Rehabilitation, Gadsden Schools and the DABCC.

Kelly Arias, Assistant Student Advisor for the Technical and Industrial Studies Division at DABCC, provided a terrific tour that included the campus Library, Tutoring Center, Office of Counseling/Services for Students with Disabilities, Bookstore and a general orientation to the DABCC campus. "How to" presentations were included at each stop including the Tutoring Center and the help available to our students through the Office of Counseling/Services for Students with Disabilities. We all learned a lot about our next steps to enrollment and success at DABCC.

The students met with eleven instructors who introduced us to the programs offered by Technical and Industrial Studies. Included were programs ranging from Creative Media and Digital Graphics to Water Technology. The instructors discussed with us many opportunities for potential employment in areas such as filmmaking, computer animation, auto technology, electrical power plants and the semi-conductor industry to name just a few.

Our group was amazed at the different programs of study and the different jobs and careers available! The student's interest in furthering their education after high school was really piqued when they learned that they could complete a one year program of study and anticipate an entry level yearly salary of approximately \$32,000 as an electrical lineman. Auto Technology is a two year course of study with an entry level yearly salary of approximately \$27,000.

Mentoring Diverse Abilities program staff Daniel Sosa also attended the tour. He will mentor and guide our students in application for financial aid, scholarships, enrollment and registration for classes. Mr. Sosa will assist our students in using the DABCC's Office of Services for Students with Disabilities and will follow students through each step with encouragement and ready assistance.

The Post Secondary Support Project that includes our recent DABCC tour for Gadsden High School students was initiated by DVR's Mentoring Diverse Abilities and staff from Gadsden High School. Our first event and the initiation of this project was a success due to the efforts of Shannon Vermillion, Special Education Instructor. A special thanks to Mr. Foster, Principal, Mr. Chambers, Vice Principal, Mr. Dickson, Special Education Department Head and Mary Barerras, Administrative Assistant all from Gadsden High School. Their commitment to the success of students and cooperative efforts with MDA

staff made this event an eye-opening opportunity for students and their families. We are excited about Gadsden High school student's futures and our work together.