

Schools

Roycemore School lets high school students experience college.

Getting the chance to try out college while still in high school is a unique experience for those who want a challenge.

By Roycemore School, Community Contributor
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As a Pre-K through grade 12 school, Roycemore offers several opportunities for students of all ages, and one of the most interesting of those opportunities is Roycemore's NU Option program. NU Option is a long-standing dual enrollment program between Roycemore and Northwestern University that grants Roycemore high school students the opportunity to take classes at the University for college credit.

When a student completes all the coursework available in a certain subject area at Roycemore, with the exception of science and fine arts, they can apply to take the next course in the sequence at Northwestern. Most of the courses that students end up registering for are usually in math or foreign language areas. "Parents are very interested in this program and are impressed by the prestige that the Northwestern University name carries. Plus, it is compelling that students can put on their resume that they have taken a course at Northwestern University, while still in high school," says Dr. Theodora Franck, Upper School Instructor and the Northwestern University Coordinator at Roycemore School. Roycemore is an independent school in Evanston that charges students annual tuition. However, when a student is accepted into their NU Option program, the annual tuition covers any classes the student takes as part of the NU Option program. There is no additional college tuition for that student to pay.

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The first step for interested students is to meet with Stefanie Rivera, Upper School Division Head, and propose their ideas of what Northwestern courses they would like to pursue. "We look at teacher recommendations and discuss the student's plan with faculty and the student's advisor. We want to see that the student is academically ready and responsible," said Rivera. Once a student is accepted into the NU Option program, Dr. Franck assists students throughout the enrollment process. "In the fall, we go to the Northwestern campus together for a visit, attend an information session, and we even walk



After the course begins, a delicate balance is underway for Dr. Franck. Her goal is to give the students a lot of independence, but to also help encourage and support them along the way. “After the university quarter starts, I check on the students’ progress. I want to make sure they are successful. The NU professors treat them like any other student, so the Roycemore students have to really step up,” said Dr. Franck.

And step up they do. Last term, ten Roycemore Upper School students were accepted into the NU Option program. They all passed their Northwestern University classes and more impressively, they had a collective average grade of B+ in their ten college courses. Rachel Cico, a Roycemore senior, was one of those students. “It is like a taste of college while you are still in high school. You have to motivate yourself, that’s an important lesson that I learned. The class goes really fast. I like the fast pace because there is always something fresh every day. But they are on a tight schedule! If you miss a day, you miss a whole section.” she says. “But you get a lot out of it. It definitely made me super independent.”

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