

Good morning. I am Dr. Megan Olivia Hall, 2013 Minnesota Teacher of the Year. I am a teacher and coach at Open World Learning (OWL). I would like to share a teacher's perspective on what's needed for a successful Advanced Placement (AP) program.

OWL has had an increase in college level offerings over the last decade. That is important because a wide variety of advanced course offerings engages a wide variety of learners; many students will take a single advanced course early in high school and branch out to take additional advanced courses later in high school.

To begin, I'd like to confirm that significant research has demonstrated that participation in advanced high school courses predicts success in college and higher level coursework. A recent [study out of Princeton](#) found that, "The biggest predicted boost in first-year grades and on-time bachelor's degree attainment are associated with AP participation changing from zero to one AP exam and from one to two AP exams."

In 2006, OWL's AP program began with two course offerings, AP Environmental Science and AP English Language. We have gradually added additional courses; now, in 2024, we also offer AP Biology, AP English Literature, AP United States History, AP Spanish Language, AP Studio Art, AP Computer Science Principles, AP Computer Science A, AP Statistics, AP Pre-Calculus, and an Ed Equity course called Grit Lab that is offered through the University of Pennsylvania. I believe that this range of AP courses is a reason that OWL has engaged more diverse learners in AP courses than almost every other school in Minnesota, but there are few other factors that have improved our students' success in advanced courses.

Once advanced courses exist and students are enrolled, more work is needed to ensure that all students can learn and thrive within the advanced courses. Creating a culture where all students are welcome and valued begins when teachers invite and welcome students into their advanced classes. Teachers need to know how to establish inclusive classroom norms. Intentional seating charts, well-structured group work, and opportunities for students to get to know each other can also help students recognize their classmates' strengths and potential.

When we eliminated academic tracking in my science department in 2016, I had to learn new ways to teach. Spending less class time on lectures and note-taking and more time on discussions, labs, and projects allowed me to interact with my

students, help them one-on-one, and support multiple learning styles. Opportunities to revise work (including tests) based on teacher feedback is essential. When I was going to high school in the 1990's, everyone got one shot at each assignment. Now we know that some of the biggest learning gains occur when students get notes from their teachers on where they need to improve - along with a chance to change their work and pull up their grades.

I would like to emphasize that high levels of academic achievement come when schools support all students to be more successful. Good students seek out support. In college, smart, capable students have access to tutoring centers, writing centers, and well-equipped media centers. Students need time in their school day for collaborative study time. In college, students take 3-4 classes and have most of their day free to study. In high school, students take 6-8 classes and have virtually no flex time. High-quality textbooks and materials are needed. Schools will only maintain Advanced Placement credential if their textbooks have been published in the past 10 years. Advanced Placement science courses must include college-level lab work, and AP computer science courses need access to laptops, not iPads. Here at OWL, we have district- and building-level AP coordinators who work on creating these supports and ensuring that students have access to them. I am hopeful that your Committee will consider extending similar supports to more schools in Minnesota.

Thank you for listening to my ideas and perspectives.