Future teachers navigate program changes

San Diego State University-Imperial Valley campus student Anna Karen Goycoolea reviews Division of Education program application information during an informational session on the school’s Teaching Credential Programs. (CHELCEY ADAMI PHOTO / September 10, 2012)

By CHELCEY ADAMI
Imperial Valley Press Staff Writer
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The campus, like others within the California State University system, has adjusted programs due to state budget cuts.

Beginning this past spring, the SDSU-IV Teaching Credential Programs are offered on a cohort model, meaning students enter the roughly two-year program as a cohesive group, and courses that used to be offered both during the spring and fall semester are now only offered once a year.

This means students need to communicate regularly with their advisers to make sure they’re on the correct schedule to graduate from the program as seamlessly as possible.

The program application process includes an interview, letters of recommendation, an analytical essay and more, SDSU-IV credential analyst Franell Prather explained to students Monday.

“We want to hear about why you want to be a teacher and what your life may be like in five years as a teacher,” she told the students. “We are creating lifelong learners, and that’s what education is all about.”

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DuMars to speak on QSA

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As school districts go through budget cuts battles, many students worry about being hired later.

Franell advised not to be intimidated of taking the California Basic Educational Skills Test, to be flexible in career goals and look at which subjects, such as math, science, English and special education, usually have a higher demand for teachers.

"There are opportunities out there," she said. "You have to be willing to go outside of your comfort zone."

With many districts laying off fully credentialed tenured teachers, most require applicants to be at least an intern or higher, said Lorie Shirley, Imperial County Office of Education Credential Supervisor.

SDSU-IV junior Leslie Villanueva wants to be a teacher both because her aunt is one but also "to help our community. I want kids to have the same opportunity as I had as a child."

She’s already made sacrifices to pursue her career goals such as changing her full-time bank job to a part-time one due to class schedule restrictions.

While dismal news about school districts not hiring or giving out pink slips has caused her to doubt her career path at times, she said she’s also determined to make it work.

"With all these budget cuts, we have to plan ahead and have a master plan," she said. "Don’t give up and don’t feel overwhelmed, because everything is there for you."

For more information on the SDSU-IV Teaching Credential Programs, contact Betty Wong at 760-768-5512 or bwong@mail.sdsu.edu or Franell Prather at 760-768-5551 or fprather@mail.sdsu.edu

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