Imperial Valley University Partnership welcomes its first freshman class

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Imperial Valley Press  
11:28 p.m. PDT, August 14, 2012

CALEXICO — After much anticipation from incoming students, faculty and administration, the Imperial Valley University Partnership launched its first freshman orientation Tuesday evening.

"This is the first so we're really excited," said Miriam Castañón, assistant director for Partnership Programs.

After a year and a half in the making, IVUP welcomed its first class of freshmen and their parents to the San Diego State University-Imperial Valley campus, where they discussed financial aid and student agreements. The event also allowed parents the opportunity to ask questions regarding the upcoming school year.

"There are many benefits to being an IVUP student, such as getting guaranteed access to their classes, being in a cohort, they don’t have to worry about crashing. We give them their classes and they graduate in four years with a bachelor’s degree," Castañón said.

With the first of its kind in the county, the partnership involves joint admission to Imperial Valley College and San Diego State University-Imperial Valley campus, and offers criminal justice, liberal studies and psychology degrees for the 102 freshmen enrolled in the program.
“So we have them since Day One. They do the IVUP program for two years; once they are in their third program they become juniors and seniors at San Diego State and they graduate their fourth year,” Castañón said.

“It’s pretty exciting to know you’re going to be the first student to kind of go through this program. I can tell all my friends from Central how good of a program it actually is,” Central Union High School graduate and incoming IVUP student Zoe Wilson said during Tuesday’s orientation.

“It’s remarkable in my judgment that after really only two years to the day right now, we’re able to go from just a sparkle in our eye to having our first cohort of students sitting in front of us this evening,” SDSU-IV Dean David Pearson announced.

“In this case I think the force of need in the Valley, the energy of the people who are working with the program and the energy they brought to the task of creating this program is nothing short of a minor miracle,” he continued.

The IVUP went through struggles during its formation, being controversial for many individuals within the education system.

However, having been the vision of many IVUP officials, welcoming the first freshman class to the program was more than overwhelming.

“You are our dream come true,” said Denise Cabanilla, director of higher education for the Imperial County Office of Education.

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