



Berks County Intermediate Unit  
An Educational Service Agency

## P R E S S   R E L E A S E

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### **BCIU Co-Hosts College Visit Videoconference for High School Students**

*Virtual Visit Could Help Parents Nix Expensive Road Trips to See Campuses*

READING, PA – Forget about the high cost of attending college today – parents often fork over a bundle while a child just **considers** which colleges he or she may wish to attend.

There are no tens of thousands of dollars in annual tuition during the college research phase, but often there is:

- The cost of ACT and SAT test preparation courses and materials
- College application fees
- Tutors to help a student improve his grades or test scores
- Fees to hire a private admission consultant to help a teen gain admission to the college of her choice
- Fuel costs, restaurant tabs and hotel bills for the trips to visit potential future alma maters

In an effort to help students in grades 10-12 and their families save a bit of money – and perhaps even the college-visit road trip itself – the Berks County and Lincoln intermediate units are putting together a presentation February 11 in which four colleges/universities will make their pitch and showcase their campus to hundreds of Berks and Adams county high school students via interactive videoconference.

The high school students will remain on their campus. The only “traveling” they’ll undertake is the walk down their school’s hallways to the videoconference room. No overnight hotel bills. No gasoline costs. No need to purchase walking shoes for the treks around the college quads with the ebullient sophomore tour guides.

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It's important to get a feel for a college campus, but with the economy the way it is today, we thought perhaps we could help a few students and their parents out with these virtual presentations and tours," said Sue Calvin, project administrator, distance learning, in the BCIU's Educational Technology Services Department.

A virtual visit is not a perfect substitute for an actual visit to an actual campus, Calvin said, but the video tour and presentation may help a student cross an institution off – or add it to – his list of potential colleges.

"For example, Penn State Berks is one of the colleges participating in the videoconference," Calvin said. "Maybe a student will see the presentation and say to himself, 'Hey, I never knew that about the Berks campus! I should look into it more.'"

This is the first time the BCIU and the Lincoln IU have hosted the virtual college-visit event. Admission representatives from four institutions – PSU Berks, the University of Pittsburgh, and Drexel and Villanova universities – each will give a 20-minute presentation to high school students. Schools participating in Berks County are: Hamburg Area, Conrad Weiser, Muhlenberg, Daniel Boone Area, Governor Mifflin, and Tulpehocken. Four school districts in Adams County also are participating. Students will have a chance to ask questions directly to the college representatives after each presentation.

"We're always looking for new ways to reach potential students" said Erik Kornet, assistant director, recruitment, at Drexel University. "Young people today are extremely comfortable and savvy when it comes to technology, and any way we can reach them via media they embrace, is great."

Kornet added that he hopes he'll pique the interest of a student who might otherwise not have thought of Drexel for his or her college education.

**Who:** Students from six high schools in Berks and Adams counties, as well as admission representatives from four Pennsylvania colleges/universities.

**What:** College admission presentations, with question and answer opportunities, via videoconference.

**Where:** High school videoconference facilities at Hamburg Area High School, Conrad Weiser High School, Muhlenberg Senior High School, Daniel Boone Area High School, Governor Mifflin Senior High School, and Tulpehocken Area Jr./Sr. High School; four Adams County high schools; and the admission offices of Penn State Berks, the University of Pittsburgh, Drexel University, and Villanova University.

**When:** 1-3 p.m., Wednesday, February 11, 2009

For more information on the February 11 college videoconference event, contact Sue Calvin, BCIU project administrator, distance learning, at [610-987-8629/suecal@berksiu.org](mailto:610-987-8629/suecal@berksiu.org).