

# How Vernon College Keeps Students on Their Academic Pathway

## Filling Gaps with Core and Elective Courses



### COURSE SHARING CHAMPIONS

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Vernon College is a comprehensive community college that integrates education with opportunity through its instructional programs and student support services for traditional and distance learning. VC is also a member of the DigiTex Consortium, which powers course sharing among community colleges in Texas. DigiTex focuses on expanding access to STEM courses at rural institutions and ensures every learner in the state has access to in-demand courses, no matter where they live. As a two-year college, VC doesn't offer many specialized courses and may not enroll enough students to justify creating an entire section, often leaving students who need a required course without many options. However, course sharing through the DigiTex Consortium allows students to take elective and core courses from partner institutions to continue on their academic pathway.

Since joining the Acadeum network in the summer of 2021, campus leaders have connected over 230 students to the courses they need to catch up or get ahead, tapping offerings from trusted partners in the network while keeping students connected to VC.

### Vernon College Fast Facts



- Vernon, Texas
- Two-year college
- 65% of students work part-time jobs
- Started course sharing in the summer of 2021



**“Course sharing reduces time to completion by helping with sequencing. Students don't have to wait for the course to be offered at VC or choose to leave VC and transfer before completing graduation. Instead, students can complete all courses they planned with Vernon College.”**

**- Criquett Chapman**

# Getting Faculty Buy-In and Increasing Course Visibility

As the division chair for math, Paula Whitman was ready to take the lead. Initially, Vernon College faculty expressed hesitancy about course sharing because it was unfamiliar, and faculty needed clarification on how it would work. They also knew course sharing required cross-communication between instruction, advising, and admissions. Then, the faculty saw how course sharing worked with a few math and science classes, and they were on board. Course sharing fills in the gaps for students who might need an elective for their teaching degree at a transfer institution or for those who need core classes in physics instead of biology.

The college now advertises courses available through course sharing in the course catalog to increase awareness and new enrollment. Students home from neighboring four-year institutions can pick up a summer math course that Vernon College offers because they see it in the schedule.

**230+**  
course  
bottlenecks  
resolved

“Course sharing helps students stay on their path in different ways. Before course sharing, we sent students to another institution to take a course in December because we didn’t have options. Now, course sharing gives us a ton of flexibility.”

- Paula Whitman

## How Vernon College is using course sharing to meet student needs and add value by:

- + Expanding its catalog of courses while ensuring academic rigor and quality
- + Reducing bottlenecks caused by courses offered infrequently
- + Creating opportunities to increase course visibility and expand enrollment
- + Helping students progress on their educational pathway