Clackamas Web Academy's Annie Sharpe builds up college credits during high school: Academic Achievers 2013

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Though Annie Sharpe graduated from high school this week, she’s already intimately familiar with college life.

For the past two years, Sharpe attended all of her classes at Clackamas Community College in Oregon City, earning a high school diploma and more than 60 college credits, all while maintaining a 4.0 GPA.

Clackamas Web Academy, an online charter school in the North Clackamas School District, offers the early college program to just 30 students. Sharpe, who’s been enrolled in the school since it opened in 2004, said getting into the program was something she dreamed about since she was a freshman.

When the opportunity to apply came at the end of her sophomore year, her parents, Don and Carol, worried the pressure of college classes might be too much, she said. But she excelled in the program and is now one of three valedictorians.

Sharpe, 17, admits she’s a bit of a perfectionist when it comes to schoolwork. The other valedictorians happen to be her good friends, so there was plenty of good-natured competition.

“I just want to do my best,” she said. “I’m disappointed when I do less than that.”

The early college program allows students to pursue career goals earlier or simply explore their interests, said Susan Roberts, Sharpe’s adviser at Clackamas Web Academy. Over the past two years, Sharpe took college level math and science classes, explored fitness and pottery classes and interned at a pair of local elementary schools.

“She’s somewhat of a Renaissance woman, interested in everything from education and engineering,” Roberts said.

Sharpe said she loved being able to attend class a few times a week and work at her own pace. It helps her stay close to her parents and her 15-year-old brother, John, plus she fits in better with the college crowd, she said.

This fall, she plans to continue classes at Clackamas Community College and then enroll in George Fox University in Newberg in 2014 to pursue an engineering degree.

Outside of school, she’s active in her church and a leader in her American Heritage Girls troop, said coordinator Jane Carter. Later this month, she will be honored with the Dolley Madison award, the second highest honor a Heritage Girl can receive.
“She’s so gentle and outgoing,” she said. “She’s just a consistent leader.”

-- Michael Bamesberger

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