



**Wharton County  
Junior College**

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# NEWS RELEASE

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## A 'FOOT IN THE DOOR'

*ROAR Academy provides unique educational opportunity for WISD freshmen*

WHARTON, TEXAS – When Angel Delgado begins his freshman year at Wharton Independent School District this fall, he'll be doing more than working toward a high school diploma. He'll be jumpstarting his college education, too.

Thanks to the Realizing Our Academic Reward (ROAR) Academy – a joint effort of Wharton ISD and Wharton County Junior College – Delgado and other select freshmen will have the chance to earn up to 60 college credit hours while enrolled in high school.

Although similar to dual-credit programs, ROAR differs in that it begins freshman year and allows participants to take up to 18 hours per semester. Dual-credit programs, by comparison, are only offered to junior and senior-level students and are limited to six hours per semester. ROAR is further offered free of charge to participating students.

Delgado's parents – Victor and Regina Delgado of Wharton – said ROAR Academy will provide a positive foundation for their son's educational career.

"It's an incredible opportunity. By the time he graduates high school, he'll already have his foot in the door of obtaining his college degree," said Victor Delgado.

Delgado and 24 other incoming freshmen were chosen for the 2015-2016 ROAR Academy during a "lottery event" held recently on WCJC's Wharton campus. Prospective students and their families gathered in the WCJC Hutchins Memorial Center conference room and waited in anticipation as Wharton ISD officials drew names from a basket to determine the academy's next class.

Although there were 32 applicants, only 25 were chosen. The others were placed on a list of alternates.

Leigh Ann Collins, WCJC's vice-president of instruction, told the crowd that ROAR is an excellent opportunity for students.

"This is a wonderful program," she said. "This is the culmination of a dream of Wharton ISD."

Wharton ISD Superintendent King Davis credited WCJC with helping to make that dream a reality by providing ongoing support.

“We couldn’t do this without our partnership with WCJC,” Davis said. “And this is an awesome opportunity for the students. It’s critical for their educational success.”

The ROAR Academy launched its inaugural class last fall. The program provides high school freshmen with the opportunity to earn up to 60 credit hours of college level coursework by the time they reach graduation. Those hours may be used to complete a certificate program, obtain an associate’s degree from WCJC or transfer on to a four-year university.

Although he admits to being a little “nervous” about college-level classes, Delgado said he’s looking forward to entering the ROAR program this fall. He plans to apply the credit hours he obtains through ROAR toward a business degree from Texas A&M.

“I feel like I can gain more experience and have much better opportunities through ROAR,” he said. “This is a good thing.”

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