COMMITTEE ON EDUCATIONAL POLICY

California State University Remediation Policies and Practices: Board Expectations and Directives

Presentation By

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Summary

In summer 2007, staff in Academic Affairs surveyed CSU campuses to appraise promising practices designed to bring entering first-time freshmen to college-level proficiency. The survey was described in a report for Information at the Board’s September 18-19, 2007 meeting. The report to the Board included eight principles that emerged from the summer survey. They are as follows.

Principle one states that the 1996 Board of Trustees policy goal, that 90% of incoming first-time freshmen should be fully proficient, is consistent with the existing CSU strategic plan. However, as that plan is reviewed and updated, the quantified student proficiency goal should be reassessed, and revised as appropriate.

Principle two tasks campuses to assess the effectiveness of their approaches to meet students’ varying developmental needs, and to continue to identify—and share—practices that are found to be particularly effective.

Principle three encourages all campuses to establish or expand “early start” programs, including strong financial support to include both improved financial aid opportunities and opportunities for summer employment, for students with both significant and moderate remedial needs.

Principle four stipulates that the CSU should continue to expect freshmen to attain proficiency within one year, especially as students are directed to an energetic early start in the initial summer, as called for in principle three.

Principle five asks campuses to explore alternatives to redirection to Community Colleges, while maintaining the basic principle that students must achieve proficiency before enrolling in their second year in the CSU.
Principle six encourages campuses to develop, for students who begin their mathematics or English study at a demonstrated “nearly proficient” level, courses that offer baccalaureate credit while requiring enrolled students meet specific proficiency objectives along with goals for general education.

Principle seven encourages all campuses to develop and use technology-assisted, Internet-based learning programs for remedial English and mathematics. Consortial efforts that involve several campuses in the development of these programs are encouraged.

Principle eight calls for a review and validation study of the English Placement Test, Entry Level Mathematics, and other related instruments (such as the Early Assessment Program (EAP), the SAT; and the ACT), and the results used to inform campus experimentation with directed self-placement and other innovative remediation placement practice.

At the September Board meeting, Academic Affairs was asked to forward the proposed principles to the Academic Senate CSU for review and comment, before returning with a resolution for final Board action. The elements in this proposed Board resolution have been developed in the context of near-final drafts of an Academic Senate CSU resolution set for final action in January 2008.

The following resolution is recommended for adoption:

RESOLVED, by the Board of Trustees of the California State University, that systemwide policy on the attainment of readiness for university-level learning in English and mathematics (i.e., the attainment of proficiency) by first-time freshman students include the following.

1. It is the goal and continuing expectation of the Board of Trustees that regularly-admitted first-time freshmen be fully ready for postsecondary learning in English and mathematics (i.e., be proficient) based upon their work and learning through secondary school; and that entering first-time freshmen be assessed as to this learning based upon reasonable standards and via appropriate instruments and tests. In light of this goal and expectation, the Chancellor is directed to continue the engagement of the California State University with the public schools of this State, via the Early Assessment Program (EAP) and other means consistent with priorities and directions to be identified in the new CSU systemwide strategic plan, Access to Excellence.

2. In the light of the priorities and directions in the forthcoming Access to Excellence systemwide strategic plan, and as a product of the continuing engagement of the California State University with California public
schools, the Chancellor is further directed to review the current numeric goal of 90% proficiency in English and mathematics at entry among first time freshmen; to report to the Board of Trustees the results of this review; and to propose to the Board of Trustees any changes to this goal that may be appropriate.

3. It is the expectation of the Board of Trustees that the validity of commonly-used tests and assessments of proficiency in English and mathematics be well established. In light of this expectation, the Chancellor is directed to review and freshly evaluate, in consultation with CSU faculty experts, the validity of the English Placement Test, the Entry Level Mathematics assessment, and other related instruments (such as the Early Assessment Program assessment, or EAP; the SAT; and the ACT).

4. It is the expectation of the Board of Trustees that first-time freshmen who are unable to show English and mathematics proficiency at entry shall attain such proficiency during their initial college year of study at the California State University, including the summer prior to initial fall matriculation, plus the fall and spring semesters (or, on quarter campuses, in the fall, winter and spring quarters). To that end, the Chancellor is directed to engage CSU campuses in implementing recommended effective practices to guide and support first-time freshmen in attaining this proficiency. As appropriate, this engagement may include providing campus faculty and staff with opportunities to collaborate and share effective practices, and developing comprehensive periodic reports on successful programs.

5. It is the expectation of the Board of Trustees that programs that demonstrate success in bringing students to full proficiency be widely replicated in the CSU. To that end, the Chancellor and Presidents are directed to collaborate with CSU faculty in experimenting with, or piloting, programs such as the following, which were reported to show evidence of success in a summer 2007 survey of remediation practices on CSU campuses; to assess with care any such experiments and/or pilot programs; and to implement on a widespread basis those programs shown to be successful. To the extent that it is judged convenient and beneficial, collaboration with community colleges is encouraged.

A. “Early start” programs, including strong financial support to include both improved financial aid opportunities and opportunities
for summer employment, for students with both significant and moderate remedial needs.

B. Alternatives to redirection to Community Colleges for students who narrowly miss achieving full proficiency in the course of an initial college year, including, for example, hosting Community College instruction at CSU campuses, while maintaining the basic principle that students must achieve proficiency before enrolling in their second year in the CSU.

C. For students who begin their mathematics or English study at a demonstrated “nearly proficient” level, courses that offer baccalaureate credit for the attainment of college-level course outcomes, while requiring enrolled students also to meet specific proficiency objectives.

D. Technology-assisted, Internet-based learning programs for remedial English and mathematics. Consortial efforts that involve several campuses in the development of these programs are encouraged.