

**ACADEMIC SENATE**  
**of**  
**THE CALIFORNIA STATE UNIVERSITY**

Item 2

AS-2687-05/AA  
March 10-11, 2005

**The Role of Prebaccalaureate Programs (AKA Remediation)**  
**in the California State University**

- RESOLVED: That the Academic Senate of the California State University (CSU) express concern that, with the approach of the 2007 and the Board of Trustees target of no more than 10% of CSU entering freshmen requiring remediation, the Board could turn to more stringent limitations on prebaccalaureate students or turning away prebaccalaureate students altogether rather than on reducing the need for remediation; and be it further
- RESOLVED: That the Academic Senate CSU urge the Board, the Chancellor, and the Executive Vice Chancellor to maintain their focus on policies and programs, such as the Early Assessment Program, that reduce the need for remediation of students eligible for admission to the California State University; and be it further
- RESOLVED: That the Academic Senate CSU urge the Board, the Chancellor, and the Executive Vice Chancellor not to pursue policies intended to further reduce access by restricting admission or retention for otherwise admissible CSU students who require prebaccalaureate coursework; and be it further
- RESOLVED: That the Academic Senate CSU urge the Board of Trustees, the Chancellor, and the Executive Vice Chancellor to recognize the important role that pre-baccalaureate coursework plays in providing access to higher education for students eligible to attend the CSU; and be it further
- RESOLVED: That the Academic Senate CSU urge the Board, the Chancellor, and the Executive Vice Chancellor to value and encourage programs which enhance the learning, retention, and graduation of students who initially require prebaccalaureate coursework; and be it further
- RESOLVED: That the Academic Senate CSU urge the Board, in response to the March 15, 2005, report to the Board, that 63% of entering students are proficient in mathematics, that 53% of entering students are proficient in English, and that the proficiency levels have plateaued for the last 3 years, to make public its planned actions in the likely case that the 10% goal is not achieved by 2007.

*RATIONALE: The CSU's historic mission has been to enact in practice the American ideal of upward mobility through education. To accomplish this goal, we have served as a platform by providing access to students admissible under the California Master Plan for Higher Education. That access includes, and*

*must include, eligible students who are required to take prebaccalaureate courses. It would be ironic, having spent so much breath recently decrying the demise of the Master Plan, were we to decouple access from prebaccalaureate programs. A former CSU student tells us, "I believe that I am sitting here today because of a lot of hard work and the opportunity offered to me by the California State University. My hope is that every student might have that opportunity." Even in these tough budget times, when the Master Plan commitment of California higher education appears to be undermined and, as Kevin Starr, the California State Librarian emeritus states, "that repudiated promise represents yet another nail in the coffin of the California dream, [but] I still have that hope because I do not believe that the American dream of achievement is dying."*

*The proportion of adults over 25 nationally who have college degrees is 25.9%. California's proportion is 28.5%. However, there are counties in California where the proportion is much less. In Stanislaus County, for example, only 13% of those 25 and older have achieved a college degree, fourth from the bottom on a list of 231 counties in America with populations over 250,000. The Modesto Bee noted on May 24 that the central valley "serves as a launching pad for the upwardly mobile," but that the lower rate of college graduates deters business and prompts "talent flight."*

*The Associated Press reported on January 4, 2005:*

*California's students across all races rank among the lowest in the nation for academic achievement despite the state's many reform efforts, according to a new study by the Rand Corp.*

*The Rand Corp. study released Monday also finds that California's per-pupil spending is among the lowest, and its student-to-teacher ratio is among the highest. The state also lags in building schools, though it is catching up thanks to billions of dollars of bonds that voters have approved in recent years.*

*While he said he wasn't surprised by any single finding from the 18-month study, lead researcher Steve Carroll said he was struck by "the overall cascade of unhappy observations."*

*The falling performance of California public schools coupled with the plummeting CSU budgets to highlight the competition for available seats at the same time that we might expect greater numbers of students who require prebaccalaureate coursework. Some might equate a need for further development in writing or mathematics as a reason to deny students access. However, when thinking about the labeling of students and courses as remedial and when assigning responsibility for that remedial status, it is useful to consider the history of first-year composition courses at the college level. Various sources document that freshman composition courses began at Harvard in the 1880s, a recognition that students who had completed high school were*

*not prepared to write at the university level (Berlin, Boylan). Berlin's rendering has a familiar ring:*

*In 1874, Eliot [the president of Harvard] introduced a test of the student's ability to write in English as a part of the Harvard entrance requirement. . . . Since the language of learning at the new university was to be English, it seemed appropriate that entering students be tested in this language. Furthermore the test in English ensured that the new open university would not become too open. . . . The fact that no freshman class had ever been able to write in the manner thought appropriate for college work and that additional writing instruction had always been deemed necessary for college students seems not to have been noticed either by Eliot or the staff of his English department. A look at the sample essays from the entrance exam of 1894, published by the Harvard Board of Overseers in indignation at the errors it found, reveals that the best students in the country attending the best university of its time had difficulties in writing. Rather than conclude that perhaps it was expecting too much of these students and their preparatory schools, however, the Board of Overseers excoriated the teachers who had prepared these students and demanded that something be done. This vilification of high school English teacher has since become a common practice as college English teachers have tried to shift the entire responsibility for writing instruction--a responsibility that throughout Anglo-American history has been shared by the college--to the lower schools. (24)*

*Some CSU initiatives such as the PAD (pre-collegiate academic development), CAPI (collaborative academic preparation initiative), and EAP (early assessment program) focus or have focused on the goal of reducing the need for remediation. However, other initiatives--such as the limitation of prebaccalaureate work in some cases to one semester, and proposals to count prebaccalaureate units in a total of "sanctionable units," units beyond which students or campuses will be penalized, have nothing to do with reducing the need for remediation.*

*The Board of Trustees has created policy in relation to remediation in the CSU, and, pursuant to that policy, Executive Order 665 encourages limitations on remedial activities and redirection of non-remediated students to other institutions. This resolution states the Senate's intent that Trustee policy and EO 665 not be extended or interpreted to deny admission or further limit remedial activities for students admissible under the California Master Plan for Higher Education.*

*Berlin, James. Rhetoric and Reality: Writing Instruction in American Colleges, 1900-1985. Carbondale: SIUP, 1987.*

- Boylan, Hunter. "Developmental Education: Demographics, Outcomes, and Activities." Journal of Developmental Education, 23:2, 1999.*
- California State University. "The Mission of the California State University." <http://www.calstate.edu/PA/info/mission.shtml>*
- Coleman, Jennifer. "Report: Calif. schools lag behind other states." Modesto Bee, 4 January 2005, [http://www.modbee.com/state\\_wire/story/9701339p-10583821c.html](http://www.modbee.com/state_wire/story/9701339p-10583821c.html)*
- Farrar, Debra. "Leadership in the Climate of Change." American Association of State Colleges and Universities Millennium Leadership Institute, June 2004.*
- Turner, Melanie. "Finish College? You're among the few here." Modesto Bee, 24 May 2004, A1,*

**APPROVED – May 5-6, 2005**