California State University’s Early Start Program
Frequently Asked Questions

1. **What is Early Start?**
   Under Early Start, beginning in 2012, entering freshmen that are not proficient in math or “at risk” in English will need to start the remediation process before their first term. By 2014 students will need to have started their work on becoming ready for college-level English.

2. **Why an Early Start program?**
   The CSU is mandated under the state’s Master Plan for Higher Education to serve the upper third of high school graduates and about half of these men and women do not have college level skills even though they are fully eligible to attend our campuses including a grade point average of 3.0 or above, test scores and completion of the A-G curriculum.

   The issue of college preparedness is not a new issue for higher education and certainly not CSU with over 50% of fully eligible freshmen arriving on CSU campuses without being proficient in math and/or English. Early Start is simply another effort by CSU faculty, academic leaders, staff and others to help make sure that these admitted students get this important work done sooner rather than later and to increase their likelihood of completing their degree in a timely manner.

3. **What is different than current CSU policy?**
   Current CSU policy, as reflected in Executive Order 665, was adopted in the late 1990’s and requires all entering freshmen to complete their remedial work in the first year of CSU enrollment. Early Start does not change that timeline; but it does facilitate students’ beginning this work prior to the first term for which they have been admitted to a CSU campus, so they are better prepared to succeed in their college courses.

   Annual reports are provided to the legislature regarding this policy, the trends on student preparedness, how many students complete remediation, the demographics of these students, and the number that were not successful. The most recent report was released this month. All annual reports including the one released earlier this month can be accessed on our website at: [http://www.calstate.edu/budget/fybudget/legislative-reports/20110201-Final-First-Time-Freshmen.pdf](http://www.calstate.edu/budget/fybudget/legislative-reports/20110201-Final-First-Time-Freshmen.pdf).

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4. **When do students know they may need remedial instruction?**
   Six years ago students in the 11th grade were given an opportunity to determine their preparation for college by taking the Early Assessment Program (EAP). The EAP is administered as a voluntary part of the California Standards Test (CST) taken by students in the 11th grade and the result of an ongoing partnership with the Superintendent of Public Instruction, California Department of Education and the State Board of Education. By receiving results prior to their final year of high school, students can make better use of both their senior year of high school and summer prior to their college freshmen year. Over 80% of 11th graders took advantage of the EAP during the last testing cycle.

In the course of time, the EAP has been recognized nationally, states throughout the country are working to replicate it and just last year the legislature expanded its use to the California Community Colleges. The goal with Early Start is to have students, parents and teachers use this information more proactively so that students do complete remediation before leaving high school or starting college. We will continue to encourage more students to take courses during their senior year, at their community college, in summer programs, or even an online option.

Secondary school students, who opt not to participate in the Early Assessment Program as well as those who come from private schools or from outside California may not learn of their need for remediation until they take the CSU placement test(s) during their senior year in high school.

5. **What does CSU spend today on remedial instruction that recent high school students need?**
   We estimate that we spend $30 million annually on remediation. This does not include the cost for students who pay for these courses during their freshman year. Several of the possible options for Early Start, e.g., coursework during high school and/or via partnerships with community colleges are likely to be less costly for both students and the university.

6. **Why do we need to address remedial needs of students at all?**
   Research also shows us that students that come to college without the necessary skills in mathematics and English will face significant challenges in completing their degree. It is also true that such efforts can reduce the need for students to take noncredit coursework that can increase their costs and possibly lengthen their time to degree.

7. **Should CSU complete pilots before implementing this new policy system wide?**
   We did conduct three pilots over the last several years at Fullerton, Monterey Bay and San Diego State University as described below:
   - CSU Fullerton has offered an online option for remediation in mathematics where over 85% of the students have been successful in completing their work.
   - A one week intensive mathematics workshop (boot camp) at CSU Monterey Bay, where almost 200 admitted freshman enrolled and 90% of the participants were successful. Forty –five percent of the CSUMB workshop “graduates” moved on to the next level of remedial work in mathematics, and the remaining 55% percent were able completely finish the required

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remediation and be placed in college level mathematics classes. This was accomplished at a fraction of the costs, which would have been incurred were these same students to have enrolled in regular remedial courses in the Fall semester.

- In 2010, SDSU partnered with San Diego Community College to offer five week Early Start instruction in both English and mathematics. Among African American participants, there was a 46% increase in proficiency in mathematics, and the increase in English proficiency was even more dramatic. Latino participants in the San Diego Early Start program displayed a 26% increase in proficiency in mathematics, and English proficiency increased from 10% to more than 80%. Overall, 82% of the admitted SDSU freshmen, who received instructions via Early Start “cleared” their CSU placement test deficiencies in either English or mathematics or both.

The Early Start Implementation Team is using information on these pilots to assess the 23 individual plans submitted for review and approval this month.

8. Does the current remedial policy negatively impact underserved students?

No. In fact the data below shows that the make-up of first-time freshmen over the last ten years under our current remediation policy has increased in its number and diversity. This has occurred even in these tough budget times where enrollment funding has not kept up with demand. The CSU has not only maintained its commitment to diversity but seen increases in the number of Latino and African American students.

The CSU has a responsibility to not only enroll all eligible students under the state’s Master Plan for Higher Education but also to ensure their success in completing their degrees. This commitment is for all students, regardless of background or circumstances, so that they too have a chance live the dream.

The table below shows that even with our more aggressive remedial policy adopted in 1998, the diversity of our entering freshmen has NOT been negatively impacted.

<p>| First-Time Entering Freshmen Since Implementation of CSU Remedial Policy |
|---------------------------------|-----------------|----------------|-------------|</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1999</th>
<th>2009</th>
<th>Change</th>
<th>% Change</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>African American</td>
<td>2384</td>
<td>2960</td>
<td>576</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>American Indian</td>
<td>280</td>
<td>132</td>
<td>-148</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asian American</td>
<td>5083</td>
<td>5780</td>
<td>687</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Filipino Amer.</td>
<td>2137</td>
<td>2469</td>
<td>332</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mexican American</td>
<td>6017</td>
<td>13537</td>
<td>7520</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other Latino Amer.</td>
<td>2013</td>
<td>4210</td>
<td>2197</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pacific Island.</td>
<td>190</td>
<td>195</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White</td>
<td>12968</td>
<td>11914</td>
<td>-1054</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>International</td>
<td>916</td>
<td>1393</td>
<td>477</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unknown</td>
<td>4700</td>
<td>5519</td>
<td>819</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total FTF</td>
<td>36688</td>
<td>53110</td>
<td>16422</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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It is true that in many cases students from low socio-economic and underserved communities need remedial assistance at a greater rate than others; but the point of our remediation policy and initiatives such as EAP and Early Start is to help all students so that regardless of circumstances they succeed in college.

9. **Is the Early Start going to be one size fits all for students statewide?**

No. Students will be given a menu of options to determine the best approach for them to start their remedial instruction. All 23 campuses have been working to develop their Early Start plans under the leadership of the CSU Early Start Implementation team made up of system leaders, faculty, students, student affairs professionals and others.

Initial review of campus plans are encouraging, and each campus plan will be tailored to the needs of their students, nature of their partnerships with K-12 and community colleges and the approach determined best by the campus implementation team including local campus faculty. Campus plans include such things as senior year high school courses, courses offered in the summer at any one of their local community colleges or CSU campuses and online courses, to name a few.

10. **Will students have to move to their CSU campus prior to the start of the academic year to do their remedial work?**

No. Students who have been accepted to a CSU for the fall will NOT have to do their remedial instruction at the campus to which they have been admitted. Instead, they will be able to begin their remedial work locally before the fall term. Campuses will be accepting coursework from throughout the state so that students do not have to relocate prior to the start of the fall term. For example, a student who lives in Inglewood but is attending San Jose State in the fall will be able to do Early Start at any of the local CSU campuses such as Los Angeles, Pomona, Long Beach, Dominguez Hills, or others; at their local community colleges, and online coursework if so desired. Students will NOT be required to move early and increase their expenses prior to the start of the academic year at the campus they have decided to enroll.

11. **How much will Early Start cost students?**

It could cost them nothing if they are successful in using their senior year in high school to complete this work. Students attending local community colleges would pay the same fees they would if they took the course during the fall and spring terms. Programs offered by the CSU will be offered at the same if not a lower fee than students would pay during the regular academic year, whether offered via extension or during a summer term for which state support is provided.

The CSU has two fee levels for matriculated students – a flat rate for six units or less and another for 6 or more units. The Implementation Team is working with the campuses now to develop a common, per unit fee structure so that students taking a one or two unit remedial course will actually pay less than if they took this same course during the regular school year.

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12. Will Early Start costs be covered by financial aid for needy students?
   Financial aid will be provided to needy students from the federal Pell Grant program to cover their fees. Students are now eligible for Pell Grants year round per changes CSU advocated with Congress and President Obama. In cases where students exceed a total of 24 units in all three terms – summer, fall and spring, students will qualify for a second Pell Grant and therefore, more aid. It is also possible that State University Grants (SUG) may be available to some students.

13. How will students and families know about Early Start and their options?
   Students taking the EAP during the 11th grade will be given information regarding the academic issues they need to address if they want to be fully proficient before starting college and will be encouraged to work on these issues during their senior year. CSU faculty are already working closely with local schools, teachers and principals to offer courses and other options to students.

   A communications plan is a required component of each campus’ Early Start Plan. In addition, the CSU will include Early Start in the 2012 edition of its “How to Get to College” poster, which is widely circulated in half dozen languages. Hundreds of thousands of these posters are distributed annually via the CSU’s Super Sunday and Parent Institute for Quality Education (PIQE) programs as well dozens of other events, which target under-represented populations.

   Finally, students will be notified throughout the normal and on-going process of application, admissions, enrollment and registration. In most cases admissions decisions are made by March giving students several months to choose from the menu of options for them prior to starting their college courses in the fall.

14. What are the next steps?
   The statewide Implementation Team is reviewing all 23 campus plans and will lead to the approval of their approach by the Provost/Chief Academic Officer and Chancellor. Campus’ plans are being qualitatively assessed for best practices as well as for common issues that need to be addressed at the state level.

   The Implementation Team will oversee the campus plans and regular reports will be provided to the Board of Trustees (BOT) and the Chancellor.

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