

August 30, 2015

CEO Colleagues,

An update on the Common Assessment Initiative, from the Steering Committee meeting held in San Diego, Friday, Aug 28.

**Multiple Measures:**

The Multiple Measures pilot has now expanded to 27 colleges (Bakersfield, Butte, Canada, Coastline, Cypress, Desert, redwoods, Contra Costa, De Anza, Diablo Valley, Fresno City, LA Valley, Alameda, Berkeley City, Laney, Merritt, Rio Hondo, Sac City, San Diego City, San Diego Mesa, Miramar, Santa Barbara City, Santa Monica, Irvine, Saddleback, Sierra, West LA) and is becoming central to the discussions of the Common Assessment Initiative.

Multiple measures captures a student's skills and abilities in a more comprehensive manner than solely relying on a single test; this assessment/placement approach has the potential of placing students more accurately and helping with the student success and completion agenda. A July 2015 student by Community College Research Center (CCRC) titled *Improving the Accuracy of Remedial Placement* suggests that assessment/placement approaches could impact subgroup in different ways.

*Overall, the research presented here strongly suggests that using high school information can improve placement accuracy and student outcomes. It also serves as a reminder that colleges changing their assessment practices should monitor how new approaches to assessment and placement impact different subgroups of students.*

As CEOs you may want to consider embedding this approach within our college's SSSP and Equity Plans.

The attached pdf was distributed to the steering committee on the Multiple Measures Phase I implementation. Please review and share with faculty and administrative leadership on your campuses.

**Some definitions:**

Over the past year, the steering committee has developed working definitions that I thought you might find helpful on your colleges as you determine the best approach to initial placement of students. The data are clear, appropriate placement is a significant contributor to student success—i.e., student learning and time to completion.

Assessment: Note that this definition of assessment is very broadly stated.

*Assessment means the process of gathering information about a student regarding the student's study skills, English language proficiency, computational skills, aptitudes, goals, learning skills, career aspirations, academic performance, and need for special services. Assessment methods may include, but not necessarily be limited to, interviews,*

*standardized tests, attitude surveys, vocational or career aptitude and interest inventories, high school or postsecondary transcripts, specialized certificates or licenses, educational histories, and other measures of performance.*

### Duplicative testing and retesting:

The steering committee discussions on duplicative testing and retesting was particularly enlightening to me, and I thought some of you might also find beneficial.

Duplicative testing – one reason the Common Assessment Initiative was legislated and funded was the issue of (re) testing when a student moved from one community college to another. This is less of an issue for the more isolated colleges, like Bakersfield College. However, colleges that are more geographically clustered in southern California and Northern California have a need for “portable” assessments. The legislation is intended to address this issue and reduce “duplicative” testing.

Retesting – on the other hand, students may retest in an attempt to improve their score on a prior assessment, or may need to retest because prior assessments are not current. The discussion at the steering committee included the following:

- If successfully completing a prerequisite course is valid for 3 years, why would an assessment test score be valid, at some colleges, for only one year?
- Should students be able to retest right away or should they wait for a period of time before they retest?
- Should students be primed with a pretest prior to taking their actual assessment test? This practice is gaining momentum in many colleges.
- Saddleback discussed their “refresh” initiative which seems promising. Here is a blurb from their website:

*Refresh is a 21 hour workshop designed to refresh students' skills, build their confidence and coordinate re-test efforts into higher level math or English courses. Each workshop will take place over the course of 2-3 weeks.*

<http://www.saddleback.edu/matriculation/refresh>

- The issue of the costs of retesting is a practical consideration for implementation.
- In a joint responsibility model, the student takes responsibility for their decisions as well. However, the college needs to make relevant information available to students. For example, if there is data that shows retesting in English does not significantly improve scores, then the use of data analytics could provide this information to students ahead of time to inform their decisions.

Although the Steering Committee’s conversation was initially framed in terms of policy, the discussion that emerged was more an ongoing, active exploration:

- Perhaps develop a document that outlines best practices as it relates to retesting,

- Continue with research on this topic,
- Continue to keep this issue on the front burner.

That's all for now.

For more information:

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