

**Themes and Questions from the
Academic Senate for California Community Colleges
for the Chancellor's Office and the TFSS
10/25/11**

SSTF Recommendations – Reactions, Emerging Issues, and Concerns

1. The recommendations give the impression that community colleges are completely broken and failing. We know this is incorrect, and at the same time we know we can make improvements.
2. The recommendations are focused on a hypothetical student that is not our typical CCC student. The “traditional” CCC student is a “nontraditional” student.
3. The presumption that technology can free up counseling faculty for the students that really need them is flawed – and the recommendations increase the burden placed on counseling and student services more generally without an accompanying recommendation to also increase the number of counselors at the colleges.
4. Certain terms appear to lack clear definition, and these same terms are used almost interchangeably – i.e., program of study and educational plan.
5. The matriculation requirements, which have been in place for 20 years, align with the SSTF recommendations of today. Yet no additional funding for these tasks is identified (while funding for matriculation has been slashed) and more mandates and requirements in matriculation appear to be the solution to many of the challenges to student success.
6. The need for more full time instructional and counseling faculty is not addressed in the recommendations. There are documented benefits of having full-time faculty and it is full-time faculty who would be responsible for implementing the proposed “alternatives to basic skills curriculum”. And the proposed increased demand on matriculation services would necessitate the hiring of more counseling faculty.
7. A system priority for some time has been the need to close the achievement gap, yet the recommendations do not address this issue specifically.
8. The system office “reform” imbedded in the student success recommendations is misplaced. What is the relationship between the Chancellor's Office and student success?
9. Career technical education (CTE), as part of the mission, is largely absent in the recommendations.
10. The recommendations presume that every course that a student takes is a required course; they ignore the additional units that are commonly needed as electives for degree completion. How do these factor into the educational plan as the means of guiding all offerings?

Questions for the Chancellor's Office and the SSTF

1. How can educational plans be used to drive schedules when the timing of educational plans and the development of schedules are not aligned?
2. Why have categorical programs that receive matching federal dollars been included in the categoricals to be consolidate? This suggests an intent to cease those categorical programs – an intent that should be explicitly stated and justified.
3. How is it cost-effective to implement an interim assessment before a diagnostic one is developed? Wouldn't a more logical approach be to wait and implement the more desirable diagnostic option? Is the intent really to have a diagnostic assessment or just to have any required statewide assessment?
4. As written, CTE is largely ignored in the recommendations. The CCC, for example, does not appear to be viewed as a place for job retraining. Would a student needing one or two courses for career advancement not be able to do this on state support? Or would such a student be required to go through all matriculation services and tax the college's resources just to be able to take one or two courses on the state's dollar?
5. Chapters 5 and 8 propose different uses for basic skills funds. If these dollars are to be redirected, how will they be used?
6. While recommendation 8.4 indicates that outcome-based funding is not to be a recommendation, 7.3 is suggestive of a first step in establishing such a system. Will the Chancellor's Office oppose legislative efforts to implement outcome-based funding, should such efforts materialize?
7. Like many aspects of the recommendations, Chapter 6 delineates the inappropriate intrusion of the Chancellor's Office and Board of Governors into matters that are clearly within the purview of faculty. Given the down-sizing of the Chancellor's Office and the broad array of compliance monitoring activities that it is charged with offering, how can the Chancellor's Office take on the new roles delineated for it in the recommendations? In its totality, the recommendations increase the roles and responsibilities of the Chancellor's Office – and not clearly in a manner that would support student success.
8. Recommendation 8.3 proposes an alternative funding mechanism that appears to require consistency across the system in the leveling of basic skills curriculum in order to be implemented. Is there a presumption that basic skills curriculum will be aligned across our 112 colleges and a plan to avoid the declaration of this as an unfunded mandate by not mandating it, but rather tying new dollars to it? Given that this strategy is proposed in 8.2 (access to the proposed “student support initiative” is contingent upon local implementation of recommendations 2.1 and 7.2), is the plan to obscure unfunded mandates by creating options that colleges will be compelled to select due to fiscal awards?