

Chancellor's Task Force on Student Success

Summary of Community Comments | December 5, 2011

Since the last Task Force meeting, comments shifted from predominantly advocating for particular program types (e.g., CalWORKS, classes for seniors) to addressing recommendations that would create new requirements, priorities, or systems. Key themes included:

Objections to narrowing the focus of California community colleges

- Defining success as the completion of a degree, certificate, or transfer does not recognize other vital roles that our colleges play, including continuing education, serving as part of the state's social safety net, and assisting those seeking job re-training
- Students may gain substantial benefits from only taking a few courses, but these students would not be counted in the proposed accountability measures
- The recommendations do not adequately reflect career technical education students or programs

Concerns about the mechanisms designed to help students become better directed

- The recommendations in Chapter 2 will fail unless we increase matriculation funding or change the 50% law
- Implementing mandatory, early educational plans that are difficult to update will eliminate students' abilities to explore, forcing them into programs of study before they know what they want to do
- Assessment tests do not provide accurate information and may codify a longer developmental sequence
- Educational plans, for use in both student and institutional planning, would quickly become obsolete because colleges do not have enough space to meet students' needs

Worries that the recommendations might compromise academic quality

- The demand for basic skills courses that would be triggered by mandatory assessment and early enrollment in developmental classes would overwhelm the colleges, eliminating most other offerings
- A funding formula that rewards students completing basic skills courses might emphasize speed over quality
- The recommendations will lead to a common curriculum and restrict the development of offerings that are tailored to local needs
- Linking scheduling to educational plans would jeopardize the offering of subjects that students don't know to prioritize or don't think they can succeed in, such as science, technology, engineering, and math courses

Alarm about the balance of control

- Reducing local control is unacceptable and untenable given our governance structures, including locally-elected boards, faculty purview established under AB1725, and local bond funding

- The Chancellor’s Office will not be able to identify solutions that will be appropriate for local contexts on issues including professional development, curriculum, and resource allocation
- While community colleges would be held accountable for collaborating with other segments, there is no mechanism to require that these segments work with us, thus risking that we will have to submit to their priorities
- The recommendations acquiesce to funding reductions when they should argue strenuously for increasing funding levels

Belief that the recommendations would have a negative impact on vulnerable students

- This approach will harm the least advantaged and economically vulnerable students by reducing job retraining opportunities, English as a Second Language programs, and lower-level basic skills courses
- Students with the least resources would have the least flexibility and would be prevented from exploring possible fields of study
- There is an inadequate focus on building students’ life, career, and college-knowledge skills as a precursor to establishing an educational plan--which is especially important for vulnerable students and would be difficult to provide using technology or paraprofessionals
- The recommendations erroneously assume that students are digital natives and will know how to use educational technology
- Expecting low-income, working adults to attend college full time is unrealistic, particularly given the community colleges’ lack of financial aid advisors to help students find funding

More input needed

- Being able to further discuss the recommendations will enable the community to provide useful feedback, so more time is needed before the recommendations are finalized
- The group developing the recommendations needs to be more representative of all of the community colleges’ missions and constituencies
- The recommendations need to be soundly grounded in evidence and on-the-ground experience

Comments At A Glance

IdeaScale	Email
351 Ideas, 658 Comments, 12,163 votes <i>1,740 registered users</i> Faculty: 41% Administrators: 6% Staff: 9% Students: 22% Community members: 22% Most use has been between Oct 3-Nov 14	273 messages 24 were formal letters from organizations or interest groups. 207 additional emails were petitions rejecting the general vision of the recommendations 4,000 additional letters were delivered by seniors to support continuing educations