

December 8, 2011

Dear Fellow Task Force Members:

I wanted to take this opportunity to recap the significant decisions reached during our combined November and December meetings. Following is a summary of the changes made to our Task Force's Draft Recommendations document, as it was circulated amongst community college constituencies statewide.

Categorical Program Consolidation (Recommendation 8.1).

One of the most significant changes agreed to by the Task Force at its November meeting was the decision to eliminate from the draft recommendations the proposal to consolidate categorical program funding. A considerable portion of the feedback from the field expressed concerns that consolidating categorical funding would threaten existing programs and diminish student support. Further, concerns were raised about the possible interaction of categorical consolidation on various matching requirements for federal funding. While the Task Force discussed options to mitigate the concerns, the final determination was to remove the categorical consolidation proposal from the Task Force recommendations. Task Force members did, however, request that the report be amended to urge state leaders to streamline the administration and reporting requirements of these programs and, at the college level, to urge programs themselves to strive to break down programmatic silos and voluntarily collaborate in an effort to improve student success.

At its December meeting, the Task Force further refined the language of this recommendation asking state leaders to "reorient reporting requirements away from inputs and activities and toward outcomes that reflect the student success goals of the Student Success Task Force plan."

Student Support Initiative (Recommendation 8.2).

Without the consolidation of categorical programs, Recommendation 8.2 was also amended. The new recommendation essentially "renames and rebrands" the Matriculation Program as the Student Support Initiative and emphasizes that this program should receive high priority for new state funds. Given that the bulk of the recommendations fall under the programmatic umbrella of Matriculation services, this recommendation (8.3) serves as the core of "how" the Task Force recommendations are funded.

Career Development and College Preparation Non-Credit Courses (Recommendation 4.1)

Another recommendation that was re-examined in November dealt with limiting non-credit classes to only those identified as Career Development and College Preparation. Considerable input was received that this proposal would threaten a variety of high priority courses, including Citizenship, English as a Second Language (ESL), and courses for individuals with acquired brain injuries. The Task Force discussed these concerns and made clear that the draft recommendation was not intended to negatively impact these courses.

As a result, the above-noted recommendation was removed and, at its December meeting, the Task Force reworked this recommendation to make clearer its intent. Recommendation 4.1 was stricken and the new recommendation now reads:

“Highest priority for course offerings in credit and noncredit shall be given to courses that advance students’ academic progress in the areas of basic skills, ESL, CTE, degrees and certificates, transfer and in the context of labor market or economic development needs of the community.”

Additional language spells out the role that the Chancellor’s Office will play, working with administrators and faculty, in disseminating guidelines and best practices for implementing these priorities and using aggregated data from student education plans to inform the development of course schedules. The revised recommendation further calls on the community colleges to develop assessments, metrics, goals and reports addressing student success and completion in all categories of noncredit education, including CDCP.

Requiring Students to Pay Full Cost for Courses Not in Education Plans (Recommendation 4.1)

At our November 9 meeting, recommendation 4.1 was further modified by the Task Force to remove the proposal to charge students the full cost of instruction for any courses not included in their education plans. While Task Force members continued to emphasize the need to prioritize access for students pursuing educational goals identified in education plans (related to transfer, basic skills, and career technical education), there was a widespread concern on the Task Force about establish a two-tiered system of fees.

Develop and Use Centralized and Integrated Technology to Better Guide Students (Recommendation 2.3)

At its December meeting, the Task Force added language to both this recommendation and to the Chapter 2 introduction related to the “new” digital divide, in particular the need for both the system and for colleges to be cognizant of students’ access to high-speed internet connectivity and to affirm its intent to help student overcome this gap.

Require Students Receiving Board of Governors (BOG) Fee Waivers to Meet Various Conditions and Requirements (Recommendation 3.2)

An amendment to this recommendation adopted by the Task Force at its December meeting will make clear the ability for local colleges to exempt students in exceptional circumstances from the 110 unit cap on BOG Fee Waiver eligibility.

Comprehensive Strategy for Addressing Basic Skills Education (Recommendation 5.2)

At town hall meetings and through the website forum, faculty expressed concern over this recommendation noting that ESL was inappropriately referenced in the work of the Task Force related to Basic Skills. The Task Force was sensitive to this concern and as a result, at its November meeting, agreed to change the text of recommendation 5.2 to draws an appropriate distinction between Basic Skills and classes in ESL.

Professional Development (Recommendations 6.1 and 6.2)

The text of the professional development chapter, which both describes the current system and calls for the development and maintenance of a more robust one, remains largely unchanged, however, the “Requirements for Implementation” section was edited per the request of the Academic Senate and the Task Force to *encourage* and *recommend* that colleges link professional development with statewide goals rather than *mandate* such alignment.

At its December meeting, the Task Force further edited both Recommendation 6.1 and 6.2 to remove any calls to change either statute or Title 5 Code of Regulations related to Professional Development and to wordsmith language related to the inclusion of Part Time Faculty.

Develop and Support a Strong Community College System Office (Recommendation 7.1)

This recommendation was amended at the December meeting of the Task Force to remove references suggesting that the Chancellor’s Office could or should be funded using Proposition 98 dollars.

Implement a Student Success Scorecard (Recommendation 7.3)

Responding to concerns over language in this recommendation that emphasized that the new Scorecard will be built on the “existing” Accountability and Reporting System for the Community Colleges (ARCC), the Task Force altered the recommendation to ensure that the scorecard will recognize and look closely at students taking from 1-12 units, a population which may not be adequately captured by the current ARCC system. Additionally, the Task Force expressed its intent to measure and report on employment outcomes for students as part of its scorecard.

Alternative Funding Model for Basic Skills (Recommendation 8.3)

Following considerable deliberation of recommendation 8.3, the Task Force determined at its November meeting that this recommendation would be modified. Rather than suggesting broad statutory changes, the Chancellor’s Office would be provided with the authority to develop alternate funding allocations, using apportionment funding, to promote innovation in basic skills instruction.

The recommendation continued to be refined further at the December Task Force meeting by clarifying that this recommendation was not an attempt to implement performance-based funding nor was it intended to promote one basic skills curricular strategy over another. Further, language was added that would require participating colleges to report on student outcomes in order to identify effective educational models.

Tone of Introduction and Part I of the Report.

In November, Task Force members expressed concern about the “tone” of the draft report – in particular *Part I* of the document - which they felt criticized the system unfairly and didn’t provide enough context about our students, our current budget climate, or emphasis our successes. This entire section was re-written to address many concerns, including re-emphasizing our commitment to equity.

In December, the Task Force requested that the report be edited to make clear its continued commitment to students with career advancement objectives and that students meeting their education objectives, whatever they may be, be defined as “successful.”

Finally, the Task Force requested that the report be re-worked to de-emphasize the “vision” provided by the fictional student profile in the introduction and to instead craft a report introduction that emphasizes the Master Plan for Higher Education role for community colleges.

I would like to thank the Task Force members for their sustained and engaged participation in this process. I look forward to seeing you in January when the Board of Governors considers our report.

Dr. Peter MacDougall, Chairman
Student Success Task Force