

**Summary Remarks from the Basic Skills Coordinating Committee
Regarding the Recommendations from the Student Success Task Force on Student Success
November 4, 2011**

The Basic Skills Coordinating Committee at Mt. San Antonio College comprises managers (appointed by Vice Presidents) and faculty members (appointed by the Academic Senate). The primary goal of the committee is to promote student success, primarily for students enrolled in basic skills classes at the college. The BSCC has read and discussed the recommendations from the Task Force on Student Success and would like to submit our comments and concerns.

Many of the recommendations such as requiring orientation and assessment (2.2), developing and using technology for student services (2.3), participating in a success course (2.4), and taking basic skills courses in the first year (3.4) are excellent ideas which the committee supports in theory. The committee is, however, concerned about the feasibility of implementation in this time of economic distress. We feel that such recommendations would be very difficult to implement and enforce without considerable additional funding. If new funding is not provided, then we are concerned that other viable programs or services would be greatly reduced or eliminated at the expense of implementation of the proposed plan.

The committee's primary concern is that the proposals from the Student Success Task Force are based on a notion of "success" that is both limited and limiting. The proposal does not seem to recognize the diverse needs and goals of community college students and seems to be written for a population of students that we as a community college do not recognize.

The committee is also concerned that the requirement of having an educational plan by the end of the second term (2.2) and the subsequent loss in priority registration for those students who are not compliant (3.1 and 3.2) would have a disproportionate impact on many of our students. Typical community college students are not the college ready student that the task force envisions in the introduction to the document.

The committee members are also concerned that some of the recommendations, if enforced, eliminate local control of the community college and give this control to a centralized system. Assessment measures (2.1) and staff development (6.1), in particular, are designed and developed to meet local needs and shaped by the community we serve and the surrounding labor market. A one-size-fits-all system or test is not conducive to meeting these local needs. The committee is strongly opposed to a strong community college system with authority and resources (7.1) that eliminates local control. We have no interest in mirroring the CSU and UC systems.

The committee has concerns about collaboration with K-12 to develop common standards for college and career readiness (1.1) because our community college curriculum standards are determined by transfer readiness to the four-year universities. The exit exam standards at the high school level do not measure college readiness. Furthermore, fewer than 50% of our students come from high schools, so alignment of standards with K-12 will not meet their needs.

Of serious concern are those recommendations which would most certainly marginalize our most vulnerable populations - those students served by categorical funding and adult education. We are strongly opposed to recommendation 4.1, which limits the scope of non credit classes to CDCP and 8.1, which would consolidate select categorical funds. These recommendations seem to ensure in-fighting over limited funding and do not address how these populations would be served if funding is taken away.

Overall, while the Basic Skills Coordinating Committee acknowledges the need to continually improve service to our students, the committee does not feel that our college is as "broken" as reports today seem to indicate. Many of the recommendations are existing practices at Mt. SAC. We serve a unique population of students, and we serve those students well. We fear that several of the recommendations in the report envision a community college student that is not our reality and a community college mission that is in direct opposition to the current mission of Mt. San Antonio College.