

**LEARNING ASSISTANCE STAFF FEEDBACK
ON STUDENT SUCCESS TASK FORCE REPORT--DRAFT
MT. SAN ANTONIO COLLEGE**

Classified staff of the Learning Assistance Center reviewed the Student Success Task Force report, and while student support areas are willing to follow new policies that are put into place, they are concerned that sufficient funding and administrative support would not be provided to carry out such tasks. In addition, some recommendations don't reflect the students that staff see and assist every day in their work. This is a summary of some of those concerns.

Funding and Feasibility:

Recommendation 2.4: "Require students whose diagnostic assessments show a lack of readiness for college to participate in a support resource, such as a student success course, provided by the college for new students...Amend Title 5 to allow for students to be placed in a student success course or other support activity".

- The vast majority of community college students place into classes below college level. Tutoring across campus could be inundated with students required to participate in a "support resource" if there isn't sufficient funding for "student success courses". Many tutoring centers are already overwhelmed with students seeking help, but lack sufficient resources to serve everyone in a timely manner.
- If one "support resource" identified is the use of instructional software, instructional labs would need support from tutors or other staff. Students need assistance with both technology and content. While software can assist students with reviewing subject matter, software can't answer questions. Students are often not comfortable enough with the technology or content to work and progress independently.

Recommendation 5.2: "Support the development of alternatives to traditional basic skills curriculum" including "learning communities...supplemental instruction."

- Any proposed expansion of supplemental instruction would require additional funding for hiring supplemental instructors as well as sufficient administrative support to operate an expanded program.

Effectiveness for Students:

Recommendation 2.4: "Require students whose diagnostic assessments show a lack of readiness for college to participate in a support resource, such as a student success course, provided by the college for new students."

- If required tutoring hours are to be part of this, rather than faculty referral or counselor recommendation and the student's motivation, tutoring would simply be another "hoop" for students to jump through—another requirement to comply with. If students just clock

in to get hours and are not really focused on the ostensible reason for being there, the effectiveness of tutoring is greatly reduced.

Recommendation 2.1 and Recommendation 2.2 : “Community Colleges will develop and implement a common centralized assessment for English reading and writing, mathematics, and ESL that can provide diagnostic information to inform curriculum development and student placement and that, over time, will be aligned with the K-12 Common Core State Standards and assessments.”; “Require all incoming community college students to (1) participate in diagnostic assessment and orientation and (2) develop an education plan.”

- Staff in the Basic Skills tutoring area work with students on much more than discrete “skills” identified by a diagnostic test. Students in the LERN classes who are served by the Learning Assistance Resource Center are supported in their holistic development as students: content mastery, time management skills, expectations of a college class, the importance of seeking assistance, and many other factors which contribute to their identity as a college student.

Recommendation 2.3: “Community Colleges will develop and use centralized and integrated technology, which can be accessed through campus or district web portals to better guide students in their educational process.”

- This recommendation recognizes the widespread use of technology among students, but does not acknowledge the transition that must be made for students to use technology academically. Students currently need guidance on basic academic use of technology, such as accessing a campus portal, attaching a file to email, or using software for classes. Tutors and teaching assistants in the LAC’s instructional lab track the types of questions they get from students, and about a third of those questions are technology-related.
- This report also does not recognize the reality that many students do not have access to smart phones, tablets, or even computers or printers at home, due to economic limitations. The heavy use of the Learning Lab shows the need for both access to basic technology and support in using that technology.

In conclusion, student support areas at the LAC would be happy to implement changes to better serve students, but we would appreciate informed policy changes with feedback from “on-the-ground” staff who work with students daily.