Recommendation of the Academic Senate concerning
Board of Trustees Resolution S10:
Recommendation to adopt Revised Matriculation, Assessment and Placement Policy
April 26

California law specifies that community college governing boards have procedures in place to ensure that faculty, classified staff, and students have opportunities to express opinions on matters pertaining to them and that academic senates assume primary responsibility for making recommendations on academic and professional matters. (Education Code 70902.b.7) Title 5 regulation defines academic and professional matters to include “standards or policies regarding student preparation and success” and explains that relying primarily on the advice and judgment of the academic senate means that “the recommendations of the senate will normally be accepted, and only in exceptional circumstances and for compelling reasons will the recommendations not be accepted. If a recommendation is not accepted, the governing board or its designee, upon request of the academic senate, shall promptly communicate its reasons in writing to the academic senate.” (Title 5. 53203.d.1). City College of San Francisco (Board Policy 2.07) follows the Education Code and Title 5 regulation in specifying that the Board of Trustees shall rely primarily upon the advice and judgment of the Academic Senate in academic and professional matters as defined by Title 5.

The Academic Senate Executive Council met on April 18th to consider changes to placement testing and assessment policy. After listening to students and faculty, the Council approved Resolution 2012.04.18.01 which recommended to the Board of Trustee five of the clauses that are in S10. In place of clauses 5-6 in S10, the Academic Senate recommended:

5) That an English placement “pilot” project be developed during Fall 2012 for possible implementation in Spring 2013 or Fall 2013 using “Placement Plus One,” at which time students will be eligible to take the English class recommended through the placement assessment process, or take the class one level higher after an informed decision-making process with their counselors; specific recommendations for implementing “Placement Plus One” will be developed during the pilot project by the English department in consultation with other academic and student services departments impacted by this proposed “pilot;”
6) That students who feel that their English placement should be higher, should be encouraged to pursue other avenues for placement, such a challenge exam, a retake of the English placement test, or a conference with a counselor;

Further, the Academic Senate specified in Clause 8 that

8) That the math and English departments, the Matriculation office, the Research office and the appropriate Shared Governance bodies, including the Academic Senate, evaluate the new policies in one year.

The substitution of a policy mandating English “Placement Plus One” as a policy, rather than supporting its development as a pilot project is a substantial and unacceptable change to the recommendation of the Academic Senate. Insisting on a timeline for the commencement of English “Placement Plus One” that differs from the recommendation of the Academic Senate is a substantial and unacceptable change.

Below, in summary form, are the Academic Senate’s reasons for recommending an English “Placement Plus One” pilot, rather than a change to policy.

- Impacts on counseling departments have not been assessed.
- Impacts on career technical programs with English prerequisites (e.g. Radiologic Sciences) have not been assessed
- Impacts on other disciplines, including ESL, have not been assessed
- For students to succeed in “Placement Plus One,” resources and materials need to be developed.
- There are workload issues that have yet to be identified or resolved.
- There are major implementation issues that will require time to resolve
- It is possible that the outcomes of implementing "Placement Plus One" will not be satisfactory. Under a pilot model, the pilot may be allowed to expire. However, if the District adopts new policy, then rescinding that policy will require another Board action.

If the Board finds that there are exceptional circumstances and compelling reasons for disregarding the recommendation that the Academic Senate is providing in compliance with the laws and regulations of California, we request that the Board of Trustees promptly communicate its reasons in writing to the academic senate.”

Reference materials

**Education Code 70902 (b) (7)** [The governing board of each community college shall] Establish procedures not inconsistent with minimum standards established by the board of governors to ensure faculty, staff, and students the opportunity to express their opinions at the campus level, to ensure that these opinions are given every reasonable consideration, to ensure the right to participate effectively in district and college

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governance, and to ensure the right of academic senates to assume primary responsibility for making recommendations in the areas of curriculum and academic standards.

**California Administrative Code Title § 53203 (d) (1)**

(1) in instances where the governing board elects to rely primarily upon the advice and judgment of the academic senate, the recommendations of the senate will normally be accepted, and only in exceptional circumstances and for compelling reasons will the recommendations not be accepted. If a recommendation is not accepted, the governing board or its designee, upon request of the academic senate, shall promptly communicate its reasons in writing to the academic senate.

**San Francisco Community College District Policy Manual 2.07. I. G.**

The Board of Trustees, and its official representative, the Chancellor, shall rely primarily upon the advice and judgment of the Academic Senate in the following areas as defined by Title 5, Section 53200:

1. Curriculum, including establishing prerequisites and placing courses within disciplines
2. Degree and certificate requirements
3. Grading policies
4. Educational program development
5. Standards or policies regarding student preparation and success
6. Faculty roles and involvement in accreditation processes, including self-study and annual reports
7. Policies for faculty professional development activities
8. Processes for program review
9. Processes for institutional planning and budget development
10. Other academic and professional matters as mutually agreed upon between the governing board and the academic senate

**San Francisco Community College District Policy Manual 2.07. IV. H. 3.**

If the Board rejects the Academic Senate recommendation, it shall do so with a written explanation to the Academic Senate.

**Resolution 2012.04.18.01 Concerning English and Math Placement Testing and Assessment Policies**

Whereas on April 3, 2012, the Student Preparation and Success Committee endorsed one resolution and three proposals as shown in the appendix below; therefore, be it

Resolved that the Academic Senate Executive Council recommend all of the following:

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1) That placement testing continue to be included among the multiple measures for course placement assessment of all students;

2) That the Matriculation Advisory Subcommittee continue to consider improvements to Matriculation policies and practices related to English, math, and ESL course placement assessment;

3) That any new placement policies apply to all City College of San Francisco students (both incoming and current);

4) That all students be permitted to retake any English or math placement test after two weeks with a limit of two tests per cycle, regardless of previous enrollment in an English or course;

5) That an English placement “pilot” project be developed during Fall 2012 for possible implementation in Spring 2013 or Fall 2013 using “Placement Plus One,” at which time students will be eligible to take the English class recommended through the placement assessment process, or take the class one level higher after an informed decision-making process with their counselors; specific recommendations for implementing “Placement Plus One” will be developed during the pilot project by the English department in consultation with other academic and student services departments impacted by this proposed “pilot;”

6) That students who feel that their English placement should be higher, should be encouraged to pursue other avenues for placement, such a challenge exam, a retake of the English placement test, or a conference with a counselor;

7) That all students, current and entering, who place below college-level math may choose to enroll in a course one level higher than their tested placement level if they can document two of the following three criteria:
   - Cumulative math GPA of 2.7 or higher, or the equivalent;
   - Cumulative attendance rate of 90% or higher, or the equivalent;
   - Final CST proficiency level of Basic or above, or the equivalent;

8) That the math and English departments, the Matriculation office, the Research office and the appropriate Shared Governance bodies, including the Academic Senate, evaluate the new policies in one year.

**Note.** Materials brought by members of the English department to the Student Preparation and Success Committee meeting omitted the crucial information that the proposal was for a Pilot project, not for a policy change at this time.