

Foothill College Assessment Taskforce Notes

November 20, 2015

Present

Andrew LaManque; Patrick Morriss; Allison Herman, Casie Wheat, Victor Tam; Liz Leiserson; Katie Ha

1. Update on the Meeting with De Anza

The group discussed the meeting with De Anza to talk about a common re-testing policy. De Anza representatives included faculty, and both instructional and student services administrators. The discussion was generally very positive about the need to talk about placement policies in general, for the good of our students. The De Anza re-testing policy for both math and English requires some type of instructional work before a student can re-test. The Foothill policy does suggest it would be beneficial for students but does not require any type of test preparation before retesting. The De Anza faculty spent quite a bit of time working on the policy (English in particular) so while there was an openness to discuss changes, we will need to be respectful of that work. All agreed that APM would probably be the best place to take up a proposal for some type of District Assessment Taskforce supported by the Chancellor.

2. Multiple Measures Pilot in Spring with English

Casie briefed the group on their presentation at the English department meeting the previous week. They presented the state model using high school GPA of 2.6 with the grade in the last high school English taken to decide which students would likely be successful in English 1A. It was proposed that the pilot would only involve students that tested in winter for spring and would involve adding questions to the placement test for students to report their high school information. Only students placing into 110 or 209 (both not 110 and 209) would be given a higher placement if their high school scores warranted. It was also proposed that for the pilot, we could place students without reviewing transcripts, but verification will need to be built in for future terms. So, in the future we might be able to use CalPass Plus data. This pilot proposal and the method of self-reporting would require English faculty approval.

Liz presented some data that aggregated previous course placements with high school information over a several year period. As expected, the better a student does in high school the more likely they are to do well in whatever English course they take.

Andrew asked for additional information that included data by ethnicity and information on one quarter of results (spring) so that it can be used to model the potential impact with regard to the number of sections of each course that may be necessary to accommodate the change.

There was a lot of discussion about what GPA to use. Using a lower GPA – say 2.0 would allow us to assess whether students from 2 to 2.6 might be able to be success at high rates in English 1A. The data that Liz presented seemed to suggest that the majority of students in that range would be successful. For a small group in a pilot this would

provide some good information. On the other hand, if students were not successful because they were placed too high this could have a negative impact for them reaching their educational goals. Setting the GPA at 3.0 or higher would likely ensure those that were placed higher would be likely to be successful but would leave out students that may have benefited from the higher placement. In the end the group agreed to take the safe bet and follow the state model, even with its limitations (R squared of .3 using data that includes students with different demographics as Foothill College).

Liz promised to bring data on the likely number of students that would be in the pilot this spring (by high school GPA and ethnicity) to the next meeting. The early estimate is that the pilot may only involve 100-200 students receiving a higher placement because it is focused on first time to college students – recent high school graduates from Santa Clara County.

3. Role of the Assessment Taskforce

Liz and Casie asked about the authority of the Taskforce to approve the pilot so the group reviewed the purpose and role of the Taskforce as charged by PaRC (see below). All agreed that the role was to promote college-wide recommendations to PaRC by working with faculty from English, Math, and ESL. The Taskforce does not provide operational oversight of the Assessment Office but has been charged with looking at policies and procedures related to placement. This includes asking for data to help guide recommendations.

Note: Given that a Multiple Measures Pilot has been approved as a Student Equity Plan Activity, the Assessment Taskforce may want to brief the Student Equity Workgroup on the plans for a pilot this spring.

Assessment Taskforce Charge from PaRC

<http://www.foothill.fhda.edu/president/assessment.php>

College Goal:

Review and revise our assessment and placement policies/procedures to support an increase in the number of students successfully completing our college-level English, Math and ESLL courses.

Objectives:

- Position Foothill College mathematics, ESL and English for anticipated system-wide implementation of CAS (Common Assessment System) in Dec 2015.
- Examine our current assessment and placement policies to ensure they are data-driven / evidence- based, and revise if necessary.

- Determine a mechanism/venue for the Student Equity Workgroup, Basic Skills Workgroup, and 3SP Advisory Council to integrate planning around issues pertaining to assessment and placement.