

## Discussion toward a Common Foothill-De Anza Assessment Re-test Policy

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### Foothill College

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#### **1) Background on Common Assessment and Need for Discussion**

Andrew walked the group through the current timeline and plans for the Common Assessment Initiative. He pointed out that faculty and staff members from both colleges have participated in the Common Assessment Initiative workgroups and that De Anza was a Pilot college.

The current schedule is that the questions will begin to be validated this spring with an instrument scheduled to be available for spring / fall 2017 placement. There will be a student essay that will likely be machined scored with the essay available to colleges for human scoring as part of multiple measures. Under discussion is one Language Arts assessment that would guide students to either ESL or English questions. Multiple Measures piloting is also taking place (with De Anza as a Pilot and Mallory Newell helping to lead the effort) to research which measures and models might be recommended to colleges. However, the project is about Assessment in the broad sense, but not Placement. Foothill has included a Multiple Measures pilot in its equity plan in recognition of the potential to help disproportionately impacted students obtain greater success through more appropriate placements.

In the next year Colleges will need to begin to map the Competencies and the likely output from the assessment to their own curriculum. Since the tests will be more diagnostic in nature decisions will need to be made about the level of competencies

that will be appropriate for each course. These placements will then need to be validated and tested against disproportionate impact.

A primary component of Common Assessment is the portability of assessment results. If a student takes the English exam at one college the other college will need to accept the score, even if the placement is different. Given this, if one college's re-testing policy is different than the other, the impact could be that students just re-test at the college with the more liberal policy, thereby negating the other colleges' intentions.

## **2) Retesting Policies and Philosophies**

At present the Foothill policy allows one re-test within six months with the rationale that this allows students a second chance if they had a bad day.\*(see below)

The De Anza policy (generally) requires some type of study before a student can re-test with the idea being that they are not likely to do better if they have not taken some steps to refresh their knowledge and skills.

The discussion included the need for pre-assessment opportunities and practices aimed at letting students know the importance and seriousness of taking the placement exam – before they take the exam for the first time.

## **3) Next Steps**

There was general agreement on the need to discuss having some common approaches to assessment (not only re-testing) for the benefit of our students, recognizing that we do have different curricula. Faculty from both colleges have done a lot of work in this area and we need to honor that while thinking about how we can best serve our students that often bounce between the colleges depending upon their course placements.

Members from both colleges agreed that it was important that faculty, staff, and administrators were involved in the discussion as the issues involved not only curriculum but assessment policies and practices.

**Myra agreed to bring the issue up at District Academic Senate. It was also discussed that the Academic and Professionals Matters group would be a good place to discuss whether folks would want to ask the Chancellor to appoint a District Taskforce to start planning for Common Assessment at FHDA.**

\* This was not the sole rationale for the Foothill policy of a six-month retest window. Though it was the only example mentioned in the meeting, during the deliberations last year there were several rationale presented - the strongest was that many students don't understand the importance of the test and don't do any review or preparation prior to their first attempt. The first take serves as a wake-up call and with some brush-up, practice, boot camp, etc. they are able to place into a higher level and avoid some additional remedial coursework.