

Response of English and Reading Faculty to Administration's MMAP Pilot Proposal

Information shared by Mallory about MMAP as well as her presentation on 1/19/16 to the faculty were shared via email about the MMAP Pilot Proposal with all active FT and PT English faculty and Reading faculty. The faculty held another discussion on 1/26/16 to discuss and share response to the pilot proposal. At that meeting, faculty voted not to participate in the statewide RP Group Spring 2016 pilot in favor of continuing with the actual pilot that English department has already been doing.

Briefly, faculty voted and agreed to:

(1) continue to run the GPA multiple measure pilot developed by the English department and started last spring. (Please see further explanation below regarding how new access to Cal Pass data will help increase student participation in this pilot); (2) gather more college-specific data on persistence and success across all our basic skills (developmental) and transfer level composition courses required for transfer to UC and CSU, and using that data, plus the continuing pilot, to refine our own GPA placement rule set which would serve as an additional multiple measure along with a placement test and essay.

1) Mallory's MMAP Pilot Proposal and initial Reading and English department reactions

This is the English and Reading faculty's understanding of the pilot proposal. The administration has proposed to faculty a pilot project to use cumulative HS GPA to place students as a Multiple Measure, as developed by the RP Group. This proposal would initiate the use of cumulative HS GPA as the main means to place students into their English courses, unless the Accuplacer score indicates a higher placement. The administration's goal is to achieve a student success rate of 75% or a De Anza GPA of 2.2 (Multiple_Measures_Memo_10.19.15). The RP Group's English rule sets do not apply to how Reading courses would fit into the proposed pilot.

According to the RP Group, Accuplacer has an error rate of 27-33% (Multiple_Measures_10.19.15.pdf). According to De Anza's Institutional Researcher, implementing the pilot would result in changing the placement of approximately 52% of students originally placed into EWRT 211, and about 68% of the students originally placed into EWRT 200. (These percentages reflect the students who would move out of the course they placed into). The data do not indicate whether it included students solely placed by Accuplacer, or whether the student's placement essay was used to determine placement. It is not clear if the administration is directly claiming that De Anza's error rate in placement is approximately twice that of what the RP Group has calculated, but it is a reasonable inference based on the slide that was presented to us.

In addition to moving students up one course (if not two for the 200-level students), other "Goals where appropriate" of the proposed pilot are to: "lower remediation rates and increase access to college courses," "reduce the amount of time students need to spend completing pre-collegiate courses," "increases in successful completion of course sequence," and "increases in degree and transfer rates" (Multiple_Measures_10.19.15.pdf). In other words, students who are placed via the proposed GPA MM will be more likely to enroll in the English course they placed into, and complete the transfer sequence in a shorter amount of time.

2) Reading and English dept faculty response & rationale for continuing the current GPA multiple measure pilot

The faculty of the English and Reading departments are not opposed to trying to pilot the use of HS GPA as a multiple measure, but we feel that our college is an “outlier” in comparison to most California community colleges, and would therefore warrant different conditions for a pilot. There are many factors in which this is demonstrated:

* We are on the quarter system and students can move from EWRT 200 (two levels below) to EWRT 1A within one academic year. Since most of our students place into EWRT 211, they can complete their transfer sequence (from 211 to EWRT 1A to EWRT 1B/EWRT 2) in one year. In comparison to most semester system schools (which are most of the CCC’s), we are already “accelerated” in our basic skills to transfer sequence.

- We deeply care about equity and here is what we see from our work in our classes and in student success cohorts: Individual faculty who have gone above and beyond to reach out to struggling underrepresented students (<http://lavozdeanza.com/features/2014/06/15/undocumented-student-from-unschooled-to-a-uc/>), and student success programs like LART, Puente, FYE, IMPACT AAPI, Sankofa, LEAD, EOPS, and other programs like athletics and produce compelling results in greater success with our underrepresented students BECAUSE they go above and beyond to reach out to and support students--things like extra one-one time in office hours, team/familia spirit, etc. We also see how highly self-motivated students who take advantage of tutoring in the student Success Centers (WRC, Math & Science Tutorial, etc) and programs like CCP improve their skills dramatically because of that support, and they have data to support that. So those things, that are "expensive" and "hard to scale up" have demonstrated success. When students can get over their "shame" of being labeled “remedial” (a word we no longer use) by being better INFORMED of what those classes help them achieve, they can benefit highly from them. A recent Washington Post article linked below describes a first-generation Latino college student who felt "discouraged" and "depressed" after being placed in a remedial class. However, the article's main point is that social and cultural factors are the main barriers for first generational students, and clearly simply placing them into transfer level courses, without any other support interventions, is not the solution to that.

<https://www.washingtonpost.com/posteverything/wp/2016/01/20/first-generation-college-students-are-not-succeeding-in-college-and-money-isnt-the-problem/>

- Our student success cohort students are a valuable source of feedback we should be tapping into for more information, like the RP Group did for their report on the six factors of student success for underrepresented students. It could be enlightening to survey students in the cohorts after having completed the sequence through EWRT2. Survey questions could be/include:
 1. Looking back, if they would have had the opportunity to pass out of the 211 level with their GPA scores, would they have done so?
 2. If so, would they have done so if that meant they were no longer eligible for programs like Puente, FYE, or Sankofa?

3. If so, why? If not, why not? What do they think the 211 level offered them to prepare them for EWRT1 and EWRT2?

* English and Reading at De Anza have already been using Multiple Measures for placement, as mandated by the State, prior to this proposal. It is important to note that State mandates allow us to develop our own criteria for how we would want and choose to use HS GPA as an additional multiple measure.

* Our placement process places students into both EWRT and READ classes. We have data showing that students who complete READ classes succeed in EWRT 1A at higher rates than students who do not. For students who place into READ and take READ 211 within the first year, their success rates are 88%, but when they take READ 211 in the second year, their success rates drop to 79%, which is significant. However, for students whose Accuplacer score placed into READ but did not take the READ course before enrolling in EWRT 1A, their success rates dropped to 70%. These data suggest that READ courses are an integral factor in students' success in EWRT 1A. However, the proposed pilot lacks a definitive plan for READ, in part, because no READ rule set exists.

* As captured on p. 7 of the Board Meeting Highlights of the January 11, 2016 FHDA Board of Trustees' meeting: "[Chancellor Judy Miner] also reported that based on the performance of both colleges, the district was listed in Gov. Jerry Brown's 2016-17 budget proposal in the No. 1 position statewide for moving students from below college-level into college-level math and English.

* The specific percentage of success cited on page 44 of Governor Brown's report (<http://www.ebudget.ca.gov/FullBudgetSummary.pdf>) is 68%, but that is a District-wide number. De Anza's success rate in moving students from developmental to transfer-level English is 73%, which is noted on De Anza's "Scorecard."

Of course, faculty want to see more students successfully move from basic skills to the transfer level EWRT courses and are open to trying ways in which we can motivate students to: (1) take the course they place into at higher rates than they do currently; and (2) successfully persist through basic skills into EWRT 1A, 1B and/or 2 and successfully transfer to a 4-year school.

Specifically, as stated above, English and Reading faculty would like to continue the pilot initiated by the English department.

* This pilot would use GPA to add on "bonus points" to the student's ACCUPLACER score, depending on how far they are from the cut-off and their GPA.

* At the beginning, the pilot was nearly stalled due to the HS transcripts not being available in Cal-Pass; however, now that we have Cal-Pass access, we will not need to ask students to bring in their transcripts. Consequently, this pilot can now proceed with more participants because we can access their HS GPA directly through Cal-Pass.

- * We wish to further examine the HS GPAs of students who succeed in EWRT 1B and 2, and then create a local HS GPA rule-set after looking at that data as well as the HS GPA data of students who succeed in EWRT 1A.
- * It is also important to emphasize that faculty are not comfortable with a pilot that has such a low GPA cut-off for EWRT 1A placement, and that GPA multiple measure would trump all the other measures. To this crucial measure, faculty would like to have more time and more input on determining a cut score for EWRT 1A that is more informed by examining the success of students at De Anza in EWRT 1A, 1B, and 2.

After English and Reading faculty discussed the data and information presented by Mallory Newell about how the RP Group came up with the rule sets for English, many faculty spoke to the reality that there were still many unanswered questions and unaddressed concerns about piloting these rule sets given the anticipated large increase in students we might expect to see move up one level, based upon Mallory's analysis.

3) Additional Reading and English dept faculty concerns and questions

Here is a summary of our ongoing faculty concerns/questions:

- * Our colleges are #1 statewide for our success in moving students from below college level to college level English. Why should we jeopardize that standing by placing students into courses for which they may not be prepared?
- * The RP Group surveyed 900 students (paying special attention to African American and Latino students' responses) from 13 community colleges to come up with their "6 Student Success Factors," and De Anza is one of those 13 colleges. On addressing the equity issue: It is not clear how just accelerating students into transfer courses, which have more students per section (and therefore higher student to instructor ratio), and have more intense academic demands, without the support provided in the developmental classes, would be helping our underrepresented students to feel more supported in the six student success factors identified in this RP study.
- * 2014 Analysis (completed for DARE) of students placed by test compared to placement by essay stated that students who placed directly into EWRT 1A succeeded at 77%-82%.
- * If we implement the MMAP pilot using a GPA of 2.6, the projected success rate for EWRT 1A will drop to the estimated 75%. Why would we want to take the chance of lowering our success rates, when it is the students who will be the ones to either struggle or not pass?
- * For students who place directly into 1A, what is their persistence rate and success rate in EWRT 1B and/or 2? If we aren't seeing significantly higher rates of persistence and success in students who started out in 1A versus those who started out in either 211 or 200, then are the basic skills courses really the "barrier" that the RP Group Multiple Measures study implies that they are? In contrast, the majority of our English and Reading faculty view these courses as gateways to opportunity infused with equity pedagogies rather than the unfortunately chosen word "barrier" to success.

* In De Anza's own research, the student success rates in the developmental courses are very high (~80% for developmental courses) in the most recent stats Mallory sent to us, but they do not persist through the sequence. This suggests that succeeding/passing the course is not the "barrier" to progressing through the sequence, but other factors may be influencing student progress.

* De Anza has a reputation for being one of the TOP community colleges nationwide in terms of transfer rates. Since so many of our students have transfer as an educational goal, the faculty feel strongly that the definition of student success should not just be defined by a "C" grade in EWRT 1A only. Faculty want to see correlation of HS GPA with success in the higher level transfer classes as well (ie, what is the HS GPA of students who succeed in 1B and 2 at De Anza?).

* What happens to much sought after BSI funding from the state if we drastically decrease our basic skills course offerings?

* Many students come to understand and value what basic skills courses are and how they can benefit from once they have enrolled in these courses – and not prior to taking them. What enhanced interventions would be provided, under the proposed pilot, to better inform students about how they can benefit from enrolling in basic skills classes (e.g. advising, counseling, information in Banner and from Assessment office, etc.)

* Under the administration's proposal, what are the strategies and support resources that foster student success and increase persistence in student success cohort programs such as LART, Puente, FYE, IMPACT AAPI, LEAD, and Sankofa?

* Faculty believe that it would be beneficial to be tracking success AND persistence from/to all levels from basic skills to EWRT courses required for transfer and that is not reflected in the proposed pilot.

Overall, we appreciate the interest that our administration and institutional researchers have in our placement process and their willingness to work collaboratively with us to improve our student success. One clear outcome is that the proposed pilot has sparked increased and welcomed faculty interest in cross-departmental dialogue and collaboration. It has also served to open a window of communication with our administration and institutional research team, which we intend to continue as we further refine the use of HS GPA as a multiple measure for placement in English and Reading courses.