

BOARD FOCUS

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FORWARD

Our colleges are in the midst of unprecedented change. It is change that if done well, will fundamentally transform the academic lives of many of our students.

As trustees, our role is to provide oversight and direction, and to ensure accountability and transparency. And it's important to remember that the implementation of AB 705 must be a collaborative process. As AB 705 is implemented on our college campuses, our oversight role will be critical to whether or not it is successful. There is no question that faculty, administrators and staff are at the center of this change but more importantly so are our students. While we all have a stake in the success of our students it is their futures that are truly at stake.

However, if we keep students at the center of our discussions and deliberations, if we ask questions that lead to understanding and listen intently to the responses, if we are all working on behalf and in the best interest of students and if we are collecting actionable data, and we use that data in our deliberations and in our decision-making process, our students will be served well.

This edition of the Board Focus includes three articles that offer important insights into the implementation of AB 705. Together these articles act as an important guide for local boards as they provide meaningful oversight of the implementation process on their college campuses.



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AB 705 Implementation: Why Boards Need to Monitor the Course Schedule by Katie Hern frames the next critically important phase of implementing AB 705. The article offers examples of how several colleges and their faculty have successfully implemented courses and supports on their campuses. Ensuring that students are provided the best chance of successfully completing transfer-level mathematics and English is central to these early implementers.

We are reminded that AB 705 represents a move away from traditional remedial courses and to continue their use will depress student completion of transfer-level English and math. Included in the article are several suggested questions that a board member can ask to help ascertain how AB 705 is being implemented at their college.

New Pathways at Citrus College: Modified Transfer Tracks for English and Math by Geraldine Perri, Gina Hogan and Michael Wangler shares their insights on changing how transfer-level English and math are delivered.

Citrus College is the first in the state to eliminate pre-transfer English courses and to allow every student to enroll in a "one and done" option to meet English college-level requirements. The college is also the first in the state to offer a "one and done" option for all students to complete their math transfer-level requirement. Citrus College offers an example of what can be accomplished when administrators, faculty and staff work together to support students.

Understanding AB 705: Resources, Guidance and Recommendations from the Academic Senate by Ginni May and David Morse outlines the work that has been done by the Academic Senate, the Chancellor's Office and other key stakeholders at all levels across the community college system in support of implementation. This article focuses on clarifying "what colleges *may* do versus what colleges *must* do" to appropriately implement AB 705. Local boards can reference the information to assist in their understanding of the requirements of the law.

I encourage you to read each of these articles and to share them widely with colleagues. ■



By Pamela Haynes
Trustee, Los Rios CCD
Member, California Community College
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Vice President, California Community Colleges
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AB 705 Implementation: Why Boards Need to Monitor the Course Schedule

By Dr. Katie Hern

English Instructor, Chabot College

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This article provides a follow-up to the guidance offered by Board of Governors Vice President Pamela Haynes in the summer 2018 issue of Board Focus.

As the fall 2019 AB 705 deadline approaches, California community colleges are making unprecedented changes.

Citrus College, for example, has eliminated all remedial courses in English and created a high-support model of college composition in which students classified as underprepared receive an additional unit of instruction with their teacher. The college also allows 100% of students to enroll directly in a high-support model of college statistics, and in the fall they will offer high-support business and STEM math pathways open to all students.

At Citrus and other colleges embracing the changes of AB 705, student completion is increasing substantially and equity gaps are narrowing¹. But some colleges are hanging onto old remedial structures, and strong Board oversight may be needed to protect students' rights under the law. In particular, Boards will need to closely monitor the course schedule to see whether their English and math departments are continuing to

offer courses below transfer-level. This is where the AB 705 rubber meets the road. Continuing to offer remedial courses will not only depress student completion of transfer-level English and math, it will put the college at risk of losing funding under the new Student Centered Funding Formula, as well as the Student Equity and Achievement, Guided Pathways, and College Promise programs.

A Paradigm Shift

AB 705 represents an overdue paradigm shift in community college remediation. In the past, colleges used discredited standardized tests to make students prove that they were "ready" for college, and, as a result, we required more than 80% of students to begin in remedial courses that did not count toward a bachelor's degree.

Instead of helping students be successful, taking remedial courses made students much more likely to leave college without reaching their goals. Under our past practices, over 140,000 California students would begin in remedial math each year, and more than 110,000 of them would never complete the math for a degree. Students of color were disproportionately represented in this group.

Under AB 705, colleges must honor students' high school grades for placement into English and math, and students have the right to begin

in courses that give them the best possible chance of completing transfer-level requirements. Statewide research by the Multiple Measures Assessment Project has shown that all students have higher completion when allowed to bypass remedial classes and enroll directly in transferable courses – students from every racial and ethnic group, students with disabilities, low-income students, and students for whom English is not a first language. Even students with the lowest high school grades are 2-3 times more likely to complete transferable English and math requirements if they enroll directly than if they start in a remedial course.

This is why all students have a right to begin directly in transfer-level math and English² under the Chancellor's Office's default placement rules, with extra concurrent support recommended for students considered "underprepared," such as those with high school GPAs below 2.6.

Offering Courses below Transfer-Level?

Despite the research, many colleges plan to continue offering traditional basic skills courses. Even though the law prohibits colleges from *requiring* these courses, there is a lingering perception that some students need these classes. At some colleges, guided self-placement processes

1. For data from early implementers of AB 705 reforms, see the Capacity Gazette, A Seat at the Table, Up to the Challenge, Leading the Way, and research by the Public Policy Institute of California and Complete College America. 2. English language learners who need language instruction will still enroll in ESL coursework. AB 705 includes separate requirements for ESL courses that don't go into effect until Fall 2020.

are emphasizing the difficulty of transfer-level courses and allowing students to select traditional basic skills courses. The rationale: students should have the option to choose the course that's right for them.

This seems reasonable until you see what happens to students.

In 2016, College of the Canyons became one of the first in the state to use high school grades for placement in math, allowing 71% of students to enroll directly in college statistics (up from 15% eligible for transfer-level math the prior year). During the assessment process, students received two options: enrolling directly in statistics or taking a remedial algebra course. Among students who previously

would have been classified "remedial" and who chose to enroll in Statistics, a respectable 66% passed on their first attempt.

But 80% of those who were eligible for Statistics chose to take remedial algebra, even though the vast majority did not need it for their major. Counselors say students felt that statistics was "scary" compared to repeating courses they'd taken in high school or junior high. Others thought a STEM path was the only way to make good money, or that algebra would keep their options open.

What students likely didn't realize was that the choice would devastate their chance of transferring to a four-year university. Just 13% of students

enrolling in remedial algebra completed a transferable math course at the college that year – 188 out of 1,438 students. Similar patterns played out at Cuyamaca and Los Medanos colleges, two other early implementers of AB 705 reforms in math.

Longtime math department chair Sab Matsumoto says what happened is like that line from the Kevin Costner baseball movie – *If you build it, they will come*. "If you keep offering the developmental courses, they will take them," says Matsumoto. "But instead of a field of dreams, it's a field of nightmares." ■

QUESTIONS TO ASK

Board leadership is critical to ensuring that poor implementation of AB 705 does not erode student completion gains and jeopardize districts' financial well-being. It will be especially important for trustees to monitor whether colleges are still offering below-transfer courses and why. Below are some questions for trustees to ask college leadership.

1. Under AB 1805, colleges are required to notify students of their right to access transfer-level courses. How is the college doing this?
2. How are students being guided to the right path for their program of study (e.g., statistics for humanities and social science majors, calculus pathways for business and STEM majors)?
3. For English composition and math, how many sections are being offered of below-transfer and introductory transfer-level courses?
4. If the college is continuing to offer courses below transfer-level...
 - In math, what specific programs or student populations are the intended audience? Does the number of sections offered fit the size of these populations? (Note that for students not seeking transfer, associate degree requirements can be met with transfer-level courses, which typically have higher success rates than intermediate algebra.)
 - Is the college offering courses more than one-level-below transfer, a structure that does not fit AB 705's one-year completion timeframe for transfer-level courses?
 - Given the poor outcomes of below-transfer courses, what steps is the college taking to prevent students from under-placing themselves and to safeguard against implicit bias in who is guided into these courses?

New Pathways at Citrus College: Modified Transfer Tracks for English and Math

By **Dr. Geraldine M. Perri**, Superintendent/President; **Dr. Gina Hogan**, Dean of Language Arts and Library; and **Mr. Michael Wangler**, Dean of Mathematics and Business, Citrus College (pictured top to bottom)

Citrus College is deeply committed to student success. Like many institutions of higher education, we continually assess institutional practices, policies, and curriculum to better serve our students and enhance their capacity for success. More recently, with the passing of AB 705, curriculum pathways and assessment methods for placement in English and math classes have come under scrutiny. In response, Citrus College made comprehensive changes; indeed, faculty, staff and administrative leadership took to the task quickly and, in our continued commitment to student success, made the changes early and wholeheartedly. As a result, we are compliant with AB 705 one year ahead of schedule.

Today, Citrus College students can enroll directly into transfer-level English and math courses instead of the long, unwieldy sequences of remedial courses that do not count toward a degree. This transformation has included placing students in English and math based on their high school record, modifying courses to eliminate pre-transfer requirements, and providing complimentary support to increase successful completion of these courses and speed up academic journeys.

Citrus College is the first community college in the state to eliminate pre-transfer English courses and, as of fall 2018, has allowed every student to enroll in a “one

and done” option to meet English college-level requirements. To support this change, the class size for college composition was reduced from 30 to 25 students, and faculty members added a co-requisite course that provides an additional hour of instruction for students who need more support. Faculty even arranged their classrooms with creative furniture to support collaborative pedagogy and foster student engagement. Since making this change, the one-year completion rate of students has increased significantly to 65% up from 54% in the previous year, and enrollment in the college-level English 101 has been at 100%; a big change from the previous year when 47% of students—more than 1,000 students—began in a remedial course. For fall 2019, every student will begin English coursework in a transferable, college-level course either in a standard section or one with additional support. Specifically, incoming students enroll directly into transfer-level English 101 (4 units) or English 101E (5 units). English 101E is an enhanced course that provides the additional support for course content and assignments.

When it comes to math, Citrus College has become one of the first in the state to offer a “one and done” option for all students to complete their math transfer-level requirement. We have adopted a pathways approach that gives students the opportunity to take classes better aligned with their



“Like many institutions of higher education, we continually assess institutional practices, policies, and curriculum to better serve our students and enhance their capacity for success.”

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Understanding AB 705: Resources, Guidance, and Recommendations from the Academic Senate

By Virginia May, ASCCC Treasurer and Curriculum Chair; and
Dr. David Morse, ASCCC President 2014-2016
(pictured top to bottom)



"The resources offered by the ASCCC provide information and guidance that can help local boards as well as their administrations and faculty make informed decisions regarding the implementation of AB 705's mandates."

By now, most people who are connected to the California Community College System have some awareness of Assembly Bill 705 (Irwin, 2017), now written into Education Code §78213. The bill addresses placement of students into transfer-level English, ESL, and mathematics courses and in some cases college-level mathematics courses. Colleges are allowed to place students into pre-transfer courses only if students are highly unlikely to pass the transfer-level course and if placement in the pre-transfer course would maximize the likelihood that a student would complete transfer-level English or mathematics within a one-year timeframe or for ESL within a three-year timeframe. In addition, colleges are required to use a student's high school performance in their placement procedures when that data is reasonably available. These aspects of the bill are all intended to promote student success, and indeed if implemented appropriately they may well benefit students.

Few faculty members would deny that the placement systems traditionally used by community colleges needed improvement: data indicates that many students were under-placed by traditional placement models, while others were over-placed by those same placement processes. However, developing new placement processes that more fully serve the educational interests and goals of students requires careful consideration and local discussion that relies on the leadership of the faculty who most directly interact with students and are able to assess their needs and abilities. In order to facilitate and encourage informed local decision-making regarding the mandates of AB 705, the Academic Senate for California Community Colleges (ASCCC) has developed a variety of resources, both on its own and in coordination with the California Community Colleges Chancellor's Office, that can assist districts as they develop new placement policies and practices. These resources are housed on the ASCCC's "AB 705 Resources" website at www.asccc.org/ab-705-resources.

With many groups in the state of California interested in participating in the implementation of the AB 705 mandates, messages regarding what colleges *may* do versus what colleges *must* do often become mixed and unclear. Certain myths and misinformation regarding AB 705 have circulated throughout the state, including questions regarding the use of the default placement rules circulated by the Chancellor's Office, the need—or lack thereof—for pre-transfer level courses, and the importance of retaining previously established prerequisites. Local governing boards must be certain that the recommendations they are receiving regarding the implementation of AB 705 are consistent with the actual requirements of the bill and that they are serving the interests of their local student populations. The resources offered by the ASCCC provide information and guidance that can help local boards as well as their administrations and faculty make informed decisions regarding the implementation of AB 705's mandates.

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New Pathways at Citrus College

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major. These pathway math classes include additional support to help with success. Beginning fall 2019, math will have the following transfer-focused pathways: Liberal Arts, Teacher Preparation, Business and Social Sciences, Statistics, STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics), and a Learning Community approach to math for CTE (Career Technical Education). As with English, we are seeing substantial gains in student completion. In fall 2018, 63% of students passed our new high-support statistics course, which is open to all students; a first-year completion rate more than four times higher than among students starting in remedial math in prior years (14.6%).

Administrators, faculty, and staff at Citrus College continue to work at supporting our students during this transformation whether it be

shepherding more curriculum through the approval process, training more embedded tutors in our Writing Center or Math Center, or facilitating resources and funding for classroom furniture or professional development. We are proud of what we have accomplished, and we will continue assessing our work and making appropriate improvements to produce even better student outcomes.

The most significant premise to AB 705 is to challenge students while providing necessary support to enable them to succeed. Our experience thus far highlights that premise and reinforces that students are capable and ready for the challenge. We hope our experience encourages other community colleges to join us in implementing the changes of AB 705.

Education should be the “runway” from which students take flight, so it is a vital time to take advantage of the transformative opportunity AB 705 presents and streamline that runway to enrich our students’ academic journeys. ■



Understanding AB 705

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In July of 2018, the ASCCC and the Chancellor's Office created and disseminated guidelines and FAQ documents for AB 705 in order to assist colleges with the implementation. These guidelines outline the default placement rules that colleges and districts may adopt as well as offering further recommendations for implementation in areas such as placement, curricular design, and co-curricular support. However, the guidelines are intended as assistance for districts, not as mandates that must be adopted wholesale; in fact, colleges have been encouraged to develop their own placement rules, evaluate those rules, and adjust them accordingly to maximize throughput and student success. The ASCCC urges local boards to consult with their faculty regarding the most appropriate practices for AB 705 implementation in order to best serve their specific student populations.

In the fall of 2018, the ASCCC presented regional meetings to further inform districts regarding best practices and guidance for the implementation of the new mandates. Among the topics of the presentations at these meetings were curricular innovations, placement models, an ESL update, and concurrent support for students, as well as other matters. On October 19, 2018, the ASCCC also presented a webinar regarding placement and corequisite support. Materials from the webinar and the regional meetings are available on the ASCCC AB 705 Resources website.



The AB 705 Resources website also features a discussion board on which the ASCCC responds to specific questions regarding AB 705 implementation. A wide variety of questions have been posted, ranging from curricular issues such as corequisite courses to articulation to assessment testing and more. ASCCC representatives post replies to all questions, allowing all readers to benefit from consideration of real issues that are occurring on campuses. This discussion board is an ongoing service that the ASCCC plans to continue throughout the AB 705 implementation period. In addition, colleges may request an ASCCC visit to assist with local issues regarding AB 705 implementation.

In March of 2019, the Board of Governors approved Title 5 Regulations addressing the implementation of AB 705. These regulations were created through the consultative process beginning with the California Community Colleges Curriculum Committee (5C), a body led by the ASCCC and the Chief Instructional Officers that makes recommendations and provides guidance to the Chancellor's Office on local and regional implementation of curriculum policy and regulations throughout the California Community College System. The regulations further clarify the requirements of AB 705 and are available on the ASCCC's AB 705 Resources website.

The text of AB 705 correctly notes that improperly assigning a student to remediation can result in "discouraging some students from pursuing a postsecondary education," and thus colleges and districts should without question undertake a full review of placement processes and, under the parameters set by the new mandates, work toward more accurate placement practices that would allow all students who are prepared for transfer-level work to begin at that level. At the same time, students can be equally discouraged and are equally likely

to curtail their education if they are placed into coursework for which they are not prepared and in which they experience frustration and failure. Education Code §66010.4 still requires colleges to provide remedial education for students that need it. Local governing boards should take note of the experience and expertise of their faculty when approving policies and procedures for the implementation of AB 705 in order to ensure that their placement processes are truly serving the interests of students and promoting student success.

While not all in the CCC system may agree on how to improve student success, all stakeholders do agree that improving student success is their ultimate goal. Certainly local governing boards must ensure that their institutions are adhering to the requirements of the law under Education Code, but they should also respect and rely upon the recommendations of their faculty in determining how those requirements are implemented. The ASCCC will continue to work to provide guidance regarding AB 705 implementation and to dispel misinformation and mistaken assumptions in order to assist all system partners in making thoughtful, informed decisions that suit local needs. In overseeing this implementation, local boards must be certain that the recommendations they receive are based in the actual requirements of the legislation and are designed to best serve their specific communities and student populations. Doing so will help to ensure that AB 705 truly works to the benefit of students. ■

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California Community College Trustees Endorsements for ACCT Elections



Considering a position on the Association of Community College Trustees (ACCT) Board or one of its committees?

IMPORTANT DATES

Aug. 1, 2019 – Application for CCCT Endorsement of 2020 ACCT Candidates available online at www.ccleague.org/ccctendorsement

Nov. 1, 2019 – Application deadline

Nov. 20, 2019 – Candidate interviews



Apply for a CCCT Board Endorsement from the Community College League of California. For questions about the endorsement process or how to run for ACCT office, contact Rina Kasim, Member Resources Associate, at Rina@ccleague.org.

Community College League of California | 2017 O Street, Sacramento, CA 95811 | www.ccleague.org

UPCOMING LEAGUE EVENTS

Annual Trustees Conference

May 3-5, 2019
Resort at Squaw Creek

CEO Leadership Academy

June 7-9, 2019
Granlibakken, Tahoe City

Student Trustees Workshop

August 16-18, 2019
Mission Valley DoubleTree

Annual Convention

November 21-23, 2019
Riverside Convention Center

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