

**BOARD OF REGENTS FOR HIGHER EDUCATION
CT STATE COLLEGES AND UNIVERSITIES (CSCU)**
Minutes of Joint Meeting
of the Board of Regents and Student Advisory Committee
Friday, November 5, 2021
Conducted Via Remote Participation

Regents	FAC Members & Alternates	Staff
Merle Harris, Vice Chair	Colena Sesanker, Chair	President Terrence Cheng
Rick Porth	David Blitz, Vice Chair	Alice Pritchard
Aviva Budd	Lois Aime	Ken Klucznik
Eleese Wright	Benjamin Breault	Steve Marcelynas
Ari Santiago	Fran Coan	Pam Heleen
Holly Howery	Michael Emanuel	
JoAnn Ryan	Myrna Garcia-Bowen	
	Brian Goh	
	Robin Gustafson	
	Mark Jackson	
	Jenn Long	
	Ron Picard	
	Marybeth Rajczewski	
	Barbara Richards	
	Mike Shea	
	David Stoloff	
	Linda Wilder	
	Carmen Yiamouyiannis	

CALL TO ORDER

President Terrence Cheng, as moderator, called the meeting to order at 1:00 p.m. Pam Heleen added that a quorum of the Board was present.

WELCOME

President Cheng welcomed everyone and introduced the agenda items.

Faculty Advisory Committee - ACME

Chair Colena Sesanker presented comments which appear in full as Attachment A.

FAC Member Jenn Long presented comments about how we can move forward with the ACME policy and the merits of collaborating with the Connecticut Coalition of English Teachers, the elected faculty body representing all English faculty in the CSCU system. She asked that data be collected that highlights marginalized learners and qualitative data collected by faculty. She stated that issues regarding co-requisite supports for college-level English include whether they are credit-bearing, whether a grade will/could be assigned, who will develop and teach them, and will they be PACT-eligible. She implored administration to roll out ACME more slowly to ensure that we are not putting more pressure on students.

FAC Member Marybeth Rajczewski presented comments which appear in full as Attachment B.

FAC Member Mike Shea stated that the FAC wants to see ACME work for our students. He believes that based on years of teaching experience and the data that the FAC has, he knows that ACME will not work as it is currently designed and they have the data to fix it. He requested that another meeting be scheduled to talk more precisely about what's not working.

FAC Chair Colena Sesanker stated that CSCU currently offers what is considered to be the gold standard in co-requisite modeling, the ALP Model in English. There has been a lot of interest in extended it to Math with a great desire to fund it.

Discussion:

President Cheng stated that we are clearly missing each other somewhere. The goal is to create something that works for our students because the KPI that states only 23% of first-year community college students receive a C or better in college-level English and Math clearly is a problem.

In response to President Cheng's question, BOR Vice Chair Harris indicated that the ACME implementation could begin in 2023, but as specified in the policy, does not have to be completed until July 2025. This change to the original drafted policy will allow for data collection and evaluation.

President Cheng also asked for clarification about whether CCET has disengaged from the ACME discussion, refusing to work on ACME. Jenn Long indicated that this is a mischaracterization. She described at least two submissions to Provost Gates and incoming Interim CT State President Rooke for which many of the recommendations were not incorporated into the work of the ACME managers. President Cheng stressed that it seems again that we are missing each other - whether in communications or feedback mechanisms. He is looking for a real collaboration to find solutions.

Dr. Ken Klucznik, incoming Interim Provost, stated that ACME is not an attempt to help our students "on the cheap." Successful programs of this nature are expensive. He added that ACME is only one initiative in the works to help students; none of these programs can be successful on their own. He suggested that we walk through the policy together so that there is a common understanding. The policy does have bumpers, but there is significant flexibility built in, including:

- There is no curricular design in the policy; that is left for the faculty to design.
- The policy requires a rigorous "opt out" process which will also be developed with significant faculty input.
- Once transitional students are identified, the policy requires the faculty to design transitional supports.

BOR - Improving Transfer Opportunities

BOR Vice Chair Merle Harris introduced the topic; her comments appear in full as Attachment C.

Discussion:

President Cheng provided the following comments:

- The transfer student numbers show that a lot of students transfer out of the CSCU system from the community colleges. Many are going to private 4-years and UConn; we should be keeping more of our students. This may be an opportunity for FAC input to determine why this is happening and how do we fix it.

- We could look to FAC for input into TAP - what is working, what is not. We have 25 TAP pathways right now. Are they the right pathways for the needs of today? Are the numbers where they should be? What can we do to strengthen them? What can we do to create new pathways?
- The BOR and leadership can look to the FAC for assistance to break down the credit acceptance problem.
- There is an opportunity to talk more about GenEd, 'Associates to Bachelors' programs, and related policies.

Mike Shea noted that community college students who transfer to the 4-year private schools end up not doing as well. It is easier to transfer, but not necessarily easier to graduate. He recommended that Steve Marcelynas head up the TAP programs based on his work with Gateway CC and SCSU; it is an excellent model. President Cheng noted that if we look at the transfer numbers at the 4 CSUs, those numbers are dropping precipitously. What can we control within our own system to improve the transfer experience and the outcomes for our own students.

FAC Vice Chair David Blitz commented that the system has a lot of things going on at the same time and proposes that we disentangle all projects and deal with them one-by-one.

Steve Marcelynas reinforced Mike Shea's comments about the difficulties students experience transferring to the 4-year privates. We need to identify the best practices at each institution that make it easy for the students and work best for faculty and staff. Right now, students who don't ask the right questions or who don't get connected to the right faculty/staff lose out. The goal isn't to "dumb down" the system or to create a less rigorous degree, but to ensure that the courses that a student takes have a return on the student's investment. This must be created with faculty and staff input.

Recommendations:

- We need to figure out some mechanisms for feedback.
- We would like the FAC to submit some ideas/recommendations so that this idea sharing can continue.

Regent Wright noted that she appreciated the meeting - its content and tone. She thanked today's speakers and believes that we can move forward together. President Cheng indicated that we would be in touch with FAC leadership to determine what the next steps might be. We need to find a shared solution for the betterment of our students.

Adjourn:

The meeting adjourned at 2:11 p.m. after a motion by Regent Wright, a second by Regent Howery, and a unanimous voice vote.

The consistent response to those who criticize ACME has been insistence that it is supported by the research on the corequisite model of developmental education and to challenge those who question its wisdom to produce *their* data.

Our data is your data. The disagreement lies in how to apply it without straining the limits of both logic and language.

At least 13 of the [28 sources](#) provided in support of the ACME plan either contradict or provide a more complex view of remediation than ACME has presented. Nearly 40% of the referenced material was produced by Columbia University's Community College Resource Center, and many sources reference each other. [see [William Key's Literature Review](#)] Importantly, to quote one source cited in ACME's support, "*there is no strong consensus about how to carry out developmental education most effectively*" (p. 2); "*It is not necessarily true that developmental education itself contributes to worse outcomes*" (p. 2).¹ Bailey (2009). Nothing in the available data necessitates our current trajectory of removing standalone developmental courses entirely and enrolling all students in college level math and English with optional supports.

Many reports produced by relevant discipline groups in our system make clear that we worry

- that the term 'co-requisite' is misapplied when used to describe the ACME policy, given the **absence of any corequisites** for gateway math and English courses,
- That you have equivocated on the categories *some students* and *all students*,

that a design worked for the students for whom it was intended is not a compelling indication that it will also work for the students for whom it was not intended

ACME proposes to put all students into what it refers to as gateway courses with 'corequisites' but "*While there is a movement to mainstream students just below the cutoff for college-level courses, a different tactic may be warranted for students who are multiple levels below college-level material, as our results hint at the potential benefits of intensifying remedial coursework.*" (p. 55) Boatman and Long 2018

- that many of the cases cited as indicative of ACME's success are insufficiently analogous to ACME's design to indicate anything of the sort,

many of the examples cited (Florida, Tennessee, Texas) require two dedicated composition courses- we do not,

In California, CUNY, Florida, Kentucky, Tennessee and Texas, faculty provide the supports and in all of those states except Tennessee engagement in the support effects the student's grade. ACME does not allow for this.

some of the reforms we point to in California also came with dedicated funding to support the reform. We have no dedicated funding and no budget has been specified.

Florida and CUNY offer a college prep program for students who would not be served by going straight into a college level course and other states offer a credited 100-level course, while ACME would put all students straight into college level courses with supports.

In some states professional tutors attend the main class and

¹ Highlighted quotes are sourced from documents that have been offered in support of ACME. They are, of course, cherrypicked to prove my point and that is my point.

not all of the systems touted as models are exclusively open enrollment institutions

[see [Connecticut Coalition of English Teachers' report](#) for a more complete list of comparisons and resulting recommendations]

- And that, in spite of intentions, the suggestion that this policy advances the board's stated goals of equity and antiracism is simply and straightforwardly false.

the fact that this policy would have the effect of either excluding developmental students from PACT or of unreasonably burdening them was overlooked in ACME's design --and that it still hasn't been fully remedied-- is revealing of the care that was taken with these aims.

It disproportionately withdraws appropriate supports from those from under-resourced k-12 systems (and many of us describe its effects as effectively abandoning those students)

putting everybody into a college level course *isn't equity*—making sure that we have enough ways to prepare students we serve to be successful when they enter a college course is equity.

When it is possible for reasonable people to disagree on the appropriate application of research, one would expect that we defer to the content experts and to those who are in close contact with our students and our communities but that is not what has happened here. The most crucial elements of input from the relevant discipline groups has been ignored [see the discrepancy between [the policy and CMAC's recommendations](#)] and one group - PA1240 - has been disbanded.] But there is still time for modification.

This is not just an academic issue. It is one of justice. This policy will disproportionately affect black, brown, and poor people because we know that our state's k-12 school systems still struggle to achieve racial integration 25 years after Sheff vs. O'Neill and because so many of our under-resourced schools are in these areas. We often bridge the gap between k-12 schools and college level work for these neighborhoods.

Another population for whom developmental education is important is those students who might never complete a college degree or even a college level course but for whom we can provide basic literacy and numeracy skills that are crucial to survival and that open up a new range of possibilities for earning a living. If our community colleges no longer aim to serve these students, we should discuss who will and whether such a shift in our mission is wise.

A model that does not include a plan to serve these most vulnerable students should not be an option and if ACME doesn't include a plan to invest in the students with most need, it cannot accurately be described as pursuing equity and antiracist aims.

In addition, if this experiment fails, we risk undermining the transfer relationships we have cultivated with the universities and on which our 17-institution system is premised. We must also remember that even when the corequisite reform is successfully implemented, the benefits are relatively short-lived [Ran & Lin \(2019\)](#) "*We found no significant impacts of placement into corequisite remediation on enrollment persistence, transfer to a four-year college, or degree completion. This suggests that corequisite reforms, though effective in helping students pass college-level math and English, are not sufficient to improve college completion rates overall.*" (abstract)

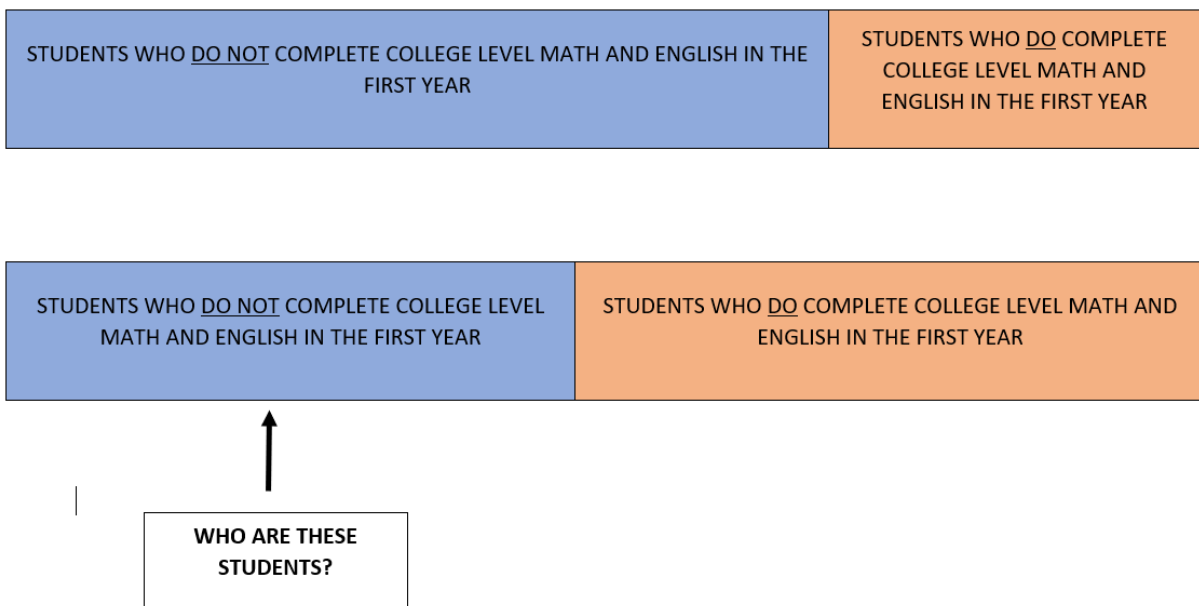
We already provide the gold standard of the corequisite model in our system (ALP) and faculty have long been asking to expand it and to invest in its proper implementation. **ACME is *not* the introduction of**

the corequisite model to our system but a policy of scaling it back where it was offered and of reducing the range of options available to our students. This means we offer less to the students who benefit from the corequisite model and less to those who do not.

I'm MaryBeth Rajczewski. I'm an Associate Professor of Mathematics at Asnuntuck, and I'm speaking to you as a math faculty representative of the FAC. Thank you all for the opportunity to speak on this important topic. I will probably echo many of the things that Jenn already said so well, but I will speak from a math perspective. Math faculty are so excited about the Math Pathways that are being created. We have long been advocating for non-stem pathways that didn't require students to take Intermediate Algebra. In fact, before consolidation was even discussed, a group of math faculty from CMAC, Connecticut Mathematics Advisory Council, designed non-stem corequisite pathways that would allow a student who placed in a developmental level math course to go directly to a Statistics or Math for Liberal Arts, with a corequisite course taught by a faculty member. Unfortunately, these courses were only implemented on a very limited basis because the math departments at the CSU's wouldn't give transfer credit to Statistics or Math for Liberal Arts unless those courses had an Intermediate Algebra prerequisite. I bring this up to add some context to this discussion, so you can understand how anxious and excited math faculty are to bring these new pathways to students. And also so you can understand the incredible expertise that exists and hasn't been utilized in this process. We want our students to succeed. We want more students to pass college level math and English. But we have significant and substantial concerns that we believe need to be addressed in order for ACME to truly help and support our students.

The definition of corequisite is "a formal course of study required to be taken simultaneously with another." The ACME policy does not match this definition – instead it places students into college-level math courses with optional supports. This means that a student that would currently place into our lowest level developmental course, which gives 6 semester hours worth of faculty developed curriculum, would now go straight to Intermediate Algebra, if that student chose a STEM pathway. There will be non-stem pathways available for students. However, if the student has an interest in being an Engineer or Nurse or Veterinarian, they will need to choose the STEM pathway. I chose these example careers because I have worked with exactly these students. Students who started in my developmental math course not knowing how to deal with fractions, negative numbers, or solving equations. But they had their sights set on something in the STEM field. Now these students will be placed in an Intermediate Algebra course with optional supports. I work with these students day in and day out. I know that they CAN succeed in Intermediate Algebra, and beyond. (The Engineering student I'm referring to started in my developmental math course and last I spoke to him he was taking Calculus 3 and Differential Equations at Central while pursuing an Electrical Engineering degree.) In order to be successful, students would need a true corequisite course, taught by a faculty member, and ideally the same faculty member that is teaching their college-level course. Optional supports are just that – optional. In an ideal world, students would take full advantage of these optional supports. And I'm sure many of the students would intend to take full advantage. But I know my students. They work full time, often in two or more jobs. They are single parents. They are food insecure, and some are even homeless. They rely on public transportation. They are essential workers. They struggle with their mental health. They have very real math anxiety. The first thing to drop off when life gets in the way, will be the optional supports. This is just human nature. I am much more privileged than many of my students – but I still work a full time job and have four kids, and when I'm having a busy week the first thing to drop off are the optional things on my calendar – even if they are important for me or my family. Optional is optional when we are busy. And without those supports, the students won't succeed in a college-level math class. You can not work in Intermediate Algebra on graphing a Quadratic Function if you still can't deal with adding negative numbers. It just isn't possible to make that conceptual leap.

Over the past 18 months, the Dana Center has been touting reams of data on how successful corequisite courses are at helping students complete college level math and English in their first year. I've sat through numerous presentations and despite asking this question over and over again, I still don't have a clear sense of exactly what the corequisite courses looked like in the data they have presented. As a mathematician, I know that statistics can be used to support pretty much any argument. I worry about the information behind the statistics. Did the institutions cited in these statistics offer true corequisite courses, or did they offer optional supports? By placing students in college-level math courses with optional supports, we are offering them less. They are getting less time with a mathematics faculty member. They are getting "just in time" support, and not a well planned and executed curriculum. The very students who are the least prepared, will be losing the most. Let's not forget who these underprepared students are – they are black and brown and low-income students. They are the very students we should be giving MORE to. The students who have been given less over and over again. Even if I work under the unclear assumption that the ACME policy will result in more students completing college level math and English in their first year, I still ask myself - what about the students that don't? Don't we have a responsibility to those students? The saying goes "a picture says a thousand words", so I have prepared a simple image for you.



This image keeps me, and my colleagues, up at night. Who are these students that we will be leaving behind? Isn't that question vitally important if this policy is proposed to be an equity policy? With great care, and a carefully designed curriculum, we can help more students succeed in college level math and English. The ACME policy as currently written will not do this. I encourage you to take the time to engage the stakeholders who are working with students every day to make sure the changes are made that are necessary so this policy will actually help our students. Thank you for your time.

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Transfer

As some of you on the FAC know, I am passionate about the issue of improving the ability of students to transfer seamlessly from our community colleges to our CSU institutions. One of the first policies adopted by the Board of Regents in the Spring of 2012 was our Transfer and Articulation Policy. I want to thank faculty, some of whom are with us today for their work making that policy a reality. I know many were opposed to the 2011 creation of the BOR but they decided that good transfer policy was in the best interests of CSU students. (Comment about Michael Shea)

As of the fall 2021, we have over 6,300 students enrolled in TAP programs at our community colleges. I am meeting with NECHE accreditors visiting Tunxis next week, and I noted that the chart in its self-study shows that between 2017 and 2020, enrollment has increased 219% in the TAP psychology degree and 85% in Business Studies. And in biology studies, the enrollment increased 135%.

But there is more work to be done. We have many workforce related programs at our community colleges that could be the foundation for transfer to a CSU institution. We just need to build the bridge that easily provides access to a bachelor's degree at CSU without needing to repeat courses or graduate with many additional credits. In fact, it would be ideal, if as we build new programs to address workforce needs in CT, we built these with clear transfer pathways.

I hear complaints regularly that many students transfer from our community colleges to independent colleges and universities in CT. It may be that these institutions are more welcoming and make it easier for transfer students to earn a bachelor's degree. Today, we face an enrollment problem in our system. Although our universities may appear to have lower tuition, with tuition discounting and time to degree shortened, an independent college is often a cost-effective choice.

I urge the FAC to work with system office staff to address this problem. I think, as in 2012, it is a problem we can solve together. It will be good for students, a win for our institutions, and boost economic growth in our state. Call on Terrence.