

RESOLUTION
concerning
PROFICIENCY COURSES
in the
CONNECTICUT STATE UNIVERSITY SYSTEM

July 16, 2003

WHEREAS, In recent years, the quality of students in the Connecticut State University System has been marked by improving academic performance, and

WHEREAS, The CSU System is committed to promoting access, academic excellence and student success and, at the same time, raising standards, and

WHEREAS, Within this context, improving academic performance, retention and graduation rates require that students have the necessary skills early in their course of studies to succeed, and

WHEREAS, Some students admitted to the universities in the Connecticut State University System may be underprepared for college-level coursework in English and/or Mathematics, and

WHEREAS, The successful completion of non-credit courses designed to provide the proficiency in English and Mathematics necessary to undertake college-level credit courses in these fields has been shown to improve retention and graduation rates, therefore be it

RESOLVED, That students needing to demonstrate proficiency shall be required to successfully complete the appropriate courses within their first 24 academic credits, and be it further

RESOLVED, That students who must demonstrate proficiency shall be informed that there are five opportunities to complete said requirements (summer session prior to freshman year, fall, winter and spring sessions and the summer session prior to sophomore year), and be it further

RESOLVED, That students who do not successfully complete recommended proficiency courses within this period shall not be allowed to register for credit courses at a university within the CSU System until they complete these courses or equivalents elsewhere, and be it further

RESOLVED, That all students shall be notified by the university of this requirement, and be it further

RESOLVED, That this policy shall go into effect for students entering in fall semester 2004, and be it further

RESOLVED, That each university shall review its entry-level proficiency requirements for Mathematics and English with particular regard to:

1. Determining specifically which Mathematics and English skills are necessary to allow successful completion of each bachelor degree program offered by the university
2. Establishing what high school Mathematics and English curricula if successfully completed constitutes proficiency in those subjects
3. Establishing what scores on standardized pre-admission tests constitutes proficiency in Mathematics and English

and be it further

RESOLVED, That each university and the CSU System will gather and analyze relevant data so the Board can assess whether required courses are unavailable and program completion is delayed as a result of resources being diverted to support students who are underprepared for rigorous academic work, and be it further

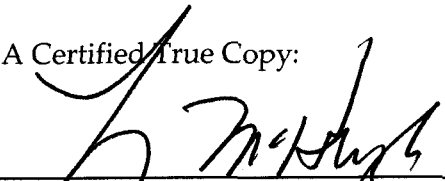
RESOLVED, That each university and the System as a whole shall develop action plans to increase the percentage of entering students who are sufficiently proficient in English and Mathematics to be able to do college-level work in those fields, so as to enable a reduction in the number of proficiency courses that must be offered, and be it further

RESOLVED, That such action plans shall be presented to the Committee on Academic Affairs at its first meeting in calendar 2004, and be it further

RESOLVED, That the Chancellor of the CSU System will work with the Department of Education and the Community-Technical College System to align the Mathematics and English curricula and communicate proficiency requirements for admission to a university in the CSU system

RESOLVED, That the Chancellor is authorized to develop guidelines to implement this policy.

A Certified True Copy:



Lawrence D. McHugh, Chairman

ITEM

Policy Regarding Proficiency Courses in the Connecticut State University System.

BACKGROUND

The number of students in the CSU system enrolled in proficiency courses in English and Mathematics has increased in the last few years. The number of students enrolled in proficiency courses in English has shown an increase of 7% from 1995 to 1999. The number of students enrolled in proficiency courses in Mathematics increased by 45% between 1995 and 2001. Although students are expected to complete proficiency courses within their first year of college, an analysis of the percentage of students enrolled in these courses showed that, while 66% were classified as freshmen, 13% were sophomores, 7% juniors and 4% seniors (10% were unclassified).

Regarding academic success, graduation rates of students who took English and/or Math proficiency courses were compared with those of regular students. The preliminary data indicate that for all four universities, the six-year graduation rate for students who passed proficiency Math courses is higher than the respective university's graduation rate for those who passed a proficiency English course and is higher than the university's overall six-year graduation rate. Graduation rates for students who passed a proficiency English course were higher than overall graduation rate at three of the four universities.

ANALYSIS

In order to identify ways to maximize the benefits of taking proficiency courses, the Office of Academic Affairs reviewed "best practices," as well as policies instituted by other university systems, including the California State University System and the City University of New York System, two of the largest in the country. Staff reviewed the literature regarding proficiency education policies and outcomes including two reports prepared by The Institute for Higher Education Policy: College Remediation: What It is, What It Costs, What's at Stake, and Developmental Education and College Opportunity in New England, as well as No One to Waste, by Robert McCabe, President Emeritus of Miami-Dade Community College.

Research tells us that proficiency level impacts retention. Studies in this area emphasize the need to provide assistance in developing the necessary skills early in the student's career. It is during the first year that deficiencies in academic preparation are most noticeable and have a greater impact. It is good academic practice to correct these deficiencies as early as possible. In addition, fields of study in areas of workforce shortage are made accessible for students.

To improve academic performance, retention, and also to better address cost-effectiveness issues we are proposing an approach that shifts the emphasis at the CSU System from remediation to proficiency. This approach will promote students' success and the attainment of their educational objective by: defining the knowledge and skills students must bring to college; ensuring that an early assessment process is in place to

STAFF REPORT

ACADEMIC AFFAIRS COMMITTEE

identify the proficiency levels of entering students; providing students opportunities to make up deficiencies in a timely fashion, if possible even before they start college.

The establishment of a policy that sets a time limit for students to exhibit proficiency addresses the above objectives.

CHANCELLOR'S RECOMMENDATION

Approve the policy regarding proficiency courses in the Connecticut State University system.