

Fellow Student Success Task Force Members:

I wanted to take this opportunity to recap the significant decisions reached during our November 9th meeting and review the next steps as we approach our final meeting in December and ready the final report for consideration by the Board of Governors in early January. First, I would like to thank each of you for the time and expertise you have devoted to this historic initiative that I am confident will lead to even better results for students in our community colleges.

As we reviewed the large amount of public feedback to the draft recommendations collected so far, it was evident that stakeholders both inside and outside our system are engaged and informed about the work of the Student Success Task Force. The extensive public input was helpful in identifying areas in which the draft recommendation could be improved. While several changes were approved at the November 9th meeting, others were agreed to in principle, pending the drafting of alternate language.

Categorical Program Consolidation.

One of the most significant changes agreed to by the Task Force was the decision to eliminate from the draft recommendations the proposal to consolidate categorical program funding. A considerable portion of the feedback from the field expressed concerns that consolidating categorical funding would threaten existing programs and diminish student support. Further, concerns were raised about the possible interaction of categorical consolidation on various matching requirements for federal funding. While the Task Force discussed options to mitigate the concerns, the final determination was to remove the categorical consolidation proposal from the Task Force recommendations. Task Force members did, however, request that the report be amended to urge state leaders to streamline the administration and reporting requirements of these programs and, at the college level, to urge programs themselves to strive to break down programmatic silos and voluntarily collaborate in an effort to improve student success.

Career Development and College Preparation Non-Credit Courses.

Another recommendation that was re-examined in detail dealt with limiting non-credit classes to only those identified as Career Development or College Preparation. Considerable input was received that this proposal would threaten a variety of high priority courses, including Citizenship, English as a Second Language (ESL), and courses for individuals with acquired brain injuries. The Task Force discussed these concerns and made clear that the draft recommendation was not intended to negatively impact these courses. A subgroup of Task Force members agreed to fashion language that modifies recommendation 4.1 in a way that addresses the concerns in the areas noted above.

Requiring Students to Pay Full Cost for Courses Not in Education Plans.

At our November 9 meeting, recommendation 4.1 was further modified by the Task Force to remove the proposal to charge students the full cost of instruction for any courses not included in their education plans. While Task Force members continued to emphasize the need to prioritize access for students pursuing educational goals identified in education plans (related to transfer, basic skills, and career technical education), there was a widespread concern on the Task Force about establish a two-tiered system of fees.

At my request, the modifications noted above to Chapter 4 will be drafted and sent out to the Task Force members prior to our December meeting.

Comprehensive Strategy for Addressing Basic Skills Education.

At town hall meetings and through the website forum, faculty expressed concern over this recommendation noting that ESL was inappropriately referenced in the work of the Task Force related to Basic Skills. The Task Force was sensitive to this concern and as a result, staff will be working with Task Force members to refine this recommendation.

Alternative Funding Model for Basic Skills.

Following considerable deliberation, the Task Force determined that this recommendation would be modified to provide the Chancellor's Office with the authority to develop alternate funding allocations, using apportionment funding, to promote innovation in basic skills instruction. A subgroup of Task Force members has agreed to help craft language to meet this end and consistent with the request noted above, the amended language will be sent via e-mail to members before the December meeting.

The final meeting of the Task Force will be held on Wednesday December 7, 2011 at the Le Rivage Hotel in Sacramento. At this meeting, we will discuss any new feedback received on the draft recommendations and review those items where the Task Force made changes. A final report will then be prepared for the Board of Governors to consider at its January 9-10, 2012 meeting.

I would like to emphasize that we will continue to gather public input as we work toward the Board of Governors meeting in January. Another town hall meeting is scheduled for Oakland on November 16, and on-line comments will be accepted and compiled to help inform this panel up until its final meeting and to help inform the Board of Governors as it considers final action.

Thank you all again for your engaged participation in this process. I look forward to seeing you in December.

Dr. Peter MacDougall
Chairman
Student Success Task Force