

STUDENT SERVICES PROGRAM REVIEW 2009-2010

DEPARTMENT OR PROGRAM: Assessment Center

NAME AND TITLE OF PREPARER(S): Stephen Fletcher, Supervisor

In providing responses in the following areas, **please provide quantitative and qualitative data to support your responses.** For the purposes of the Program Review, both departments and programs will be referred to as “program.”

- I. **Description and mission of the program.** Provide a brief description of the program including any services provided and the program’s mission.

The Assessment Center provides students the opportunity take placement tests in mathematics (through Mathematics 1A), English (through EWRT 1A), and English as a Second Language, as required by Assembly Bill 3 78212(b)(3)(A). The Center also administers a readiness test for Chemistry 1A/Biology 6A and Biology 40a.

The Assessment Center assists with the rollover of student placement information at the end of each quarter. Testing and placement screens are updated automatically based on students’ current enrollment information. These changes, however, assume courses are successfully completed. When final grades are input, the Assessment Center adjusts the testing and placement screens for those students who did not successfully complete courses. This task needs to be done quickly to make sure students can enroll for the appropriate courses the following quarter.

The Assessment Center scans tests for instructors. Based on Fall Quarter 2008, the service was used primarily by instructors in Social Sciences/Humanities (55%), Business/Computer Science (22%) and Physical Science/Mathematics (13%).

The Assessment Center does the Ability to Benefit testing for students who are applying for financial aid. The program serves students who want to take college courses but have not graduated from high school.

The Assessment Center receives Advanced Placement score reports from College Board. As students request it, we forward their reports to Admissions and Records for evaluation scores for graduation credit.

- II. **Retention and growth.**

- A. How has the program responded to the institutional goal of increased access, growth and retention?

Between July 1, 2007 and June 31, 2008, the Center administered 25,633 tests to 10,729 students. This number represents an increase of 12% over the previous year. Between July 1, 2008 and December 31, 2008, the Center administered 14,291 tests to 5,954 students, which implies 2008-9 numbers may be slightly higher than the 2007—8 totals.

The Assessment Center has also supported the outreach efforts of the college by giving local high school seniors the opportunity to take the English and mathematics placement tests at their school sites. In 2007-8, we did testing at high schools in the Fremont Union, Campbell Union, and East Side Union high school districts.

The Assessment Center also does analysis of student placement data for special projects on campus. We are currently helping identify students for the new Asian Pacific Islander grant. We have helped identify students for LinC and Puente programs.

B. How has the program responded to the institutional goal of increased access, growth and retention specifically for the identified targeted populations of African Ancestry, Latino /a, and Filipino /a students?

In 2007-8, the Assessment Center, through the Outreach Office, worked with East Side Union High District schools to facilitate ethnic minority students attending college. We went to many of the high schools and conducted placement testing during spring semester. A review of the student database indicates that Fall Quarter 2008, 13.7% of graduating seniors from East Side attended De Anza, in contrast to 10% of seniors in Santa Clara County.

- III. **Student equity.** In what ways has the program worked towards decreasing the student equity gap? Has the program made progress towards or achieved these equity goals? What challenges exist in the program in reaching such goals?
- IV. **Strategic Planning initiatives (Community Collaborations, Cultural Competency, Outreach, and Individualized Attention for Retention).** Other than what was mentioned in III and IV above, what other Strategic Planning Initiatives has the program addressed and in what ways?
- V. **Budget limitations.** (Please be specific in your responses.)

A. Identify any limitations placed on the program based on limited funding. What increases in resources are critical to the program and what are the consequences if the program does not receive these resources?

The main non-personnel expenditure for the Assessment Center is the cost of the tests. Currently, tests cost \$1.80 each, though the typical English or mathematics placement test consists of two tests (i.e., Sentence Skills and Reading Comprehension, Arithmetic and Algebra). A reduction in budget would mean that students would have to re-test less frequently. For mathematics, the reduction would mean that students could only take one test every six months. The current policy is students can only take the same test once every six months. This policy allows students to take as many as three tests (Basic Math test, College Level Math test, Calculus Readiness) every six months. Multiple testing accounted for 31% of tests in 2007-8.

For English, a reduction in budget would mean current testing practices would need to be modified. A possible modification would be to only allow students to take the Sentence Skills test if they score 89 or higher on Reading Comprehension. Students not taking Sentence Skills would still be evaluated on their grammar skills using the essay

they write. This modification would mean 4,959 Sentence Skills tests would not have been administered in 2007-8, or a reduction of 24%. Another possible modification would be to eliminate having students write an essay. The essay is the most expensive part of the assessment because of the need to pay faculty to score each essay. However, the English Writing Department has been strongly opposed to eliminating the essay from the placement test.

B. Identify any other implications affecting your program: e.g. technology, staff, Facilities.

A reduction in funding could affect staffing. The current level of staffing is one supervisor and four testing technicians. A reduction in the level of staffing would have minimal impact on Assessment Center operations except between April and September when the number of students tested increases significantly.

C. Describe the consequence to students and the college in general if the program were eliminated. Please be specific.

We think there are three possible options.

1. No placement testing will occur, so students could enroll in any course offered by De Anza. Instructional methods would need to be implemented to account for the variation in student preparation.
2. The responsibility for placement will shift to academic departments. Placement decisions would likely be based on high school and college transcripts, Advanced Placement results, and/or the results of standardized assessments (i.e., SAT 1, SAT 2).
3. Students would take a set sequence of mathematics and English courses regardless of past coursework. Based on current placement patterns, the English sequence would start with EWRT 211/212 and Reading 211/212. The mathematics sequence could start at Math 114.

VI. **Assessment of program.** What evaluation and/or assessment practices are in place to support the program's accomplishments and findings? (provide quantitative and/or qualitative data).

Current assessment practices are based on policies implemented when Bert Manriquez was Director of Assessment. Although Dr. Manriquez was careful in the work he did, the assessments need to be re-evaluated. The institutional research group has allowed us access to the student data warehouse and we are beginning the process of looking at the relationship of placement results and course grades. The results of the analysis will be shared with the appropriate departments and decisions will be made about future directions.

VII. **Additional comments.** What additional information is important to consider when reviewing the budget of your program for possible reductions? You may include any or all of the following, or other information.

- **Relationships with other programs.** Describe any partnerships or collaborations that the program is actively engaged in, which reduce costs and/or improve service delivery.

College Now: We administer English placement tests to high school students who want to take college level courses while concurrently enrolled in high school.

Outreach: We work with them on testing high school seniors at local schools

International Student Program: We conduct placement testing for new foreign students.

Admissions and Records: Assisting in the rollover process by correcting student placement information for students who do not successfully complete a course
Financial Aid: Conducting the placement testing for Ability to Benefit
Disabled Student Services: Work with them in assessing students with special needs

- **State and Federal mandates.** What State or Federal mandates impact the work you do?

Placement testing for language and computation is required by Assembly Bill 3 78212(b)(3)(A).

- **Trends.** Describe any positive and/or negative trends in the program.

Positive

Students like the walk-in basis for testing

Negative

Abuse of the retest policy. The abuse occurs in mathematics because the policy states you can only repeat a test every six months. However, the Assessment Center has three mathematics tests (Basic, College, Calculus Readiness), so testing can occur in less than six months.

- **Comparable programs at other institutions.** Provide any information that you have that would allow for a comparison of the program to similar programs at other institutions in the State.

Although most community colleges conduct some type of placement testing, De Anza differs from other programs in two important ways. First, De Anza tends to have a more generous retest policy than other colleges. Policies at other institutions allow retesting only once a year or not at all. Second, De Anza serves more students than many of the community colleges in California. The increased number of students means that practices at smaller institutions cannot work here.

VIII. Program strengths/areas for improvement.

A. Provide a summary of the program's main strengths.

Focus on service to students and the community

Closely linked to Admissions and Records and Counseling

Current practice allows us to meet the needs of increased enrollment

Willingness to help people

B. Provide a summary of the program's main areas for improvement.

Generate funds in a way that supports programs on campus

Offer a site for testing off site students from other institutions

Better serve evening and weekend students

Better communication with Admissions and Records on policy changes and computer operations

IX. Suggestions for campus-wide change.

- A. What organizational change would you recommend to increase program effectiveness, include consolidations, collaborations, or mergers that you think the college should investigate?

Closer link between De Anza and Foothill in terms of test results and placement

Better training of counselors with respect to assessment as well as placement screens

Improved discussion of placement results with students

B. Are there cost savings or recommended reductions to any areas of the college that you think should be investigated?

Article 19 contracts: Retired faculty return at faculty pay and may be performing lower level tasks

Book Buy Back: Increase the buy back rate or decrease used book cost