

Dear Members of the BOR ASA Committee,

We are writing to explain why the Alignment and Completion of Mathematics and English (ACME) proposal, while built on claims of promoting equity, in fact does quite the opposite—it increases inequity for students and should not be implemented.

The ACME proposal eliminates developmental courses for Math and English in favor of a co-requisite model in which all students unprepared for the gateway courses, regardless of placement level, would take the gateway courses along with a simultaneous supporting course (the co-requisite). This policy discriminates against our students with the greatest needs who form a significant portion of our student population. Indeed, the research accompanying the original proposal demonstrated that the co-requisite model may help students just below the placement level needed for gateway courses, but not help students at a lower level; these students would not be helped and might actually be harmed. The statement in the proposal that “research shows that traditional prerequisite courses hinder students’ progress and raise, rather than lower, barriers to gateway, college-level, transferable course completion” is false. It defies logic to assume that we can provide fewer supports and less education to needy students and, despite this, then expect they will end up in the same place as their peers who started at a higher level. It is distressing to see the original research redacted from the revised proposal because it did not support the proposal.

This approach is therefore unproven for our student population; furthermore, the costs have not been calculated and presented. Despite the greater costs necessary for this model, which requires much smaller class sizes and other supports, the Cost of Delivery section (page 3, revised proposal 4/19/21) does not mention the cost of implementation. Moreover, the solution for managing the uncalculated costs is as follows: “The aforementioned administrators and other related CSCU leadership are strongly encouraged to utilize and seek increases to the PA 12-40 legislative funding to support and maintain this financial model for corequisite supports.” This “solution” is shameful and irresponsible, given the long-term inability of CSCU leaders to secure adequate funding from the legislature to support even the maintenance of current educational services.

Furthermore, the ACME proposal advocates for ‘dumbing down’ the current math gateway requirements. In many cases, students would be required to take a simplified math course. Do we really want CSU to graduate students who do not understand basic algebra? And changing the math requirement to a “gateway, college-level, transferable course *aligned with the student’s program of study*” (italics added) fails to recognize that a majority of students change their programs of study, in many cases, more than once. The proposal would thus lock students into a particular program of study and limit their options, further disenfranchising those students with the greatest needs. Although some students struggle with the current gateway requirement, which for most involves basic algebra skills, the answer is not to eliminate the requirement, but rather to better support student learning and to work with the K-12 system, which graduates too many students woefully unprepared.

Finally, this ACME proposal ignores (and wastes) the time, money, and expertise already invested in TAP by CSUC; over a period of nine years through TAP's grassroots process, the programs of study between the community colleges and the universities were carefully aligned and agreed to—and the transferability works. This proposal, on the other hand, lacks significant faculty input and is pushed by a consulting company with slick marketing tactics, so it simply dictates the transferability of lesser gateway courses to meet the higher-level gateway courses at the universities. This proposal is widely condemned by faculty because it is a classic example of administrators making decisions about curricular matters that the faculty better understand and rightfully own.

Therefore, in the strongest possible terms, the Southern Connecticut State University Faculty Senate urges rejection of the ill-conceived and academically and financially reckless ACME proposal.

Sincerely,

SCSU Faculty Senate