

May 17, 2017

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California State University Board of Trustees
c/o Trustee Secretariat
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Chancellor Eloy Ortiz Oakley
California Community Colleges Chancellor's Office
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Cecilia V. Estolano, President
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Chancellor Timothy P. White
California State University, Office of the Chancellor
401 Golden Shore
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RE: Intersegmental Curriculum Workgroup Decision to Add an Intermediate Algebra Competency to Nine Transfer Model Curricula

Dear Chair Eisen, President Estolano, Chancellor Oakley and Chancellor White,

We write to you, as organizations committed to ensuring college access, success and equity, and as supporters of legislation which established the Associate Degree for Transfer (ADT), to express our ***strong opposition to the Intersegmental Curriculum Workgroup's (ICW) recent decision to add an intermediate algebra competency to nine Transfer Model Curricula (TMCs)***. We urge you to reject this decision immediately, and continue to allow the use of statistics pathways to meet lower division requirements for quantitative reasoning and for major preparation in non-math intensive fields.

Accepting the ICW's action will adversely affect thousands of community college students seeking to transfer to a CSU on the Associate Degree for Transfer pathway each year, disproportionately impact our most vulnerable students, and will exacerbate inequities in higher education.

Seven years ago, through the passage of SB 1440, our state and college leaders took historic steps to significantly increase the number of students who transfer with an associate degree. The spirit of the bill was to streamline, simplify, and create a preferred transfer pathway for the majority of students hoping to transfer from the California Community Colleges (CCC) to the CSU. ***Our coalition supported that historic legislation because students faced significant, sometimes insurmountable barriers to transfer*** including duplicative and inconsistent coursework, ever-changing requirements, an overwhelming number of transfer pathways and insufficient guidance. ***The ICW decision will impose new barriers for students seeking to transfer through the ADT pathway, it undermines the promise made to students to provide a clearer, preferred pathway to transfer, and threatens to undercut the state's tremendous strides in improving transfer through Associate Degree for Transfer pathways.***

Additionally, there has been little evidence or research to support why requiring intermediate algebra as proposed by the ICW is appropriate. A decision this significant should not be accepted without proper consultation of the Intersegmental Oversight Committee (IOC) and articulation officers given the potential implications to the state's efforts to improve transfer.

Unfortunately, *this decision also undermines the vital progress in math redesign that removes hurdles and closes equity gaps for students in majors that are not math intensive.* Intermediate algebra requirements drive inequity in our system. Each year over 170,000 community college students are placed into math remediation based on the intermediate algebra standard and over 110,000 never complete math requirements for a degree or for transfer. 80% of African Americans and 67% of Hispanics placed into remediation do not complete math requirements in six years.ⁱ One statistical study of a large California community college district attributed 50-60% of racial inequity in degree completion and transfer-preparedness to placement into remediation.ⁱⁱ

Yet, students have demonstrated that they can pass rigorous, credit-bearing math courses required for transfer in their program of study without intermediate algebra. Alternative math pathways, like the Statway model, provide students with an alternative to traditional remedial mathematics sequence, one that is still rigorous and one in which that they can be successful. Statway triples math completion in half the time. A study of colleges offering a new statistics pathway with the California Acceleration Project found that students' odds of completing a transferable math course were 4.5 times higher in accelerated statistics pathways than in traditional remediation and that African Americans' completion of transfer-level math quadrupled, eliminating the equity gap.ⁱⁱⁱ

It should also be noted that the University of California (UC), the state's most selective and elite university system, has not imposed such a pre-requisite on students. In fact, intermediate algebra is no longer required for transfer when a student takes statistics. In 2015, after an extensive review process, the UC system approved the Statway curriculum for transfer^{iv} and their Transfer Course Agreement guidelines require only a small set of preparatory skills for statistics, which can be offered in a prerequisite or as a co-requisite.^v

At a time when California continues to be plagued by wide gaps in enrollment at four-year universities and college graduation rates by race/ethnicity, our higher education systems must ensure that policies do not unfairly create obstacles for students on the way to earning a college degree. **We ask for your leadership in righting this wrong by rejecting this ICW decision** and allowing the use of statistics pathways to meet lower division requirements for quantitative reasoning and for major preparation in non-math intensive fields.

Sincerely,



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Executive Director



Allen Zaremberg
President & CEO



Stewart Kwok
President & Executive Director



Michele Siqueiros
President



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cc: Members, California Community Colleges Board of Governors
Members, California State University Board of Trustees
Executive Vice Chancellor Loren J. Blanchard, California State University
Vice Chancellor Pamela D. Walker, California Community Colleges

ⁱ California Community Colleges Chancellor's Office. (2017). 2017 Statewide Student Success Scorecard. Retrieved from:
<http://scorecard.cccco.edu/scorecardrates.aspx?CollegeID=000#home>

ⁱⁱ Stoup, G. (October 2015). Using data to identify emergent inequities and the effective practices to address them. Presentation delivered at the Success and Equity: Regional Conference for Collaboration. Modesto Junior College.

ⁱⁱⁱ Hayward, C. & Willett, T. (2014). Curricular Redesign and Gatekeeper Completion: A Multi-College Evaluation of the California Acceleration Project. Berkeley, CA: The Research and Planning Group for California Community Colleges.

^{iv} University of California Board of Admissions and Relations with Schools (BOARS). *Statement on Approval of Statway Board of Admissions and Relations with Schools*. N.p., 16 Jan. 2015. Web. 10 May 2017.

^v University of California. (2017). Special regulations for courses in specific subject areas. Retrieved from:
<http://www.ucop.edu/transfer-articulation/transferable-course-agreements/tca-policy/regulations-by-subject-area.html#s>