Southern Connecticut State University

SCSU

FACULTY SENATE

Faculty Senate Resolution Number F-2020-13

To: Joe Bertolino, Ed.D., President, Southern Connecticut State University
From: Deborah Weiss, Ph.D., President, SCSU Faculty Senate

The attached Resolution of the Faculty Senate is entitled:

RESOLUTION Regarding BOR ACME POLICY

This Resolution was approved by Faculty Senate on: 12/02/2020

☐ This Resolution is presented for APPROVAL

☑ This Resolution is presented for INFORMATION

In accordance with the CSU-AAUP Contract (Article 5.10), "When the Senate makes a written recommendation to the President, the President shall acknowledge and respond to the recommendation in writing within fifteen (15) school days of receiving the Senate's recommendation. "

After considering this resolution, please indicate your action on this form and return it to the President of the Faculty Senate.

Weiss, Deborah M. Digitally signed by Weiss, Deborah M. Date: 2020.12.07 14:53:18 -05'00' 12/07/2020

Deborah Weiss, Ph.D., President, Faculty Senate Date

cc: Robert S. Prezant, Ph.D., Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs

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ACTION OF THE UNIVERSITY PRESIDENT

Resolution for Approval:

☐ Resolution APPROVED

☐ Resolution DISAPPROVED (Provide comments below or attach statement)

Resolution for Information:

☑ Resolution NOTED (applies to Informational Resolutions only)

There is a literature base that suggests that some approaches recommended within the ACME report could be supportive of our students. Pending the ultimate use and fate of this report, I suggest that Southern faculty more deeply explore the proposed approaches to determine their potential value.

Bertolino, Joe Digitally signed by Bertolino, Joe Date: 2020.12.08 10:03:20 -05'00'

Joe Bertolino, Ed.D., President, SCSU Date

SOUTHERN CONNECTICUT STATE UNIVERSITY FACULTY SENATE
RESOLUTION REGARDING BOR ACME POLICY

Whereas, Southern Connecticut State University exists for the primary purpose of furthering academic excellence;

Whereas, SCSU Faculty Senate is the official representative body of the Academic Faculty;

Whereas, The Board of Regents (BOR) has presented for commentary an Executive Summary of a draft policy (hereafter referred to as 'Proposal," regarding Alignment and Timely Completion of Mathematics and English Implementation at Connecticut State Community College in fall 2023 (ACME);

Whereas, by necessity, given the close coordination between the colleges and the universities in the CSCU system, especially given efforts since 2012 to design, approve, and provide seamless transfer opportunities through the Transfer and Articulation Policy (TAP) Pathways, what occurs at the colleges, will subsequently affect what occurs at the universities;

Whereas, The Proposal violates faculty purview over curriculum (Collective Bargaining Agreement, 5.17[1]) in removing Algebra as the "required prerequisite for any math pathways" and dictating "transfer of and applicability of mathematics courses," thus co-opting this responsibility from the departments, and subsequently also violating the Framework portion of the TAP Transfer Pathways;

Whereas, The Proposal mandates utilization of 1) a new corequisite delivery of support (rather than the current prerequisite developmental course sequences), 2) course placement based solely on high school GPA, and 3) utilization of self-reported high school GPA for course placement in lieu of transcripts at the community colleges, but fails to support those proposed changes due to citation inaccuracies and the presentation of incomplete information (Appendix A);

Whereas, despite evidence in the research literature that clearly differentiates between the needs of students with marginal levels of academic preparedness and the needs of students who are more severely underprepared, the Proposal calls for a one-size-fits-all corequisite program for students, which simplified approach could jeopardize the academic success of the most vulnerable students;

Whereas, Although the proposal purports to address Connecticut's racial and socioeconomic achievement gap, in actuality, it would reinforce these disparities by lowering academic standards and expectations for community college and state university graduates; and

Whereas, The BOR Proposal would be damaging to students and would violate the principles of shared governance set forth in the Collective Bargaining Agreement (CBA); now therefore be it

[1] "The department shall have responsibility for the content and development of courses, curriculum and Programs of study within its discipline, research and service within its area…"

Resolved, That we reject the BOR proposal; and be it further

Resolved, That the BOR follow appropriate pathways of engagement with the faculty to create a more thoughtful and nuanced approach; and be it further

Resolved, That the BOR must respect that changes to curricula are to be decided through the curricular approval processes established by each university and the CBA, and that any changes to the TAP Transfer Agreements are to be made only through mutual agreement between the faculty of the colleges and the universities.

Appendix A

Commentary on the BOR Executive Summary draft entitled:

"Board of Regents Policy: Alignment and Timely Completion of Mathematics and English Implementation at Connecticut State Community College in fall 2023"

These comments relate to the draft of the policy regarding alignment and timely completion of math. Although the policy is proposed as related only to the community colleges, by necessity, given the close coordination between the colleges and the universities, especially given efforts since 2012 to design, approve, and provide seamless transfer opportunities through the TAP Transfer Pathways (and other venues), the colleges and universities cannot be separated, since what occurs at the colleges, will subsequently affect what occurs at the universities. This commentary is divided into several sections to address a number of points.

Mathematics Pathways – Aligning Mathematics to Program and Career - The proposal states, "For programs that do not require algebra-based math, algebra is no longer a required prerequisite in order for the college-level mathematics courses to be accepted and applied at four-year schools to which students transfer."

This is a decision that can only be made with the agreement of the CSUs. Neither has a discussion taken place nor has an agreement been reached; in fact this math model has been rejected by the CSUs in the past. The TAP Transfer Pathways have been worked out cooperatively between the CSUs and the community colleges over a period of five or more years. This change would negate those negotiated agreements and would render the TAP transfer pathways as invalid since the agreed-upon math requirement would no longer be met (as defined in the original framework of the program from 2012).

Placement Based on High School GPA

The proposal advocates for placing students in classes primarily based solely upon high school GPA, citing the Bahr et al. article:

"Bahr and associates (2019) report that "cumulative high school grade point average (GPA) is the most consistently useful predictor of performance across levels of math and English coursework" (pp. 178-179)."

While Bahr et al. (2019) support using high school GPA for placement, they acknowledge that there is "limited research to date" on the subject, and they recommend using the data in a much more nuanced manner than advocated in the proposal, which on a practical level might be difficult to apply. Among other conclusions, Behr et al., state that an overall higher GPA would be needed to "signal a given level of math competence than is necessary to signal the corresponding level of English competency." It is also unclear how reliable GPA would be for students who are not recent high school graduates with the authors stating, "More research is needed on the relationship between the length of delay between high school graduation and college enrollment and the extent to which measures of high school achievement can be used to predict performance in math and English coursework." They further state that if high school GPA is used, a differential model would need to be employed for various college-level math courses and that the information should be used in conjunction with subject-specific skill milestones that come

late in the high school career. Therefore, "the most up-to-date transcript information" should be utilized for incoming college students. This leads to the next issue of the suggestion in the proposal that "Students may opt to self-report their high school GPA" because simple reporting of a cumulative number will not allow for the nuanced placement criteria described in the article and self-reporting has not been demonstrated to be reliable in place of transcripts.

Self-reporting of high school GPA

The proposal states that according to Kadlec and Dadgar (2020), "the latest research indicates that students self-reporting of high school course grades and GPAs can be reliably used in place of official high school transcripts." The Kadlec and Dadgar report, however, is not a peer-reviewed article, but rather a compilation of information with citations that are not clearly linked to the statements that are made. In fact, the most recent article cited by Kadlec and Dadgar on this subject is the Bahr article from 2019 which states "It will be important for future research to investigate the viability of students' self-reported information about high school achievement in place of information reported directly by high schools." Further, the Kadlec and Dadgar article is actually produced by an organization called Strong Start to Finish, which self-describes on its website as "a network of like-minded individuals and organizations from the policy, research, and practice spaces who've come together for one reason – to help all students, not just the select few, find success in postsecondary education." This is not a credible source to utilize in the development of policy that will determine student course placement.

Corequisite rather than Prerequisite Delivery of Support

The proposal advocates for elimination of prerequisites and utilization of a corequisite model with all students to be enrolled directly in college-level English and mathematics with supports to maximize success as needed. In the proposal there are a number of conclusions that have been drawn based upon selectively citing some statements from the Ran and Lin article (2019) and other articles without presenting a complete picture.

Several conclusions from this article, however, indicate that the corequisite model is not supported as a one-size-fits all solution:

"We found no significant impacts of placement into corequisite remediation on enrollment persistence, transfer to a four-year college, or degree completion. This suggests that corequisite reforms, though effective in helping students pass college-level math and English, are not sufficient to improve college completion rates overall."

Further, more importantly, the success of the corequisite model in the article refers specifically to the group of students who have taken an alternate math model. Therefore, the predicted effects in the proposal of utilizing a corequisite model are not supported based on this article, since the results are due to the alternate math model and not the corequisite model.

"In the current study, we were able to disentangle the effects of these two approaches and found that the positive effects of corequisite reform in Tennessee in math, relative to prerequisite remediation, were largely driven by efforts to guide students not interested in a STEM program to take statistics, math for liberal arts, or other types of math that align with their program requirements. Students placed into corequisite algebra had gateway completion rates similar to those of students taking prerequisite

remedial math on the algebra-calculus track."

Boatman and Long (2018) also do not conclude in favor of unilateral application of a co-requisite model stating that, "Importantly, while most of the literature only examines the effectiveness of developmental courses for students at the margin of needing any remediation, our results suggest that more, rather than less remediation may be beneficial for students with weaker preparation. These results suggest that states and institutions need not treat remediation as a singular policy but instead should consider it as an intervention that might vary in its impact according to student needs."

They describe a distinct difference between students who are "on the margin of needing one remedial course," and those who are less prepared by stating, "However, students with lower levels of academic preparedness experienced much smaller negative effects from remediation, and in some cases, remedial courses are estimated to improve later student outcomes, particularly for students attending 2-year colleges. For example, we estimate that students placed in reading and writing courses two levels below college level are more likely to persist or attain a degree than similar students who were placed one level below college courses. These results suggest that remedial and developmental courses can either help or hinder students differently depending on their level of academic preparedness."

Therefore, the proposal should not be approved based upon its faulty premises regarding course placement based solely upon GPA, utilization of self-reported GPA, and use of the co-requisite model. This proposal would serve to disenfranchise our least academically-prepared students by denying them the preparation that would help them to succeed. It is suggested that, based upon the literature, a more thoughtful and nuanced approach be proposed that takes into consideration the fact that a one-size-fits-all approach is simplistic and not supported by the literature. Further, the unilateral proposal to not require the algebra prerequisite dictates curriculum, which is a faculty purview, in a top-down manner that violates the Collective Bargaining Agreement and invalidates the TAP transfer agreements.