

PROJECT CHARTER

USING MULTIPLE MEASURES FOR PLACEMENT IN REMEDIAL MATH COURSEWORK



**LINCOLN LAND COMMUNITY COLLEGE
SPRINGFIELD, ILLINOIS**

Section 1. Project Overview

1.1 Problem Statement

Currently, readiness for mathematics is demonstrated by student performance on the ACT, SAT, and/or Accuplacer placement examinations. So a LLCC student's initial placement is often determined by a single test score. Research demonstrates that test scores are not a perfect measurement of student knowledge and that all students do not test equally well (Armstrong, 2000; Belfield & Crosta, 2012; Hughes & Clayton, 2011; Matter & Packman, 2009; Sawyer, 2007; Scott-Clayton, 2012). Subsequently, utilizing a lone test score to determine appropriate placement for all students may result in one of two types of mistakes: overplacement (i.e., placing a student into a college-level course when he/she lacks the academic skill to succeed) and underplacement (i.e., placing a student into a developmental course who could have succeeded in a higher developmental or college-level course).

1.2 Rationale and Opportunity

LLCC established its cut scores using statistical processes to minimize overplacement and underplacement mistakes. Student placements are examined periodically for the predictive validity of score cuts. Yet even with sound research methods and periodic review, the college acknowledges that it is impossible to establish cut scores that accurately place every student. While acknowledging that zero misplacements is an improbable target, this action project provides an opportunity to research whether LLCC's current placement process can be improved through the use of additional measures.

1.3 Strategic Alignment

Supports Goal 1 – Student Access and Success: LLCC will promote academic access and success as well as personal development for all its students

Supports processes documented in Category 1 – Helping Students Learn (1P8) and referenced generally in Category 3 – Understanding Students' and Other Stakeholders' Needs

Aligns with the Complete College America (i.e., time to degree, credits to degree)

The Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers (PARCC), emerging from the Common Core, is anticipated to provide a pathway to college-level coursework in higher education

Goal One – Increase Educational Attainment – of the Illinois Board of Higher Education's (IBHE) Public Agenda for College and Career Success

1.4 Goals and Objectives

This project will examine the college's current process for the initial academic placement of students in mathematics courses. The current procedure for the placement of students new to LLCC is as follows:

Students desiring to enroll in any course with established prerequisites in reading, English, and/or mathematics shall be assessed in the relevant subject area(s). All students must be assessed UNLESS:

1. the student holds a degree at the bachelor's level or above;
2. the student has already achieved grades of C or better in a college-level English composition course (COM 111, its equivalent, or above) and a college-level mathematics course (MAT 104, or its equivalent, or above) from any accredited college or university; or
3. the student has earned ACT scores of 22 or better in English, reading, and mathematics or SAT scores of 480 or better in verbal and mathematics.

Proof of degree status shall be determined either by receipt of an official transcript from the awarding institution or by the student's signature verifying degree status on the appropriate LLCC form.

A new student completes the following steps to enroll in courses at LLCC.

1. Complete an LLCC admissions worksheet. Submit transcripts (high school and, if applicable, any college) and any ACT/SAT scores. (Note: submitting a high school transcript and ACT/SAT scores is not currently required)
2. Complete placement testing (if needed – determined by procedures outlined above)
3. Meet with an academic advisor to discuss career goals, placement scores/ACT scores, and previous coursework (high school and college); complete an educational plan
4. Submit a FASFA if desired (This step is fluid and can be completed at any point in the process; Enrollment Services staff recommend that it is completed early in the enrollment process.)
5. Complete new student orientation
6. Register for classes

The current process uses test scores from ACT, SAT, or Accuplacer administrations for placement into mathematics courses. This Action Project team will research whether placement into mathematics courses is more accurate with an additional measure or measures. If the findings suggest that mathematics placement can be improved with additional measures, the team will design and recommend a new process to be used at LLCC. Any new process would need approval from the Academic Admissions and Standards team. With that approval, the process would then be handed over to the Dean of Mathematics and Sciences and the Director of Placement and Testing for monitoring the impact and success of the new process. Measures to determine the success for the new process will be explored and determined by the action project team. Such measures could include examining the following: students meeting the learning outcomes, indicators of student success (grades, course progression), student

retention (course retention rates), incident rate of departmental directives for improper placement, and student preparedness in initial placement.

1.5 Project Scope

The project will examine the College's current placement processes for mathematics courses. While this particular team will limit its research to mathematic placements, their findings may establish a set of best practices which are applicable to LLCC's English and reading placements.

1.6 Critical Success Factors and Risks

- Any change will need support from the mathematics faculty/Dean of Mathematics and Sciences.
- Procedures in admissions, placement and testing, and academic advising may need to be altered. Consequently, support and involvement from Enrollment Services will be needed.
- The college's student administrative database software (i.e., Datatel) may be a factor. This is the primary structure for ensuring that course prerequisites have been met before processing a course registration.

1.7 Assumptions

- Any change in placement processes will be cognizant of avoiding/minimizing any potential barriers to students enrolling at LLCC.
- As much as possible, Enrollment Services' desire to maintain a one-stop environment for new students will be preserved.
- LLCC's current student administrative database (Datatel) and placement instrument (Accuplacer) will not change.
- Implementation of any new process will coincide with the College's regular enrollment and registration cycles.
- Current processes for monitoring student placements will continue.

1.8 Constraints

The college's student administrative database software (i.e., Datatel, WebAdvisor, and online registration) may be a constraint for any recommended change. This is the primary structure for ensuring that course prerequisites have been met before processing a course registration.

The Illinois Community College Board (ICCB) has been examining the academic placement of students for the past few years. Some discussion has suggested a movement toward statewide use of COMPASS and uniform cut scores for all courses.

The Illinois Mathematics Association of Community Colleges (IMACC) has approved a new course sequence in non-STEM mathematics.

Section 2. Milestones/Timeline and Budget

2.1 Major Milestones and Timeline

Research of Literature and Current Use of Multiple Measures (Summer and Fall 2013)

- Review literature related to the use of multiple measure in placement
- Talk with the mathematics faculty/enrollment services staff at community colleges which have been using multiple measures in placement
- Review current and/or past student placements at LLCC through different lenses (i.e., using additional measures that emerged from the team's research, altering current cuts, a combination of both altered cut scores and use of additional measures, using a different placement instrument, etc.)
- Share the findings with LLCC's mathematics faculty, enrollment services staff, ITS staff (particularly those who support Datatel), and any interested stakeholders through an open forum
- Annual update submitted to the AQIP steering team in January/February 2014

Modify Current Placement Process and/or Designing a New Process (Spring and Summer 2014)

- Modify the current placement process or design a new placement process
- Establish or recommend measures to be used in determining the success of the modified/new process during the monitoring phase
- Hold a forum to present the modified/new placement process and gather feedback from key internal stakeholders
- Make any needed changes to the process based on feedback from internal stakeholders
- Map the new process; route the new process through the appropriate Shared Governance team(s) for approval; turn the new process over to Enrollment Services for implementation
- Provide final report to the AQIP steering team

Close action project (September 2014)

- Close out report completed for AQIP steering team
- Monitoring turned over to the Dean, Mathematics and Sciences and Director, Placement and Testing

2.2 Budget

It is not anticipated that any recommendations for change in the college's mathematics placement process will require additional funding or human resources. The Action Project team will likely talk with staff at community college's currently using multiple measures during the research phase of the project. The team would likely conduct any information gathering by phone and electronic means, but may decide that a follow-up site visit would be beneficial. So

travel expenses represent the only anticipated budget impact. But a specific budgetary need has not been identified at this time.

Section 3. Project Organization

3.1 Project Oversight

Academic placement of students falls under Board Policy 5.12, Course Prerequisites and Corequisites/Evaluation of Student Skills. The Board Policy will not be impacted by this action project. However, this Action Project team's work may change the procedures used to carry out Board Policy 5.12. Any recommended changes to the current procedures would need approval of the Academic and Admissions Standards Team, the Vice President of Academic Services, and the Vice President of Student Services. Additionally, changes to this process could also impact the workload of the Curriculum Team.

3.2 Project Team

Co-Leaders

Bill Bade, Dean of Mathematics and Sciences
 Tricia Kujawa, Director of Placement and Testing

Members

Nancy Cobetto, Student Development Professional/Student Athlete Advisor
 Ron Gregoire, Director of Admissions and Records
 Angie Gum, Professor Mathematics
 Hugh McNiece, Professor of Mathematics
 Susan McClintock, Professor of Mathematics
 Abbas Meigooni, Professor of Mathematics
 Cynthia Reese, Associate Dean of Nursing

Section 4. Revision History

Section 4.1 Revisions to Project

Revisions include any changes to the document that have occurred since initial approval. Consult with your project sponsor when completing this section. Revisions may result from road blocks, resource constraints, research findings, new ideas, etc.

References

- Armstrong, W.B. (2000). The association among student success in courses, placement scores, student background data, and instructor grading practices. *Community College Journal of Research and Practice*, 29(2), 255-270.
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- Hughes, K.L. & Clayton, J. (2011). *Assessing developmental assessment in community colleges* (CCRC Working Paper No. 19). New York, NY: Columbia University, Teachers College, Community College Research Center.
- Mattern, K.D. & Packman, S. (2009). *Predictive validity of ACCUPLACER scores for course placement: A meta-analysis* (Research Report No. 2009-2). New York, NY: College Board.
- Sawyer, R. (2007). Indicators of usefulness of test scores. *Applied Measurement in Education*, 20(3), 255-271.
- Scott-Clayton, J. (2012). *Do high-stakes placement exams predict college success?* (CCRC Working Paper No. 36). New York, NY: Columbia University, Teachers College, Community College Research Center.