Dramatic Changes for Dramatic Results

Faculty-Supported Change Makes San Diego Mesa College "The Leading College of Equity and Excellence"

STEPS TO SUCCESS
from STRONG START TO FINISH

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About the Author

Dr. Sim Barhoum serves as an Associate Professor at San Diego Mesa College.

Acknowledgements

About Strong Start to Finish

Right now, a first-year student sits in a college classroom being ill-served by remedial math.

And if we fail them, they mostly likely will not earn their degree. There is a persistent trend among students placed in remedial or developmental courses – particularly math and English. They are not completing the courses and, in most cases, should not be taking them in the first place. This should not be their path.

We are 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.

Strong Start to Finish was created to better the chances of low-income students, students of color and returning adult students, to create a fundamental shift in the outcome of their college journey. We have networked higher education leaders, policy entrepreneurs, institutions and technical assistance providers to drive towards an outcome where all students pass their first credit-bearing English and math courses during the first year of study.

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Abstract

Primary Audience:

The primary, though not sole, audience for this publication is a department chair of faculty member within an institution.

Problem Statement:

Many of our students were not passing gateway English, and the majority of those were students of color.

Action:

We set out to eliminate the developmental English pipeline and allow students to self-place into the gateway course or the gateway course with support, whichever they deem appropriate.

Context:

In becoming *The Leading College of Equity and Excellence*, our campus culture focused on data infused change. Even though the California code of regulations was already in place in regards to placement, desired outcomes, and success, like many colleges in California, our college was not following the policies.

Process:

There are four basic steps we used to change practice: analyzed our data and saw significant equity gaps; used acceleration to bridge our English pathway sequence; implemented a 2-unit corequisite course to support gateway English; and designed a self-placement tool that allowed students to directly enroll and succeed in gateway English.

Outcomes:

From Fall 2014 to Fall 2017, the number of students completing transfer-level English within 1 semester has increased by 75%. Also, Black students' placement into gateway English increased from 27% in 2017 to 53% in 2018.

Sources of Support:

Our college used funding from grants for basic skills, equity, STEM, and initiatives to pay for professional learning, new and repurposed spaces, equipment, and other high priority areas of need. These transformations included partnering with the leading community college equity organizations Center for Urban Education, the Community College Equity Assessment Lab, and the Center for Organizational Responsibility and Advancement.

Introduction

Imagine someone asked you this question: How many students starting in community college with the intention of earning a degree from a university actually succeeded within six years? Would you estimate that 50 percent accomplished their goal? How about 40 percent? When we look at the reality, you might need to take a seat because those guesses are not even close.

"Overall, out of all degree-seeking students who began at a community college, 13.3 percent earned a bachelor's degree within six years. This completion rate was 9.0 percent for lower-income students and 19.6 percent for higher income students" (Shapiro et al., 2017).

Starting in 2013, San Diego Mesa College recognized that our performance was not what it should be, and we decided to do better. Our faculty and administrators dug deep into our student stories and institutional data, and realized the assessment of students and the developmental pipeline were significant barriers to student success. The purpose of this paper is to show why and how San Diego Mesa College stopped assessing students and started changing and eliminating the developmental writing pipeline, so that similarly-positioned institutions could do the same.

Context

Location & Student Population

California has the largest community college and higher education system in the world. San Diego Mesa College is part of the San Diego Community College District, which includes three colleges and seven continuing education campuses. We are the second-largest district in California, serving about 100,000 students. San Diego Mesa College is one of the largest colleges in California and serves about 23,500 students. Fifty-four percent of our students are female and 46% are male. Forty-three percent of our full-time, beginning undergraduate students receive a Pell Grant. Six percent of our students are Black, 15% are Asian, 37% are Latinx, 32% are White, and 6% are more than one race. We are a federally-designated Hispanic Serving Institution (HSI), meaning specific grant funding is provided to ensure and promote academic success (San Diego Mesa College,

n.d.) and have "an enrollment of undergraduate full-time equivalent students that is at least 25 percent Hispanic students" (U.S. Department of Education, 2016). Our goal has been to use the increased grant funding to improve academic success for all our students.

Policy Factors

The state of California is undergoing significant change at the community college level. AB705 took effect on January 1, 2018, and requires that community colleges "maximize the probability that a student will enter and complete transfer-level coursework in English and math within a one-year time frame and use, in the placement of students into English and math courses, one or more of the following: high school coursework, high school grades, and high school grade point average" (California Community Colleges, 2018). Even though these mandated changes are new for most institutions in California, San Diego Mesa College started the process in 2013.

Our developmental sequence in English included four pre-transfer courses. About 60 - 70% of our students were mandated to enroll into one of the non-credit English courses. This meant students had to take between one and four of these courses before they attempted a credit-bearing, college-level, transferable course. This is problematic because students often dropped out before reaching the gateway course.

After doing our own research and institutional policy analysis, we recognized that our institutional practices—not California state policy—needed to change. For example, we were violating aspects of Section 55003 of Title 5 of the California Code of Regulations (enacted in 2007). Section 55003 (d,2) states, "The prerequisite will assure [...] that a student who has not met the prerequisite is highly unlikely to receive a satisfactory grade in the course (or at least one course within the program) for which the prerequisite is being established" (CCR, Title 5).

We never statistically tested if students were "highly unlikely" to pass the credit bearing courses because we did not allow students into transfer classes unless they passed an assessment test. To be fair, informal conversations with colleagues suggest that most California colleges were ignoring this regulation as well.

Also, Section 55003 (I, B) states, "Where there is a disproportionate impact on any such group of students, the district shall, in consultation within the Chancellor, develop and implement a plan setting forth the steps the district will take to correct the disproportionate impact" (CCR, Title 5). Although Black and Latinx student groups were disproportionately impacted, we did not take significant action previously because faculty did not understand how attrition and pathway length contributed to success. Through our data analysis we saw equity disparities; our Black and Latinx students, especially male, were not doing nearly as well as our other students from other racial and ethnic groups. For example, in the first semester Black (17%) and Latinx (21%) students were passing gateway English at statistically significant lower rates than our White (38%) students.

Additionally, we discovered that our practices were violating Section 55003 (k): "The determination of whether a student meets a prerequisite shall be based on successful completion of an appropriate course or on an assessment using multiple measures" (CCR, Title 5). Rather than using multiple measures for assessment, we used AccuPlacer, a computer-based testing service. After reflecting on this practice, we read research that testing services like AccuPlacer and Compass were not predictors of college success (Belfield & Crosta, 2012); this is opposite of the assumption we and other educators had for years.

Enabling Conditions

Our College Motto

There are two main enabling conditions that contribute to our success. The first is the embracing of our college motto: "The Leading College of Equity and Excellence." This mantra has been adopted in our mission and vision statements, featured on posters, listed within email signatures, strategically placed on our college webpage, and stated so often that it is ingrained in our everyday work. Our college defines equity as:

[S]tudent-centered approach to fostering a culture of success for historically marginalized students. In our roles as faculty members, student services practitioners, staff, and administrators, we pursue equity through principles of inquiry and data-informed decision making. We will achieve equity when we see parity in outcomes across racial/ethnic groups and all disproportionately

impacted groups within higher education. We work within integrated and equity-minded systems to ensure that everyone has what they need to succeed during their time at Mesa College" (San Diego Mesa College, n.d.).

We have come to see equity as the lens with which we view our work and our outcomes. The deliberate use, placement, and incorporation of our motto around campus encourages faculty, administrators, and staff to consider and incorporate its intention into our everyday work.

Partnership Among Leadership and Faculty

The second enabling condition is the sense of togetherness, or partnership, of our college leadership and faculty. Equity and excellence thrive at Mesa College because our President, Dr. Pamela Luster, is a passionate advocate for the underserved populations on our campus, and she knows that transformation only happens with courageous change. Dr. Luster's strong leadership, paired with the core faculty's commitment to implementing the changes, adopts regular enactment of the motto, "The Leading College of Equity and Excellence." For example, many colleges incorporate a smattering of professional learning experiences, but Dr. Luster intentionally brings in equity experts and organizations for multi-year processes to ensure we make lasting and transformative change. These experts use various assessments, skills, and reflective tools to help us become more effective as higher education practitioners. Because a core group of faculty is dedicated to making sure these changes are successful, we intentionally take on leadership roles to make an impact. We attend meetings with our president, vice presidents, deans, and other administrators, and significantly contribute to researching and understanding our college data. Another focus is applying for coordinator and supervisor positions to ensure we take lead roles in shared governance. Making change a dedicated part of our campus culture is necessary because we know that students deserve our best efforts.
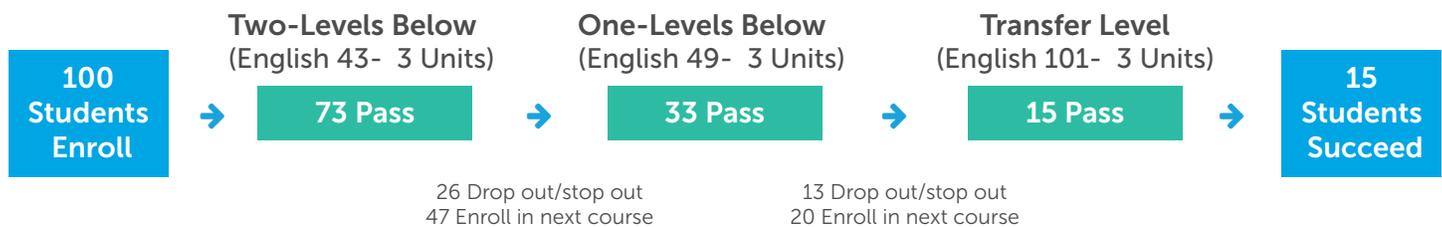
The Change Process

Data Analysis

In our first activity, we met as a department and analyzed our data to understand how students navigate developmental education and their overall success. During this activity, we articulated how difficult and confusing our sequence was. In total, we have four classes below transfer before students enroll into our gateway course, English 101 (Reading and Composition): English 42 (College Reading and Study Skills I), 43 (English Review), 48 (College Reading and Study Skills II), 49 (Basic Composition). (Note: These classes still officially exist within our curriculum. However, as of fall 2018 we do not offer these courses on our schedule.) We found that if a student takes English 43, there is a 73% chance of passing the class. While this statistic seems good in isolation, we decided to analyze individual course success rates and the entire pathway. We defined success as passing a course with a C or higher and completing a college-level course in one year. Through this process, we learned that students who passed English 43 had a 70% success rate in the next course, English 49. Again, although this outcome appears good in isolation, several faculty and administrators asked that we look at our data differently. As we looked closer at throughput rates (the number of students who enroll, then pass the gateway course), we learned that factors such as attrition and course failure rates, contributed to low course success rates for students who started in English 43 and passed the next course, English 49: 33%. Of those 33%, only 44% enrolled and passed the gateway course, English 101. Therefore, the total rate of gateway success from English 43, 49, and 101 is a meager 15%.

Figure 1:
Student Success Rate For Two Levels Below Transfer

| 100 Students Enroll | → | **Two-Levels Below** (English 43- 3 Units) 73 Pass | → | **One-Levels Below** (English 49- 3 Units) 33 Pass | → | **Transfer Level** (English 101- 3 Units) 15 Pass | → | 15 Students Succeed |

26 Drop out/stop out
47 Enroll in next course

13 Drop out/stop out
20 Enroll in next course

Note. These data are for illustrative purposes only. They reflect approximate data from San Diego Mesa College that fluctuates slightly depending on semester and year.
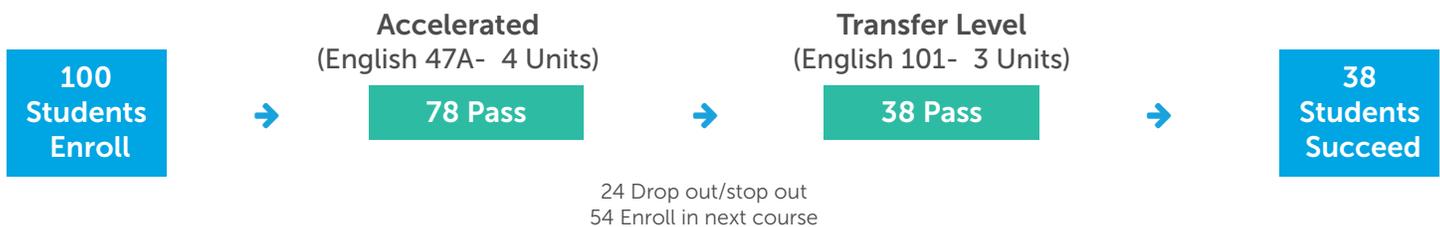
Let us look at this in simpler terms. Imagine 100 students take English 43 and 73 pass (73% pass rate) and 27 fail or withdraw. Because we lose 26 students to attrition from one class to the next, 47 students then enroll in English 49. Of those 47, 33 pass the English 49 class (70% pass rate) and 14 fail or withdraw. Because we lose 13 students to attrition, 20 students enroll in English 101, the gateway course. Of those 20, 15 students pass (75% pass rate) and five fail or withdraw. Therefore, if 100 students start the pathway at English 43, only 15 pass English 101 (15% throughput rate) while 75 fail or withdraw somewhere within the pathway. With these data in mind, we looked at all the other possibilities. What if students had to take all four pre-transfer classes? What about three pre-transfer classes? Looking at the statistics, it became clear why students were not reaching their academic goals.

Acceleration

A few progressive faculty wanted to compress and shorten the pre-transfer sequence, so they helped create English 47A in 2008. This four-unit, non-credit course could take the place of all other pre-transfer courses and is taken at the student's discretion. At that time, and despite the early evidence showing multiple courses produce lower success rates, many faculty feared the accelerated courses would lower standards. Although some were reluctant, our faculty agreed to pilot English 47A; this practice produced improved results. For example, 78% of students pass English 47A, and 79% of those learners go on to take English 101. A somewhat respectable 74% of those students pass English 101. With our updated equity lens, we looked at the data differently.

Figure 2:
Student Success Rate For Accelerated English

	Accelerated (English 47A- 4 Units)		Transfer Level (English 101- 3 Units)		
100 Students Enroll	➜	78 Pass	➜	38 Pass	➜	38 Students Succeed

24 Drop out/stop out
54 Enroll in next course

Note. These data are for illustrative purposes only. They reflect approximate data from San Diego Mesa College that fluctuates slightly depending on semester and year.

Again, let's take a look at this in simpler terms. Imagine 100 students take English 47A and 78 pass the class. Because we lose 24 students to attrition, 54 enroll in English 101. Of those, 38 pass English 101. The acceleration class seemed to be a statistical success because moving from 15% to 38% throughput is a decent difference, and students appreciated the choice between developmental English and accelerated English.

MILESTONE EVENT 3

Corequisite Support

Some of us were still dissatisfied because the throughput rate of 38% from the accelerated course to the gateway course still did not seem good enough. A nationwide analysis of the best practices for teaching community college developmental writing students (Barhoum, 2016) showed better models existed. The Community College of Baltimore County's Accelerated Learning Program (ALP) developed a corequisite course that "resulted in success rates at least double those for [their] traditional basic writing course" (Adams, Gearhart, Miller, & Roberts, 2009). Instead of acceleration, the ALP model placed students directly into the gateway class combined with a supplemental course with support. They combined eight developmentally assessed students with 12 transfer-level assessed students into the three-unit, gateway English class. The eight developmentally assessed students also took a companion course with the same instructor to receive individualized instruction.

Our progressive faculty gravitated toward the ALP model because of the structure, attention to the affective domain, and focus on student support. The model aligned with my research (Barhoum, 2016), and the need to trust student capacity, which was important for many in our department. When we presented the model to our administrative leaders, the Vice President of Instruction declined because as a college we could not offer an eight- or 10-student class due to space limitations and budgeting. The decision was deflating, but we understood the reasoning and pressed on. After much thought we decided to pilot English 101X (English 101 extra): a gateway English course of 25 developmentally assessed students. This five-unit course is comprised of a three-credit gateway English course (English 101) and a two-unit course to support students (English 31). The two-unit course is for working in groups, workshopping, reading, emotional support for life challenges, and addressing anything else that students need to get their work done for the gateway class. We were conscientious about not adding any more work while giving students and the teacher extra time to build relationships.

As part of the official course proposal, we wrote: "We are attempting to address equity and success issues because as a Hispanic Serving Institution grant recipient, we are charged with addressing disproportionate impact on student success in basic skills classes. This course is modeled after accelerated curriculum used in many states with great success." When getting the course through the curriculum approval process in 2016, we did not face extensive resistance because we combined the two-unit co-requisite course with our three-unit gateway course as one learning community course (two courses bound together), and implemented the new course as a pilot study hoping to address disproportionate impact. Officially the course is called LCOM 101, Learning Community 101; however, English 101X is used interchangeably by faculty and others, and is used throughout this report for consistency.

MILESTONE EVENT 4

Self Placement

Our English and math faculty were the impetus for looking at our pathways and placement. In 2014, during meetings with our administrators, English faculty, math faculty, counseling, and others, we investigated our placement practices and their effect on student educational plans and outcomes. From these discussions, a reality developed from our inquiry:

students succeed in courses higher than the placement tests indicate (Belfield & Crosta, 2012). The literature combined with our college's data convinced us to change or eliminate our placement test and use multiple measures that included high school GPA. Eventually in 2018, California passed AB 705 which enforces the Title 5 regulations (noted in the Policy Factors section) with funding. Because of the meetings in 2013, our English department was already on this path.
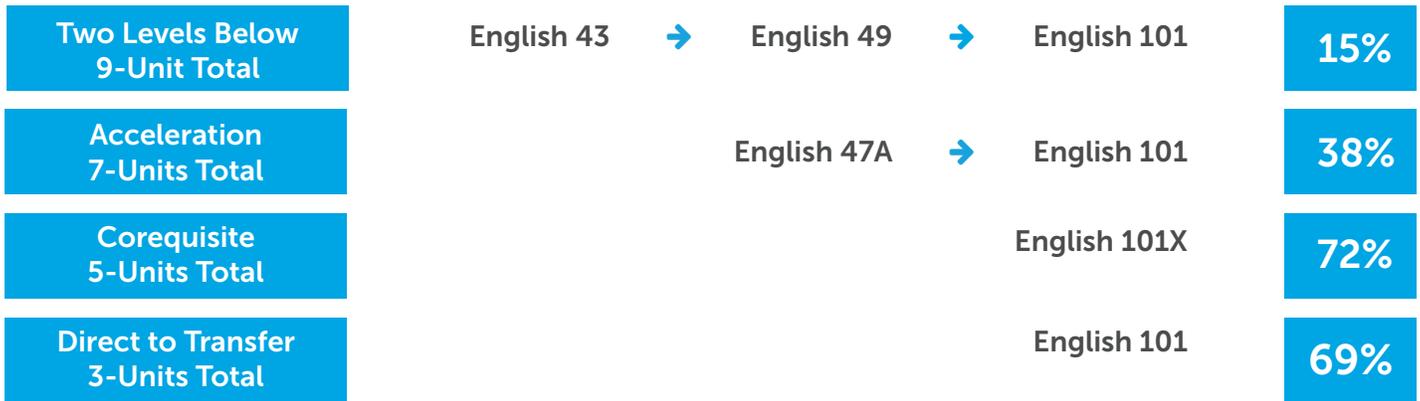
As of Fall 2018, we no longer use a placement test. Instead, we administer our "Placement Assistant" which bases course recommendations on a few criteria including graduation from high school within 10 years, grade received in an 11th or 12th grade English course, and overall high school GPA. For example, if a student has a high school GPA of 2.6 or higher the recommendation is to take gateway English, and if her or his GPA is lower than 2.6, that student is advised to take the corequisite support class, English 101X (5 units) or the accelerated pre-transfer course, English 47A (4-units).

Outcomes from Change in Practice

Overall Change

Within the next year, we will not offer developmental English courses. Instead, we have instituted English 101X. The unique aspect of this course is that it combines a gateway English course with a support course that includes only students who would have traditionally been placed into developmental English. Once we offered our students the opportunity to choose between the developmental course sequence and English 101X, a majority selected English 101X. During the pilot period in 2016 we offered three courses, and in 2018 we increased the offering to 15 to meet the increased demand. So far, the success rate of students in English 101X is 72% compared to our traditional English 101 success rate of 69%. This was significantly better than any other developmental pathway option, including acceleration. We are proud that San Diego Mesa College initiated this California model.

Figure 3: Student Success Rates For Transfer-Level English: Fall 2018

Two Levels Below 9-Unit Total	English 43 ➔ English 49 ➔ English 101	15%
Acceleration 7-Units Total	English 47A ➔ English 101	38%
Corequisite 5-Units Total	English 101X	72%
Direct to Transfer 3-Units Total	English 101	69%

Note. These data are for illustrative purposes only. They reflect approximate data from San Diego Mesa College that fluctuates slightly depending on semester and year.

Equity-Focused Change

The percentage of students enrolling directly into gateway English has increased dramatically over the past few years. In fact, our intention to focus on equity and excellence has resulted in dramatic improvements for students of color. For example, 17% of our African American students were placed into gateway English in Fall 2014, and that increased three-fold to 60% in Fall 2018; an additional 26% had access to the gateway course through the accelerated, co-requisite pathway. Our Latinx students' placement into gateway English increased from 21% to 58%. Our White students' placement also increased during this period: from 38% to 60%. The entire student demographic placement shifted from 28% to 59%.

Table 1
Change in Gateway English Course Placement, by Race/Ethnicity: Fall 2014 to Fall 2018

Time Frame	Total	White	Black	Latinx	Asian	Pacific Islander	Other
Fall 2014	28%	38%	17%	21%	28%	27%	33%
Fall 2015	32%	42%	21%	26%	39%	32%	39%
Fall 2016	36%	44%	18%	30%	41%	22%	46%
Fall 2017	42%	53%	27%	37%	37%	36%	54%
Fall 2018	59%	60%	60%	58%	52%	100%	73%

Data Source: SD Mesa Data Warehouse (https://www.sdmesa.edu/about-mesa/institutional-effectiveness/institutional-research/data-warehouse/Placement.shtml)

From Fall 2014 to Fall 2018, the number of students completing transfer-level English in their first term has increased by 175% (+416 students). From Spring 2014 to Spring 2018, the number of students completing transfer-level English in their first term has increased by 150% (+75 students). This is important because our institutional data is suggesting that the vast majority of students who pass a gateway English course do so in the first semester. Likewise, students who opt out of this pathway are at a much higher risk of dropping out.

Our campus is making a concerted effort to enroll students into the gateway course, and we expect the student success numbers to continue to increase significantly. For example, from Fall 2014 to Fall 2018

Black students passed gateway English from 8% to 26% in the first term and 21% to 31% in the first year. During the same period, completion of transfer English during the first term for Latinx students increased from 10% to 36% and 25% to 44% in their first year. Because the rate at which Black students placed into gateway English changed from 27% in 2017 to 60% in 2018, and Latinx students from 37% in 2017 to 58% in 2018, we believe the student success numbers will continue to rise dramatically. For each of these groups, access to gateway courses made a difference for students' outcomes.

Table 2 Successful Completion of Gateway English in First Term, by Race/Ethnicity: Fall 2014 to Fall 2018							
Time Frame	Total	White	Black	Latinx	Asian	Pacific Islander	Other
Fall 2014	13%	18%	8%	10%	14%	18%	10%
Fall 2015	18%	23%	8%	16%	25%	16%	20%
Fall 2016	25%	29%	15%	20%	30%	22%	32%
Fall 2017	29%	36%	16%	26%	35%	36%	24%
Fall 2018	36%	35%	26%	36%	44%	63%	40%
Data Source: SD Mesa Data Warehouse (https://www.sdmesa.edu/about-mesa/institutional-effectiveness/institutional-research/data-warehouse/Placement.shtml)							

Table 3 Successful Completion of Gateway English in First Year, by Race/Ethnicity: Fall 2014 to Fall 2017							
Time Frame	Total	White	Black	Latinx	Asian	Pacific Islander	Other
Fall 2014	28%	34%	21%	25%	31%	27%	22%
Fall 2015	37%	42%	27%	35%	45%	32%	37%
Fall 2016	46%	48%	40%	42%	56%	33%	44%
Fall 2017	46%	50%	31%	44%	51%	50%	38%
Data Source: SD Mesa Data Warehouse (https://www.sdmesa.edu/about-mesa/institutional-effectiveness/institutional-research/data-warehouse/Placement.shtml)							

We fully expect these trend increases to continue because our department and college view this process holistically, and we are focused on persistence in all academic courses after initial gateway course success. Of the students who pass our gateway English course with support (our co-requisite course), 50% enroll in our second-level English course. This compares favorably to the students who pass traditional gateway English because 49% of those enroll in the second-level English course. We have a goal that is quickly becoming a reality: to have 100% of our students enroll into gateway English regardless of ethnicity or race.

The problem with the traditional pathway for two-year colleges is that the beginning is too long and daunting, and this has serious equity ramifications. For example, of students who start at two-year colleges, the completion rates at a four-year college are significantly worse for Black and Latinx students. For example, 25% of Asian and 20% of White students earn bachelor's degrees in six years, while only 10% Latinx and 8% Black students have the same success (Shapiro, et al, 2017). We suspect that if we transform the pathway for Latinx and Black students and increase the success of all students, we will see a transformational change never before seen at the higher education level.

Sources of Support

Technical Assistance Support

Our college has partnered with the Center for Urban Education (CUE), the Community College Equity Assessment Lab (CCEAL), and the Center for Organizational Responsibility and Advancement (CORA). With these organizations, we have had the opportunity to work alongside leading community college equity scholars, such as Dr. Estela Bensimon, Dr. J Luke Wood, and Dr. Frank Harris III.

Grant Support

In Fall 2014, Mesa College was awarded a five-year "Developing Hispanic - Serving Institutions - Title V" grant in the amount of $2.62 million. The purpose of

the grant was to improve the retention and graduation rates of Mesa's diverse population, particularly our Latinx students, through systemic, institutional changes and improvements. In Fall 2016, Mesa College was also awarded a 5-year, $5 million Title III HSI STEM Grant. The initiative, entitled "STEM Conexiones" (STEM Connections), supports a number of instructional and student support practices aimed at strengthening the college's capacity to support Latinx and low-income students" (San Diego Mesa College, n.d.).

Mesa has used these grants to look at data and practices, which has helped change our developmental pipeline and our assessment policies discussed in this report. In addition, these funds have impacted other areas. For example, in Fall 2014 we significantly strengthened our learning assistance within the classroom by starting an embedded tutoring program with graduate student tutors and peer-tutors in some of our various discipline courses with the lowest rates of success (math, science, etc.). These tutors are in classes upon faculty request and student need. The grants have also helped lead to the creation of a STEM Center, the LOFT (a central and dynamic space for professional learning), and Supplemental Instruction (SI) program. Grant money was needed for these spaces and programs because the majority of the cost was necessary up front for design, creation, and equipment. The programs are now integrated within the Learning Resources Center, which manages tutoring, the library, and other learning assistance services.

Reallocation of Resources

The STEM and HSI grants have allowed Mesa College to free up basic skills funds for specialized projects. For example, Acceleration Innovators at Mesa (AIM) is a Professional Learning Community that was formed to help English faculty learn how to teach reading and writing to community college students, with a special emphasis on practical teaching techniques and relationship building. This is a paid professional development sequence that lasts one year and takes place once a month. All English faculty are advised to take it, especially teachers of the co-requisite gateway course. The money used for AIM was reallocated from basic skills funding because the STEM and HSI grants paid for other high priority areas of need. The anticipated forthcoming funding for AIM will come from college equity funds, as long as faculty and administrators see the continued need.

Moving Forward

Lessons Learned

To enact more effective practices, our college challenged two ineffective mindsets and added one operational strategy. The first mindset was the idea that students were flawed. For instance, perceived student skills supported assessment and placement practices. Students were called *underprepared, not ready for college, needing basic skills,* and other deficit-minded phrases. The bias of student capacity was defective, and it kept us from seeing students' stories.

The second mindset was a more recent framework emerging in the field of higher education about colleges being underprepared for students. Although well-intended, this created the same indicator of bias that shifted the blame to institutions and educators, and restricted our ability to find creative solutions. Instead of looking at deficiencies, our college was intentional about seeing all the possibilities ahead of us by using asset-based language about students, educators, and institutions, so that we transformed authentically and effectively.

In addition to changing our mindset about blame, we implemented an operational strategy at meetings that discontinued the practice of repeating, or recapping, previous discussions. We made a collective choice that we did not want to waste time, resources, and energy. Rather, we started each meeting by stating where we left off and an intention about what we expected to cover in the discussion that day; this guided us away from a state of ineffectiveness, and helped us be intentional in our discussions and practices. It was this momentum that helped push us to improving outcomes.

Next Steps

While San Diego Mesa College is working to meet or exceed the legislative and funding changes occurring in the California Community College system, our English faculty reflected on our success and identified three areas of improvement in the future: train educators how to better build relationships, remove our accelerated course, and make course schedule offerings adhere to student pathway success. We are optimistic because our calculations indicate these three changes are attainable without additional grant money.

First, the results from the work at our college support the national data which show that students succeed when placed into gateway courses or into gateway courses with support. Now that we have implemented this reform, our faculty need to focus on offering effective support once students are in gateway classes. How do we do that? Train teachers how to build better relationships with students and be more attentive to effective domain challenges (Barhoum, 2016). Our professional learning offerings will be focused on changing faculty mindset to include personal and social learning.

Second, the removal of the developmental pipeline did not include eliminating acceleration, which is the four-unit course that combined all the pre-transfer level courses. Although enrollments are down in acceleration, and our college no longer offers stand-alone, pre-transfer English courses, the best path forward is eliminating acceleration. Our department understands the data and our intention is to only offer transfer-level English or transfer-level English with support.

Third, our course schedule needs to accommodate student choice, instead of instructor preference. We know students need to enroll in gateway English in fall semesters and second-level English in spring semesters, and our course schedule needs to accommodate this pattern. Our department has recently discussed how adjusting fall and spring course offerings will significantly benefit students. For the past five years, our district has dealt with challenges and setbacks because of a change in campus software. The system will be fully implemented by the fall 2019 semester, and our staff and faculty will have more capacity to handle the intricacies of the fall and spring scheduling.

While we have undergone dramatic changes at San Diego Mesa College, we know more are to come. It takes time to make transformational change because people take a while to adapt. The most important belief we hold onto is the faith and capacity of our students to do good work and know they have the ability to succeed.

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Appendix A:

Site Context

What is the name of the institution(s), and if appropriate system, where the changes in practice took place?

San Diego Mesa College, San Diego Community College District

In which state(s) is/are your institution/system located?

California

At which type of institution(s) did this change in practice take place? (Highlight all that apply)

2-year public

What is the total, undergraduate (headcount) enrollment for the institution(s) where the change in practice took place? (Provide a total for each institution)

2018 = 23,532

What percentage of full-time, beginning undergraduate students received a Pell Grant?

43%

What percentage of students are African American/Black? (Provide a total for each institution)

6.9%

What percentage of students are American Indian/Alaskan Native? (Provide a total for each institution)

0.3%

What percentage of students are Asian/Pacific Islander? (Provide a total for each institution)

11.2% Asian
4.4 % Filipino
0.6 % Pacific Islander

What percentage of students are Hispanic or Latinx? (Provide a total for each institution)

34.9% Latinx

What percentage of students are More than One Race? (Provide a total for each institution)

6.4% Other
1.8 % Unreported

What percentage of students are White? (Provide a total for each institution)

33.5% White

What percentage of students are aged 24 or under? (Provide a total for each institution)

65%

What percentage of students are aged 25 or older? (Provide a total for each institution)

35%