

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Combined Executive Summary of the Three Reports

Provided by the National Center for Developmental Education:

Instruction

Support Services

Administrative Support

Prepared October 2007

Distributed at an Open Campus Meeting

Friday, 26 October 2007  
9-10 AM, H-51

NOTE: Double-spaced portions of the Executive Summary are direct quotes from the NCDE Reports.

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## The National Center for Developmental Education Executive Summary

### History:

Developmental Education is one of the primary missions of the California Community Colleges. At Bakersfield College (BC), the developmental education offerings are provided through three departments: Academic Development, English/ESL, and Mathematics. Of course, the needs of developmental students are served by a much wider array of courses and services than just those pre-collegiate classes offered by these departments. In many ways, everyone needs to be aware of meeting the needs of developmental students since they eventually sit in every class on campus and visit every service. Several key services and departments are especially helpful in making first contact with the developmental education students who arrive on campus: Assessment, Counseling, Disabled Students Program and Services, Extended Opportunity Program and Services, Financial Aid, Library, Tutoring (both student and ESL), Student Success Lab, and Math Lab.

In 2006-2007, the state revitalized its commitment to serving developmental education students throughout the system by providing two years of one-time dollars that each college could use to enhance their existing programs. Primary oversight of the funds for BC was given to Academic Development. The group decided that an assessment of developmental classes, programs, and services was a great place to start. The ideal review would be conducted by national experts who could compare BC's activities against researched best practices. Although the advisory group valued the assessment/improvement processes being developed on campus through student learning outcomes, the educational master plan, and program review, opening the campus to an external audit was still a daunting prospect—we knew we would hear positive and negative feedback as a result of the study. But we decided the scrutiny was needed to help developmental education faculty and staff make the changes that would best help BC's students.

Fortunately, the National Center for Developmental Education was available for a new project, having just completed a review of the developmental education programs at the community colleges in Texas. Hunter Boylan, NCDE Director, worked with Patti Ross, Dean of Instruction, to finalize what the review would entail. With input from the advisory committee and the support of President Andrews, Vice President Ed Knudson, and Vice President Mildred Lovato, it was determined that the most prudent course of action would be to review the complex and comprehensive departments, programs, and services that address the needs of developmental education students. For students, everything that happens on campus has an influence on their academic success from first contacts through assessment and counseling to developmental courses and efforts in all their classes, including ongoing support such as tutoring and financial aid. If we were to bring in the experts, we needed them to look at everything and how all the pieces worked together to help students.

### The Study Parameters:

NCDE was contracted to conduct an extensive review of Bakersfield College's instructional programs and student services directed toward developmental students. This study would involve three campus visits and subsequent reports that would cover instructional programs, student services, and administrative support. Although there would be some overlap as each visit took place, each report would have its own primary focus. Each review would be conducted by a team of NCDE consultants who would review materials and data and would visit the campus, talking with employees and students and visiting key programs and services. The Delano Center was visited as part of the third review. A special thanks goes to Hunter Boylan who was not required by the contract to attend all the review sessions but who did so nonetheless. His consistent presence and expertise helped add a cohesiveness to the ultimate reviews. The Instructional Review took place in April, the Student Service Review took place in May, and the Administrative Review took place in July.

A final piece of the contract involves NCDE providing a range of training workshops for Bakersfield College throughout 2007-2008. The first follow-up training session took place on Friday, 21 September, when Hunter Boylan presented "Creating a Campus Culture Where Developmental Students Thrive." Three to five additional workshops will be planned with input from the departments, programs, and services referenced in the reports, after they have a chance to review the recommendations. The goal is to get these scheduled for early in spring 2008, at least one or two during flex week if at all possible. The actual number of workshops will be finalized when the topics are determined as well as the number of presenters and the length of the sessions.

### Appreciation:

The NCDE consultants were able to conduct their reviews because BC's faculty and staff were very generous with their time and expertise and open with their feedback and insights. Trying to list all participants here would invariably overlook someone, but thanks are extended anyway to the faculty and staff of Academic Development, Admissions & Records, Assessment, Counseling, Disabled Students Programs and Services, English/ESL, Extended Opportunity Program and Services, Financial Aid, Learning Center (tutoring, math lab & student success lab), Library, and Title V. Overall, NCDE was impressed with the quality and concern for students demonstrated by Bakersfield College personnel. The administrative team is appreciative of everyone's help and participation—and echoes NCDE's appreciation of your work with students.

### General Results & Campus Distribution:

For each review, the consultants spent two full days investigating campus programs and services under the primary focus of each report. The consulting team shared some initial feedback through an exit process with the administrative team and—much like an accreditation site visit—verified the accuracy of details within the draft reports as they were being prepared. NCDE prepared a separate report for each study/visit. However, through the exit interviews, a common thread emerged: BC was commended for doing some great work, *randomly*. One recurring

theme was the need to increase communication and collaboration across campus so the efforts of faculty and staff would be maximized thereby expanding the service to students.

Given that theme, it was decided that the three reports would be presented on the campus as one comprehensive document. This executive summary is being distributed across campus via an open meeting (26 October, 9-10 AM) and a BC-ALL email. Access to the full results will be provided, so all could see the full commentary and research. The report is available through Public Folder (Developmental Education, NCDE Reports). In addition, hard copies of the three-in-one document will be provided to each program and service reviewed within the reports' pages and made available for general review by placing copies in the Library, the Academic Senate Office, and the Delano Center. Once faculty and staff have had a chance to review the commentary and recommendations, additional meetings will be called as needed, either for the campus or individual areas.

### General Report Conclusions:

Although each report was initially submitted as a separate document, since Boylan participated in all the visits/reviews, his conclusion for the third report (Administrative Support) offers some commentary that addresses the comprehensive nature of the three reviews. Note that the double-spaced portions of the Executive Summary are direct quotes from the NCDE Reports although paragraphs have been pulled from introductory and concluding comments at times creating new juxtapositions.

Here are Boylan's concluding paragraphs from Report III (Administrative Support):

Key administrative leaders at Bakersfield College are to be commended for recognizing the developmental education is not only a major function of the institution but a function that is critical to performing the college's mission. The extent to which there may be a gap between this recognition and the resources assigned to developmental education is more likely to result from resource constraints than from a lack of concern or commitment. Also, although the leadership team of Bakersfield College acknowledges that additional resources may need to be allocated to developmental education activities, they have not known where to start and which investments may result in the greatest return. The fact that this review is taking place is an indication that the college's leadership is willing to take action once they

decide upon a plan that will yield the greatest benefits to developmental programs, courses, and students.

As this report indicates, the single greatest problem with developmental education at Bakersfield College is the lack of a coordinated, focused, and systematic effort. It is hoped that the information provided in this and previous reports will enable institutional decision-makers to determine how to coordinate the many campus courses, services, and activities serving underprepared students.

The “bad news” from this and other reports is that improving developmental education at Bakersfield College will probably require a long-term, labor intensive, and costly process. Major coordination of effort, some realignment of policies and procedures, and additional resource allocations are likely to be necessary. The “good news” is that the college already has in place most of the essential courses and services necessary to serve underprepared students well. It also has committed and well-qualified faculty and staff to provide these courses and services.

Perhaps the most important “good news,” however, is that the changes in policies, procedures, organizational structures, and instructional techniques necessary will benefit ALL students and programs at Bakersfield College. The research and literature of the field is clear and consistent in indicating that what works to insure that underprepared students succeed academically and are retained is also what works to insure success and retention for all community college students.

#### More General Comments:

The final conclusion from Report 1 also stressed insights that are applicable for all across campus to understand. Basically, developmental education is everyone’s business. Here are the concluding paragraphs from Report 1:

The vast majority of BC faculty members teaching developmental and academic development courses are well-qualified for their positions, knowledgeable in their subject matter, and committed to the success of their students. If students are not retained at the desired levels or have not learned the subject matter with the desired competency, it is not because faculty members have failed to put forth sufficient effort. Indeed, the faculty members interviewed worked hard, cared for their students, and often tried new techniques to help students learn.

Unfortunately, there are both local and systemic problems that work against the success of instructors who work with underprepared students at BC. Chief among these is the fact that student demographics and culture have changed more rapidly than the culture of BC.

The college is confronted with large numbers of what K. Patricia Cross once referred to as the “New College Students” (1976, p. 3). These are students who thirty years ago would not have been considered “college material.” They are single parents, displaced workers, and ethnic minorities. They are students with disabilities, students with poor records in previous schooling, or only marginal previous schooling. They are students who often lack fluency in either English or their native language, who come from backgrounds of hard core poverty, and students who have been out of school for a decade or more. When Cross coined the term “New College Students” thirty years ago to describe such students, she was describing a growing minority of students. Today, these students represent a majority of the community college population.

The institution has made sporadic efforts to accommodate the fact that its student body has become more diverse and, at the same time, often less qualified. But these efforts have been neither systematic nor comprehensive.

Programs have been established to address the needs of students from different cultures and weaker educational backgrounds, workshops have been held to accommodate different teaching and learning styles, and policies have been developed to make it easier for students to matriculate through the institution. However, these efforts have been random and piecemeal.

There is inadequate communication between and among the departments and programs that deal with the new majority of college students. There is little coordination between professionals in the academic and student development areas focused on collaborative efforts to meet these students' needs. There are insufficient training opportunities available to faculty who work with these students. The fiscal, physical, and personnel resources available have been inadequate to address the needs of the new majority of BC students and the faculty who work with them.

Nevertheless, there are still many things that BC can do in response to these circumstances. A basic mantra in consulting [is] that "*the cheapest form of innovation is a change in your own attitude.*" Attitudes and the actions resulting from them must be changed if BC is to be successful with its current students.

Administrators must recognize that serving the new majority of college students is not the job of a particular program, department, or innovation. Instead, it is the job of the entire institution including everyone from the president to the



grounds keepers. Planning must be implemented and resources allocated based on the recognition that serving the new majority is the college's major task.

Faculty should recognize that they must teach the students they have, not the ones they used to have or wish they had. The basic philosophy of developmental education is that faculty must accept students where they are and move them as far as they can go (and the key word here is "accept").

Frequently, teaching the new majority will require that faculty learn and adopt new teaching methods and techniques. This will necessitate a much greater emphasis on faculty development, particularly for adjunct faculty who often teach the majority of developmental courses.

Teaching the new majority will require reviewing departmental and program policies to determine which ones encourage student success and which ones serve as barriers to student success. It will require developing new policies based on the criteria of - *does this promote learning for our current generation of students?*

Teaching the new majority will require greater collaboration with others both inside and outside the university. No individual, program or group of programs can meet the challenge alone. It will require a collective effort, frequently among people who are not used to working with one another.

The members of the review team believe that the recommendations provided here may serve as a basis for the attitudinal and operational changes at BC. Change must take place if the college is to be successful in serving its new majority of students. But whatever change takes place must be systematic rather than random, coordinated rather than isolated, and planned rather than accidental.

### Specific Report Results & Recommendations:

Each of the three reports were completed by a separate review team. In addition, each report had multiple sections and corresponding recommendations. The recommendations come after explanatory commentary and are supported by research bibliographies. Consult the full reports in public folders to review commentaries and bibliographies. The recommendations are not numbered sequentially throughout each report, rather each subsection starts over with recommendation 1. In the Executive Summary, the recommendations in each report have sequential numbers imposed to facilitate reference for discussion. In addition, note that the double-spaced portions of the Executive Summary are direct quotes from the NCDE Reports although paragraphs have been pulled from introductory and concluding comments at times creating new juxtapositions. The full reports are available in public folders.

### Taking Action and Prioritizing Change:

As is typical practice with the use of consultants, recommendations are provided for contemplation and review. After careful consideration and collaborative exchange with all involved, the recommendations that will be followed would be determined and prioritized. Certainly those recommendations that impact funding, staffing, and significant changes in service and curriculum will need careful review. Also, some recommendations address the same challenge and initiating one maybe negate the need to initiate another. *The recommendations listed in the Executive Summary in italics fall into that category, where additional meetings and discussion will be needed with those most directly involved to determine how to proceed.* Watch for announcements about additional meetings. **The recommendations listed in the Executive Summary in bold are ones that are easier to take more immediate action on, if that decision is finalized.** All changes resulting from the recommendations provided by the NCDE Reports will be ultimately approved by President Andrews. Works teams will be needed to help with implementation.

## Evaluation of Bakersfield College Developmental Education

### Part I - Instruction

#### Review of Developmental Writing Program at Bakersfield College

Prepared by Elizabeth Carroll, Ph.D.

Faculty at BC care about educating their developmental writing students, but their efforts are seriously undermined by several factors: excessively large class sizes and inadequate space; a lack of support for faculty development; an ineffective curriculum driven by exit exams and grammar drills; and a lack of adequate support services for writing students. Addressing these issues will depend on funding and the

collaborative involvement of administrators and faculty in the three disciplines that offer developmental writing courses (Academic Development, English, and English as a Second Language). Commentary is provided in the following areas: Use of diverse instructional methods, Integration of classrooms and laboratories, Consistency of entry and exit standards for developmental courses, Use of learning communities, Integration of critical skills throughout the developmental education curriculum, Use of adjunct faculty, Use of strategic learning techniques, and Class size in developmental education.

### Recommendations

*1.1 Recommendation 1. Lower class size in all developmental writing courses.*

*1.2 Recommendation 2. Hire a specialist in rhetoric and composition with expertise in writing program administration to reopen and direct the writing center and administer a writing across the curriculum (WAC) program.*

*1.3 Recommendation 3. Implement annual goals #4 and #5 in the future development strategies of BC's Educational Master Plan.*

*1.4 Recommendation 4. Review the use of the POWS and the FEE. (Incorrectly numbered "5" in the final report—but only four recommendations provided).*

### Academic Development - Reading and Study Strategies Courses

Prepared by Hunter R. Boylan, Ph.D.

The reading and study strategies courses at BC represent an incredible range of content and ability levels. The Academic Development reading courses serve students who read below the fourth grade level on up through high school and college level. The reading faculty teaching Academic Development courses have done a good job of selecting content appropriate for the students they serve. Given the wide range

of reading abilities of BC students, the faculty teaching Academic Development reading and study strategies courses have designed a reasonable course sequence.

The review team was also asked to comment on specific aspects of developmental education at BC in each subject area. The following comments reflect the reviewer's response to these specific areas in the Academic Development reading courses: Use of Mastery Learning, Use of diverse instructional strategies, Integration of classrooms and laboratories, Consistency of exit and entrance standards for developmental courses, Use of learning communities, Integration of critical skills throughout the developmental education curriculum, Use of adjunct faculty, Use of strategic learning techniques, Class size in developmental education, and Comparison with national averages

#### Recommendations for Reading and Study Strategies Instruction

*1.5 Recommendation 1. Make more systematic use of computer-based mastery learning in reading courses.*

*1.6 Recommendation 2. Invest more resources in training faculty.*

*1.7 Recommendation 3. Engage with laboratories in a more systematic manner.*

**1.8 Recommendation 4. Make systematic efforts to insure consistency of standards.**

*1.9 Recommendation 5. Build learning communities.*

**1.10 Recommendation 6. 6. Agree on essential skills and plan to integrate them throughout the developmental curriculum.**

**1.11 Recommendation 7. Utilize a greater variety of study strategies techniques.**

*1.12 Recommendation 8. Work to reduce class size.*

*1.13 Recommendation 9. Restore teaching assistants.*

*1.14 Recommendation 10. Utilize the CRLA position paper on the rights of adult readers and learners as a guide for personal and program development.*

Review of Basic Skills & Developmental Mathematics  
Courses at Bakersfield College  
Prepared by Barbara S. Bonham, Ph.D.

The National Center for Education Statistics (Parsad & Lewis, 2003) reports that the percentage of students enrolling in developmental courses was higher for mathematics than for English or Reading at two-year colleges. In a recent study by mathematics educators in the Massachusetts Community College System, it was revealed that “there are more than two million enrollments in developmental mathematics (basic arithmetic, and introductory and intermediate algebra) in community colleges nationally. Developmental mathematics is the single largest program in community colleges nationwide, enrolling more than 15% of all students with failure rates reaching as high as 50%” (Massachusetts Community Colleges Executive Office, 2006). Statewide data included in the California Community Colleges System Strategic plan reveal that “those who begin mathematics with arithmetic have a 10% chance of taking a transfer level mathematics course.”

This report will compare what is presently being done at BC, CA in the area of mathematics for underprepared students with the research, guidelines, and best practices. The latter will be used not only for discussion but also as a basis for recommendations as necessary and appropriate. The first section of this report will include an overview on the success rates at BC in the Basic Skills Mathematics course and Developmental Mathematics courses. Other sections of this report all relating to these pre-college courses in mathematics include: 1) Assessment, 2) The Curriculum

and Related Issues, 3) Delivery Strategies, 4) Skills Related to Success in Math, 5) Labs, Tutoring, Learning Communities, SI, etc. 6) Instructional Strategies and 7) Professional Development. Substantial review of the computerized program ALEKS is also provided.

Part of the conclusion acknowledges that “a systematic approach to improving the basic skills/developmental mathematics program at BC is needed.” Also, greater collaboration between all services and support programs needs to be enhanced.

### Recommendations

**1.15 Recommendation 1. Collect more noncognitive information on math students.**

**1.16 Recommendation 2. Continue to analyze data on student performance in math classes.**

**1.17 Recommendation 3. Review student learning outcomes.**

*1.18 Recommendation 4. Teach math study skills.*

*1.19 Recommendation 5. Enhance professional development for math faculty.*

**1.20 Recommendation 6. Use more diverse teaching strategies (from AMATYC 2006).**

## Evaluation of Bakersfield College Developmental Education

### Part II - Services

Prepared by *Hunter R. Boylan, Ph.D.* (Director, NCDE),  
*Gen Ramirez, Ph.D.* (Director, Learning Assistance Center,  
California State University - Long Beach), and  
*D. Patrick Saxon, M.B.A., Ed.S.* (Assistant Director, NCDE)

Support services are essential to the success of all college students but particularly for those who are underprepared and enrolled in developmental

education programs. Research is consistent and clear in finding that support services are an important part of any effort to improve the performance and retention of underprepared students. Furthermore, the research indicates that, for these services to be most effective, they must be linked to remedial courses and integrated into the academic experience of underprepared students.

As part of its contract with Bakersfield College (BC) to evaluate developmental education, the National Center for Developmental Education was charged with reviewing student support services related to developmental education. The review took place on May 15 and 16, 2007. It involved discussions with directors and staff of various programs, tours of facilities, and interviews with students. Documents relating to each program were also reviewed both before and after the visit. When necessary, follow-up telephone calls were made to directors and program administrators to seek additional information. This review not only explored the support services available to students at BC but also the extent to which they were integrated into the campus-wide developmental education effort.

One of the most notable things about the support services of Bakersfield College is that they are many and varied. They certainly provide a comprehensive range of interventions designed to help students enter and succeed in college. Also, they are typically well managed and staffed by competent, responsible, and dedicated professionals.

Another notable aspect of BC's support services is that they are equally varied in their funding, support, and resources. The somewhat patchwork distribution of programs and services throughout the campus, their uneven staffing and resources,

and their range of quality in facilities and furnishings creates an impression of disconnectedness. Also, the expansion of student development over the years has not been planned.

#### Admissions and Records (Assessment) Recommendations

**2.1 Recommendation 1. Review registration instructions and procedures to insure that they are understandable to students with low reading levels or poor English skills.**

**2.2 Recommendation 2. Meet with student focus groups to identify unforeseen problems with admission, assessment, and registration.**

#### Orientation Recommendations

**2.3 Recommendation 1. Review the online orientation program.**

*2.4 Recommendation 2. Consider implementing a true first year experience program.*

*[NOTE: already part of Foundations of Excellence Action Plans].*

#### Counseling Recommendations

*2.5 Recommendation 1. Use students' waiting time to their advantage.*

*2.6 Recommendations 2. Provide more training in cross-cultural communication.*

*2.7 Recommendation 3. Train receptionists in customer relations.*

**2.8 Recommendation 4. Audit Counseling Center functions to determine which ones require the assistance of professional counselors.**

*2.9 Recommendation 5. Explore the use of peer or paraprofessional advisers.*

*2.10 Recommendation 6. Improve the Integration of Counseling Department's efforts with those of developmental education.*

*2.11 Recommendation 7. Place greater emphasis on student mental health.*



### Extended Opportunity Programs and Services Recommendations

- 2.12 *Recommendation 1. Improve response to student problems.*
- 2.13 Recommendation 2. Improve connectivity with other campus units.**
- 2.14 Recommendation 3. Expand evaluation efforts.**

### Financial Aid Recommendations

- 2.15 *Recommendation 1. Expand the college endowment for scholarships.*
- 2.16 *Recommendation 2. Continue an emphasis on providing outreach services to parents.*
- 2.17 *Recommendation 3. Provide workshops on financial management.*

### Disabled Students Program and Services Recommendations

- 2.18 Recommendation 1. Strengthen communication with the Academic Development Department.**
- 2.19 *Recommendation 2. Take a greater role in faculty development.*
- 2.20 *Recommendation 3. Expand liaisons with high schools.*

### Student Success Lab Recommendations

- 2.21 *Recommendation 1. Integrate Plato with ESL instruction.*
- 2.22 Recommendation 2. Encourage faculty referrals.**
- 2.23 *Recommendations 3. Expand Professional Staffing.*
- 2.24 *Recommendation 4. Expand operating hours.*

### Tutoring Center Recommendations

- 2.25 Recommendation 1. Become more proactive.**

2.26 *Recommendation 2. Strengthen the Tutorial Program (reference to Supplemental Instruction provided in commentary). [NOTE: Supplemental Instruction already being explored through BSI].*

2.27 *Recommendation 3. Create collaborative initiatives.*

2.28 **Recommendation 4. Plan for institutionalization.**

## **Evaluation of Bakersfield College Developmental Education**

### **Part III - Administration**

Prepared by *Hunter R. Boylan, Ph.D. (Director, NCDE)*  
*J. Bryan Brooks (Chair, Leadership and Education Studies, ASU)*

This report represents the third and final component of an extensive review of developmental education at Bakersfield College. This report addresses the administration of the college and the extent to which it supports developmental education and contributes to its success. Such a review is appropriate because there is substantial research indicating that administrative support is critical to the success of developmental education. The purpose of this report is to identify ways in which the words and actions of administrators at Bakersfield College support developmental education. It also addresses administrative and coordinating arrangements that influence the effectiveness of developmental education.

#### **Institutional Leadership Recommendations**

**3.1 Recommendation 1. The administrative leadership team of Bakersfield College is encouraged to communicate aspirational values concerning developmental education more frequently and more clearly.**

**3.2 Recommendation 2. Celebrate the institutional values that have guided Bakersfield College through difficult times in the past and present.**

### Leadership Support for Developmental Education Recommendations

*3.3 Recommendation 1. Develop a systematic plan for investing resources to improve developmental education. [NOTE: The ongoing funding opportunity through the state BSI will begin to address this matter].*

*3.4 Recommendation 2. Invest more resources in training and development for those working with underprepared students.*

*3.5 Recommendation 3. Create more formal and informal opportunities for faculty to discuss teaching and learning issues.*

*3.6 Recommendation 4. Set up a faculty/staff lounge where instructional personnel may congregate and discuss teaching and learning issues. [NOTE: SDCC is already working to convert LEV 40 into a comfortable Professional Development Center as a first step in effectively providing such a center on campus].*

### Developmental Education as an Institutional Priority Recommendations

**3.7 Recommendation 1. The President, Vice Presidents and other key administrative personnel should systematically identify the “priority message” they want to deliver and consistently and frequently share that message with faculty, staff, students, and the community.**

**3.8 Recommendation 2. Enhance internal communications concerning institutional enrollment, funding, and resource utilization data.**

**3.9 Recommendation 3. Focus on the message that good developmental education is good for the college.**

### Institutional Integration of Developmental Education Recommendations

**3.10 Recommendation 1. Continue to gather and disseminate data on the percentage of Bakersfield College students who participate in some form of developmental education.**

**3.11 Recommendation 2. Continue to work closely with the Academic Senate and encourage them to help make the case for developmental education.**

**3.12 Recommendation 3. Use college publications to reinforce the importance of the campus-wide developmental education effort.**

**3.13 Recommendation 4. Develop a plan for improving the integration of developmental education into the campus mainstream.**

**3.14 Recommendation 5. Explore methods of providing incentives for faculty who collaborate with the developmental education effort.**

Developmental Education Administrative Coordination Recommendations

**3.15 Recommendation 1. Appoint an administrative officer to coordinate the campus-wide developmental education effort.**

**3.16 Recommendation 2. Develop a philosophy statement for developmental education courses and services. [NOTE: already being explored by the BSI Team].**

**3.17 Recommendation 3. Develop a statement of goals and objectives for the campus-wide developmental education effort. [NOTE: Already being explored by the BSI Team].**

**3.18 Recommendation 4. Continue to search for the best organization structure and personnel assignments to effectively serve the needs of underprepared students.**

Institutional Policies and Procedures Affecting Developmental Education Recommendations

**3.19 Recommendation 1. Remove unintended barriers to access for underprepared students by involving faculty and staff within the institution in a comprehensive review and revision of policies and procedures associated with admissions and placement.**

**3.20 Recommendation 2. Revise policies and procedures to enhance access by underprepared students.**

Campus Climate for Developmental Students and Courses Recommendations

**3.21 Recommendation 1. Review the language used to describe developmental programs and courses in college publications.**

**3.22 Recommendation 2. Develop a listing of comments and descriptors that should not be used in developmental courses.**

Review of Administrative Leadership at Bakersfield College - Delano Campus  
Prepared by D. Patrick Saxon, M.B.A., Ed.S., (Assistant Director, NCDE)

Kerr employed the metaphor of “nations” that exist at every college (Cain, 1999). These nations have a tendency to define their own constituents, territory, jurisdiction, and standards of operation. At Delano, the rules of engagement appear

to be defined quite differently from those of the Bakersfield College main campus. Much of this difference is affected by its unique organizational structure, the personnel and clientele, and a limited availability of resources. The Delano campus personnel have worked to establish their “nation” and to have it operate as effectively as possible in the midst of rapid enrollment growth, limited facilities and resources, and excessive leadership turnover.

The report presents commentary on the following aspects of the Delano Center: Professional faculty and staff, Student population concerns, Leadership of the Delano Campus, and Leadership and Developmental Education. As one interviewee put it “(Delano) is like a small town that struck oil and now must decide what to do with it. There is an incredible lack of foresight, planning, and vision among the ranks.” It appears that many of the problematic issues at Delano are caused by rapid growth, “porous” campus leadership, and a lack of strategic planning (or communication of those plans) to the rank and file. Some of these recommendations go beyond the scope of developmental education however, given that a primary function of Delano is developmental education, the reviewers believe it is appropriate to provide them.

### Recommendations

**3.23 Recommendation 1. Re-establish and communicate Delano’s vision and plan with its constituents.**

- *Plan for adequate administrative staff.*
- *Plan for appropriate development of the Delano Science and Technology facility (DST).*
- *Plan for centralizing the Delano Campus.*

**3.24 Recommendation 2. Establish performance and learning outcomes.**

**3.25 Recommendation 3. Establish and communicate the priorities of the campus director.**

**3.26 Recommendation 4. Communicate a consistently positive message about developmental education and ESL.**

**3.27 Recommendation 5. Treat students as valued customers.**

*3.28 Recommendation 6. Examine and promote equitable distribution of resources.*

#### Follow-Up Meetings and Training Sessions:

As needed, follow-up meetings can be arranged for groups of faculty and staff of individual areas or for a larger group. In addition, training sessions need to be decided upon once decisions are finalized about which recommendations to follow and how to prioritize the resulting action plans. Watch for follow-up emails and surveys to help collate everyone's feedback to the NCDE Reports. If you have questions, need fuller feedback, or want to schedule a meeting for further discussion, contact Patti Ross at 395-4037 or [pross@bakersfieldcollege.edu](mailto:pross@bakersfieldcollege.edu).

# Evaluation of Bakersfield College Developmental Education

Conducted by the National Center for Developmental Education  
Appalachian State University  
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## Part I - Teaching and Learning

Reviewers: *Barbara S. Bonham, Ph.D.* (Senior Researcher, NCDE),  
*Hunter R. Boylan, Ph.D.* (Director, NCDE), *Elizabeth L. Carroll,*  
*Ph.D.* (Associate Professor of English, Director, University Writing  
Center)

## Introduction

Bakersfield College (BC) is part of the Kern County Community College

District which serves an area of almost 25,000 square miles, including a Delano campus, Cerro Coso, and Porterville College, as well as several education centers. Founded as a traditional junior college in 1913, BC is one of the oldest 2-year colleges in the United States.

The college offers over 100 certificate programs and 70 different A.A. and A.S. degrees. According to Kern County Community College District records, BC enrolled just under 16,000 students (unduplicated head count) in the fall of 2003 and generated almost 12,000 FTEs. In 2006, the college generated 1,487 degrees and certificates (Bakersfield College Office of Institutional Research and Planning, 2006).

BC is a totally open enrollment institution in that it admits everyone who applies regardless of their prior educational experience or credentials. As a result of this and local demographic factors BC also has an extremely diverse student body. Although a majority of students enrolled at the college are white, a large minority (39%) are classified as "Hispanic." The college also enrolls a smaller percentage of African-American, Asian and Pacific Island, and Native American students. According to faculty and administrators, a very large number of these students are also first generation college students.

Many of these students also come from low income backgrounds.



According to U.S. Census documents, the per capita income in Kern County is \$15,760 with a mean income of \$37,614. As of 2003, 19.1% of the population fell below the official U.S. poverty line (U.S. Census Bureau, 2003) and over 27% of young people below the age of 18 grew up in households below the poverty line (Bishaw & Iceland, 2003).

Furthermore, the college is located in an area with the lowest baccalaureate attainment rate in California. This lack of educational attainment tends to mitigate any economic development in the county and contributes to a continued cycle of poverty among the area's most disadvantaged citizens. As McCabe (2000) points out, the modern American economy requires skilled workers in order to develop and expand. Economic development cannot take place without an educated population coupled with a skilled work force. High paying jobs require skill-based industries but skill-based industries tend to go where a skilled labor force already exists.

BC is well positioned, therefore, to make a critical contribution to the economic development of the region and its citizens. The college can do this by developing the talents of local citizens and expanding the pool of skilled laborers, technicians, and professionals in its service area. This will contribute to additional economic development as well as existing business

and industry, thus improving opportunities for all. BC, therefore, represents the area's major source of educational opportunity for students of all social and economic backgrounds, but particularly minorities and the poor. The college contributes to the social and economic development of its community through developing the talent pool of that community.

A significant part of this talent development effort requires that students master basic academic, life, and workforce skills before going on to certification, degree, or college transfer programs. Developmental education, designed to teach basic skills and prepare students for college level work, is a key component of this effort.

Although developmental education is not specifically mentioned in the college vision, mission, and goal statements there are several statements that imply its importance to the mission of the college. One of the goals of the college, for instance, is to "improve student access, retention, and success." Another is to provide "all students with the competencies necessary for learning and earning." These statements are consistent with a commitment to developmental education at BC.

As part of this commitment, campus administrators decided to use some recently available funding from the State of California to conduct a

thorough review of developmental education courses and activities at Bakersfield Community College. During the spring of 2007, discussions were undertaken with the National Center for Developmental Education (NCDE) and the NCDE was later commissioned to assemble a team of postsecondary education professionals in order to perform this review. It was agreed that the review would include three parts. Part I would evaluate teaching and learning activities, Part II would evaluate student support services, and Part III would evaluate administrative support for developmental education.

Part I of the evaluation process was undertaken on April 9 and 10, 2007. The evaluation team consisted of Dr. Hunter R. Boylan, Professor and Director of the National Center for Developmental Education, Dr. Barbara S. Bonham, Professor and Senior Researcher of the National Center for Developmental Education, and Dr. Elizabeth L. Carroll, Associate Professor of English and Director of the Writing Center, Appalachian State University. Dr. Boylan was to review developmental reading, Dr. Bonham was to review developmental mathematics, and Dr. Carroll was to review developmental English.

Prior to the visit, members of the review team analyzed documents provided by BC. They also obtained many more documents during their visit

and reviewed these both during and after the visitation. During the visit, the review team toured facilities, interviewed instructors of adult and developmental education courses, and held discussions with college administrators, professional tutors, and students. Following the visit, the review team met to discuss their findings and decide on a structure for the report. The resulting effort focuses on three areas: English and writing, mathematics, and reading and study strategies. The findings from each of the areas under review are presented below.

**Review of Developmental Writing Program at Bakersfield College  
Prepared by Elizabeth Carroll, Ph.D.**

**Developmental Writing at Bakersfield College**

Faculty at BC care about educating their developmental writing students, but their efforts are seriously undermined by several factors: excessively large class sizes and inadequate space; a lack of support for faculty development; an ineffective curriculum driven by exit exams and grammar drills; and a lack of adequate support services for writing students.

Addressing these issues will depend on funding and the collaborative involvement of administrators and faculty in the three disciplines that offer developmental writing courses (Academic Development, English, and English as a Second Language).

The following report is structured around the topics given to the review team by representatives of BC, using data collected during the observation on April 9-10 and current research on developmental writing, and offers guidelines for addressing issues in these areas of concern to best meet the needs of BC's developmental writing students.

### **1. Use of diverse instructional methods**

A recent study by researchers at the Center for Student Success (CSS, 2007) identified characteristics of effective developmental programs in the California Community College System. In the most effective programs, "Developmental education faculty employ a variety of instructional methods to accommodate student diversity" (CSS, 2007, p. 54). Faculty at BC reported using a variety of instructional methods, most often using some combination of the following: lecture, grammar exercises, journal writing, practice tests, peer editing, portfolios, and individual conferences.

While effective teaching for diverse students does require a variety of

teaching methods, the presence of variety alone does not answer the question of which methods are most effective. Some of the practices BC faculty use are supported by current research on the writing process; journal writing (Fulwiler, 1987), peer collaboration (Bruffee, 1999), portfolios (Belanoff & Dickson, 1991; Reynolds & Rice, 2006; Sommers, 1991; Yancey, 1992), and individual conferences (Murphy & Law, 1995) are particularly effective in teaching writing as a process. However, research shows that other methods, such as timed writing tests, grammar workbook exercises, and lecturing about writing (and grammatical concepts in particular) are less effective (Hartwell, 1985; Shaughnessy, 1977). BC faculty rely heavily on these less effective methods; classroom instruction emphasizes workbook grammar exercises and practice exit exams. Practicing timed essay exams will help improve students' performance on the exit exams (via the method of "teaching to the test"); this practice will not, however, teach students the rhetorical fluency necessary for academic literacy and college-level writing tasks (Bartholomae, 2005). Additionally, BC faculty emphasize workbook grammar exercises and tests, an approach to teaching writing based on misguided assumptions about the nature of error and the writing process (Shaughnessy, 1977; Bartholomae, 2005). To increase student retention and

success at BC, teaching methods should focus far more attention on students' writing processes and rhetorical skills. (For resources on developmental writing curriculum and assessment, see Adler-Kassner & Glau, 2005; Belanoff, 1991; Bernstein, 2007; Bizzell, 2000; Cody, 1996; Elliot, 1995; Enos, 1987; Herrington, 1990; Hindman, 1999; Horner & Lu, 1999; Rose, 1989; Shaughnessy, 1977; Sirc, 1994).

Adopting a more effective writing pedagogy in the three areas that teach developmental writing at BC will require a major shift in curricular design as well as instructional methods. The Student Learning Outcomes (SLOs) for developmental writing courses, for example, are weighted heavily toward competencies involving grammatical correctness, de-emphasizing or ignoring altogether other possible outcomes such as rhetorical skill, critical writing and thinking, and metacognitive development. While it is true that students need to learn editing skills and some rules of academic English, these skills are not the first step in learning how to write at the college level, nor are these editing skills learned through grammar workbook exercises or practice tests. As Bartholomae (2005, p. 159) argues, "the skills curriculum is not founded on any investigation of the language that students produce, nor any systematic investigation into how writing skills are

acquired.”

For the past thirty years, research on the teaching of writing has shown that students learn best when they are exposed to a process-based approach to teaching writing, an approach that teaches students writing as a series of identifiable, recursive stages, and focuses students’ and teachers’ attention to the process (rather than the product) of writing (Murray, 2003).

Some BC faculty are familiar with the language of writing process theory but their pedagogical practices do not reflect process theory’s guiding assumptions. For example, teachers reported that students must include in their final exit exams “brainstorming, outlining, and drafting” (terms taken from process writing pedagogy); however, research on the writing process suggests that students do not write their best under timed, artificial, anxiety-producing testing conditions. The methods that BC faculty use to “teach to the test” include, according to one English B60 syllabus, using seven class meetings to write practice tests and two class meetings for grading the tests (class is canceled for that week). In a sixteen-week course that meets twice a week, over half of the course (nine classes) will be spent exclusively in the preparation for and grading of exit exams, time that would be much better spent teaching students a writing process rather than



testing them on their products.

As the Conference on College Composition and Communication's Position Statement on Writing Assessment claims:

Essay tests that ask students to form and articulate opinions . . . without time to reflect, talk to others, read on the subject, revise, and have a human audience promote distorted notions of what writing is. They also encourage poor teaching and little learning. Even teachers who recognize and employ the methods used by real writers in working with students can find their best efforts undercut by assessments such as these (CCCC, 2006, p. 2).

Teachers and students are not well served by the final exit exams (FEES) and proficiency of writing tests (POWS). Best assessment practices, however, do not use timed essay exams, and they use multiple measures:

One piece of writing—even if it is generated under the most desirable conditions—can never serve as an indicator of overall writing ability, particularly for high-stakes decisions. Ideally, writing ability must be assessed by more than one piece of writing, in more than one genre, written on different occasions, for different audiences, and responded to and evaluated by multiple readers as part of a substantial and

sustained writing process (CCCC, 2006, p. 2).

A process-based approach using portfolio assessment is one identified best practice in writing pedagogy and is supported by a large body of research from scholars in the field of developmental writing (Belanoff & Dickson, 1991; Reynolds & Rice, 2006; Yancey, 1992). Other research articulates the possibility of using multiple methods of assessment for developmental writing (Wolcott, 1996).

BC developmental writing faculty teaching English 60 are divided on the issue of the exit exams, though most appeared not to be in favor of the tests. When asked what the tests measure that the courses can't measure, no one claimed that the test measures anything that the course can't measure. One BC faculty member speaking in favor of the exams described the valuable experience of getting together with other faculty to norm and grade the exams. A document from BC English faculty, "The History and Purpose of the Test," explains that the exit exam in English 60 "has been especially helpful in integrating part-time teachers into the program since they participate in workshops and norming sessions." A mechanism that gets teachers together talking about writing and teaching should be supported; these conversations are instrumental in creating a cohesive, strong writing

program, but they do not have to be organized around a writing exam.

Professional development opportunities that move teachers beyond conversations about norming grades must be supported by the institution. Support for faculty development is essential—yet non-existent at BC—for teachers to understand current theories and use the best practices in their teaching. The CCCC Position Statement on the Preparation and Professional Development of Teachers of Writing (CCCC, 1982) urges college English departments “to provide opportunities for the faculty to develop knowledge of theory and skill in the teaching of writing.” The significant faculty resources devoted to exit exams could be redirected toward much more beneficial forms of professional development, such as participation in conferences, workshops, institutes, and collaborative work on teaching strategies among developmental writing faculty. Without ongoing and substantial support for professional development, faculty are at a significant disadvantage and students are less successful in their courses. Research shows a direct, positive relationship between professional development of instructors and rates of student success and retention (Boylan & Saxon, 2002).

A document from BC’s Institutional Research and Planning Office shows that in 2005-2006, 49.4% of the students enrolled in English B60 passed the

course. This is well below the national average of 73% for developmental writing courses (Gerlaugh, Thompson, Boylan, & Davis, 2007). Some faculty members blame the exit exams for this low rate of success. Anecdotal evidence suggests that students leave BC and take writing courses at Taft College in order to avoid the exit exams. Faculty, administrators, and students reported that these tests pose significant obstacles for students moving through BC's programs. Eliminating the exit exams could remove barriers to success without removing academic challenges in the courses, and would allow for more instructional time for teaching a substantial writing process. On the assessment of proficiency, CCCC (2006, p. 5) states: "Proficiency or exit assessment involves high stakes for students. In this context, assessments that make use of substantial and sustained writing processes are especially important."

To support the movement of students through the developmental writing sequence, one of the most important steps is a revised assessment plan for the courses, along with a revision of Student Learning Outcomes (SLOs). Earning a passing grade in the developmental course should certify that a student is prepared for the next course in the sequence; portfolio assessment in the course (or, if necessary, within the department, if some

faculty cannot be trusted to grade fairly) is a much better assessment method and teaching tool (CCCC, 2006).

The Center for Student Success (2007, pp. 38-40) supports the argument that BC's curriculum needs to be adjusted to align with proven effective curricula and practices. It shows that students must be actively involved in making choices, solving problems, and thinking critically and creatively. In terms of a writing pedagogy, developmental writing SLOs should reflect these values by emphasizing rhetorical facility, meta-cognitive development, and critical writing skills (as well as clarity and correctness, which are included in the SLOs for these courses). These are not skills that are acquired later, after the work of learning to spell and punctuate correctly; they need to be integrated at each level as part of a holistic, process-based approach to writing.

For ESL students, BC's approach to developmental writing is also ineffective, for many of the same reasons it is ineffective for native English speakers. ESL courses should also be using best practices, and faculty in this area in particular should be keeping up with the latest research on how linguistic and cultural diversity affects the teaching and learning of academic literacy (Ferris & Hedgcock, 1998; Silva & Matsuda, 2001). CSS (2007, pp. 48-50)

articulates some ESL-specific needs that all faculty (not just ESL faculty) should know, meaning that all faculty but especially developmental faculty need professional development opportunities for learning about working with ESL students.

According to faculty and administrators, many of BC's ESL students register for non-ESL courses. BC faculty suspect the perceived stigma attached to the ESL label could be the cause for this. Some faculty suggested changing the course titles from "ESL" to "English for Academic Purposes," a change that is consistent with approaches some other institutions are taking to make the titles of courses more accurate, appropriate, and attractive to students.

Changing the names of the courses, however, is less important than the preparation faculty have for working with ESL students. Since the number of ESL students at BC will continue to grow, the need for ESL professional development and expertise will become even more important in the future. CCCC (2001, p. 3) recommends that "writing programs should encourage—and offer incentives for—writing teachers to attend workshops on teaching second-language writers that are presented at professional conferences such as CCCC and Teachers of English to Speakers of Other

Languages (TESOL).” (For resources for teaching ESL writers, see Leki, 1992; Silva & Matsuda, 2001; Ferris & Hedgcock, 1998; and Reid & Kroll 1995).

BC’s Educational Master Plan lists two annual goals that will go a long way to improving instructional methods in developmental writing at BC: #4 prioritizes professional development of employees, and #5 identifies the need to research best practices in basic skills courses and to revise courses and methods to support student learning. Reaching these two goals should be a priority for the developmental writing program.

## **2. Integration of classrooms and laboratories**

Two places on campus offer some form of assistance to developmental writers: the Student Success Lab (SSL) and the Tutoring Center (TC). The SSL offers “proofreading,” an editing service that students can use to correct mistakes before they hand in papers. A flyer advertising the SSL explicitly states that they will not read for “content,” meaning that the TC is the only place on campus where students can get individualized feedback on their writing. While this service does an admirable job with limited resources and space, the tutors are trained generalists—that is, they are not educated in writing pedagogy, in ways to respond to (and not simply proofread) a student’s paper. BC used to operate a writing center, located in the English

department, but it was closed a few years ago. Without a writing center, BC lacks one of the most important academic support services for developmental writers; currently, no support service exists where tutors are educated specifically to work with writing students. According to CCCC (1989, p. 6),

The effectiveness of classroom writing instruction is significantly improved by the assistance students receive in writing centers.

Centers provide students with individual attention to their writing and often provide faculty . . . with opportunities to learn more about effective writing instruction. Because these centers enhance the conditions of teaching and learning, their development and support should be an important developmental and institutional priority.

BC also lacks a writing across the curriculum (WAC) program, a program that would assist in urgently needed faculty development in the teaching of writing. While writing centers assist students on their writing projects, WAC programs support faculty in the design of effective writing curricula, assignments, and evaluation methods. Some WAC programs offer writing support in specific sections of writing courses by attaching peer tutors to these sections to work with individual students in the courses (the programs are usually referred to as “writing fellows” programs); with adequate training



for the writing fellows, this type of program could be initiated at BC using the TA (teaching assistant) model used in Academic Development that was abandoned a few years back.

Some faculty said the TAs were not “used appropriately” in the ENG 68 courses. A writing fellows program coordinated through a WAC program would provide the necessary training for these or any other TAs/writing fellows to be effective in the support for students’ writing. The lack of these two programs - a writing center and a WAC program - is a serious deficiency for students and teachers of developmental writing at BC. Re-opening the writing center and starting a WAC program would significantly improve student success in developmental writing at BC. (For resources on WAC and writing centers, see Duke & Sanchez, 2001; Murphy & Law, 1995; McLeod, 2001; Bazerman & Russell 1995; and Thaiss, 1998).

The CSS report (2007, p. 80) identifies two model community college programs doing innovative work with WAC and writing centers. In California, Chabot College is offered as a model for community college writing center/WAC programs, and data show that these programs are improving student success at Chabot. CSS (2007. p. 87) highlights the Peer Assisted Learning (PAL) program at Schoolcraft College as a model writing fellows program with

documented success. The PAL program at Schoolcraft is also connected to a learning communities program that might be a useful model for BC as well.

For writing support directed to ESL students and teachers of ESL students, writing centers and WAC programs are also very important. For the same reasons that the Tutoring Center is inadequate for supporting native English speakers in their writing development, ESL tutoring in the Tutoring Center is not the best place for ESL developmental writing students to find writing assistance. ESL tutors are classified staff and non-ESL tutors are often students. But, regardless of the differences, the generalist tutoring model is inadequate for supporting ESL and non-ESL students' writing processes.

BC has very little support for developmental writing outside the classroom. Faculty reported that students often do not take advantage of tutoring services or office hours, though some faculty indicated that they would like to do more individual conferencing with students if they had fewer students. A well-supported writing center with tutors educated in writing pedagogy could provide a critical support structure for students in developmental writing. A writing fellows program that attaches tutors to specific sections of writing courses, which the tutors attend, could be particularly effective with developmental writers who might be less likely to

seek outside assistance with their writing. To develop a writing fellows program, however, BC first needs a writing center and a WAC program to coordinate and educate the writing fellows and to hold faculty development workshops for writing teachers as well as other teachers at BC.

### **3. Consistency of entry and exit standards for developmental courses**

As CSS indicates (2007, p. 59), successful “programs align entry/exit skills among levels and link course content to college-level performance requirements.” The developmental writing sequence begins with ACDV B75: Sentence Writing Strategy, which “emphasizes mastering basic English sentence structure.” ACDV B74: Paragraph Writing Strategy “emphasizes paragraph development.” No one mentioned these two courses during the visit, but they are in the course catalog, meaning that ACDV B68 must be the first (lowest level) course that most BC developmental writing students place into. This course description states that ACDV B68: Basic Writing Development is “designed to prepare students for success in English B60 by developing sentence writing skills in the context of a paragraph. Emphasizes writing practice and the review of basic grammatical structures, writing mechanics, and proper usage.” ENGL B60: Basic Writing Skills is described as a “review and application of fundamentals of standard English. Emphasizes sentence,

paragraph, and short essay writing.” The ESL developmental writing course sequence uses similar language in course descriptions, with the addition of some recognition of the presence of “foreign and bicultural American students.”

The course descriptions are supported by the Student Learning

Outcomes in each course:

According to one syllabus, the SLOs for ACDV B68 claim that students who take the course will be able to do the following:

Recognize and write simple, compound, and complex sentences by properly using independent and dependent clauses;

Identify the subject(s), verb(s), and prepositional phrase(s) within a sentence;

Write a 125 word paragraph on a given topic;

Use commas appropriately and correctly;

Use the correct forms of regular and irregular verbs;

Differentiate between fragments and complete sentences;

Use subject pronouns correctly in a sentence;

Use capitalization correctly and appropriately; and

Recognize and use coordinating and subordinating conjunctions.

\*\*\*\*Another ACDV 68 syllabus articulates these goals differently, but they are similarly focused on grammatical and mechanical correctness. Importantly, though, two other objectives are listed:

Systematically evaluate and revise their writing;

Demonstrate they have ideas to share and stories to tell in discussions and writing.

The SLOs for ENGL B60 claim that, at the completion of the course, students will be able to:

Write a non-formulaic, timed final 250 word essay that is:

Organized around a thesis statement, uses transitions, is coherent, and contains a conclusion.

Assembled into paragraphs with topic sentences and supporting detail.

Composed of mostly error-free sentences.

Written illustrating control of mechanics, usage, and diction.

Demonstrative of a variety of sentence patterns that avoid primer prose.

Clear in thought and writing in response to a specific topic.

Students will show proficiency in reading and comprehension of basic college level material assigned in class, including:

Textbooks,

Essays, and

News articles

The SLOs for ENGL 1 indicate that students in this course will learn how to:

Write a non-formulaic, timed final 400 word essay that:

Can effectively summarize and paraphrase.

Utilizes an appropriate controlling idea.

Demonstrates an ability to credit a source.

Organizes ideas logically and coherently.

Develops ideas with appropriate specific details, examples, and reasoning.

Uses a variety of sentence patterns appropriately and correctly.

Uses the standard conventions of written English—spelling, punctuation, and capitalization.

Show proficiency in:

Identifying the controlling idea and the main points of college-level expository and argumentative essays.

Analyzing expository and argumentative essays using critical thinking skills.

The SLOs attempt to align entry/exit skills along the developmental writing sequence (and with the first college writing course), but there are serious flaws in the thinking behind the outcomes as well as the sequencing. Aside

from the mistaken notion that writing courses should emphasize grammar and mechanics instead of writing, the most striking feature of each set of SLOs is the focus on the production of “non-formulaic” prose in timed essays of increasing length (from 125-400 words in three semesters). Learning grammar rules and how to produce grammatically perfect paragraphs are the main objectives of developmental writing: In each course, there appears to be a remarkable lack of attention to the process of *writing*; and when writing is the subject, the assumption seems to be that writing a sentence or a paragraph in isolation is somehow equivalent to producing those units in the midst of an extended act of writing, as if the difficulties of writing sentences or paragraphs are concepts rather than intrinsic to the writer and her struggle to adjust to the demands of a language, a rhetoric, and a task. The point is that the exit/entry standards might be aligned, but they are not aimed at producing better writers; they are aimed at producing formulaic (in spite of the demand to make it non-formulaic), empty, mechanically correct prose.

The second syllabus consulted for ACDV 68 (see \*\*\*\*\* above) adds two objectives that begin to focus the course on students’ writing: attention to revision and to the ideas and stories that students bring to class. These are

the kinds of objectives that will lead students to engaging with their own writing process and will ultimately prepare them for the demands of college-level writing. Most of the other objectives and outcomes listed, however, do not prepare students to write at the college level, which involves using their writing to think through complex ideas and to express their understandings to a real audience. The entry/exit requirements should be revised in light of these problems, and BC will need someone with expertise and scholarship in composition pedagogy to assist with this effort. In collaboration with faculty in English, ESL, and Academic Development, this composition specialist should lead a serious curriculum revision effort at BC, and the specialist should also be enlisted to conduct professional development activities to prepare faculty for an updated, effective writing curriculum that supports students' movement through the developmental sequence and toward writing at the college level.

#### **4. Use of learning communities**

Some faculty reported success with a learning communities initiative that was begun a few years back and was discontinued. If there are willing faculty participants, the program should be revisited as a future possibility. Given the demanding work and school schedules of BC students, learning



communities could be difficult to organize, but if that problem could be worked out, they would be worth considering. Some literature confirms the effectiveness of learning communities on student retention and success, which makes them a worthwhile effort if they can be organized and if faculty are willing to arrange them. Writing classes linked with reading classes have proven to be particularly effective. For a model of a reading and writing learning community with demonstrated success, see the CSS report (2007, p. 87) on the PAL program at Schoolcraft College.

#### **5. Integration of critical skills throughout the developmental education curriculum**

As noted in the sections on instructional methods and course sequencing, critical skills do not appear to be emphasized in BC's developmental writing courses. Even if faculty wanted to teach students critical writing and rhetorical skills, the pressure to teach to the exit exams moves the focus away from any sustained engagement with using writing to solve problems or think through complex ideas. Students practice exit exams, take grammar tests, and use a grammar workbook with exercises; none of these activities involves critical thinking. Students appear to have few opportunities to develop writing projects connected with their own interests

or knowledge, which, if they had such opportunities, would allow students to become critically involved with their own thinking and writing.

## **6. Use of adjunct faculty**

The use of adjunct faculty in developmental writing courses at BC is consistent with national averages (around 50%). CCCC (1989, p. 4), however, recommends that part-time faculty comprise no more than 10% of a department's faculty. BC adjunct faculty reported that they were involved in the program primarily through workshops and norming sessions focused on the exit exams. As stated earlier in the report, involving faculty (including adjunct faculty) in discussions about writing should be applauded and supported, but these conversations should take place around teaching rather than testing of students' writing.

Some full-time faculty expressed a lack of trust in adjuncts' grading standards, citing that issue as one reason for keeping the exit exams. Checking up on adjuncts, however, is not a justification for keeping the exams. (Justification for exams should only be made on the basis of student, not teacher, benefits.) If adjunct faculty are not evaluating writing fairly, that is a matter for professional development. CCCC (1989, p. 5) recommends that adjunct faculty "have access to research support and travel funds to

attend professional conferences,” meaning that BC’s revised professional development program should support adjunct faculty (as well as full-time faculty) development.

### **7. Use of strategic learning techniques**

Developmental writing students are taught strategies for passing timed exit exams in their classes, but beyond that it is not clear what “strategic learning techniques” are being used in developmental writing courses. There is evidence of grammar drilling in BC’s developmental writing courses, but there is a large body of research that suggests no measurable learning of grammar taking place through this type of instruction (Hartwell, 1985).

Under a revised curriculum, students could learn strategies for mastering all parts of the writing process: how ideas for writing are created and formed (invention); how writers revise texts with audience, context, and purpose for writing in mind (revision and rhetorical fluency); how to become effective editors of their own work by learning their own patterns of error and how to spot them (editing). Perhaps students are learning some of these techniques in their courses, but nothing from the observation or materials gathered suggests that students are learning these important skills.

### **8. Class size in developmental education**

Different answers were given to the question of enrollment caps in developmental writing courses at BC. The range reported includes:

ACDV B68: 25-28

ESL 3: 28

ENGL B60: 28-30

ESL 2: 28

According to CCCC (1989, pp. 5-6) recommendations:

The improvement of an individual student's writing requires persistent and frequent contact between teacher and student both inside and outside the classroom. It requires assigning far more papers than are usually assigned in other college classrooms; it requires reading them and commenting on them not simply to justify a grade, but to offer guidance and suggestions for improvement; and it requires spending a great deal of time with individual students, helping them not just to improve particular papers but to understand fundamental principles of effective writing that will enable them to continue learning throughout their lives. The teaching of writing, perhaps more than any other discipline, therefore requires special attention to class size, teaching loads, the availability of teaching materials, and the

development of additional resources that enhance classroom instruction.

For the reasons given, CCCC (1989, p. 6) recommends that “developmental sections should be limited to a maximum of 15 students.” Additionally, CCCC recommends that writing faculty teach no more than 60 students per term; 45 should be the maximum for writing faculty teaching developmental students.

BC’s ESL developmental writing courses are also far bigger than recommendations set by CCCC (2001, p. 2), which recommends the following for ESL class size:

Since working with second-language writers often requires additional feedback and conference time with the instructor, enrollments in mainstream writing classes should be reduced; in classes made up exclusively of second-language writers, enrollments should be limited to a maximum of 15 students per class.

BC’s ESL and non-ESL developmental writing courses enroll almost twice the maximum number of students CCCC recommends. The CCCC recommendations for developmental class size are not followed by all community colleges. Nevertheless, the vast majority of U.S. community

colleges have much smaller developmental writing classes than is the case at BC. Research by Shults (2000) and Gerlaugh, Thompson, Boylan, & Davis (2007) indicates that a class size of 20 is the national average for community college developmental writing courses.

Faculty report ENGL B60 courses are run with 30 students and reviewed for possible cancellation if they have fewer than 22 enrolled. According to campus administrators, however, few classes are ever cancelled for this reason.

One faculty member reported that she lost enough students each semester that the enrollment number usually fell into the low 20s or lower even if she started with 30. How many more students could be retained and might succeed in the courses if teachers didn't begin with such large numbers? Several faculty said that they would hold more individual conferences with students if they had fewer students. Research shows that individual conferencing between faculty and students, enabled through smaller class sizes, has a direct, positive impact on student success and retention (Sheridan-Rabideau & Brossell, 1995).

## **Recommendations**

- 1. Lower class size in all developmental writing courses.*

CCCC recommends a maximum of 15 students in developmental and ESL classes. BC will also need to reconsider its use of space, remodel old buildings, and add additional space for classroom and support services.

*2. Hire a specialist in rhetoric and composition with expertise in writing program administration to reopen and direct the writing center and administer a writing across the curriculum (WAC) program.*

BC needs a writing center and a WAC program to meet the writing needs of developmental students, and a composition specialist with experience in writing program administration will be necessary to lead the effort in curricular revision and program development in all areas of the developmental writing program. This specialist could give faculty development workshops on the teaching of writing and educate peer tutors and writing fellows in a writing pedagogy course.

*3. Implement annual goals #4 and #5 in the future development strategies of BC's Educational Master Plan.*

Adequately fund and support professional development for faculty (including adjunct faculty); and, research best practices in developmental courses and implement best practices in a revised curriculum.

*5. Review the use of the POWS and the FEE.*

The use of a single, timed, high stakes test is not supported by current literature and research in the teaching of writing. English faculty should reconsider the use of these tests to determine if they are accomplishing their intended purposes and represent an appropriate use of class meeting time.

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**Academic Development - Reading and Study Strategies Courses  
Prepared by Hunter R. Boylan, Ph.D.**

The reading and study strategies course sequence at BC include:

Academic Development B50 - Reading for Academic Success,

Academic Development B62 - Developing Basic Reading Skills, and

Academic Development B91 - Communication Skills.

The college also offers two student success/study strategies courses:

Academic Development B52 - Tools for College Success, and

Academic Development B66 - Student Success.

This group of courses provides a sequence of skill development ranging from vocabulary development to reading comprehension to critical reading to study skills and strategies development to critical thinking.

The reading and study strategies courses at BC represent an incredible range of content and ability levels. The Academic Development reading courses serve students who read below the fourth grade level on up through high school and college level.

The reading faculty teaching Academic Development courses have done a good job of selecting content appropriate for the students they serve. The lowest level course (ACDV 91) introduces students to reading paragraphs, understanding their meaning, developing and using vocabulary, and gathering information from written text. The next level course (ACDV 62) teaches students to analyze readings, utilize study strategies, and use references. The highest level course (ACDV 50) emphasizes critical reading and thinking as well as analyzing and evaluating written work. In sequence, these courses

theoretically move students from marginal literacy to being reading for college level work.

Given the wide range of reading abilities of BC students, the faculty teaching Academic Development reading and study strategies courses have designed a reasonable course sequence. The sequence is consistent with what is known about adult's vocabulary development and acquisition of reading skills. The goals and objectives of these courses are also appropriate to the needs of the students being served. They are consistent with current thinking about adult literacy levels. In fact, there is remarkable consistency between the content taught in the Academic Development reading sequence at BC and the standards articulated for adult literacy programs by the Council for the Advancement of Adult Literacy (Spangenberg & Watson, 2003).

It is a basic maxim of reading instruction that adults will develop their reading skills if they are given interesting materials written at the appropriate grade level. Discussions with reading instructors indicate that they have invested a considerable amount of time and research in finding reading materials appropriate to adults of various reading levels and integrating them into their courses. This also appears to be an ongoing effort as reading instructors meet regularly and share their experiences using

various reading materials.

The students interviewed consistently expressed satisfaction with the reading materials in their courses, describing them as “interesting,” “readable,” or “hard but understandable.” Several students also stated that their experiences in reading courses had encouraged them to read during their leisure time or to use reading materials as resources to gain new knowledge. It should be noted that, although these comments did not come from a random sample of students they did reflect the views of students from three or more reading classes.

The review team was also asked to comment on specific aspects of developmental education at BC in each subject area. The following comments reflect the reviewer’s response to these specific areas in the Academic Development reading courses.

### **Use of Mastery Learning**

Mastery learning is one of the most well validated instructional techniques available for developmental students (Kulik & Kulik, 1991).

Generally, mastery learning is characterized by small units of instruction that students must master in a sequential fashion by taking tests over each unit.

In order to progress from one unit to another, students must show mastery

(usually at the 85% level) on each unit test (Kulik & Kulik, 1986/87). Originally part of programmed learning and individual instruction, this model is currently used frequently for computer-based instruction. Mastery learning is available at BC but it is primarily available as part of computer-based instruction offered through the learning center. There was no evidence that reading instructors are using mastery learning outside of computer-based instruction.

It appears, therefore, that there is no specific mastery learning program for developmental reading courses except through computer-based instruction in the learning center. Reading instructors take varying degrees of advantage of the learning center's offerings in this regard. Some instructors integrate the learning center's services into their courses on a regular and systematic basis. Others use this resource infrequently. Consequently, although mastery learning is available for reading courses it is not applied in any systematic fashion.

#### **Use of diverse instructional strategies**

There is considerable evidence that a variety of instructional strategies are used by those who teach the academic development courses in reading. Students have access to several different methods of instruction.

These include:

Computerized laboratories,

Individualized tutoring,

On line courses, and

Traditional classrooms.

This range of methods is consistent with those used by modern developmental programs in most community colleges.

In addition, a variety of teaching techniques appear to be employed by ACDV reading instructors. Interviews with faculty and students as well as reviews of syllabi indicated that many reading instructors used active learning, student collaboration, recitation, visual learning, and "hands-on" teaching techniques. To some degree, instructors also use computers and reading software available through the learning center to teach some of the content of their courses.

From the evidence available, it appears that many reading instructors are aware of a variety of techniques for reading instruction and use these on a fairly regular basis. It is not clear, however, the degree to which the use of diverse instructional techniques pervades all reading instruction at BC. Most full-time reading instructors appeared to use a variety of instructional



techniques but it was difficult to ascertain the extent to which these techniques are used by adjunct faculty. Providing additional training for adjunct reading faculty is advisable to insure that they are aware of the many instructional alternatives available to them.

### **Integration of classrooms and laboratories**

The reading courses at BC appear to be somewhat integrated with the learning laboratory/learning center. There is cooperation between some reading instructors and learning center staff in the development of learning center support activities. There also appears to be a considerable amount of communication between reading instructors and laboratory personnel. As noted earlier, many reading instructors also send their students to the learning center for individualized drill and practice in reading either as a formal or informal part of their courses. Such integration of reading courses and laboratories is neither systematic nor generalized. Some reading courses are integrated and some are not.

For some time, reading instructors have been advocating for a designated laboratory for reading. This is a good idea and one which college officials are encouraged to pursue. In the interim, however, reading instructors should be encouraged to make more systematic use of the

existing laboratory facilities.

### **Consistency of exit and entrance standards for developmental courses**

Because the entire range of developmental reading courses is taught under the auspices of Academic Development, the amount of communication regarding entry and exit standards for developmental courses tends to be higher than in other developmental education content areas. Furthermore, a review of syllabi and learning objectives indicates that there is a logical progression of content from one reading level to another. If the syllabi and learning objectives are followed by all reading faculty, students who successfully complete one level of reading are prepared to be successful at the next level of reading.

Reading instructors also appear to meet with each other and share what they are doing more often than instructors in many other disciplines. As a result, reading instructors probably know more about what others are teaching than is true of many other disciplines.

Nevertheless, there does not appear to be any regular or systematic process in place for insuring that there is consistency between the exit standards for one level of reading and the entry standards for another level of reading. Without such a process, a seamless reading curriculum is

contingent upon the current level of communication among reading instructors being maintained consistently in the future.

### **Use of learning communities**

Interviews with faculty and administrators and reviews of material indicate that BC has run learning communities featuring everything from study skills courses paired with history or psychology courses to three course learning communities for students with particular needs. Reading and study strategies courses appear to be a component of most of these learning communities. Examples of these learning communities include:

*Achieving Success* - a combination of several of the lower level academic development courses for students with weak skills,

*The Power of One* - a learning community organized around developmental English and mathematics and Academic Development reading, or

*Promise of America* - a learning community including English, History, and the highest level Academic Development reading course.

Reading courses and reading faculty are involved in all of these learning communities. Furthermore, the faculty who are involved in these learning communities appear to work hard at finding ways to refine and improve them.

However, these various learning communities have something of a checkered history of implementation. Apparently some excellent learning community models existed at one point but are no longer present because their main proponent retired. Other learning communities have failed or become ineffective because advisors have been unable to recruit students to participate in them or because of scheduling difficulties.

The learning communities offered to developmental students at BC show considerable promise. However, these communities have not grown nor have they been fully mainstreamed because of lack of resources.

**Integration of critical skills throughout the developmental education curriculum**

Almost all developmental and Academic Development faculty discuss the need for students to acquire critical skills. These skills might include such things as critical reading, evaluation of evidence, problem solving, or critical thinking. There does not appear to be any systematic agreement, however, on exactly what skills are essential at Bakersfield or how they should be integrated into the curriculum. There is no written description of critical skills and no plans for how they should be implemented in various courses. In spite of this, it was interesting to note that many reading

instructors included such skills in their syllabi and went to substantial efforts to reinforce them through their teaching and learning activities.

This lack of agreement and planning in the area of critical skills is not a shortcoming of the reading faculty but rather *all those* teaching basic skills. Apparently, there is no ongoing discussion of critical skills at BC, either in developmental education, Academic Development, or the curriculum in general. This lack of discussion makes it difficult to develop plans for integrating critical skills across the curriculum.

#### **Use of adjunct faculty**

A growing body of research indicates that the over use of adjunct faculty in community colleges has a negative impact on student learning (Boylan & Saxon, 1998; Boylan, 2002; Umbach, 2007). The over use of adjunct faculty occurs when more than 50% of developmental courses are taught by adjunct faculty (Boylan & Saxon, 1998).

In the fall of 2006, 17 sections of Academic Development Reading were taught by full-time faculty and 11 sections were taught by adjunct faculty. This means that, according to the most recent data available, full-time faculty teach about 61% of the developmental reading courses at BC.

These figures compare favorably with national averages. According to

Shults (2001), only about 35% of community college developmental courses are taught by adjunct faculty. These figures are also consistent with best practice recommendations. Boylan (2002), for instance, recommends that colleges strive to attain a 60/40 ratio of full-time to adjunct instructors in developmental education. BC is to be commended for doing this in reading.

### **Use of strategic learning techniques**

Interviews with faculty and reviews of reading course materials suggest that there is some use of strategic learning techniques in academic development reading courses. Reading instructors typically encourage students to monitor their comprehension, use a variety of study techniques, employ word attack strategies, engage in time management activities, engage in various forms of self-regulation, and use study strategies. Furthermore, strategic learning appears to be emphasized at practically all levels of the curriculum.

However, the approaches used in any given class appear to depend upon the instructor's knowledge of strategic learning and preferences for particular approaches to it. There are no consistent approaches used by all instructors and no systematic implementation of any particular approach to strategic learning. Also, there is a tendency among instructors to teach

specific study strategies programs like SQ3R or PQRS instead of either teaching multiple approaches to study strategies or utilizing strategic learning models such as Claire Weinstein's acclaimed strategic thinking program (Weinstein, Dierking, Husman, Roska, & Powdrill, 1998).

### **Class size in developmental education**

According to data from the BC Institutional Research and Planning Office, reading class sizes averaged as follows in 2005-2006:

ACDV B50 = 32,

ACDV B62 = 30, and

ACDV B91 = 27.

In a national study of community college reading courses conducted by the American Association of Community Colleges (Shults, 2001) found that the average class size for developmental reading was 20 students. A more recent national study conducted by the National Center for Developmental Education found that the average size of developmental reading courses was 18 students (Gerlaugh, Thompson, Boylan, & Davis, 2007). Obviously, the class sizes of developmental reading courses at BC are well above the national average.

It should be noted, however, that some class maximums and overall

faculty loads are negotiated as part of the district contract. Therefore, moves to reduce class size will require careful review and discussion.

### **Comparison with national averages**

One way to look at the reading courses at BC is to compare them with national averages. Table I compares BC completion rates and pass rates in the highest level developmental reading course for the fall semester, 2003-2004 (the most recent date for which comparative data is available).

These tables compare rates for developmental reading courses at Bakersfield (ACDV 50) with developmental reading course results nationally.

As Table I shows, the highest level reading course at Bakersfield had retention rates that were 5.4% higher than the national average. The percentage of students completing the highest level reading course successfully was 3.2% lower than the national average. Bakersfield data from 2004-2005 did not fluctuate in either the retention or the pass rate category by more than 5%. Completion rates and pass rates in developmental reading, therefore, appear to be relatively stable.

This indicates that the results of the highest level developmental reading course at BC are comparable to the results from a national sample of community colleges. The Bakersfield reading results are generally somewhat



higher for retention and slightly lower for pass rates.

**Table I**  
**Completion and Pass Rates for Developmental Reading**  
**Bakersfield and National Averages - 2003-2004**

Comparison Groups	Retention Rates	Pass Rates (C or Better)
National Average* Fall, 2003-2004	83.0%	76.0
Bakersfield Average** Fall, 2003-2004	88.4%	72.8%

\*Gerlaugh, Thompson, Boylan, & Davis (1976)

\*\*BC Institutional Research and Planning

Being at or near the national average is probably a positive finding for the developmental reading program because it deals with such a diverse population of students. Furthermore, this diverse population includes high numbers of students from first generation and lower socio-economic backgrounds. Nevertheless, these results may also show that there is room for improvement in the performance of students in developmental reading

courses.

### **Recommendations for Reading and Study Strategies Instruction**

#### ***1. Make more systematic use of computer-based mastery learning in reading courses.***

Caverly & Peterson (2000) point out that computer based instructional programs can be effectively used for teaching literacy skills and lower level reading skills but are less useful for teaching critical reading and other higher order reading skills. Because many of the students taught in Academic Development Reading courses are lower level readers, the increased use of computer-based mastery learning programs should be beneficial. Discussions with faculty and administrators indicate that some thought has been given to establishing a designated computer laboratory for reading. This is a good idea and one supported by the reviewer. In the interim, however, reading instructors are encouraged to make increased use of the existing computer-based instruction options in the learning center.

#### ***2. Invest more resources in training faculty.***

This recommendation is true for all faculty, not just those in reading. There is consistent evidence that developmental students taught by faculty who participate in regular professional development get higher grades and are retained for longer periods of time than those taught by untrained faculty (Boylan, Bliss, & Bonham, 1997; Boylan, 2002; Roueche & Roueche, 1999). It is recommended that the Academic Development reading faculty meet to identify those topics they consider to be most helpful for their professional development. Once these have been identified, each reading faculty member should develop a personal professional development plan based on these topics and be held accountable for implementing that plan during the 2007-2008 academic year. Obviously, if faculty are to be held accountable for implementing these plans, funding will have to be made available to support them.

### *3. Engage with laboratories in a more systematic manner.*

At present, some Academic Development reading faculty use the learning center on a regular basis and some do not. Integrating classroom activities with learning laboratory activities is a well documented best practice in developmental education (Boylan, 2002; Casazza & Silverman, 1996; Maxwell, 1997; McCabe, 2000). It is recommended that Academic

Development reading faculty expand efforts to integrate their courses with the existing learning laboratories while continuing to lobby for a learning laboratory dedicated to reading and study strategies instruction. These efforts should include holding meetings with laboratory personnel, sharing syllabi and tests, and getting feedback from laboratory personnel on software and other learning materials that may help reading instructors accomplish their goals and objectives. Ongoing discussions on how the laboratory can be more helpful to reading instructors are also recommended.

*4. Make systematic efforts to insure consistency of standards.*

Having a match between the exit standards for one level of developmental education and the entry standards for the next level of developmental education is essential to a successful developmental education program (Boylan, 2002; McCabe, 2000; Roueche & Roueche, 1999).

Although the Academic Development reading faculty do make some efforts to insure this consistency, it is recommended that these efforts be made more systematic. Specifically, all reading faculty, both full and part-time, should meet at least once every three years to review entry and exit standards.

This process should involve:

Sharing syllabi,

Discussing what skills faculty members consider to be important,

Identifying appropriate sequences for skill development,

Sharing tests, and

Discussing grading procedures.

***5. Build learning communities.***

There is a growing body of evidence indicating that learning communities contribute to improved retention, higher grades, and greater personal development among students exposed to them (McGregor, 1999; Taylor, 2003; Tinto, 1997). Although BC already maintains some learning communities, it is recommended that existing learning communities are strengthened and that new learning communities be developed. This will require providing training and release time for faculty to learn to develop and manage learning communities. It is recommended that existing and newly developed learning communities continue to feature a strong emphasis on reading and study strategies and continue to include these courses and faculty in the learning communities effort. Pairing reading and study strategy courses with disciplinary courses such as history and psychology is particularly recommended.

***6. Agree on essential skills and plan to integrate them throughout the developmental curriculum.***

It is recommended that a task force be established to identify those skills considered to be essential to success at BC as well as for success in the workforce. These skills might include such things as:

Critical reading,

Problem solving,

Critical thinking,

Oral communication,

Written communication,

Computer literacy, and

Numeracy and computation.

Once these skills are identified and agreed upon, the task force should also develop a list of strategies and techniques for integrating these skills into all developmental, introductory, and survey courses. Workshops and other professional development activities should be provided on a regular basis to help faculty learn how to integrate these skills into their courses and reinforce their development through course work. Academic Development reading faculty should be heavily involved in this effort because they are well trained in many of the skill areas that are likely to be identified.

### *7. Utilize a greater variety of study strategies techniques.*

The SQ3R study method is used by many reading and study strategy instructors. This is a technique developed by Frank Robinson in 1946. It is one of the most effective and most widely used study strategies techniques in the world. Nevertheless, it may not be the best technique for all the students taking Academic Development reading courses. It was, after all, developed for an audience of white, male, members of the military service. Since its development, there has been little research to validate its use with diverse populations of students.

It is recommended that reading instructors consider not just teaching study skills strategies but also encourage students to use the principles of systemization to develop their own study plans.

In addition, alternative study skills methods might include:

Statement-pie,

PQRST, or

Skill/Will/Self-Regulation, or

K-W-L

Any of these study skill methods might be of benefit to students and students should be able to select from several options rather than simply being taught one method.

#### *8. Work to reduce class size.*

There is no question that reading and study strategies classes at BC exceed national averages. In fact, they exceed these averages by a rather substantial number. Furthermore, the fact that national averages for developmental reading class sizes run between 18 and 20 students (Shults, 2001; Gerlaugh, Thompson, Boylan, & Davis, 2007), it is reasonable to assume that a majority of U.S. community colleges have much lower developmental reading class sizes than BC.

Given the fact that some class size maximums and overall faculty loads are part of the contract, it is unlikely that class size can simply be reduced across the board. However, to the extent possible, it should be reduced in developmental reading.

The International Reading Association states that "if class size is reduced to below 20 students, the increase in reading achievement can be substantial (International Reading Association" (1999). Cotton's (1988) research makes it quite clear that lower class size in reading helps elementary and



secondary school students improve their reading abilities. Because the Academic Development reading program is frequently dealing with elementary and secondary level reading skills, it is reasonable to assume that these findings are also true for their students. Consequently, it is unproductive to have reading classes with caps higher than 25 students. It is recommended, therefore, that such caps on reading class enrollment be implemented as soon as is practicable.

*9. Restore teaching assistants.*

Interviews indicate that teaching assistants which had previously been available to developmental instructors were eliminated during the 2002 budget crisis. Well trained student assistants serving as mentors can contribute to improving the quality of student learning (Pascarella & Terenzini, 2005). It is recommended that, as funds become available, BC attempt to restore teaching assistants, particularly for developmental reading courses.

In order to get the most benefit from these teaching assistants, however, it is also recommended that a training program be established for teaching assistants. It is further recommended that teaching assistants be required to go through this training program either before or during their

participation as classroom assistants. Finally, it is recommended that the faculty using these teaching assistants be trained in deploying them properly and held accountable for doing so.

*10. Utilize the CRLA position paper on the rights of adult readers and learners as a guide for personal and program development.*

In the spring of 2003 the College Reading and Learning Association published a "Statement of the Rights of Adult Readers and Learners." This statement resulted from more than three years of work and was designed to guide college reading and learning professionals in their efforts. Academic Development reading instructors are encouraged to review and adopt this statement as a set of guidelines for professional development as well as their personal behavior as reading instructors. The statement is included as follows:

*Adult learners have a right to instructors who...*

Engage in ongoing development and have a commitment to lifelong learning for themselves and their students.

Are knowledgeable about adult development and learning and understand the unique needs and complexities of the diverse adult learner population.

Possess expertise in their content area.

Have knowledge of learning theories, the ability to relate theory to practice, skill and confidence in methods of presentation, modeling, and facilitating learning.

Are self-reflective, solicit feedback, and make accommodations to improve instruction.

Have a repertoire of interpersonal skills necessary to establish, maintain, and develop effective relationships and a secure positive classroom environment that will promote active learning.

Understand their responsibilities in facilitating and guiding the learning activities of adult students while acknowledging that the adult learner retains the right and responsibility to manage his or her own life and learning, growth, discovery, and increasing skills and knowledge.

*Adult learners have the right to instruction that...*

Allows them to see reading as a constructive process.

Encourages reflection, critical analysis, and affective response.

Includes social interaction such as collaborative and cooperative group work.

Promotes interest and excitement.

Is personalized to meet the needs of each learner.

Is based on current theory and practice.

Encourages students to become learners who are independent, autonomous, lifelong planners, and problem solvers.

*Adult learners have a right to assessment that...*

Appropriate, matching the level, purposes, and content of instruction.

Includes the student in the assessment process (e.g., self-assessment, peer review, interview, consultation).

Occurs at frequent intervals with meaningful feedback.

Focuses on outcomes and informs instruction.

Involves multiple measures (Angus & Greenbaum, 2003).

Although these principles are straightforward, they still require a great deal of focus and effort to maintain. It is recommended that they be included on bulletin boards and in classrooms so that students and faculty alike can understand and implement them.

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**Review of Basic Skills & Developmental Mathematics  
Courses at Bakersfield College**

**Prepared by Barbara S. Bonham, Ph.D.**

The National Center for Education Statistics (Parsad & Lewis, 2003)

reports that the percentage of students enrolling in developmental courses

was higher for mathematics than for English or Reading at two-year colleges. In a recent study by mathematics educators in the Massachusetts Community College System, it was revealed that “there are more than two million enrollments in developmental mathematics (basic arithmetic, and introductory and intermediate algebra) in community colleges nationally. Developmental mathematics is the single largest program in community colleges nationwide, enrolling more than 15% of all students with failure rates reaching as high as 50%” (Massachusetts Community Colleges Executive Office, 2006). Statewide data included in the California Community Colleges System Strategic plan reveal that “those who begin mathematics with arithmetic have a 10% chance of taking a transfer level mathematics course.”

This appears to be a pretty dismal picture. There are significant challenges facing developmental education programs particularly in the area of mathematics, including large numbers of students and underprepared faculty to meet the diverse demands of these students. Yet, there are many successful programs in this country which are using best practices and helping large numbers of students succeed in meeting their educational goals.

Working with underprepared students in mathematics, particularly



returning adults, can be a very challenging and exciting responsibility for educators. As anyone who has ever taught basic skills or developmental mathematics can attest, "it differs substantially from simply teaching mathematics courses" (Armington, 2002). There is a growing body of research in this area of developmental mathematics to help mathematics educators to eliminate the major contributors to student frustration, lack of confidence, and high dropout rates in community colleges. Some of these contributors to this body of research and practice include: AMATYC publications, mathematics educators working with the National Association for Developmental Education, statewide projects such as the 100% Mathematics Initiative in Massachusetts, institutional projects, and publications in a variety of math/developmental education related journals compiled in the Annotated Research Bibliographies in Developmental Education (ARBIDE - Mathematics), etc.

This report will compare what is presently being done at BC, CA in the area of mathematics for underprepared students with the research, guidelines, and best practices. The latter will be used not only for discussion but also as a basis for recommendations as necessary and appropriate. The first section of this report will include an overview on the success rates at BC

in the Basic Skills Mathematics course and Developmental Mathematics courses. Other sections of this report all relating to these pre-college courses in mathematics include: 1) Assessment, 2) The Curriculum and Related Issues, 3) Delivery Strategies, 4) Skills Related to Success in Math, 5) Labs, Tutoring, Learning Communities, SI, etc. 6) Instructional Strategies and 7) Professional Development.

### **Students' Success Rates in Pre-College Mathematics Courses**

The National Study of Developmental Education II (Gerlaugh, Thompson, Boylan, & Davis, 2007) provides the baseline data for developmental students on completion rates, pass rates, class size and grades in first college credit courses. This study found the pass rates for students completing developmental mathematics at community colleges was lower than the pass rates for Reading and Writing developmental courses. Sixty-eight percent of math students were successful in developmental mathematics courses. This was consistent with the NCES (1996) study that showed 66 % passed in math. The table below summarizes the pass rates and number of sections for each of the pre-college mathematics courses for the Spring and Fall terms from 2004 to 2006 at BC.

### **Success Rates at Bakersfield College for Pre-College Math Courses**

Math Course	Spring No. 2004 Sections	Fall No. 2004 Sections	Spring No. 2005 Sections	Fall No. 2005 Sections	Spring No. 2006 Sections
ACDV 78	32.3% 2	39.4% 3	52.8% 7	64.5% 11	66.7% 14
Math 50	55.5% 9	56.7% 13	62.5% 9	57.2% 13	59.5% 21
Math A	46.1% 21	45.9% 25	43.3% 22	45.8% 24	45.5% 30
Math D	45.6% 22	45.6% 21	47.2% 28	40.9% 22	43.6% 31

At BC the pass rates for the lowest level mathematics course, ACDV 78 (Understanding Basic Math) was close to the national averages in the last two terms (Fall, 2005 and Spring, 2006) but not before the fall of 2005. Math 50 (Modern College Arithmetic/PreAlgebra) has success rates in the high 50s. Math A (Elementary Algebra) and Math D (Intermediate Algebra) success rates seem to be consistently around the low to mid-40s which is greater than 20% below the national baseline data on the NCES study as well as the National Study of Developmental Education II. The above data was accessed at the Institutional Research and Planning Web Site for BC [HYPERLINK "http://www.bakersfieldcollege.edu/irp/Student\\_Outcomes/Grade\\_Distributions/+Grade\\_Distrib\\_Index.asp#By%20Dept"](http://www.bakersfieldcollege.edu/irp/Student_Outcomes/Grade_Distributions/+Grade_Distrib_Index.asp#By%20Dept) [http://www.bakersfieldcollege.edu/irp/Student\\_Outcomes/Grade\\_Distributions/+Grade\\_Distrib\\_Index.asp#By%20Dept](http://www.bakersfieldcollege.edu/irp/Student_Outcomes/Grade_Distributions/+Grade_Distrib_Index.asp#By%20Dept)).

Other areas which were of significant concern regarding students'

success in developmental mathematics accessed from this site were the high withdrawal rates for Math 50 (approximately 100 students per term), Math A which was as high as 253 students in Spring, 2004 and 228 students in Fall, 2004. It has dropped to 150 or less in the last two terms. The withdrawal rates in Math D were generally above 150 students for all of the terms between Spring, 2004 to Spring, 2006. The high number of withdrawals (Ws) coupled with the high number of students receiving an F is also an area of significant concern. The data reveals for this period of time that over 1/3 of the students enrolled in Math 50, Math A and Math D either received an F or a W for the course. In meetings with faculty and staff they talked about the "60% data." I later learned this meant that 60 percent of the students drop with a W through the semester. Some individuals interviewed attributed this to high numbers of students in courses, too little interaction between faculty and students, and too few counselors.

## **Assessment**

BC clearly defines in their catalog its commitment to advance all of their "students toward their goals as effectively and efficiently as possible" (2006-2007 catalog, p. 19). Assessment in most developmental

education programs occurs at several levels: individual level, classroom level, course level, and at the program level. The standards provided by AMATYC (2006, pp. 29-35) provide an in-depth discussion of each of these levels. This section is dealing only with the assessment of individual students at entry level. At BC all students are given an assessment test after meeting with a counselor. Students are advised to call the Bakersfield Counseling center to make a counseling appointment or find out the drop-in times after taking the assessment test. Depending on their scores on the assessment test (COMPASS), a counselor/advisor reviews the student's assessment scores and transcripts and makes course recommendations (Information Letter to BC Student provided by Sue Granger-Dickson, Interim Dean of Learning Support Services). The excerpt below is taken from this letter to students including only the math guidelines.

The following math guidelines will be followed when a counselor/  
advisor reviews your assessment scores and transcripts:

If you have not been successful in high school prealgebra, it is recommended that you register for ACDV B78 and then Math B50.

Hybrid math courses are recommended if you want or need math review.

Online math courses are rigorous and challenging. You must be computer

literate and able to transfer files, email, use the Internet, download files and send files as attachments.

Note: For Math 50, Math A and Math D the online courses are all listed as hybrid in the Bakersfield, Spring 2007 Schedule. So they are both online and hybrid. This is confusing to this consultant given the excerpt from the handout given to students listed above. Might this information also be confusing for the counselors/advisors and the students? In one situation, hybrid courses are recommended if you want to review and yet something very different is noted if the course is online but most developmental courses are both! Language is very important when working with developmental students. Information must be clear and concise, not ambiguous.

Based on students' assessment scores and transcripts, students are recommended to take college level mathematics course(s) and/or pre-college mathematics course(s). The pre-college mathematics courses include ACDV 78, Understanding Basic Math, and the developmental mathematics courses offered by the Math department which are Math B50, Modern College Arithmetic/Pre-algebra; Math BA, Introductory Algebra; and Math BD Intermediate Algebra. ACDV stands for Academic Development which is a

centralized program offering only one basic skills math course and several reading and English basic skills/developmental courses.

Several persons interviewed noted the need for additional advisors and/or counselors particularly for developmental students. (This topic will be discussed in another part of this overall program review so there will be no further discussion on it here - Support Services.) It was unclear how familiar these individuals were with the characteristics of the developmental mathematics students, their related attitudes and feelings towards mathematics, and the different delivery strategies for these courses. The first contact these students have with someone who will discuss their need to improve their mathematics skills is critical to their subsequent participation and success. Two important considerations need to be factored into this process. First, at BC there is more than one delivery option for students to select in enrolling in these pre-college courses. Second, many of these students are dealing with low self-confidence in their ability to do mathematics, high anxiety, poor study skills and learning strategies, etc. There is no assessment done to gather information on their choice of delivery options nor for learning strategies, study skills, math anxiety, etc. These factors, if not addressed, will continue to significantly interfere with

students' ability to be successful in these courses.

### **Basic Skills and Developmental Mathematics Curriculum**

The following information about the curriculum is based on the Student Learning Outcomes provided for ACDV 78, Math 50, Math A, and Math D coupled with conversations with full-time faculty, adjuncts, staff and administrators. The curriculum in the course for basic skills mathematics and the courses for developmental mathematics appear to include the common *content* student learning outcomes for basic arithmetic, prealgebra, introductory and elementary algebra. There are prerequisite reading levels listed for each of the courses. This is certainly appropriate given the correlation between reading and success in mathematics. BC is to be commended for including this. It is hoped that they are strictly enforced. There was no mention or any outcomes dealing with areas such as study skills, learning strategies, critical thinking skills, attitudes, anxiety, use of mathematics learning resources available outside of the classroom, etc. Examples of such outcomes from Beyond Crossroads (2006) are "students will understand the impact of mathematics anxiety on their learning" (p. 24) . . . "students will be expected to demonstrate an understanding and appreciation of the positive role of mathematics in their lives" (p. 40). In



best-practice institutions, substantial time and efforts were taken to teach not only the subject content but also the necessary study strategies, thinking skills, etc. for continued success in subsequent courses (CQIN/APOC, 2000). These can be integrated into the courses or offered in paired courses, integrated labs, etc.

There is quite a body of research to indicate the impact that students' math beliefs and attitudes, anxiety, study skills, learning strategies, etc. have on developmental mathematics students' success in these courses. Although there **had been** at BC, workshops on math anxiety, study skills assessment, as well as a Math Study Skills course/workshop (which had a grant and won the College Chancellor Student Success Award); none of these services are available at the present time. Someone did note that Sharon Edgeman does workshops sometimes on math anxiety. Faculty noted, "The related courses were always filled but then they stopped offering them." No one seemed to know why. Presently, there is no systematic approach to assess incoming students' skills in these areas nor related workshops or courses.

### **Additional Curriculum Related Issues**

#### **Congruency Exit and Entry Criteria**

Some faculty did express curriculum related concerns regarding students who needed ACDV 78 but didn't take it (because it is not required). They noted that these students often do experience difficulty moving from Math 50 to Math A. "Sometimes there is confusion as to whether this course is arithmetic or pre-algebra. This is particularly true since ACDV 78 is not required." Tutors working with these students commented about students going from Math 50 to Math A: "They have problems and don't remember what they learned in Math 50."

There was also some concern expressed that there are sometimes gaps between Math A and Math D. Faculty said, "There is not always congruency for online/hybrid and traditional courses between exit criteria for Math A and entry criteria for Math D." Students using ALEKS need only to pass with a 75% which means they may not have worked on some of the topics which are considered to be pre-requisites for Math D.

Given available data it was difficult to determine if there was a seamless curriculum with congruency between the exit requirements of one level pre-college mathematics course and the entry level requirements of the next level course. Data was not available on the percentage of students who repeat courses. Yet from conversations with faculty and with students, it

did appear that there were significant numbers of students exceeding the limit of 2 attempts. The data discussed above concerning the high number of student withdrawals and Fs in these courses may be related to this.

If a significant percentage of students are taking courses 2 or 3 times to successfully pass them, survey data could be collected from students and faculty to determine the major causes for incompletes, withdrawal, and or failure. A curriculum review can also help in investigating this issue. The bottom line is what changes can be made to reduce the number withdrawals and the number of attempts by students.

The congruency between exit criteria for one level of developmental mathematics and the entry requirements of the next developmental course (s) or the first college curriculum course has often been identified as a significant problem in developmental programs. A critical measure of a program's success is whether students who pass one level can also pass the subsequent level(s) in the same subject (Boylan, 1997; Boylan, Bonham, White, George, 2000).

### **Sequence/Content Issue Related to ALEKS Program**

Another curriculum related area of concern expressed by faculty involved the hybrid classes. In the traditional classroom-based courses the

teacher organizes the sequence, assignments, etc. In discussions with students, it was noted that when working on ALEKS (online course approach) “they can select the topics they want to work on from a menu.” This quote is included because faculty commented that “students generally don’t do the word problems until the end.” This is certainly not consistent with the math standards recommended by AMATYC (1995 & 2006). Problem-solving skills are to be integrated and emphasized throughout the courses especially in developmental courses. Crossroads in Mathematics outlined three sets of standards that provide the foundation for Beyond Crossroads. These include 1) Standards for Intellectual Development (the following is one of 8 guidelines in this category - “Students will engage in substantial mathematical problem solving” (p.5)); 2) Standards for Content; and 3) Standards for Pedagogy (2006).

In addition, problem solving was not stated as an expected student learning outcome in ACDV 78 or Math 50. When stated as SLOs for Math A and D it was related to a particular math topic not integrated throughout the course. “Problems provide opportunities for students to learn and do mathematics. . . as a way to apply what they have learned, . . . as a catalyst for learning. . . act as a driving force leading to student discovery and

invention (AMATYC, 1995, p. 71). Most problem solving activities are best done by students working in small groups. There has been a variety of research demonstrating the value of students working on word problems collaboratively with peers and with the teacher in the mathematics classroom (Armitage, 2002).

### **Delivery Strategies for Basic and Developmental Mathematics**

#### **ACDV 78 Understanding Basic Mathematics**

The lowest level basic skills course in mathematics is ACDV 78 *Understanding Basic Mathematics*. Some students may use the Student Success Lab to get help with math skills at this level. There is only one approach to this course. That is a whole-group, classroom-based approach.

As noted above, some students whose assessment scores place them at this level may utilize the Student Success Lab but not enroll in ACDV 78 as a credit course. These students work on a self-paced individualized approach in the lab. Students in the self-paced course come to the Student Success Lab where they work using a software program called PLATO. This is an individualized program and students can review and prepare for subsequent levels of mathematics courses. This is a non-credit open entry/open exit approach. Students can get assistance as needed from faculty in the lab

area. They take exams and quizzes when they are ready. Students move on to new material when they have been successful.

The main approach for ACDV 78 is a teacher-directed classroom-based approach. The primary mode of delivery is whole group instruction with lecture and with some opportunities for small group discussion or working on problems with teacher assistance. Students can earn extra credit if they go to the Student Success Lab to do work on PLATO to improve their skills. One faculty does require one hour/month in the lab. If faculty were interested, the staff in lab have said that they would work with them to tailor what students should work on by going through the menu in PLATO. Few have taken advantage of that. There is no systematic approach to integrating the lab and classroom activities into ACDV 78 for all sections. Mastery learning was not used in ACDV 78. It could be implemented by requiring additional work in the lab and making re-tests available.

There did not appear to be extensive use of a variety of instructional strategies and active learning activities in this course. A rule of thumb used in developmental education is to vary the activity, i.e. teaching approach, every 15 minutes. Most developmental students have an attention span of approximately this long (Massachusetts Community College Executive Office,

2006). There has been considerable research on instructional methods for developmental students conducted in the last 30 years. There is no one single method which works best for all students. The best approach supported by research is to use as many different teaching methods to accommodate the diverse needs of students (Boylan, 2002; AMATYC, 1995 & 2006). In best-practice institutions developmental instructors consistently utilize a variety of instructional practices, using at least three different teaching modalities to present material in every class period (CQIN/APOC, 2000).

### **Developmental Math Courses: Math 50, Math A, and Math D**

There are several approaches to the developmental Mathematics courses: Math 50, Math A and Math D. This includes the traditional classroom-based approach and the online/hybrid approach. The traditional classroom-based approach appears to be primarily lecture-based with some interaction with students by working on problems from homework in class. In class observations conducted during the site visit, when students asked for one of the homework problems to be done, the instructor was always the one who did the problem. This can be an opportunity to get students actively involved by having someone from the group explain how to do the problem. The

students did not seem to be very actively involved in the classes observed during the visit.

One student that I interviewed before class started noted that she had failed twice and was just sitting in on the class. She planned to take it in the summer in 6 weeks because it goes faster. Her rationale was that she would have less time to forget! This student may need some advice or counseling. Does anyone talk to students who have failed for the second time?

Another student sitting nearby said, "Just don't go and take it on the computer because it is really hard." I said, "but you can get help in the lab if you need it." She said, "Oh, no, they just show you where to find the information on the computer but my friend said it is really hard."

The extent to which these students represent what is typical at BC is unknown but there seems to be some misunderstandings among some students about the different delivery strategies available. It might be helpful for faculty to discuss this with their classes regularly particularly noting the type of learning styles or skills necessary to be successful.

Mastery learning was not used in this delivery strategy. In this course, as with others, there was no systematic approach to assessment or



integration of study skills and learning strategies, math anxiety, building self-confidence etc.

The online approach utilizes the program ALEKS. However, it is referred to in the syllabus as an Online/Hybrid Math Course. This was a little confusing because in interviews with faculty, staff, and tutors; it was noted that the online class with ALEKS didn't include any classroom-based instruction. This is usually what is meant by a hybrid course. After checking into this further, it was explained that the reference to hybrid is utilized because the students can access ALEKS by using computers in the Math Learning Center where they can get assistance if needed.

The computerized program ALEKS is the primary delivery strategy. Students can access it from any Internet-accessible computer. Students are required to put a minimum of 5.5 hours each week on the ALEKS program. If a student is 11 or more hours short on time, the student will be dropped from the course. They do have a one-time-only option "no questions asked" reinstatement. Subsequent reinstatements require permission from the instructor.

Students are required to take the comprehensive proctored exam in the Math Learning Center. This delivery strategy does use a mastery-based

approach but only for the final, comprehensive exam. Students must have 75 % to pass Math 50 and Math A and 70 % to pass Math D on this comprehensive examination. Students do take tests on ALEKS throughout the term. In these tests they can choose (a) recently learned material or (b) a comprehensive test. Since the final exit test is a comprehensive test, students should be encouraged to take the comprehensive exam regularly in preparation for this exit test. Students also suggested that "There should be more than one proctored test, maybe like every 10, 15, or 20% that we move up. This might help more students to pass since so many get incompletes." In interviews with students, this was a commonly mentioned concern. They noted that the comprehensive exam had information on it that "they had never studied or seen." ALEKS is a menu-driven program and students may not have selected some of the units or worked on all of the skills within a unit they had selected. This was such a frequently noted issue in conversations with students that it does merit some investigation by the mathematics faculty to determine the root of the problem and very vocal concerns of the students.

The second version of a hybrid approach to Math 50, A, and B is the classroom-based approach in which some faculty require students to attend the Student Success Lab to work on parts of the PLATO program. Some

faculty are also using the software program *My Math Lab*. This use of a technology-based program as a supplement to developmental mathematics is supported by the research as more effective for most developmental mathematics students than use of a technology-based software program as the sole delivery strategy.

### **Tutoring for Math 50, A and D**

The Math Lab staff also noted that tutoring is available for students in these pre-college level courses. Faculty don't seem to systematically require tutoring for students who are averaging less than a B nor is it noted in the syllabus. Labs and tutoring are most effective with developmental mathematics students when they are an integrated and strongly recommended part of the course.

### **Comments from Faculty and Students Related to the Use of ALEK**

It is strongly suggested that data on students' success rates in these different delivery strategies be analyzed to determine if there are any significant differences. On a data sheet provided in one meeting related to this, the success rates for the non-hybrid courses in Math 50, A, and D between 2003 and 2006 were at least 10% higher than the success rates in the hybrid courses. The incompletes in Math D were approximately 40%.

These statistics do deserve closer scrutiny by the mathematics faculty. It may be that many students are taking the hybrid course although they don't possess the time management skills, study skills, etc. to be successful in this approach.

Other concerns related to the hybrid approach with ALEKS were noted by faculty and students. One stated that "students sometime take a test over and over again and don't do well." Students recommended in the discussion group that "it would be helpful if we could get some feedback and guidance on using ALEKS through the semester." Doesn't the record keeping system allow the faculty working in the lab to see how students are progressing and which students are having some difficulty? Using this data from the monitoring system on ALEKS, the faculty can then provide an intervention such as individual or small group study session on the topic.

Students have commented on the proctored tests. Although they can take them as many times as they want, they still feel the pressure and anxiety of these tests. One student commented, "Perhaps if we had a proctored test every 10, 15, or 20% we move up, the passing rate would increase and we as students would not be so stressed and have to file for an incomplete." Others noted that it was overwhelming when they "had to

learn 75% of the topics to get a C.” They obviously didn’t understand why these procedures and processes were being used. I assume they were referring to the 75% mastery which is required for students working on ALEKS. Although students made numerous suggestions for improving the format for ALEKS as well as their high stress level, they did note they would take another course using ALEKS. This seems to be a communication issue. Students may need more in-depth explanation of why mastery learning is required and related information on ALEKS.

Students with low level mathematics skills, weak study skills, time management, etc. may not seek help readily in an online/hybrid course. They may need to be invited to participate in small group activities or work with an instructor assigned to the lab. Faculty working in the lab may need to look at the record keeping program to identify students in the lab who are spending large amounts of time in the same unit or appear to be having difficulty with a particular concept based on quiz or test results. Self-paced learning, particularly when the computer is the primary mode of delivery, requires intervention by trained personnel to be most effective in mathematics. The major difficulty with self-pacing for developmental students is that it assumes they are capable of regulating their own behavior

far more than in a traditional system (Steele, Legg, & Miles, 1980).

Procrastination becomes a problem resulting in lower completion rates.

Greenwood (1977) found that students' success in courses with external pacing was higher than for those with self-pacing.

### **Integration of Labs & Related Skills to Developmental Math Students'**

#### **Success**

As noted previously, there was no systematic approach in any of these courses to assessing and providing services in math study skills and learning strategies, anxiety, and other non-cognitive variables which may significantly influence students' success in these and other mathematics courses. The Student Success Lab does provide Time Management, Test Taking, Memory, Note-Taking, Textbook Reading, and Vocabulary classes (listed as ACDV classes i.e. ACDV B70 A). These are offered at different dates and are clearly identified on handouts posted in the Student Success Lab. However, there is not a systematic approach to assessment of students, integration of these with pre-college math courses or recommendations to students to take these classes.

Developmental mathematics students are often not prepared for

college level work in mathematics because they also lack adequate skills in and understanding of the learning process itself. These skills can be integrated into the classroom instruction, offered in labs which are a part of the course, taught in a paired-course, etc. They are an important factor in students' success in pre-college mathematics courses. Recent developments from the research on the brain consistently reinforce the significant impact anxiety has on students' success. Addressing the needs of students with a high level of math anxiety goes beyond just offering a workshop for students or lab which addresses this issue. It is important to create within the classroom a nurturing and non-threatening environment. There are strategies instructors can use to create a safe, inclusive learning environment in which all students feel comfortable expressing their questions and concerns either orally or written as is suggested in *Classroom Assessment Techniques* (Angelo & Cross, 1993). There are a variety of approaches being utilized in community college to help developmental mathematics students be successful by addressing these non-cognitive variables.

### **Learning Communities & SI & Developmental Mathematics**

There was no mention of learning communities or supplemental instruction (SI) in the discussions at any of the meetings with faculty,

administrators or students. However, they are described in a handout provided to the consultants. Upon further investigation it was found that learning communities were developed, e.g. *Achieving Success* and *The Power of One*. Although few sections are offered, these learning communities are not being expanded due to several factors. These include financial support and counseling issues in getting students to participate.

The use of learning communities has been found to improve student grades, retention, and attitudes toward learning (Tinto, 1998). Learning communities link courses and groups of students so that “students encounter learning as a shared rather than isolated experience” (Tinto, 1997, p. 602). Several courses can be linked together with a common theme in which students work collaboratively in small groups to solve problems, study, develop class projects, and benefit by having larger blocks of time for activities and discussions. A more common variation of the learning community are paired courses. A developmental mathematics course can be paired with a study skills/learning strategies course or with a developmental reading course. A publication by the Washington Center for Improving the Quality of Undergraduate Education titled The Pedagogy of Possibilities: Developmental Education, College-Level Studies, and Learning Communities



(Malnarich, G., with others, 2003) is an excellent resource for further discussion on case studies involving learning communities and developmental courses as well as the related research on this topic.

Supplemental instruction combines the advantages of collaborative learning with an emphasis on developing study strategies associated with a particular subject. Developed in 1973, SI is probably the single most well documented intervention available for improving the performance of underprepared students. Boylan, Bonham, Claxton, & Bliss (1992) reported that developmental programs with the highest rate of student retention regularly used SI to support students enrolled in difficult courses. Arendale (2000) reports that SI was the first research-based higher education innovation to be certified by the U.S. Department of Education and funded by OERI.

Studies at Valencia Community College in Florida have revealed higher end of course grades, more positive attitudes towards mathematics, lower math anxiety, higher levels of self-confidence as some of the significant outcomes for students who participated in a developmental mathematics course with SI compared to those students who didn't participate in the SI sessions (Phelps & Evans, 2006).

## Instructional Strategies and Learning Styles in the Developmental Math Classroom

Let me begin this section with a quote from one of the students interviewed during the visit to BC which prompted much discussion and agreement from other students in the group. "Why don't faculty administer learning styles inventory to students and discuss what it means for the students and for the faculty. Can you encourage faculty to use more graphics, visual aids, and different approaches in the classroom teaching?"

In conversations with full-time faculty and adjunct faculty there was no mention of an emphasis on learning styles, use of a variety of teaching strategies within the classroom, or opportunities for professional development in this area. The diverse needs of students do require that math faculty use diverse approaches to instruction. While knowledge of content is essential in teaching any discipline, effective teaching is the result of integrating content and pedagogical knowledge (Conti, 1998; Galbraith, 1998).

There is a substantial amount of research on different learning styles. This research includes information on students' styles as well as instructors' strategies to address them. The American Mathematical Association of Two-

Year Colleges (AMATYC, 2006) developed standards for teaching mathematics in the first two years of college. The learning styles/teaching styles standards are based on research that emphasizes the importance of using a variety of teaching approaches in the classroom. Professional development for educators in instructional approaches for varied learning styles is an essential part of the implementation of this in the classroom.

### **Professional Development**

The faculty seem very interested in learning more about instructional strategies that work best with developmental math students. They emphasized that they need time to talk about teaching and planning math courses. One said, "Most of our meetings deal with administrative issues." There are no regularly scheduled meeting times for the faculty teaching ACDV 78 and Math 50, A or D to meet during the term for discussion about students needs, courses, instructional strategies, changes to courses, etc.

It was noted in a meeting with the Deans that attempts are underway to "make professional development stronger." Faculty are required to have 24 hours of FLEX time but right now, as one faculty member stated, "anything counts like bowling." In actuality, the State of California has developed rather specific criteria for how this FLEX time might be used. Social and

personal health activities are included among these criteria.

There appears to be opportunities to include some in-house professional development workshops for faculty working with underprepared students. All faculty can probably benefit from a workshop explaining why so many students seem underprepared as well as one on the characteristics of developmental students. The college has provided some professional development activities over the years including sessions on learning communities and reading across the curriculum. But these activities do not appear to have been focused on the specific needs of developmental instructors generally nor developmental math instructors in particular.

Boylan (2002) suggests that faculty come together to share effective teaching practices. This increases the benefits to a greater number of students. Some ways to accomplish this include: 1) set aside time at faculty meetings to talk about teaching/learning issues and pedagogical approaches; 2) share course materials, activities, handouts, etc.; 3) encourage mentoring relations among faculty; 4) provide opportunities for faculty returning from conferences, seminars, etc. to “share out” regarding their learning and/or materials obtained; and 5) offer frequent college-wide forums devoted to dialogue and discussion of instructional practices. In order to use any

instructional technique effectively one must understand the theory behind the technique as well as the fundamental principles that may lead to improvement in instruction (Boylan, 2002).

The National Association for Developmental Education (NADE) supports the formation of professional development programs for adjuncts who teach developmental classes. It is all too common for institutions to fail to assume responsibility for providing support and resources that enhance knowledge, skills, and networking opportunities for those who do not have full-time contracts (NADE Executive Board, 2002). It should be noted that according to verbal reports in conversations with faculty, there are twice as many full-time faculty than adjuncts teaching mathematics courses. Many full-time faculty do prefer to work in the Lab with students who are working on the ALEKS program.

### **Concluding Remarks**

AT BC there are a variety of delivery strategies for students to choose from when selecting a pre-college mathematics course or in their second attempt in a course. Providing alternatives or options for students is certainly a good practice. It recognizes the diverse needs of students. Yet, students need more intrusive advising and assistance in making these choices. There is

no systematic approach being used in pre-college level courses to meet the diverse needs of students taking developmental mathematics courses. This includes assessment, delivery strategies, support services, and instructional strategies used in the classroom. There needs to be greater communication and collaborative efforts between faculty teaching basic skills courses, developmental courses, support service personnel, and counselors/advisors. There are a variety of developmental mathematics students' needs described in this report which are not being met. Meeting this full range of needs has a significant relationship to students' success in courses and for retention.

Some faculty are to be commended for their involvement in special research projects to determine ways to improve the curriculum and courses and in work being done with local high schools. More extensive projects of this type are needed involving many more faculty to have a significant impact on developmental mathematics students' academic success and retention.

A systematic approach to improving the basic skills/developmental mathematics program at BC is needed. What are the mission, purpose, and goals of the developmental mathematics program at BC? What kind of data needs to be collected to determine if their goals/outcomes at student,

course, and program level are being met?

In addition, the basic skills/developmental mathematics program faculty should work more closely with Student Success Lab, Math Lab and Tutorial Center personnel, counselors and advisors. Together they can review carefully what is done during Orientation, Counseling, and Assessment. Is it adequate? How many students participate in the pre-counseling session and follow-up meeting? How are students deciding whether to take a classroom-based course or one which is primarily technology-based? What kind of student information is used to help guide them in this decision? Why are the critical skills related to success in developmental mathematics courses not being assessed and related labs, workshops, etc. required? Are there gaps in the developmental mathematics curriculum? Which students seem to be most affected? How and why? These are the kinds of beginning questions which a Task Force can tackle in attempting to develop a systematic, efficient and effective approach to developmental mathematics at BC.

*Recommendation 1- Collect more noncognitive information on math students.*

It is strongly recommended that additional information be obtained from all students who place in ACDV 78 or Math 50, A and D regarding their learning

strategies and study skills, beliefs and attitudes toward mathematics, mathematics anxiety, etc. This can be obtained by administering an inventory such as the LASSI ( HYPERLINK "http://www.hhpublishing.com/\_assessments/LASSI/index.html" [http://www.hhpublishing.com/\\_assessments/LASSI/index.html](http://www.hhpublishing.com/_assessments/LASSI/index.html)), Study Power, Math Anxiety Rating Scale, Dutton Math Attitude Scale, etc. and/or by adding related questions to the COMPASS assessment test or both.

*Recommendation 2 - Continue to analyze data on student performance in math classes.*

It is recommended that mathematics faculty regularly access and review the data on students' withdrawals rates, grades, number of attempts, etc. over a two-year period for students who had taken/had not taken ACDV 78 and their subsequent success in Math 50 and Math A.

*(Note: Two faculty (Tim Bohan and Tom Greenwood) are working on this as a research-based project to collect data on ACDV 78 and Math 50. There has been no analysis or summary report with findings provided yet. This project should certainly be continued and results shared with all math faculty teaching ADCV 78 or Math 50, A, or D. It is recommended that mathematics faculty collect similar data on students' between Math A and Math D for the*



*hybrid course and classroom-based approach.*

***Recommendation 3 - Review student learning outcomes.***

The student learning outcomes for ACDV 78, Math 50, Math A, and Math D should be reviewed. Consideration should be given to including word problems/problem solving as well as other intellectual development outcomes as recommended by AMATYC. In addition, outcomes for the area of learning strategies, study skills, etc. should also be included in each of these courses.

***Recommendation 4 - Teach math study skills.***

Developmental mathematics instructors should identify and implement strategies for assisting students with a variety of study skills/learning strategies related to the learning process and for overcoming math anxiety and building their self-confidence in mathematics. Consideration should be given to paired courses (learning communities), supplemental instruction, labs, etc. For a more comprehensive list of related skills, see Skills Related to the Learning Process (Massachusetts Community Colleges Executive Office, 2006, p. 2; and Beyond Crossroads, 2006, pp. 23-25).

***Recommendation 5 - Enhance professional development for math faculty.***

Continued support and implementation for the Professional Development

Action Plan at BC for Goal #4 submitted by Peggy DeStefano is strongly encouraged (see document presented to Academic Senate Executive Board, 11/15/06). Facilitation of this Professional Development Center can provide the opportunities for the suggestion for faculty development made in the preceding section. These professional development opportunities should be extended to both full-time and adjunct faculty teaching developmental mathematics courses.

Strategic teaching describes instructional processes that focus directly on fostering student thinking, but goes well beyond that. Faculty utilizing strategic teaching methods need to develop an understanding of the variables of instruction. These include the characteristics of the learners, material to be learned (curriculum content), the goals and outcomes the faculty and learners designate, and the learning strategies. It is the interaction of these variables in the learning environment which determine students' success. If any one of these is not factored into the design of the learning process, students are less likely to be successful. Boylan (2002) provides an excellent discussion on instructional practices which are supported by research and have been found successful in developmental education courses.

*Recommendation 6 - Use more diverse teaching strategies* (from AMATYC 2006).

Mathematics faculty should use a variety of teaching strategies that reflect the results of research to enhance student learning.

The following suggestions are related to this recommendation.

Use multiple instructional strategies that encourage active student learning and address different learning styles.

Actively manage the learning environment.

Integrate technology as a tool to help students discover and understand key mathematical concepts.

Align technology tools for assessment with instruction.

Provide faculty with resources and training they need to select, develop, and refine curriculum materials and instructional activities.

Provide the necessary facilities, technology, student services, and training to support understanding, development and implementation of multiple instructional strategies to address various learning and teaching styles.

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### **Conclusion**

The vast majority of BC faculty members teaching developmental and academic development courses are well-qualified for their positions, knowledgeable in their subject matter, and committed to the success of their students. If students are not retained at the desired levels or have not learned the subject matter with the desired competency, it is not because faculty members have failed to put forth sufficient effort. Indeed, the faculty members interviewed worked hard, cared for their students, and often tried new techniques to help students learn.

Unfortunately, there are both local and systemic problems that work against the success of instructors who work with underprepared students at BC. Chief among these is the fact that student demographics and culture have changed more rapidly than the culture of BC.

The college is confronted with large numbers of what K. Patricia Cross once referred to as the "New College Students" (1976, p. 3). These are students who thirty years ago would not have been considered "college material." They are single parents, displaced workers, and ethnic minorities.

They are students with disabilities, students with poor records in previous schooling, or only marginal previous schooling. They are students who often lack fluency in either English or their native language, who come from backgrounds of hard core poverty, and students who have been out of school for a decade or more. When Cross coined the term "New College Students" thirty years ago to describe such students, she was describing a growing minority of students. Today, these students represent a majority of the community college population.

The institution has made sporadic efforts to accommodate the fact that its student body has become more diverse and, at the same time, often less qualified. But these efforts have been neither systematic nor comprehensive.

Programs have been established to address the needs of students from different cultures and weaker educational backgrounds, workshops have been held to accommodate different teaching and learning styles, and policies have been developed to make it easier for students to matriculate through the institution. However, these efforts have been random and piecemeal.

There is inadequate communication between and among the

departments and programs that deal with the new majority of college students. There is little coordination between professionals in the academic and student development areas focused on collaborative efforts to meet these students' needs. There are insufficient training opportunities available to faculty who work with these students. The fiscal, physical, and personnel resources available have been inadequate to address the needs of the new majority of BC students and the faculty who work with them.

Nevertheless, there are still many things that BC can do in response to these circumstances. A basic mantra in consulting that "*the cheapest form of innovation is a change in your own attitude.*" Attitudes and the actions resulting from them must be changed if BC is to be successful with its current students.

Administrators must recognize that serving the new majority of college students is not the job of a particular program, department, or innovation. Instead, it is the job of the entire institution including everyone from the president to the grounds keepers. Planning must be implemented and resources allocated based on the recognition that serving the new majority is the college's major task.

Faculty should recognize that they must teach the students they



have, not the ones they used to have or wish they had. The basic philosophy of developmental education is that faculty must accept students where they are and move them as far as they can go (and the key word here is "accept").

Frequently, teaching the new majority will require that faculty learn and adopt new teaching methods and techniques. This will necessitate a much greater emphasis on faculty development, particularly for adjunct faculty who often teach the majority of developmental courses.

Teaching the new majority will require reviewing departmental and program policies to determine which ones encourage student success and which ones serve as barriers to student success. It will require developing new policies based on the criteria of - *does this promote learning for our current generation of students?*

Teaching the new majority will require greater collaboration with others both inside and outside the university. No individual, program or group of programs can meet the challenge alone. It will require a collective effort, frequently among people who are not used to working with one another.

The members of the review team believe that the recommendations provided here may serve as a basis for the attitudinal and operational

changes at BC. Change must take place if the college is to be successful in serving its new majority of students. But whatever change takes place must be systematic rather than random, coordinated rather than isolated, and planned rather than accidental.

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## Evaluation of Bakersfield College Developmental Education Part II - Support Services

Conducted by the National Center for Developmental Education  
Appalachian State University  
Boone, NC 28608

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### Introduction

Support services are essential to the success of all college students but particularly for those who are underprepared and enrolled in developmental education programs. The first multi-campus study of developmental education was undertaken in the early 1970's by Richard Donovan of Bronx Community College under a grant from the Fund for the Improvement of Postsecondary Education (Donovan, 1974). The study found that institutions providing support services as well as remedial courses to underprepared students had better student retention than those providing only remedial courses. In 1977 John Roueche and Gerald Snow visited a national sample of colleges and found that the most successful developmental programs linked support services to developmental courses. The first truly scientific study of developmental education was undertaken

by Kulik, Kulik, and Schwalb (1983) and involved a meta-analysis of over 350 research reports and articles. The authors found that the more comprehensive a developmental program's support services, the more likely students in that program were retained.

These findings were replicated in a national study of developmental education including over 5,000 students attending 116 different colleges and universities by Boylan, Bonham, Claxton, and Bliss (1992) and again in a study of Texas colleges and universities by Boylan and Saxon (1998). In both studies, developmental programs linking support services, particularly assessment, counseling, and advising, to courses were found to contribute to improving student retention as well as grades in first year courses. More recently McCabe (2000) found that programs judged to be outstanding by their peers placed a strong emphasis on support services such as advising, assessment, counseling, and tutoring.

The research is consistent and clear in finding that support services are an important part of any effort to improve the performance and retention of underprepared students. Furthermore, the research indicates that, for these services to be most effective, they must be linked to remedial courses and integrated into the academic experience of underprepared students.

As part of its contract with Bakersfield College (BC) to evaluate developmental education, the National Center for Developmental Education was charged with reviewing student support services related to developmental education. The review took place on May 15 and 16, 2007. It involved discussions with directors and staff of various programs, tours of facilities, and interviews with students. Documents relating to each program were also reviewed both before and after the visit. When necessary, follow-up telephone calls were made to directors and program administrators to seek additional information.

BC offers a wide variety of support services to assist students in their matriculation through the college. The support services most directly related to developmental education and student success include:

The Admission and Records Office,

Orientation (provided through the Counseling Department),

The Counseling Department,

The Disabled Students Program and Services (DSPS),

The Extended Opportunity Programs and Services (EOP&S), and

The Financial Aid Office.

This review not only explored the support services available to

students at BC but also the extent to which they were integrated into the campus-wide developmental education effort.

### **Admissions and Records (Assessment)**

All students entering BC go through Admissions and Records. Because BC is a completely open admission institution, there is no application process. Instead, students complete an admissions form providing essentially the same information as an application form. Information from this form is used to communicate further with students through email and, more recently, through letters sent to home addresses. Students may fill out this form online or by visiting campus and completing the form via computer. The Admissions and Records office provides computers for this purpose and also provides personal assistance to students who need help in completing their forms.

The major contribution to developmental education made by the Admissions and Records Office is to administer the college's assessment program. BC's current primary assessment instrument is the COMPASS, a computer-adaptive test produced by ACT. COMPASS is one of the two instruments used most widely by community colleges to measure the skill levels of entering students (Gerlaugh, Thompson, Boylan, & Davis, 2007). It is



also among the most accurate assessment instruments on the market if used and interpreted properly (Morante, 2006).

Although mandatory assessment and placement is generally considered to be an essential component of developmental education (Boylan, 2002; McCabe, 2000; Morante, 1986), California state policies tend to make mandatory assessment cost-prohibitive. Circumstances may also prevent the college from making assessment mandatory. Entering students are encouraged to participate in assessment through written instructions, counseling, and orientation. It is estimated that about 6,000 students are assessed in any given year. Admissions and Records officials as well as counselors agree that all students who are assessed get a copy of their scores. If students have not completed the assessment, they are assigned to the lowest levels of Academic Development writing or mathematics.

However, only students taking reading, writing, and mathematics courses or students taking courses with reading, writing, and mathematics prerequisites are absolutely required to participate in assessment. As a result, a certain number of students “slip through the cracks” of the assessment process. Estimates provided by a Dean of Instruction suggest that this number is somewhere around 1,000 students.

In addition to the COMPASS, the English Department administers and scores a holistic writing sample for students entering writing courses and assigns students placement based on these scores. A writing sample is also administered by the English Department to ESL students. However, several faculty members interviewed claimed that some students avoid this by not registering for ESL courses.

The assessment requirement is communicated to incoming students in a variety of ways. It is emphasized during student orientation, it is posted on bulletin boards, it is printed on various forms and registration documents that students must complete; it is conveyed by secretaries, staff members, advisors, and practically everyone else who talks to incoming students. Email messages are sent to those who have completed admission forms advising them of assessment and advising requirements.

Because the COMPASS is administered via computer, the assessment center has a large number of computer terminals available for students to use in taking the assessment battery. Staff members are also available to assist students in logging on to take the COMPASS. Students may access these computers on a walk-in basis or may make appointments. Campus administrators responsible for admissions and assessment believe that

everyone who wants to take the assessment test has an opportunity to do so.

Once students have taken the COMPASS the results are sent to the Counseling Department whose staff interpret assessment scores and advise students of the implications of these scores. Where appropriate, students are advised to take either Academic Development Department Courses or developmental English or mathematics courses offered by these departments. Although the college cannot require that students take the appropriate developmental courses, counselors believe that they are able to encourage most of the students who need these courses to enroll for them. Information was not available as to the percentage of entering students who place into developmental courses but elect not to take them.

Registration for courses at BC is conducted entirely online. The requirement for online registration is made clear in all college documents and all materials sent to students prior to enrollment. For students who do not have access to computers, the college makes computers available in a variety of locations on campus for student use in registration. If students do not know how to use a computer, there are staff members available to teach them.

Admissions and Records personnel and other campus administrators

believe that online registration is not a problem for incoming students. This is confirmed by the fact that most courses for entering students are filled to capacity. On the other hand, a few of the students interviewed (about 8 out of 60) complained about online registration. They claimed that it was hard to access and that the registration instructions were hard to understand. It should be noted, however, that some of the students who made these complaints were enrolled in the lowest level Academic Development reading course.

Interviews with Admissions and Records staff and observations of procedures indicated that there were carefully designed procedures for meeting and assisting students. The staff members of the Admissions and Records Office were friendly and helpful to students who entered the office. They also knew the answers to questions raised by students. In general, the Admissions and Records Office appeared to be well-managed and staffed by knowledgeable and competent professionals.

### **Recommendations**

*Review registration instructions and procedures to insure that they are understandable to students with low reading levels or poor English skills.*

Completing enrollment forms, participating in assessment, and registering for classes can be an intimidating process for those unused to academe. This intimidation factor is increased when students are either poor readers, non-native speakers of English, or both. It is recommended that Admissions and Records Office personnel meet over time during the coming year to review all of their procedures and instructions for following these procedures. The purpose of this review should be to make sure that instructions for completing forms or registering are written no higher than the fifth grade level. It may also be profitable for Academic Development reading instructors to consult in this process and/or conduct readability studies on the resulting written policies and procedures.

*Meet with student focus groups to identify unforeseen problems with admission, assessment, and registration.*

The use of student focus groups is frequently helpful in identifying problems with policies or procedures that are not perceived by the personnel who administer these policies and procedures. The Admissions and Records Office is usually the first point of contact for students seeking to enroll in BC. The quality of this contact and the ease of procedures resulting from it can be major factors in students' decisions to attend or not to attend

the college. The ongoing use of student focus groups to discover issues and problems with procedures can help improve students' perceptions of initial contacts and processes.

### **Orientation**

The importance of students' orientation to the college is often overlooked. Nevertheless, there is a considerable body of research indicating that the quality of orientation students receive is often related to their retention (Boudreau & Kromrey, 1994; Glass & Garrett, 1995; Kuh, Kinzie, Schuh, & Whitt, 2005; Ward-Roof & Hatch, 2003).

At BC orientation is developed and managed by the Counseling Department. Orientation is delivered to new students in two ways: a ninety minute face-to-face group orientation workshop offered every Wednesday from 3:00 to 4:30 and an online orientation that students may take at home or on computers at the BC campus. There is also a special orientation for ESL students including much of the same material as the regular student orientation as well as some material specifically related to ESL students.

A review of the online orientation web site indicates that the orientation focuses on matriculation issues such as registering for classes, getting financial aid, using the college catalog, finding sources of assistance,

participating in student activities, using a course syllabus, etc. The web site also describes the differences between high school and college and provides tips on goal setting, time management, and study skills.

On the positive side, the topics covered in orientation appear to be appropriate for community college students. If students took all the advice provided, thought about it, and acted upon it, it would no doubt help them be successful. Furthermore, the language used in the online version of orientation was relatively simple and easy to understand, and helpful icons and links were provided throughout. On the negative side, the online orientation was text heavy, had few graphics, was not interactive, and did not appear to be particularly engaging.

Counseling Department faculty and staff believe that most first time students do participate in one of the two orientation programs. However, there does not appear to be any data available to support this belief. The college does make substantial efforts to get students to participate in orientation through announcements, notices in application materials, and bulletins. Students who are unable to participate in the face-to-face orientation are encouraged by registration personnel, counselors, and other college staff to participate in the online orientation. If students do not have

access to computers they may use those in the Counseling Center and receive assistance on how to navigate the program through Center staff.

In addition to the pre-college orientation, many orientation topics are also covered in the student development courses taught by the Counseling Center. In order to receive an A.A. degree, BC students must take at least one of these courses. These courses focus on one or more topics connected to student success such as planning, career orientation, and study strategies. A review of student development course syllabi and the online orientation material suggests that there is some linkage between orientation and student development course material. But these two sets of activities do not necessarily operate in conjunction with one another. Instead, students appear to be exposed to a "one shot" initial orientation with the option of selecting one or more follow up courses at a later date.

The problem with a "one shot" initial orientation such as that provided at BC is that it is provided to students in a single session at the very outset of their college careers. As a result, they may not have enough of a context to either remember or understand the information provided through orientation. Students are generally not interested in how to drop or add a class until they actually have to and at that point, they may often engage in



inappropriate patterns of dropping and adding courses.

The most effective orientation programs are ongoing and integrated throughout a college students' first year (Upcraft & Gardner, 1989). It might be claimed that orientation is ongoing because of the availability of student development courses. However, orientation does not appear to be fully integrated into a systematic first-year experience effort. Although counselors make themselves available to address orientation and other information in classes, this represents a passive approach and only some faculty members take advantage of this.

An ongoing orientation to college is particularly important for at-risk, low income, and first generation students and these groups of students are probably a majority at BC. Counseling Center staff members have worked hard to provide students with adequate orientation and they have done some good things with minimal resources. For this they are to be commended. Nevertheless, current orientation efforts tend to be fragmented, passive, and are not integrated into the entire first year experience.

### **Recommendations**

*Review the online orientation program.*

The online orientation program should be reviewed periodically by

Counseling Center staff to determine what information might be added as well as how the web site can be improved. Focus groups of students should also be interviewed to identify areas where they might be encountering problems in using or understanding the online orientation. They should also be interviewed to identify information that they would like to have that is not covered either in the face-to-face or the online orientation.

*Consider implementing a true first year experience program.*

BC has a large number of entering students who, for a variety of reasons, may be considered at-risk. These at-risk students would be better served if the college viewed their orientation as an ongoing process that is the responsibility of the entire academic community including administrators, faculty, and staff. This would involve such things as:

Having faculty members teaching first year courses make periodic announcements regarding upcoming dates for performing matriculation tasks such as dropping courses or applying for financial aid,

Establishing a first year experience task force to review policies, procedures, and activities that contribute to improving students understanding of college requirements,

Developing a first year seminar that would be required for all students

judged as being at risk,

Developing a statement of expectations of students and including this statement in course syllabi, having faculty explain it in classes, and posting it throughout the college (a sample is provided in Appendix I - although many of these expectations are included in the existing orientation program, these expectations must be constantly reinforced), Developing a college seminar/ orientation course and linking it to other courses being taken by first year students, and/or

Combing two or more of the existing student development courses into a single student success or "master student" course that is required during the first year for all students who are considered at-risk.

### **Counseling Department**

The Counseling Department at BC is, in the words of the most recent institutional self study "the gateway for students entering career specific or lower division college academic study" (Bakersfield College, 2006, p. 113).

The Counseling Department staff members interpret assessment results for students, teach study skills and college orientation, and provide career, personal, and crisis counseling. Counseling staff make referrals as appropriate to other campus or community agencies. They also provide individual

counseling for students who are either on probation or disqualified (declared academically ineligible).

At present six student development courses are also taught through the Counseling Department. These include:

Educational Planning,

Career Decision-Making and Planning,

Introduction to College for International Students,

Tools for College Survival,

Independent Study Educational Planning,

Job Strategies and Strategies for College Success (a two-part course).

These latter two courses are taught specifically for Supportive Services Students.

The Counseling Department has also established a Liaison Program that links specific counselors to specific departments. The liaison counselors then make themselves available for classroom visits, to answer questions from faculty, and to discuss transfer issues and new academic programs.

These tasks represent a fairly heavy and diverse work load, particularly given the limited size of the counseling staff. The review team was unable to ascertain the exact distribution of counseling activities.

However, interviews with counseling staff suggested that the majority of counseling center activity was directed toward academic advising and counseling.

During a previous visit to review instructional activities, reviewers noted that many faculty members were either confused about or had limited understanding of what counselors actually did. This is a rather common situation at larger institutions. The fact that counselors have so many different responsibilities at BC probably contributes to this confusion. Nevertheless, there is apparently inadequate communication between counselors and the faculty of the college.

The Counseling Department staff includes professional counselors who have a minimum of a master's degree and educational advisors who must possess an associate or baccalaureate degree. Professional counselors handle academic advising and counseling, and educational advisors handle short-term questions and work with some probationary students. According to the Vice President for Student Services, there are 17.5 FTE counselors available to serve the entire college population of about 17,000. Of course, the counselors do not see every student who is enrolled at the college nor are they expected to do so. Also, several adjunct counselors are hired during the

summer to assist with academic advising.

Even though classes were not in session during our visit, counselors claimed that they were “too busy” to spend as much time with the review team as they would have liked. The counselors did, however, give time to the reviewers in both group interviews and one-on-one discussions. Those interviewed were well qualified, possessed strong credentials, and had considerable experience. The review team’s impression was that BC is served by a very professional team of counselors.

The activities of the Counseling Department are integrated into the campus-wide developmental education effort to only a limited extent. Counselors and educational advisers do meet with and monitor the performance of students who are already experiencing academic difficulty. The Department also teaches courses specific to certain groups of at-risk students. However, the department does not monitor the performance of students who might be at risk nor does it have counselors allocated specifically to working with developmental students. An obvious reason for this is that the work counselors are already doing leaves little time for working with specific groups although some programs such as DSPS and EOP&S do have their own counselors.

There was also little evidence to suggest that counseling staff meet regularly with developmental instructors either in the Academic Development Department or in the departments where developmental courses are taught. There is some communication between the Counseling Department and other departments but it is neither regular nor systematic. It appears that there is relatively little integration of counseling into the overall campus developmental education effort.

One of the overriding pressures on the counseling center is the adverse impact of the state funding model. Fifty percent of state funding is required to go directly to support instruction. This results in a “line being drawn” between instruction and student support services, especially counseling services.

Counselors certainly perceive themselves as being overworked. As a result, some counselors may have become focused on contract and labor issues and some may have become “burned out.” Many of the individuals interviewed believed some counselors had also become resistant to change. It appears that morale is low among many counselors and, as a result, student service levels and staff development may be suffering.

Data from interviews also suggests that there may be a disconnect

between counseling staff and the faculty teaching courses where students are initially placed. Student assessment results arrive electronically and counselors make placement decisions without major input of course instructors. At one point a counseling "liaison" was charged to work with academic departments in order to address this issue. According to those interviewed, this process did not work

A visit to the Counseling Center demonstrated that the available counselors were indeed quite busy. At 2:00 on a Monday afternoon all counselors were engaged with students and about fourteen students were in the reception area waiting to see counselors. Several of the students claimed that they had been waiting for an hour or more. In addition to waiting for counselors, some students were also waiting to use computerized career guidance software. In discussions with students it appeared that at least a few of them were waiting to complete relatively simple transactions such as getting permission to re-enroll or asking about the applicability of certain courses to particular programs of study.

It is worth noting that the students in the waiting area represented an extremely diverse population including Anglo, African-American, Asian, Hispanic, and Sikh students. This extreme diversity of the student population



no doubt complicates the normal counseling process by requiring cross-cultural communication skills as well as expertise in counseling and student development. Fortunately, the ethnicity of counseling staff also reflected considerable diversity.

The review team observed several counselors meet and greet their clients. In each instance, the counselors were professional, friendly, warm, and supportive. Their demeanor appeared to reflect a genuine desire to be helpful.

Nevertheless, many students expressed dissatisfaction with counseling services in a 2004 Noel Levitz survey. Some of the factors contributing to this dissatisfaction might include:

- The excessive waiting time required to see a counselor,

- The quality of service provided by some individual counselors, or

- The reception they receive when they enter the Counseling Center.

The personnel staffing the reception desk appeared to be students although the review team was advised that reception personnel are supposed to be classified staff. The quality of reception received by incoming students appeared to depend on who was working at the reception desk at the time. Some of the reception activities observed were neither professional

nor helpful to the students.

Although there were some reading materials available in the reception area, there was little to do for students who were waiting. It appears that a substantial amount of time is wasted by students waiting to be seen by a counselor or educational advisor.

The review team's general impression of the Counseling Center was that it was moderately attractive and reasonably well-organized. Professional counselors all had their own offices providing appropriate privacy for student/counselor consultation. In this respect, the Center's facilities were slightly above average for community colleges.

The reviewers did find it unusual that, for a Counseling Center that is so busy with student clients, counselor time should be devoted to teaching so many student development classes. This is particularly true since it is possible that one or more of the student development courses may replicate, to some degree, the content of academic development courses.

It was also the review team's impression that although the counselors are obviously quite busy, they may be busy doing too many low level advising tasks. Several of the activities now being conducted by counselors or educational advisors might be carried out just as well by paraprofessionals or

peers.

It should also be noted that although counseling personnel are qualified to provide personal counseling, they did not appear to be doing very much of it. Yet personal counseling is one of the services most frequently associated with the success of non-traditional and at risk students (Center for Student Success, 2007; Maxwell, 1997; McCabe, 2000).

Furthermore, in the wake of recent events at Dawson College in Canada and Virginia Tech University in the U.S., it seems reasonable that student mental health should become a greater priority for colleges and universities. At an institution the size of Bakersfield College and one located in a depressed economic area, mental health is very likely to be a problem for many students. In addition, many soldiers, sailors, and airman returning from the Iraq War will be attending Bakersfield and other community colleges in California. Because of the trauma they may have experienced in combat, they too may require personal counseling to help them to adjust to civilian life and college. Unfortunately, there appeared to be little thought given to either of these issues by administrators and counselors.

### **Recommendations**

- 1. Use students' waiting time to their advantage.*

Many students seem to spend a great deal of time waiting in the Counseling Center reception area. As long as they are waiting, they should be provided with opportunities to use this time in ways that will contribute to their success in college. Some examples might include:

Provide one or two television screens with continuously running video tapes on college success, study strategies, or the value of a college education in today's labor market,

Place articles on study skills and strategies on tables throughout the reception area,

Place college student oriented magazines throughout the reception area,

Provide a computer with a link to the software of the learning center so that students may work on individualized learning activities or complete assignments while they wait, or

Install more bookcases and fill them with student success and study strategies texts.

## *2. Provide more training in cross-cultural communication.*

Because of the diverse nature of the student clientele served by the Counseling Center, all those who work there (students, educational advisors,

and counselors) should undergo training in cross-cultural communication.

Some staff members who obtained their graduate degrees in counseling recently may already have been trained in this area and, if so, they may be able to run short-term workshops on this topic for their colleagues.

Otherwise, external consultants or faculty members from other departments with the appropriate expertise may be required to provide this training.

### *3. Train receptionists in customer relations.*

The receptionists at the Counseling Center have probably been given some training in what is expected of them. However, they receive students with various degrees of welcoming behavior. Receptionists often represent students' first experience of the Counseling Center. Research indicates that the language and attitude experienced by students in their first contact has an impact on students' views of the college as well as on their retention (Boylan, Bonham, Clark-Keefe, Drewes, & Saxon, 2004; Boylan & Saxon, 2006).

It might be advisable to provide more training in customer service to receptionists in an effort to insure that everyone who enters the Counseling Center is properly helped and appropriately directed

*4. Audit Counseling Center functions to determine which ones require the assistance of professional counselors.*

The Counseling Center provides a wide variety of services to students. It is quite possible that not all of these services require the assistance of a professional counselor or even an educational adviser. It is recommended that Counseling Center staff meet periodically during the 2007-2008 academic year to audit all of the activities undertaken by the Center and all the actions requiring students to visit the Center. The purpose of this audit should be to identify lower level tasks that might be performed by peer or paraprofessional counselors.

*5. Explore the use of peer or paraprofessional advisers.*

There are many community colleges that have effectively used peer advisers to answer questions and guide students through simple registration and matriculation management processes (McCabe, 2000). Furthermore, the college is already using paraprofessional personnel as educational advisers. Those tasks identified through the audit procedure recommended above might well be assigned to peer or paraprofessional advisers. This would leave more time for professional counselors to engage in higher order counseling and advising tasks and might also reduce waiting time for students visiting the Counseling Center.

*6. Improve the Integration of Counseling Department's efforts with*

*those of developmental education.*

The audit of activities and the use of peer or paraprofessional advisers should free up both time and personnel in the Counseling Department. This time and personnel should be used to improve the linkage between the Department and developmental education. This linkage might include activities such as:

Monitoring students who have been identified as being at-risk by virtue of their high school grades, assessment scores, and noncognitive indicators,

Providing early intervention for at-risk students to identify their problems as they develop and assist them in resolving these problems (peer advisers might be used for this purpose and a counselor assigned to train and monitor them),

Meeting with faculty of the Academic Development Department to identify problems and issues that might serve as barriers to student success and developing strategies to overcome these barriers, and

Providing systematic consultation to instructors of underprepared students to help students deal with noncognitive issues that prevent them from performing academically.

*7. Place greater emphasis on student mental health.*

It is recommended that Bakersfield College launch a student mental health initiative to do a better job of identifying students who may have mental health problems and provide counseling services to such students or refer them to community mental health agencies. The Counseling Center staff should be major players in designing such an initiative. Although some of the existing counselors may not be licensed to provide psychological counseling, they might still participate in the identification and referral of students with mental health problems. If this initiative were launched, however, counselors would probably have to give up some of their responsibilities in order to provide time to support this initiative.

### **Extended Opportunity Programs and Services**

The Extended Opportunity Programs and Services (EOP&S) at Bakersfield College are administered together with two other state-funded categorical programs (CARE and Cal Works). The program is housed on the same floor as the Financial Aid Office, enjoying the benefits of a newly remodeled and currently spacious facility, although they have been notified of a planned reduction in their floor space as other campus services are assigned to some of their present area. The Title V office is located in that same wing, and Financial Aid occupies the other wing of the same floor; both



of these are programs with which EOP&S can build strong working relationships on behalf of their students.

EOP&S serves a total population of about 1,100 clients with three full-time counselors plus adjunct staff. These professionals monitor and respond to the needs of students who qualify for services as low-income, first generation, full-time college students with demonstrated academic need.

In its general mission and operating design, this program is comparable to those in community colleges statewide and beyond. Like most EOP&S programs, this program works with students much more holistically than what a typical counselor or academic advisor can do. Staff members provide a full range of academic, personal and career counseling, course progress and financial monitoring, study skills instruction and other learning support. Such an approach recognizes that the contributors to academic performance cannot always be compartmentalized; for low-income students who are the first in their families to attend college, the interconnectedness of personal and academic factors tends to be even more pronounced (Viernes-Turner & Garcia, 2005). This population of students in particular, then, needs a one-stop shop as its home base; not only are they attempting to manage multiple interdependent factors, but as first generation students they typically lack

the ability to label the exact type of help they need or where they should seek whatever assistance they perceive as needed (Bordes & Aredondo, 2005).

EOP&S Counselors schedule an orientation to inform new students of program requirements when they first enroll; this is in addition to the mandatory college orientation required of all new students. Follow-up sessions given at periodic intervals thereafter ensure that continuing students are reminded of or updated on, what they must do to maintain their eligibility. Knowing that most of their students arrive on campus not knowing how to be successful in college, the program uses grants and other incentives to ensure a prescribed number of counseling appointments every semester; the frequency of those appointments is determined on the basis of each student's academic history. First year and probationary students must participate in peer mentoring as well as counseling in order to enhance academic progress. EOP&S students who fall on probation can satisfy BC's required counseling by working with professionals in their own program; the benefit of this opportunity is that they actually receive much more frequent monitoring than what the Counseling Center faculty can provide.

In addition to the intrinsic reward of academic performance, students

who meet program requirements also enjoy the extrinsic rewards of book scholarships (up to \$400) and the eligibility to keep their state grants to support another semester of study. Program counselors closely monitor financial awards and coordinate with the Financial Aid Office about needed adjustments to initial award packages that can be critical to their ability to remain enrolled.

All EOP&S students receive study strategies instruction or referral to the Tutoring Center when performance or student reporting indicates a need for either. They are eligible to receive a second hour of weekly tutoring in a particular course, an “equal educational opportunity” because of the educational disadvantage they bring to college.

While all student support offices on campus characterize themselves as student-oriented, both direct observation and the input of several students indicate that EOP&S is exemplary in these respects:

First, their philosophy is proactive, not waiting for problems to arise, though the staff also react promptly to whatever needs and problems their students report. They take the initiative to explore factors that might interfere with college work (family responsibilities, the viability of financial awards, etc.), recognizing that first generation students don’t always know

what to ask or what to focus on and that they lack the experience to anticipate the greater impact of problems on college work than what they may have been able to manage in prior levels of schooling.

Second, the frequency of their interactions with participants allows counseling staff to develop solid relationships with students; even a chance encounter in the community is an opportunity to greet and get to know a student better. Students respect the professional expertise of their counselors but also see them as friends they trust and value.

Third, students feel welcome at EOP&S. Whereas our consulting team heard and witnessed student frustration with long delays when they sought services in most offices, EOP&S staff do not allow students to wait longer than ten minutes before someone begins helping them; this practice alone sends a powerful message to students about the program's commitment to them as individuals. From the students' perspective, the counselors go out of their way, always have time for them, and provide the encouragement and confidence they need to persevere.

Finally, it is also important to students that the professional staff are bilingual and have a deep understanding of their cultures, unlike their counterparts in many other offices. These assets allow more confident

communication when students are limited in their English fluency and do not need to explain or justify the experiences they report. The program's fully bilingual, bi-literate professionals also serve as language models for those who need to continue improving their proficiency in English.

Perhaps the most revealing evidence of the strong relationships EOP&S counselors build with their students was the fact that nearly all those students who met with the team during the time set aside for student input were there at the invitation of program counselors they saw that afternoon; the counselors even offered to help them locate the designated room. Even though the students did not understand why the team of consultants was at Bakersfield College, they were willing to extend their time on campus just to cooperate with an effort that seemed important to their counselors.

### **Recommendations**

In spite of the program's successful approaches, EOP&S does face limitations and challenges. For the most part, the staff directly provide counseling (including personal instruction in study skills) and verify student eligibility for some financial aid. For all other student needs, they are dependent on the resources of other offices to which they refer their students. The counselors report, for example, that students do not always

receive the tutoring requested for them because of limited staffing in the Tutorial Program. Some offices to which they direct or escort students lack bilingual staff with whom the students can communicate effectively in their native language, to ensure that the problem reported and the information received are clear and accurately understood.

*1. Improve response to student problems.*

The program does not collect specific data on unmet needs but might be able to help other units respond more effectively if gaps or projected referrals could be reported to the appropriate unit administrators in a timely way. In addition, the program might use student focus groups to identify the major problems faced by EOP&S students, categorize these problems, and meet with other campus support units to help resolve them.

*2. Improve connectivity with other campus units.*

The greatest limitation of this program, shared by many others on campus, is that it is not directly connected with potential partners for student success. The director initiated and has developed a good working relationship with Financial Aid, but this is only one of many such partnerships that could be mutually beneficial. Frequent discussion and planning with other campus agencies would allow EOP&S students to be better served in

other offices and enable counselors to give students a clearer understanding of what they should expect from these other providers. Because it is not in the same administrative unit as some of those natural collaborators, these may not be relationships the staff can be expected to initiate themselves. Instead, the college's administration may need to facilitate partnerships and build teams by creating avenues for collaboration and communication on behalf of students. If, for example, the program had a close working relationship with Tutoring, they could immediately learn the disposition of a referral and know how to follow up with the student about the effectiveness of the help provided or seek alternative support where it is not available.

### *3. Expand evaluation efforts.*

It would also be beneficial if EOP&S could document the successes their services facilitate. The overwhelmingly positive student input and the apparent effectiveness of these efforts, assuming outcome data support these impressions, suggest that features of this program might guide practice in other areas on campus and that staff in the program might serve as resource persons to the college in its efforts to improve student success. At this point, however, such possibilities are purely speculative for lack of such documentation.

## **Financial Aid**

The Financial Aid Office at BC is located in an attractive and spacious facility that, unlike many of the college's support services programs, has adequate space and staff. When all positions are filled, the office has twelve classified staff members and two student workers. The facility has a large reception area and private offices for financial aid advisers and office staff. Although the office is adequately staffed, the sheer load of students seeking financial aid can sometimes be overwhelming. According to the Financial Aid Director, "Over 600 students visited the office on the first day of fall semester."

Observations and interviews with students indicate that the Financial Aid Office provides a welcoming and supportive environment. This is a very positive feature of the Financial Aid Office and one for which it is to be commended. When queried about this, the Director of Financial Aid responded that her office puts a great deal of emphasis on quality customer service. She also said, "We hire for personality" and are a "very cohesive group." Interviews with other staff members supported these comments. In



addition, many of the offices' staff members have attended customer service workshops through the California Association of Student Financial Aid Administrators. Those who have attended these sessions also bring back information that is shared with other office personnel.

Because the Financial Aid Office is a "categorical" program funded separately by the State of California, the office has somewhat more professional development funding available than other student support services. This funding is apparently being used wisely to promote the quality of service available to students. Professional development is also essential in financial aid because the rules and regulations governing federal and state financial assistance tend to be constantly changing and it is important for financial aid officers to be current with these changes.

The Financial Aid Office provides a variety of services to students in need of financial assistance in order to attend college. The primary forms of assistance distributed by the Financial Aid Office are:

Pell Grants,

California Grants (state funded),

Board of Governors Fee Waivers (BOG),

Work Study grants, and

Federally subsidized loans.

The amount of financial aid available to distribute has increased dramatically in recent years as a result of the California Community College's Chancellors Office lobbying with state legislators. This increase was designed to promote greater educational opportunity in California community colleges. The college also has a modest endowment which it uses to provide loans for student book purchases. This, too, is administered through the Financial Aid Office.

In order to be eligible for any of these sources of assistance, students must complete the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) form. Financial aid counselors then determine student eligibility for various forms of aid and put together a "bundle" or package of grants and loans to meet student needs. Students may apply for financial aid by filling out the FAFSA forms and institutional forms either manually or online. The Financial Aid Office has six dedicated computer terminals available to students for this purpose. Financial Aid Office personnel are also readily available to students to assist them in completing financial aid forms.

One particularly promising practice of the Financial Aid office is their community and high school outreach programs. Outreach programs are hosted

at local high schools to offer financial aid information sessions to families.

“Cash for College” events are also held on evenings and weekends in the weeks preceding the early March financial aid application deadline. These efforts have recently led to a 5% increase year-over-year in Financial Aid applications. Articulation between colleges and high schools garner much interest among administrators and legislators (Saxon & Boylan, 2003). Russell (1998) found that many states have mandated certain forms of high school and college collaboration. Colleges having such arrangements with high schools have reported higher retention rates than colleges that do not. There is, however, little empirical research which suggests effective collaborative models for articulation; BC’s Financial Aid program offers one such with a measurable and successful outcome.

The BC Financial Aid Office does an excellent job of packaging and delivering basic financial assistance packages to students. As is considered an important practice in the student financial assistance community, particularly for low-income students (Perna & Chunyan, 2006), every effort is made to tap grant funds first in making awards. Pell Grants, California Grants, and Board of Governors Grants (providing fee waivers) are provided to meet financial needs and, to the extent possible, work study grants are provided to meet

additional needs. Only when federal and state guidelines exhaust these sources are students provided with loans.

Although most community college financial aid offices in the U.S. try to distribute aid using grants first, California community colleges are fortunate to have additional state grant aid provided through California Grants and Board of Governors Grants. This means that Bakersfield and other California community colleges can come closer to meeting students' actual financial assistance needs than community colleges in most other states.

It should be noted, however, that student financial need based on federal and state guidelines is not necessarily the same as financial need based on the reality of student circumstances. Essentially, what financial aid officials in Washington and Sacramento consider to be adequate financial assistance is not consistent with the needs of students from low-income backgrounds. Although the Director of Financial Aid is well aware of this, there is little that she can do given the limitations of federal and state financial aid policies.

The "bottom line" here is that the Financial Aid Office does about the best it can given the resources available. It appears that all students have their financial assistance needs completely met - at least "on paper." In

actuality, there are many reasons why students' needs are not fully met.

Chief among these is that although additional funding is available through loans, low income families are reluctant to take advantage of them (Pinto & Mansfield, 2006). There are also other circumstances that work against students' having the financial assistance necessary to complete college.

These include the following:

Some students do not apply for financial aid in a timely manner,

Some students who do not originally go through the Financial Aid Office do not fill out their FAFSA forms properly,

Some students, for various reasons, cannot accept that portion of their assistance package that is composed of work study grants,

Some students for cultural reasons contribute some of their financial aid packages to their families,

Some students simply do not apply for the aid for which they are eligible, and

Some students simply misuse their financial aid awards.

These are problems common to all financial aid programs in U.S. community colleges. There is relatively little that the Financial Aid Office can do about some of these problems. There are, however, a few strategies

that might help mitigate these problems.

### **Recommendations**

#### *Expand the college endowment for scholarships.*

Universities typically reduce students' debt loads by providing academic scholarships from endowments. Many of these scholarships are based on need as well as academic excellence and many "academic scholarships" have only minimal academic performance requirements. This is a strategy that is also becoming more common in community colleges. It is recommended that BC expand its development efforts to increase its endowment for student financial aid, particularly for low-income students. Although many institutions hire consultants to develop their endowments, the strategies involved are well-known and can be accessed through research. A committee of student development professionals and faculty might be formed for the purpose of conducting this research and implementing ideas for expanding the college's endowment.

#### *Continue an emphasis on providing outreach services to parents.*

The research suggests that one reason why students do not access adequate financial aid is that their parents are insufficiently aware of financial assistance opportunities (Perna, 2005). BC has been successful at

offering financial aid outreach programs in high schools. These efforts are likely increasing parental sophistication regarding the financial aid process and encouraging them to be more aggressive in securing financial aid for their children. In addition, many parents are also potential students at BC and these workshops may assist them in securing financial aid for themselves.

*3. Provide workshops on financial management.*

Although many students claim that “financial problems” are a cause of their departure from college, this often reflects an inability to manage the money they do have rather than not having enough money. Because the poorest students have little experience in managing money they usually do a poor job of it. It is recommended, therefore, that Financial Aid Office personnel develop a series of workshops on money management for college students. These may then be offered as part of student development courses or as stand-alone workshops.

**Disabled Students Program and Services (DSPS)**

Generally attributed to the 1990 Americans with Disabilities Act and its 1997 reauthorization, universities and community colleges have experienced a substantial increase during the past decade in the number of disabled students they serve (Kosine, 2005). As a result, colleges and universities have

dramatically expanded their services to students with disabilities. This is certainly true of BC which has not only experienced an increase in its population of disabled students but has also expanded its services for them. For this, the college and the State of California, which funds disability services separately, are to be commended. Programs such as the DSPS have made educational opportunity more available to a group of students that has, heretofore, experienced many barriers to enrollment and success in college.

According to the Bakersfield College Institutional Self-Study (2006), the goals of the DSPS are to help students:

Identify their needs based on their functional limitations, employ disability management techniques, and formulate solutions to obtain their goals,

Identify and utilize appropriate accommodations, including various technologies to complete their goals,

Demonstrate self-advocacy and use resources that are available to assist them when access is denied or hindered, and

Plan and evaluate progress towards educational and vocational goals.

These goals are appropriate to the mission of the college and the program. They are also consistent with the Association on Higher Education



and Disability (AHEAD) Program Standards and Performance Indicators (Shaw & Dukes, 2001).

In addition to these goals, the program also provides some liaison with faculty to help them work with disabled students. However, this liaison appears to be in response to specific faculty inquiries, not necessarily as part of a systematic faculty development effort.

In the service of these goals, the DSPS is well staffed and well equipped. It is probably one of the most well staffed and equipped support services in the college. According to the program's web site, it has nine professional staff members as well as several support and clerical staff to provide services to approximately 1,500 students with various sorts of disabilities. Program staff appeared to have appropriate educational backgrounds and training for roles. The program also uses these staff well to provide an exceptional range of services to students with physical and emotional disabilities. These services include:

Personal and academic counseling,

Registration assistance,

Assessment of learning disabilities,

Mobility assistance,

Sign language Interpretation.

Readers services,

Alternative testing,

Note taking assistance, and

Assistive computer technology.

Apparently this program is well supported with staff and resources because it is one of the State of California's "categorical" programs receiving separate funding.

The DSPS is linked to campus developmental education efforts because a substantial number of disabled students are also participating in developmental courses and services. Although the exact number of developmental students participating in the DSPS is unknown, interviews with DSPS staff indicate that they are likely to represent a majority of those served by the program, at least among the program's first year students.

It is impressive to note that students who fail developmental courses twice are automatically referred to DSPS for evaluation. The DSPS program has the capacity to do on-site screening for learning disabilities. This is an important and valuable service given the increasing presence of students with disabilities attending college who may have been undiagnosed in

previous educational experiences (Getzel & Wehmann, 2005).

In interviews with Academic Development Department and developmental education instructors, the consensus was that the DSPS program is quite responsive to the individual needs of disabled developmental students in their classes. Nevertheless, there did not appear to be very much structured or formal communication between the program and the academic departments serving developmental students.

A visit to the DSPS offices revealed a pleasant and well-lit facility with a comfortable waiting area. Professional staff members have their own offices which allows for privacy in personal counseling. The receptionist greeted all students with a smile and demonstrated a genuine desire to be helpful. There were few students waiting to see a staff member and these were seen within fifteen minutes of the time they arrived. It should be noted, however, that there were no classes scheduled during the period of the reviewers' visit so it was not possible to determine what the traffic flow was like on a "normal" day. As in the Counseling Center there was nothing productive for students to do while they waited but this appears to be less of a problem with the DSPS program because wait time is considerably shorter.

In general, the program appears to be well-managed and has sufficient

personnel and material resources to accomplish its goals. It also has professional and competent staff members who are fully committed to serving the disabled student population at BC.

### **Recommendations**

#### ***Strengthen communication with the Academic Development***

##### ***Department.***

Although there is already some contact between DSPS and Academic Development, this contact should be strengthened and formalized. Meetings between DSPS and Academic Development Department should be held at least once a semester. The agenda for these meetings should include discussions of problems experienced by disabled students, techniques for solving these problems, and planning for improving communication and collaboration between the two units.

#### ***Take a greater role in faculty development.***

There is very little in the background and training of typical community college instructors to prepare them to work with disabled students. This is particularly true for working with students with learning disabilities. It is recommended, therefore, that the DSPS Program work with the college's instructional development personnel to design and deliver

workshops on appropriate topics relevant to working with disabled students.

A variety of models for such faculty development are provided in the 2003 Special Issue of the *Journal of Postsecondary Educational Disability*.

*Expand liaisons with high schools.*

Although the DSPS Program does have some liaison with local high schools, it does not appear that this liaison is part of any formal or systematic plan to help disabled students make the transition to college. These liaisons and plans, however, can make a major contribution to promoting the transition of disabled students to college and it is recommended that the DSPS Program explore the possibility of establishing stronger links with local high schools. Aune (1991) addresses the importance of establishing formal and systematic ties with high schools to recruit and transition students with disabilities. Her model for high school to college transition is included in Appendix II.

### **Learning Support Services**

BC has an extraordinary breadth of support services to help students develop their academic skills and master coursework. Such a comprehensive variety of services are considered to be a hallmark of successful developmental education (Boylan, 2002; Center for Student Success, 2007;

Kulik, Kulik, & Schwalb, 1983). Tutoring, the Student Success and Math Labs, and the study skills instruction counselors provide cover a wide range of the curriculum and address essential quantitative, reading comprehension, and expository writing skills. The eligibility of all students to receive an hour of weekly tutoring in any course, with expanded support for disabled and EOP&S students, suggests that any individual can access needed learning support through a variety of prescribed channels. In actuality, however, it became obvious to the team that, while broad in coverage, the level of support available is very limited for the number of students needing these resources. For a campus like BC, located in the poorest county in California and attended by a majority of underprepared students, best practice would require a deep network of proactive personal and learning support to ensure that students succeed *before* they fall behind, fail, or decide to leave for non-academic reasons (Roueche & Roueche, 1999). A second-best alternative might involve immediate, comprehensive responses to a student problem as it surfaces. Current support service levels, however, do not allow the college to do either. Additionally, the lack of coordination and collaboration among service units limits the efficiency of their delivery, the strategic participation of students, and the adequacy of individual services to meet the needs of

those who might be referred to them.

The good news is that the quality of the offerings available is good. Professional staff and faculty appear to be genuinely committed to helping the students they serve, and student feedback about the quality of what they have received was positive; their primary complaint being the long wait in most offices to access services. For the most part, program documents and the observation of several support operations indicate sound design. Even so, such programs continually seek improvement and evolve to respond to changing realities.

Besides their size, the universal limitation shared by these services is that most of them operate in isolation, the sole exception being Title V, which is focused more on helping students enter or move beyond the institution than on supporting the immediate learning needs of enrolled individuals. Changing the institutional culture surrounding these operations to one of systematic coordination between and among the various operations would significantly improve the impact of the services provided to students by integrating support with instruction, and may alleviate them from seeming burdensome or stigmatizing (Boylan, Bliss, & Bonham, 1997; Boylan, 2002; McCabe, 2000). Such a change in culture might involve making these services:

comprehensive, rather than fragmentary;  
more consistent qualitatively and substantively across units;  
more cost effective to manage and deliver, thus maximizing the  
resources available to address the magnitude of student needs.

This general recommendation of greater integration and coordination is the theme underlying much of the program-specific discussion that follows. Particular observations and suggestions are offered toward making these services even more effective than they presently are for both providers and users.

### **Learning Center**

The Learning Center facility at BC houses only part of the comprehensive array of services that ordinarily comprise a learning center such as study skills workshops or courses and appointments, tutoring and learning labs, and Supplemental Instruction (Maxwell, 1997). Here the Learning Center involves three operations: two learning labs and the tutorial program. (Because the Math Lab is reviewed in conjunction with math instruction, the discussion that follows is limited to the other two programs.) These operations are well managed and seem to be generally effective in the manner in which they are being utilized.



### *Student Success Lab*

A learning lab for basic writing and reading that consists almost exclusively of Plato modules is an anomaly among today's colleges and universities; this form of computer support having been abandoned decades ago by most universities but is still used with some degree of success as one of several resources at many community colleges (Quinn, 2003) . That said BC is using this resource successfully in the only appropriate manner, as a supplement to classroom instruction. And with a large population of returning adult students, the Student Success Lab also provides an opportunity for highly motivated individuals to review or strengthen basic skills at an accelerated pace, allowing them to progress efficiently to more advanced courses. Most valuable to this operation is a faculty coordinator whose prior teaching experience and commitment to program effectiveness ensure that students are on task and working at an appropriate level. The supervisor's outreach to faculty accounts for the extent to which students use the lab and, in some cases, their use of particular instructional units.

Unique to this lab is the proofreading service initiated both to improve the quality of written work students submit and as a tool to help them learn to recognize some of the writing errors they most commonly overlook. Many

campuses hesitate to let students depend on a campus resource to edit papers, preferring to have writing tutors teach them editing skills they can continue to apply independently. In this instance, however, the assistance students receive is effectively tutorial in nature, as professional staff members provide one-to-one training in a limited number of fundamental grammar and mechanical skills. Return visits demonstrate that students do become increasingly aware of errors and begin offering their own corrections as they review their subsequent written products with the "tutor." Thus in this environment, the proofreading service functions overtly as an outreach tool that brings students into the lab for the only type of personalized instruction it offers. Faculty who see the practical importance of better papers from their students become promoters of the resource as they require that papers be proofread before they are submitted.

As is typical of the other learning support services, the Student Success Lab's effectiveness is constrained by:

Limited integration with classroom instruction,

Inadequate professional staffing and service hours, and

Limited student awareness of the resource and its potential benefit for them.

### *Integration with Instruction*

With the exception of those highly motivated individuals who look for opportunities to improve or refresh their skills, the best use of a learning lab is to supplement what is taught in the classroom. Whether faculty assign particular modules to their entire class or individualize the assigned work based on each student's assessed weaknesses, such a lab provides reinforcement in skills essential to the course beyond what can be accomplished with a larger group of students in limited class time. After mastering skills in the lab, students are better equipped to apply those skills independently to assigned homework or upcoming assignments than they could have been without this structured preparation and practice (Casazza & Silverman, 1996).

The mere existence of learning labs is valuable to two particular groups within the campus population—mature adults who have learned to take more initiative, and highly motivated individuals at any age. The population of this college, however, includes an extraordinarily high percentage of first generation students who are largely unfamiliar with higher education systems and expectations. For the most part, these are not students who will find their way into a learning lab or arrive with clear

learning goals to guide their selection of pertinent modules.

Though BC's use of the Student Success Lab is tied largely to basic English and writing courses, not all instructors require that their students use the lab, and those who do are rarely explicit in specifying what students are to accomplish. Instructors who assign a designated amount of time on Plato are not likely to focus those efforts; others may offer extra credit for whatever work students choose to do. For the most part, basic skills students remain on task and work at an appropriate level only because the lab supervisor monitors them very closely, directing them to particular instructional modules as she sees how easily they complete each unit they attempt. In other words, while the college as a unit and faculty in particular are using this lab in the generally appropriate manner, they are doing so only to a fairly limited extent; the benefits of student activity would be largely serendipitous but for the intervention of the faculty supervisor. Students are undoubtedly learning from their use of this resource, but probably not nearly to the extent that they could if their instructors were more consistently requiring them to use it, more prescriptive in their assignments, and more deliberate in their follow-up.

Additionally, few faculty—in basic skills or content courses—direct their

students to use the proofreading training. Yet students in nearly all content courses, whose instructors may not have the luxury of teaching writing and editing skills amidst their presentation of the curriculum, should be writing papers or answering essay questions on tests. Faced with the poor writing skills of their students, faculty on many campuses modify their expectations, either eliminating papers and essay exams entirely or overlooking the quality of the writing in favor of content. This approach merely perpetuates and reinforces the problem, as writing skill development requires development and reinforcement across the curriculum. At BC, the proofreading service can be very valuable in helping students improve the quality of particular aspects of their drafts. Faculty should be encouraged to require greater use of this resource for all written work or to reward those who elect to use it, holding their students accountable for applying the basic skills learned there to all subsequent written work. If they do so, however, demand for support will quickly exceed current capacity.

### *Staffing Limitations*

Secondly, minimal staffing in the Student Success Lab limits its potential benefit to students and effectively excludes evening students. This lab functions well because a single faculty coordinator is so committed to its

success that she works overtime when needed, rarely leaves the facility to attend meetings and campus functions during the workday, and is singularly diligent in monitoring the individual work of large numbers of students. No operation on a campus this size should be so dependent on the presence of one staff member. More importantly, the facility is highly understaffed for program effectiveness. This situation restricts or fully prevents collaboration with faculty, outreach to students, and interaction with other related units. As would be the case if the proofreading support were used optimally, if these outreach efforts yielded the appropriate increase in student use, the facility could not accommodate the resulting volume with either Plato or personal instruction. Finally, students who take late afternoon and evening classes cannot make use of this resource when they are, or can be, on campus.

### *Campus Awareness*

Finally, like other services, the Learning Center generally and the Student Success Lab in particular are greatly underutilized, given the size of the academically underprepared population and the number of students on academic probation. Best practice, calling for the assessment of needs and mandatory attention to them, implies measures beyond placing students in

the correct developmental or other courses, or requiring that they meet with a counselor (Boylan, 1999). Though the lab has finite capacity which is fully claimed during peak periods of the day, there are also many hours when more students could and probably should be accommodated. The large gap between the numbers of students retained in basic skills courses and those who pass these courses might be narrowed if faculty incorporated additional weekly time on task via the use of appropriate Plato modules. Well-placed campus publicity highlighting the benefits of the lab, and more targeted recommendations by well oriented Counselors and Educational Advisers across campus, could result in far more students using this facility effectively. Additionally, because under-skilled students are not restricted from taking General Education courses with challenging reading and writing assignments, faculty in content areas could publicize the lab and refer individuals regularly for the improvement of pertinent skills, well in advance of related coursework. These practices, overall, could not only strengthen student performance in content courses but might also reduce withdrawals and repeat attempts in Academic Development, ESL and English courses, accelerating student progress through the required sequence.

### **Recommendations**

**1. Integrate Plato with ESL instruction.**

Charge writing and ESL faculty with more extensive and targeted integration of Plato modules with classroom instruction, so that the class as a whole or individual students work on, and are accountable for, mastering particular skills through that resource.

**2. Encourage faculty referrals.**

Ideally the college would have a “writing across the curriculum” thrust that worked in conjunction with the learning center. But even without such a collective effort, faculty referrals to the proofreading service should be encouraged as a tutorial experience to improve the overall quality of written work.

**3. Expand Professional Staffing.**

Expand professional staffing in the Student Success Lab toward a ratio of one supervisor for every 30 student users, ensuring availability of qualified faculty to provide drop-in help to individuals on proofreading or other reading or writing skills or study strategies. The lab supervisor should coordinate regular outreach visits to classes, consultations with faculty, and collaboration with staff in special programs such as EOP&S, Financial Aid and the Counseling Center. Faculty and staff, if more adequate in numbers,



should also pursue avenues for publicizing the lab more broadly on campus.

#### **4. Expand operating hours.**

Extend hours of operation to include at least two evenings per week (ensuring Monday & Thursday or Tuesday & Wednesday availability) until about 7:30 p.m. Staffing might be minimal, but extended hours are essential to the above recommendations if late day students are to be served equally and effectively. Many community colleges maintain extended hours for tutoring and other services until 8:30 or 9:00 on weekdays. Perhaps incoming students could be surveyed to determine whether a need exists for extended hours as well as to identify the best possible schedule for extended hours of operation.

#### **Tutoring Center**

BC appears to have a quality Tutoring Program, which is housed upstairs in the Learning Center. Though connected by stairs to the Student Success Lab, it is not functionally related to it, except to the extent that it uses first floor space to serve students who need a quieter area. Tutors support students across a range of disciplines and at levels from basic to the more advanced courses offered on the campus. Peer tutors begin by seeing individuals in scheduled appointments; only the most skilled veterans are

assigned to staff drop-in writing and math hours, where they might rotate among several students enrolled in different courses, all within the same hour. Coordinators work in immediate proximity to tutors, ensuring continuous direct and indirect supervision of tutors as they interact with student clients.

The Program holds International Tutor Certification by the College Reading and Learning Association at Levels I and II, an indication that its training and practicum are consistent with identified best practices (Deese-Roberts, 2003). This certification is especially valuable because tutors carry it with them when they transfer to another campus and apply to continue serving as tutors. At BC, tutors must complete an initial transferable course and perform at a particular level before being recommended by the instructor for Level I certification. Advancement to Level II is optional for the tutor and discretionary for the supervisor, requiring further coursework and satisfactory completion of a work-related project. As is customary on most college campuses, BC's salary schedule was tied to certification. Unfortunately, that recognition was rescinded when the institution had to absorb a measurable increase in the state's minimum wage.

Tutor candidates are required to have done well in the course(s) they wish to support (verified by grades of A or B) and must be recommended by

faculty; they are evaluated for personal qualities such as integrity and responsibility and for job-related interpersonal abilities. Once selected, they must enroll in a Tutor Training course and complete the first three weeks of that course, which includes observing continuing tutors on the job, before they are allowed to begin seeing student clients. Tutor training faculty and the Tutor Coordinator supervise and evaluate the work of new and continuing tutors. All these characteristics are consistent with best practices in tutoring (Casazza & Silverman, 1996; Center for Student Success, 2007; Maxwell, 1997).

At a designated interval in the semester, the program collects feedback from users. Students give the Tutoring Program consistently strong ratings (Excellent and Good). Their average of 4 sessions per term may also be a valuable endorsement of their perceived benefit from the program. In addition to this larger program, the Tutoring Center space also houses a limited number of professional ESL tutors employed mainly by the Title V grant.

Overall, written materials reviewed suggest that the Tutoring Program is well designed and very carefully managed. Like the Student Success Lab, however, it operates with clear challenges and limitations. Given help in these areas, the program could contribute more effectively to the success of

BC students than what it is currently able to do. The most apparent challenges and limitations are:

Space: The physical characteristics of the facility itself are counterproductive to its intended function.

Student access: Their general awareness of the operation and their access to help are limited.

Staffing: The Center's capacity is disproportionate to student support needs and it is handicapped in its ability to maximize the quality of its staff.

Campus connections: The program generally lacks communication and collaboration with appropriate "partners" across the campus.

### *Space*

The current space assigned to the Tutoring Center is a large open area in which up to a dozen students and their tutors might be engaged, in addition to individuals talking with supervisors and the ESL tutor nearby who may be working with additional students. The space is clearly not one designed for its current use, providing limited ability to place whiteboards and other instructional tools where needed. Additionally, the serviceable furnishings seemingly collected from a variety of sources prevent the staff from making the space inviting or particularly attractive.

Delivering services in this area is made difficult by inherent distractions (acoustics and proximate activity), the lack of a viable work or meeting area where tutors can interact or prepare quietly between sessions, and the absence of any truly private or confidential space where tutors (or tutees) can talk with supervisors about sensitive matters that might warrant prompt attention. Physically and learning disabled individuals or other students who need a less distracting environment can be relocated to first floor space, but in that setting the supervision of their activity is sacrificed.

#### *Student Awareness and Access*

Secondly, although the building housing the tutorial program is well marked, students are not well aware of its availability. Several random interviewees commented that they wished they had known about services much earlier in their time on campus, when they were struggling with certain courses. Some expressed regret that their instructor never suggested tutoring.

Students who know tutoring is available consider the program valuable but not always accessible. Some reported that when they needed help, they did not readily receive it. When they asked for assistance, they discovered that the Center lacked a tutor for their course. Counselors in EOP&S and

DSPS acknowledged that some students they referred have returned disappointed, reporting that even if the Center could locate a tutor, it would take too long for that student to be trained and eligible to work. Students not in these special programs who recognized needs and took the initiative to seek help found that the program itself is limited by system-wide (not local) regulations requiring the referral of a faculty member or other “qualified” professional before tutoring could be provided. That extra step represented a further delay and was sometimes an uncomfortable experience.

If reports of limited availability are inaccurate, the widespread acceptance of such misconceptions should be a matter of concern. If they are indeed true, they highlight one of the major challenges of offering a largely appointment-based program - the need to anticipate needs in order to ensure a more adequate pool of tutors or breadth of curricular coverage. Planning for an appointment-based service requires very close collaboration with those most likely to refer students. These are faculty in known difficult academic areas, counselors in categorical programs and those working with students on probation, and advisors in Financial Aid and other key offices that support academic success. Other approaches to delivering course-related support are discussed in the pages that follow, as diversification of the

current service format may prove a more viable way to respond effectively to the breadth of campus needs.

### *Staffing*

Third, though it serves a fair number of students, the Tutoring Program's capacity falls far short of target support levels relative to the academic need of BC's student population, which includes multiple at-risk groups. As noted with respect to the Student Success Lab, best practice proactively identifies need and mandates appropriate action.

Students on probation need more than the limited guidance they can be given in counseling appointments. While the causes of probation can be varied, problems with academic work are often involved, making referrals for ongoing support from a service like tutoring appropriate until they are doing consistently well again.

Failure rates in developmental courses call not only for greater use of the Plato modules but also for regular supplemental assistance with curriculum content until students demonstrate their ability to do well without it.

Another pipeline to tutoring is likely to be the new Early Alert system being piloted in Summer 2007. During the more heavily enrolled fall and

spring semesters, it can be expected to generate a surge in referrals for tutoring. This assumes, of course, that faculty are trained and encouraged to use the system. Another concern will be the ability of current staffing levels to address this increased need for tracking and follow-up.

Finally, the eligibility of students to enroll in content courses for which their basic skills remain inadequate certainly warrants their receiving regular course-related support, so that their comprehension of material, study practices, and ability to complete assignments are addressed systematically all semester. Weekly interaction with the psychology tutor, for example, will strengthen mastery of the content while improving vocabulary, reading comprehension and critical thinking. This indirectly supports the skill-building goals of developmental courses as well.

Whether prescribed support involves tutoring or Supplemental Instruction, the program must have a much greater capacity to serve such students. It must also be adequate to respond promptly to the referrals issued by counselors in support service units because those most at risk should not get farther behind while waiting two weeks or longer for help. In a more comprehensive learning center, a student unable to access immediate tutoring might be directed to study skills personnel in the



interim. At BC, however, because study skills instruction is provided by counselors who are themselves overloaded and not able to see students promptly (except, seemingly, those in EOP&S) and through limited study skills course offerings through Academic Development, prompt support from tutors is critical.

There are several ways in which the college might increase the availability of the course-related help. One is simply to expand the existing appointment-based program, incorporating the close collaboration with feeder units required for supervisors to anticipate specific areas and the personnel needed. For this process to be effective, departments and support programs such as EOP&S or Counseling would also have to analyze their own records and track evolving needs, so they can contribute the demand projections tutorial staff would require for planning. Another option is to broaden the use of the drop-in format, which allows greater flexibility in scheduling, expanding the breadth and depth of coverage during the semester based on predictable patterns that are fine-tuned as programs report new needs. This option presents a different challenge, that of employing greater numbers of highly skilled tutors whose academic and pedagogical expertise gives them the necessary flexibility to service a mix of

clients. The decision about how best to expand the capacity of the tutorial program must be a local one, made after broad campus conversations have generated input from all constituencies and providers, and a careful evaluation of all the implications of these options has been undertaken. It may be that enlarging the drop-in arrangement toward a more balanced use of both formats would allow a better use of the strengths of both options already in use, but such a recommendation may be premature at this time. Because it would require increased funding, such expansion would have to be identified as a priority as the institution develops a strategic plan for academic development.

Whatever the preferred strategy, if student academic progress is a campus priority, the Learning Center's need to respond fully and promptly to learning support needs must involve peer tutors as key players. These paraprofessionals not only assist with course content, but also serve as role models to their peers and as representatives of the campus who personally encourage strugglers to keep trying. In addition to faculty mentors and counselors in programs like EOP&S, with whom students report that they make valuable connections, peer tutors who care also contribute to the sense of connectedness now widely recognized as key to student persistence

and achievement. An investment in ready access to tutoring, then, is also a message to students that the college is committed to their success.

Besides tutoring, a third approach to expanding available support involves the introduction of Supplemental Instruction (SI). Unlike tutoring, which focuses on individuals who are struggling in a class, SI proactively targets difficult courses, making it known to enrollees that they should expect an extraordinary challenge and that the campus has provided a means by which they can do well in those courses. In its purest form, SI targets these high-risk courses with weekly support led by model students who have already done well in the course (Martin & Arendale, 1992). These leaders encourage enrolled students to participate in the SI sessions they schedule around student availability. One of the keys to SI's success nationally (and internationally) is its dual focus on both curriculum and the development of effective learning strategies for the target course and similar disciplines (Arendale, 1998). In that respect, SI exposes students to study skills instruction and practice in the best-known manner for underprepared, non-traditional students: concrete strategies applied immediately to real assignments, so that participants acquire these skills through effective practice.

Over SI's 35 year history and widespread adoption, campuses have tailored various aspects of the program model to local circumstances and needs, seeking to maximize student benefits. Among the many adaptations are adjustments for developmental courses, non-transferable unit credit, operations funded largely by categorical programs, and other variants. Certainly the needs of the student population and local course completion rates indicate that Bakersfield College should have an SI program. A mix of tutoring and SI would allow the institution to provide strategic support to greater numbers of students in the most cost-effective manner. While some individuals might still benefit most from personal individual tutoring, many more of the students enrolled in known difficult courses could complete them on their first attempt, while also acquiring transferable skills that will serve them well in concurrent and subsequent coursework, with SI.

Capacity is one aspect of the adequacy of course-related support. Another is the quality of the support itself, which is influenced by the skills of the providers. In a program delivered largely by students, quality is enhanced when the coordinators employ the best-qualified students available and then train them to the highest skill level possible. Some community colleges employ professional tutors to ensure a quality service.

Bakersfield College's choice to rely exclusively on peer tutors makes students the immediate beneficiaries of these employment opportunities, an ideal situation in a county where most do need to work for personal (and sometimes family) support. Studies show that on-campus employment contributes to retention, so providing students jobs as peer tutors has the potential to be a "win-win" proposition (Astin, 1993; Kuh, Kinzie, Schuh, & Whitt, 2005).

Campus administrators need to find the resources both to increase program capacity and to maximize tutor effectiveness. The salary schedule should recognize initial and acquired skills in the same way that professionals are usually compensated for newly-acquired job skills. If the college adopts SI as a companion program to tutoring, SI Leaders will need a corresponding salary schedule that recognizes their training and experience.

### *Campus Connections*

Finally, the Tutoring Program, like most campus operations, has only limited collaboration with other entities. DSPS personnel, for example, participate in the delivery of tutor training. This gives them not only a working relationship with those overseeing the tutoring program but an opportunity to ensure that tutors are equipped with essential information for

supporting their students. However, other programs or sources of referral do not share those opportunities. The fact that counselors in various offices on campus learn from students about the outcome of tutoring referrals highlights the lack of direct communication between feeder units and providers. Title V tutors, who are physically proximate to—but totally separate from—the primary tutorial program represent another example of a campus culture that accepts such insular approaches to serving students. Though the priority of these staff may properly be supporting students enrolled in ESL courses, they could also, for example, guide the history tutor in better ways to help ESL students learn essential vocabulary, or offer open appointment slots to those history students to work on this skill. As the campus faces imminent deadlines for institutionalizing the players and functions piloted by Title V, it also needs to integrate them fully into the fabric of established programs and services for the benefit of these operations.

The effectiveness of all services on campus, irrespective of their quality, is limited by the degree to which they are isolated from other related resources. Though some of the Tutorial Program's natural partners are in different administrative units at BC, their mutual effectiveness will be

strengthened by the extent to which they regularly collaborate to plan, monitor implementation, and assess outcomes as a team pursuing the shared goal of student success. The campus is large enough that students feel caught in the cogs of a bureaucracy creating inadvertent road blocks that can discourage them from continuing. At the same time, however, it is small enough to permit much closer interaction among those who serve the same subpopulations of students in different but related capacities. Communication is the key to removing barriers or mitigating the challenges of necessary bureaucracy (Boylan, 2002; Center for Student Success, 2007). Collaboration sends the message to students that the institution as a whole—not just the individual programs they identify with or particular staff they feel personally connected to—is committed to their success and persistence toward personal goals.

### **Recommendations**

#### **1. Become more proactive.**

Develop a more proactive approach toward supporting known difficult developmental or transfer courses, making weekly tutoring or SI an integrated and essential part of the course for those students who are known to be most at-risk and an option for highly motivated students who want to do

well in such courses.

**2. Strengthen the Tutorial Program.**

Strengthen Tutorial Program operations by providing:

more suitable facilities for the delivery of tutorial services,

incremental salary capacities to encourage peer tutors and SI leaders

to maximize their skills and effectiveness and to provide recognition to those who do, and

institutional processes that encourage students to self-refer when they recognize their need for course support.

**3. Create collaborative initiatives.**

Create intra and inter-divisional initiatives focused on common goals that foster regular communication and collaboration between programs and among staff.

**4. Plan for institutionalization.**

Develop a plan for institutionalizing Title V funded operations, including annual steps for gradually integrating personnel as well as functions into mainstream operations. This plan should be in place well before the current Title V funding expires.

**Study Skills Support**



Besides SI, the other primary element in a learning center, often its foundation, is study skills training (Flipppo & Caverly, 2000). At BC, study skills are taught in a course that has received little enrollment of late, and to individuals Counselors find to need such help. Recent reports from Foundations of Excellence emphasize the need to reach greater numbers of students with study skills instruction, focusing on expanded offerings of the course for that purpose. This is certainly highly appropriate, given the proportion of first generation and developmental students enrolled on the campus. Because these skills are not just applicable to academic work, any student can benefit from such instruction. For those intending a degree, these are essential tools in their repertoire for both university work and their eventual career.

In that respect, however, it is important to consider study skills instruction more broadly than just what a course can provide. As noted above in the discussion of SI, students benefit most when the skills taught are practical and immediately applied to real course assignments (Caverly, Orlando, & Mullen, 2000). Otherwise, research indicates that while students may demonstrate understanding of the strategies being taught and acknowledge their value, they usually return to familiar study habits

immediately thereafter, failing to acquire and transfer these strategies to their intended application (Nist & Holschuh, 2000). Counselors who learn of study problems and provide instruction to individuals are responding to an immediate, practical need, but their ability to build on that initial instruction over multiple appointments and to monitor its application are limited.

Augmentation of study skills training for students on this campus is probably best achieved by a combination of revitalizing the existing course, introducing SI, and adding study skills staff to the Learning Center to see students on an appointment or drop-in basis. Early Alert, probation intervention, and other efforts will identify students who need immediate training in learning strategies, and typically that immediacy does not coincide with a registration period or the start of a course. Study Skills specialists might offer a number of general workshops at strategic intervals in the semester, such as the "Lunch and Learn" series at Long Beach City College or the "Pizza and Pizzazz" sessions at Piedmont Community College (Roxboro, NC). They might present workshops on particular topics in classes at the behest of faculty, who recognize a general need for students to acquire the skills needed, for example, to learn from a common text or to prepare effectively for problem solving tests. Most often, however, they would work

with individuals much as the proofreading service in the Student Success Lab does—in response to perceived need or faculty/counselor referral. Adding this strand to the Learning Center will complete the package of services typical of such operations and provide a much needed complement to the other major efforts in that Center. More importantly, it will enhance the ability of counselors and faculty to ensure that the academic needs of underprepared and underachieving students can be addressed effectively by a more comprehensive service, better able to respond promptly and optimally these students.

### **Conclusion**

One of the most notable things about the support services of Bakersfield College is that they are many and varied. They certainly provide a comprehensive range of interventions designed to help students enter and succeed in college. Also, they are typically well managed and staffed by competent, responsible, and dedicated professionals.

Another notable aspect of BC's support services is that they are equally varied in their funding, support, and resources. For instance, the Financial Aid Office and the Counseling Department have about the same number of staff but the Counseling Department has a far more extensive and

differentiated functions than the Financial Aid Office. The Learning Center and the Tutoring Center serve the entire campus but the physical facilities of these programs are not up to the same standard as other comparable programs.

The somewhat patchwork distribution of programs and services throughout the campus, their uneven staffing and resources, and their range of quality in facilities and furnishings creates an impression of disconnectedness. Interviews with the people who work in these programs and observations of operations only contribute further to this impression.

On the one hand, these programs do communicate in many ways with one another and with academic programs. The Counseling Department has some connection with many programs and departments on campus. There is a good working relationship between the EOP&S program and the Financial Aid Office. The Learning Center and Tutoring Program serve practically all campus departments. The DSPS Program has some liaison with academic departments as well as local high schools. On the other hand, these efforts are random and do not take place as part of any systematic plan. Some of this is probably attributable to a lack of stability in leadership for student support services as there have been several changes in this area during recent years.

Also, the expansion of student development over the years has not been planned. Some programs, such as Financial Aid, Admissions and Records, and perhaps the Counseling Center have been a part of the landscape of Bakersfield College for at least forty years. Others such as Title V, EOP&S, and DSPS have been added more recently. But when they were added, they were not added or planned as an integrated part of the student development effort. Furthermore, many of these programs have different sources of funding, different reporting requirements, and are accountable to different state and federal agencies.

As a result of these and other factors, the overall student development effort lacks the four basic characteristics that the research indicates are fundamental to successful programs: coordination, communication, cooperation, and collaboration (Boylan, 2002; Boylan, Bonham, Clark-Keefe, Drewes, & Saxon, 2004; Center for Students Success, 2007; McCabe, 2000). In fact, these "Four Cs" would be an excellent framework for the improvement of these programs. In order for developmental education to be more effective and its students more successful, Bakersfield College should explore:

improving the coordinating between academic development and

student development activities,

expanding the communication among all student development and academic programs,

promoting greater cooperation between and among all student support services as well as academic affairs, and

creating more opportunities for programs to engage in collaborative projects and share resources and personnel to address student needs.

Promoting the "Four Cs" will also require a greater commitment to faculty and staff development. It may also require reducing the lines of demarcation between instructional staff and classified staff so that they may cooperate more freely, communicate more openly, and collaborate more often.

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## **Appendix I**

### **Statement of Student Responsibilities**

As a student you have basic responsibility for your success: Our responsibility is to assist you in meeting your educational goals. The following message will help you take responsibility for your academic success. Read it, remember it, and use it at all times!

#### **Set Goals and Evaluate Them.**

Ask "Why am I here? What do I want to do? Where do I see myself in two years? What are my long term goals?" Have a clear understanding of where you are. Have a reasonable plan involving realistic goals and a realistic time frame.

#### **Know What it Takes to Be Successful.**

These are the things that are required to be successful at this institution. Do them consistently!

Attend class regularly.

Complete all assignments by the due date.

Participate fully in class.  
Ask questions immediately when you don't understand.  
Schedule regular outside study time.  
Use college survival skills information.  
Participate in college life outside of class.  
Request help when needed.

*Adapted from Hunter Boylan (2002), "What Works: Research-Based Best Practices in Developmental Education."*

*Originally developed by the faculty of Southeastern Community College, Whiteville, NC.*

## Appendix II

The majority of students entering Bakersfield College place into one or more developmental courses.

An excellent resource to guide this process is *Challenging and supporting the first year student: A handbook for improving the first year of college* by Upcraft, Gardner, and Barefoot (2004)

It is only recently that Board policy made it possible for probationary or disqualified students to be seen by educational advisors.

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## Focus of Activities

### Process

#### Junior Year:

- Identify needs
- Develop plan
- Implement objectives

#### Senior Year

- Revise plan
- Transfer to postsecondary counselor

#### First Year Postsecondary

- Revise plan
- Transfer and apply skills
- Transfer to on-site provider
- Optional Summer Lesson

### Service Model

- Bimonthly individual counseling
- Occasional group counseling
- Transition conference
- Consultation with parents, teachers, other team members
- Monthly individual counseling
- Support group
- Consultation with faculty

Adapted from Aune, 1991



## Evaluation of Bakersfield College Developmental Education Part III - Administration

Conducted by the National Center for Developmental Education  
Appalachian State University  
Boone, NC 28608

Reviewers: *Hunter R. Boylan, Ph.D. (Director, NCDE),  
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This report represents the third and final component of an extensive review of developmental education at Bakersfield College. The review is conducted by the National Center for Developmental Education as part of an ongoing contract with the college. Previous reports have addressed issues of teaching and learning and academic support services. This report addresses the administration of the college and the extent to which it supports developmental education and contributes to its success.

Such a review is appropriate because there is substantial research indicating that administrative support is critical to the success of developmental education. Roueche and Roueche (1999) point out that developmental education is unlikely to be successful unless key campus administrators make it a priority. This is echoed in studies by Boylan (2002), Boylan and Saxon (2006), the Center for Student Success (2007), Jenkins (2006), and McCabe (2000). This support may be provided in a variety of ways ranging from verbal statements of support - to integrating developmental education into the campus mainstream - to including developmental

education in strategic planning. The purpose of this report is to identify ways in which the words and actions of administrators at Bakersfield College support developmental education. It also addresses administrative and coordinating arrangements that influence the effectiveness of developmental education.

This report is divided into six sections:

Institutional leadership,

Developmental education as an institutional priority,

Institutional integration of developmental education,

Developmental education administrative coordination,

Institutional policies and procedures affecting developmental education, and

Campus climate for developmental students and courses.

Institutional leadership refers to the quality of leadership, its commitment to developmental education and the extent to which the campus's leadership team is supportive of developmental education.

Developmental education as an institutional priority describes whether or not developmental education is considered to be one of the key priorities at Bakersfield College. Institutional integration describes the degree to which developmental education is integrated into the campus mainstream.

Administrative coordination refers to the degree to which developmental



education courses and services are appropriately coordinated in their efforts. Institutional policies and procedures describes the appropriateness of institutional polices and procedures for supporting developmental students and services. Campus climate refers to the attitudes and values expressed on campus toward developmental students and programs.

### **Institutional Leadership**

The Chief Executive Officer of Bakersfield College is the President, Dr. Bill Andrews. The college's management team that has the greatest responsibility and greatest potential for supporting developmental education includes a Vice President for Student Learning, a Vice President for Student Services, a Dean of Learning Support Services, a Dean of Students, and several Deans of Student Learning. The latter group of deans provides leadership for various academic disciplines. There is also a Dean of Economic and Workforce Development but, at present, this dean has relatively little to do with developmental education.

The administrative team appears to be well qualified and experienced. Almost all of the management team either have relevant terminal degrees or are working on them. All of them have experience at various levels of community college administration either at Bakersfield College or other institutions.

The external evaluators found that the President and Vice Presidents genuinely want to help create an open and trusting environment which will nurture and facilitate the growth of an effective developmental education program for the institution. The leadership has, for the most part and with a few exceptions, acted in ways consistent with this value.

Their commitment to recruiting highly qualified people and to providing the necessary resources to help them is a clear and frequently communicated value of the administrative leadership team. It is also significant to note that similar values are evident among other key faculty and staff members.

During interviews, the President indicated that developmental education was “a top priority” for the college. When asked why, he indicated that developmental students represented a population that “will be with us for years to come.” He further explained that developmental education consumed the most resources of any college program and yet its students had the highest attrition rates. The challenge, as he saw it was to invest limited resources in ways that would maximize outcomes for developmental students. Another caveat to consider is that although institutional leadership may have a commitment to developmental education there are many variables over which that leadership has little or no control. Events such as significant enrollment shifts and social or economic trends fall in that

category.

Dr. Andrews and other institutional administrators were consistent in valuing developmental education as a key component of educational opportunity and economic development. They expressed the belief that Bakersfield College played a major role in providing educational opportunity for the citizens of Kern County. They also believed that, unless incoming students developed the skills necessary to be successful in college, that opportunity would be meaningless. These comments were echoed by other members of the college's management team. All of them expressed support for developmental education and indicated a commitment to seeing that developmental students were successful.

Based on interviews and other materials provided before, during, and after the visit it is apparent that the leadership team possesses the values and commitment needed to help contribute to the success of developmental education. The President, Vice Presidents, and other key administrative personnel clearly recognize the challenges facing the institution. Leadership values concerning students, accountability, communication, diversity, resource allocation, and participatory governance all contribute to the effective design and implementation of developmental education. It is worth noting that many of the faculty, staff, and administrators interviewed have a passion for addressing the developmental education issue.

## Recommendations

*Recommendation 1 - The administrative leadership team of Bakersfield College is encouraged to communicate aspirational values concerning developmental education more frequently and more clearly.*

Every organization, especially a large, complex organization that serves as many students such as Bakersfield College, encounters a certain amount of distortion in the communications process. The administrative leadership team of the institution has a good opportunity at this point in the evolution of the college to reemphasize the values that guide decisions in many aspects of the organization. Bakersfield College is a strong institution with a rich and significant commitment to quality. As the enrollment mix shifts, it is normal for some of these old values to be taken for granted. It is recommended, therefore, that discussion of the values which guide decisions and the operation of the institution need to be engaged in more frequently and consistently during these periods of significant shifts and realignments.

*Recommendation 2 - Celebrate the institutional values that have guided Bakersfield College through difficult times in the past and present.*

Change is not always easy. In fact, the misalignment between resources and needs gets more complex all the time, particularly given California's unstable funding for community colleges during the past decade. It is essential during these times that members of the organization stay in touch with the kinds of values which have prevailed in both good times and difficult times.

## Leadership Support for Developmental Education

The administrative leadership of Bakersfield College appears to have been supportive of developmental education. They have, with some consistency, attempted to hire individuals who are committed to the success of developmental students to work in the Academic Development Department and other areas serving developmental students. However, they do not appear to have devoted adequate resources to learning assistance, or to support ongoing faculty development and training for developmental educators. Learning assistance services make an important contribution to student success, particularly for underprepared students (Casazza & Silverman, 1996; Kuh, Kinzie, Buckley, Bridges, & Hayek, 2006; Maxwell, 1997). Faculty and staff development is a key component of effective developmental programs (Boylan, 2002; McCabe, 2000; Silverman & Casazza, 2000). This is an area where institutional leadership can and should be more aggressive in providing funding and support. Although some faculty development activities are supported, these are neither ongoing nor systematic.

Another sign of leadership support for developmental education is the fact that funds have been committed to working with the National Center for Developmental Education in an effort to improve developmental education at Bakersfield College. The college has invested in this review of developmental

education and it is generally understood that comments and recommendations from this review will be used as a basis for further action in support of developmental education.

Support for developmental education is also evidenced in that fact that the college returns most of the money received for developmental courses back into developmental education. According to the Dean of Student Learning who oversees the Academic Development Program, about 65% of the revenue obtained from developmental courses is reinvested in developmental education. This is somewhat unusual for community colleges. To the extent that National Center for Developmental Education consultants have been able to ascertain through observation and discussion with community college administrators, more than half the revenue obtained from developmental courses is typically used to defray the costs of other high expense programs. Reinvesting 65% of the revenue generated from these courses into developmental education is a definite sign of support.

In the recent past, the administration has also allocated some resources and made some decisions that appear to support developmental education. To date, however, these efforts have been piecemeal and more or less random. They are not part of an overall plan for the improvement of developmental education and they are not undertaken in a systematic manner. The piecemeal nature of investment in developmental education is

unfortunate. When resources are limited, it is even more important to invest them systematically and strategically. Although the leadership at Bakersfield College does indeed support developmental education, it has not done so in as systematic a manner as might be desired.

#### **Recommendations**

***Recommendation 1 - Develop a systematic plan for investing resources to improve developmental education.***

It is recommended that the administration work closely with developmental educators to explore how current investments are sufficient or insufficient to produce quality developmental education. Where gaps are identified between the resources provided and the resources necessary, plans should be made to establish priorities for addressing these gaps through future resource allocations. This plan should address foreseeable needs through at least the next five years and should become an integral part of the institution's resource allocation process.

***Recommendation 2 - Invest more resources in training and development for those working with underprepared students.***

It is recommended that the Vice President for Student Learning and the various Deans of Student Learning work with faculty to design systematic training programs for all those who work with underprepared students. These programs might include workshops, attendance at conferences and institutes, participation in graduate programs, or guided readings and discussion. Once

these plans have been developed, administrators should work to ensure that resources are available to support these plans. Enhancing training for adjunct faculty who work with developmental students is particularly encouraged because, in some courses, adjunct faculty are the major providers of developmental instruction.

*Recommendation 3 - Create more formal and informal opportunities for faculty to discuss teaching and learning issues.*

Throughout all three visits by various consultants, faculty members outside of the Academic Development Department noted that had very few opportunities to meet and talk informally about teaching and learning issues. During the teams' visits, many faculty members expressed the opinion that they were happy to have the opportunity to get together and talk about developmental education and issues of student learning and wished more such opportunities were available. It is recommended, therefore, that the administration set up formal meetings with groups of faculty involved in teaching developmental courses to share ideas and deal with developmental education teaching and learning issues. Opportunities should also be provided for faculty to meet more informally. For instance:

Discussion tables might be set aside in college dining facilities for faculty who want to sit and discuss teaching and learning issues,

Topical "brown bag" luncheons might be scheduled for those interested in talking about topics such as active learning, collaborative



learning, learning communities, classroom assessment, etc.

Administrators might schedule informal barbecues, wine and cheese parties, brunches, or other functions where faculty might come and discuss their teaching philosophies, instructional techniques, or problems and issues with developmental students.

*Recommendation 4 - Set up a faculty/staff lounge where instructional personnel may congregate and discuss teaching and learning issues.*

Several faculty indicated that they wished there was an attractive and well furnished faculty or faculty/staff lounge on campus for them to meet and talk about their teaching experiences. The administration of Bakersfield College should explore the possibility of doing this as resources and space become available. At present, there are spaces allocated for faculty/staff lounges in several academic buildings. It may be necessary simply to upgrade the space currently available in order to provide meeting and discussion space. This is an area where administrators and the Academic Senate of Bakersfield College might work together in planning.

#### **Developmental Education as an Institutional Priority**

Bakersfield College is the largest institution in the Kern Community College District. Both the district and the college have strategic planning statements which express as a core priority that basic skills and student support services assist students in their college success. The faculty, staff,

and leadership are aware of the increasing importance of effectively serving underprepared students. Based on interviews with these personnel, it is apparent that there is a significant and growing commitment to address the needs of underprepared students. There is also a strong commitment to develop programs designed to prepare people for enhanced employment as well as transfer to 4-year institutions.

This commitment is affirmed by several trends occurring within Bakersfield College and in the community that it serves. During the past five years, significant economic changes have occurred in the local community. People have increasingly turned to Bakersfield College for assistance in coping with economic pressures such as the loss of jobs and competition for new jobs. As a result, the percentage of underprepared students has increased dramatically in programs designed to address these challenges. The percentage of underprepared students has also increased significantly in traditional transfer program areas.

Beginning in 2000, racial and ethnic minority enrollment at Bakersfield College exceeded the enrollment of white students for the first time. During the past six years, Hispanic enrollment in particular has grown significantly and currently represents over 43% of the total enrollment (Bakersfield College, 2006-2007). It should be noted that minority status does not necessarily imply the need for developmental education. In fact, a national

study of developmental education by Boylan, Bonham, Claxton, and Bliss (1992) found that over 60% of students enrolled in developmental education courses were white. Minorities do, however, tend to be disproportionately represented in developmental courses.

Based on current enrollment trends, the percentage of underprepared students requiring one or more developmental courses approaches 70% of the total enrollment. As a result of these rapid and significant shifts in enrollment, Bakersfield College is experiencing significant pressure to realign resources, restructure policy, and redesign services to keep up with the demand for addressing the needs of underprepared students. Even though a significant number of college faculty, staff, and administrators express a strong commitment to these restructuring needs, interviews and data reviewed by the external evaluators indicate that this is a complex and multifaceted issue. For example, tenured faculty in one discipline are not easily transferred or prepared to serve in unique programs designed for underprepared students. In addition, state level policies, union contracts, and a variety of other organizational factors further complicate the issue. Enrollment shifts often occur at faster rates than policy changes.

While enrollment growth at Bakersfield College has been relatively steady, increasing by reasonable amounts each year, the overall proportion of students needing developmental education services appears to be advancing

more rapidly than the growth of the student population. It is apparent that this shift in student preparedness characteristics represents a problem which does not get fully acknowledged in the state's allocation of resources to the institution. While the California Community College System has a number of new initiatives underway, and several hundred thousand dollars of refunds have been made available, these resources do not keep pace with the demand for services or the complexity of resource realignment. Successful solutions to this situation make the institutional priority for serving underprepared students critically important. Essentially this priority should become a foundation for decision-making concerning a wide variety of resource and service decisions.

In general, developmental education appears to be a clear and unequivocal institutional priority and there is ample evidence that this priority influences strategic and operational decision making. It is also significant to note that key faculty leaders support this priority. While there may be differences of opinion as to specific steps to take, there is little disagreement that the future of Bakersfield College will be affected by its commitment to this priority.

In spite of the demographic realities and consistent spoken commitment to developmental education as a campus priority, many faculty and middle level administrators did not appear to be aware of it. They

claimed that they were not aware that either the president or vice presidents had demonstrated this priority in verbal statements, in strategic planning, or in the allocation of resources. Although resources for developmental education have been promised at various times, as of yet they have not all been delivered. Furthermore, it is apparent that whatever priority the administration has assigned to developmental education, it has not been clearly communicated to all segments of the campus community. This is particularly true for rank and file faculty members and lower level administrators.

#### Recommendations

*Recommendation 1 - The President, Vice Presidents and other key administrative personnel should systematically identify the "priority message" they want to deliver and consistently and frequently share that message with faculty, staff, students, and the community.*

The college leadership team has a clear understanding of the institutional priority for developmental education. Interviews with personnel within the institution indicate that improvements could be made in the consistency and frequency with which the message is delivered in a variety of venues within the college. The leadership must demonstrate a clear commitment to developmental education through their actions as well as their words.

*Recommendation 2 - Enhance internal communications concerning institutional enrollment, funding, and resource utilization data.*

The institutional research office was vacant for several months. A new person has been employed and while there is a backlog of work to address, one of the key priorities should be providing the Bakersfield College community with accurate and timely information concerning a wide variety of data on enrollment, resource allocations, and resource utilization. Well informed faculty, staff, and administrators are essential prerequisites to helping identify effective responses to the institutional priority of serving underprepared students (Jenkins, 2006).

*Recommendation 3 - Focus on the message that good developmental education is good for the college.*

One of the messages that must be clearly and consistently presented to faculty members is that the college is strengthened by good developmental education. Properly implemented, developmental education will insure that more students are retained thus generating greater revenues. Properly implemented, developmental education will insure that first semester/first year students not only continue into upper level and career programs but will also continue in these programs with stronger academic skills, study strategies, and academic behaviors.

### **Institutional Integration of Developmental Education**

Although there are a variety of efforts being undertaken on behalf of underprepared students at Bakersfield College, these efforts do not appear to be fully integrated into the campus's academic community. Yet the

integration of developmental courses and services as mainstream institutional functions is considered by many experts to be a basic condition for the success of developmental education (Continuous Quality Improvement Network/American Productivity & Quality Center, 2000; Jenkins, 2006; Roueche & Roueche, 1999).

There are several developmental education activities provided by Bakersfield College. The Academic Development Department provides a variety of remedial and developmental courses and services, including the Learning Center and the Tutoring Center. Special programs are also provided to serve the needs of particular groups of students who may require developmental education. These include the Disabled Students Program and Services (DSPS) and the Extended Opportunity Programs and Services (EOP&S).

The Academic Development Department appears to be reasonably well integrated into the college community although there still appears to be a feeling among some faculty that the department does not teach “real courses.” As one faculty member interviewed put it, there is “a certain stigma of shame attached to being in Academic Development.” The attitude of many faculty seems to be one of, “there’s something wrong with these students and we expect Academic Development to fix them.” Unfortunately, such attitudes not only place an unreasonable burden on the campus’s

developmental education activities but also absolve faculty of the responsibility for insuring that the skills learned in developmental courses are reinforced in other courses.

Furthermore, there are still a few members of the college community who do not seem to understand that the students who participate in the Academic Development Department will be Bakersfield College's career and college transfer programs students of the future. What happens to students participating in Academic Development will have a substantial impact on what happens to almost every other program on campus. Although some faculty have expressed an interest in working more closely with the Academic Development Department, they claim that campus administrators have neglected to provide incentives for doing so. Specifically, they appear to expect flex time, re-assigned time, monetary, or other incentives for collaborative activities. Although it is not uncommon for community colleges to provide such incentives, the fiscal situation of Bakersfield College in particular and California community colleges in general may not permit the provision of such incentives at this time.

The Extended Opportunity Programs and Services (EOP&S) also appears to operate at the periphery of the college. Although it is making inroads into the campus community by improving communication with various departments and administrative units, many faculty do not seem to



understand exactly what the program does, who it serves, and how it contributes to the overall mission of the college. To a lesser degree, this is also true of the Disabled Students Program and Services, although this program appears to have somewhat more widespread acceptance and support on campus.

A positive factor worth noting is Bakersfield College's participation in the Foundations of Excellence Program. The Foundations of Excellence activity on the Bakersfield College campus involves an extensive self study of:

- Foundational dimensions of institutional effectiveness,
- Participation in a current practices inventory,
- Exploration of performance indicators, and
- Development of an action plan based on these activities.

Participation in this project by the college's Foundations of Excellence Task Force has helped raise the profile of developmental education as a priority on the Bakersfield campus by providing data on the extent to which developmental education serves a majority of first year students. It has also helped to raise the profile of all developmental education courses and services generally as part of the best practices consistent with a strong first year experience program.

Also on the positive side, members of the Academic Senate appear to

have considerably greater awareness of developmental education and its role on campus than other faculty. In addition, members of the Academic Senate are among those faculty who realize that institutional administrators have established developmental education as a campus priority. For some reason, however, this realization has not filtered down to the majority of faculty.

In summary, the leadership of Bakersfield College has generally failed to take the actions necessary to insure that developmental education activities are integrated into the mainstream of the institution. Although some administrative actions may contribute to integration, there have been no ongoing, organized, or systematic efforts to do so.

#### **Recommendations**

*Recommendation 1 - Continue to gather and disseminate data on the percentage of Bakersfield College students who participate in some form of developmental education.*

Some faculty may be quick to complain about the declining academic quality of students entering Bakersfield College but they do not necessarily connect this with the importance of developmental education. One of the reasons faculty members may neither be aware or supportive of developmental education is that they simply do not understand how many students need it. Nor do they understand that, without developmental education, there would be fewer students to fill upper division classes. This needs to be articulated more frequently and consistently by key

administrators using the best data available to make the point.

*Recommendation 2 - Continue to work closely with the Academic Senate and encourage them to help make the case for developmental education.*

The Academic Senate at Bakersfield College can be a valuable ally in raising faculty awareness of the importance of developmental education. The administration should continue to keep the Academic Senate “in the loop” as better data are obtained and decisions are made regarding allocation of resources to improve developmental education. The Academic Senate should also be encouraged to help communicate the institution’s values and commitments regarding developmental education to the faculty at large. Senate resolutions expressing support for the college’s developmental education efforts would be a good example of how this might be communicated.

*Recommendation 3 - Use college publications to reinforce the importance of the campus-wide developmental education effort.*

The current college catalog simply notes that the Academic Development Department exists and that it offers courses. It describes other services such as the learning center and special programs. It does not, however, indicate that these courses and services are an essential part of the mission of the college. In fact, neither the college’s statement of beliefs, vision, or mission mentions serving underprepared students or providing developmental education. One could read the entire college catalog and

have no idea that Bakersfield College has a major commitment to developmental education. The college catalog, therefore, should be reviewed and the sections dealing with developmental education should be revised to identify it as a major campus endeavor. Other campus publications such as newsletters, marketing materials, email postings, and bulletins might also be used to reinforce the notion that developmental education is an integral part of the institution.

*Recommendation 4 - Develop a plan for improving the integration of developmental education into the campus mainstream.*

The Academic Senate and college administrators should work together to develop a plan for improving the integration of developmental education into the campus mainstream. This plan should involve developing and disseminating a consistent message about the importance of developmental education to practically every major and program on campus. This message should also articulate the necessity for integrating developmental education students and services into the campus mainstream. It should also identify actions that departments and divisions may take to improve the integration of developmental education.

*Recommendation 5 - Explore methods of providing incentives for faculty who collaborate with the developmental education effort.*

Collaboration between developmental education and other campus units is a characteristic of well integrated and effective developmental

programs (Boylan, 2002; McCabe, 2000). There are a variety of methods available to provide incentives for such collaboration. Examples include:

Provide “seed money” to support collaborative projects,

Provide re-assigned time to those faculty participating in collaborative projects,

Offer priority choice of class schedules and times to those engaging in collaboration,

Provide recognition to those participating in collaborative projects at campus convocations and other events,

Establish awards for the “best” collaborative projects,

Consider engagement in collaborative projects as part of the salary, tenure, and promotion process,

Provide additional travel funds to support the development of collaborative projects.

The administration of Bakersfield College is encouraged to use these methods as a means of fostering greater collaboration between developmental education and other campus units.

#### **Developmental Education Administrative Coordination**

It is generally acknowledged that having a single administrator in charge of all developmental education courses and services is the most effective organizational arrangement for serving underprepared students

(Boylan, Bliss, and Bonham, 1997; McCabe, 2000; McCabe, 2002; Roueche & Snow, 1977). Earlier reports from this review process, however, have noted that no one is in charge of developmental education on a campus wide basis at Bakersfield College. Whatever happens in developmental education is coordinated by individual departments or programs, usually without collaboration with other campus departments and programs. This is one of the major weaknesses of the developmental education effort at Bakersfield College and one that must be corrected if developmental education activities are to function at an optimal level.

Some developmental education activities are coordinated by the Vice President for Student Learning and the Dean of Student Learning, and others are coordinated by the Dean of Students or the Vice President for Student Affairs. There appears to be good communication between the Dean of Student Learning, the Vice President for Student Learning, and the Vice President for Student Services regarding developmental education. However, the units and departments they supervise do not always share this pattern of communication and, although this communication contributes somewhat to coordination of developmental education, it does not ensure it.

There are no counselors designated to work with developmental courses or students, there is relatively little communication between the Mathematics Department and the Academic Development Department, and

there appears to be no effort to coordinate policies for underprepared students between academic and student affairs. There is no high level spokesperson for the campus-wide developmental education effort. Instead, whoever is in charge of various efforts must serve in this capacity to the extent that their positions allow.

Furthermore, there does not appear to be any coordinated oversight of campus wide developmental education efforts. Some individual academic departments accept responsibility for serving underprepared students and some do not. Some faculty members believe they are responsible for teaching basic skills and study strategies to students in their courses and some believe that these are someone else's responsibility. In essence, there is no specific accountability for implementing best practices in developmental education or for evaluating the outcomes of developmental education activities. Various programs or departments simply do the best they can without guidance, support, advocacy, or accountability.

This means that, although there is some oversight of developmental education within divisions, programs, and service units there is no such oversight across these entities. As a result, it is difficult to design or implement a coherent, interdisciplinary, and systematic plan for improving developmental education activities. The leadership of Bakersfield College has, thus far, failed to take the necessary actions to insure that the campus-

wide developmental education effort is appropriately coordinated.

***Recommendation 1 - Appoint an administrative officer to coordinate the campus-wide developmental education effort.***

It is recommended that the President designate an administrator at the dean's level to coordinate all developmental education courses and services. This may be difficult because some of these services are in academic affairs and some are in student affairs. It is likely that the person appointed to this role will be an academic administrator who has line authority over academic departments but engages in regular and close coordination with the appropriate student services units.

***Recommendation 2 - Develop a philosophy statement for developmental education courses and services.***

Casazza and Silverman (1996) argue that a statement of philosophy is essential in guiding developmental education activities. A committee representing various stake holders in the campus-wide developmental education effort should be charged with developing a philosophy statement to guide all developmental education activities. This philosophy statement should address values and beliefs regarding developmental students and the activities designed to serve them. Once developed, this statement should be shared across the campus community, posted in all developmental classrooms, and included in campus publications.

***Recommendation 3 - Develop a statement of goals and objectives for the campus-wide developmental education effort.***



A committee comprised of Academic Development Department personnel and others serving developmental students should be charged with designing a statement of goals and objectives to guide all campus activities undertaken in support of underprepared students. The statement should make it clear what behavior changes should occur in developmental students, what practices faculty should engage in to promote these changes, and what outcomes are expected from programs serving developmental students. It should clearly define what is meant by developmental education at Bakersfield College and what it is supposed to accomplish. This statement should be widely disseminated across campus and used in developing courses, syllabi, and policies affecting developmental students. It should also be used in evaluating the outcomes of developmental education activities.

***Recommendation 4 - Continue to search for the best organization structure and personnel assignments to effectively serve the needs of underprepared students.***

Organizational structures must evolve along with changes in circumstance. Bakersfield College is grappling with those complex issues now. They are complex because of union contracts, state policies, community pressures, and student enrollment shifts. The important thing is that a climate be created and nurtured which will allow for the open and creative examination of alternatives that can best serve students who need additional help to be successful in courses. There are many dimensions to an effective

developmental education program. The role of English as a second language, developmental education courses in math, English, writing and reading, as well as the alignment of these courses in relation to other disciplines within the college become important decisions. There is no one best way to organize. Both centralized, decentralized, and blended developmental programs can be effective. The important part of this journey is for the faculty within the organization to be in agreement that the deployment of resources, the assignment of faculty to various organizational units, and the definition of procedures and policies is in the best interest of getting students prepared to be effective in traditional academic programs and courses.

### **Institutional Policies and Procedures Affecting Developmental Education**

Policies and procedures play a major role in the quality of programs and services. This is especially true in the area of developmental education (Kuh, Kinzie, Buckley, Bridges, & Hayek, 2006; McCabe, 2002; Roueche & Roueche, 1999). Ironically, many policies and procedures at Bakersfield College are designed to reflect conditions at a particular point in the history of an organization. For example, in the 1960s many community colleges in this country had policies concerning the number of hours a student could take if working part or full-time. Today as many as 80-90% of community college students work while taking a part or full-time course load (Cohen &

Brawer, 2003), yet many of our policies were developed when this situation did not exist. This phenomenon also exists in the area of developmental education. Essentially, policies affecting developmental education have been made over the years in response to circumstances that may no longer be present or that no longer make sense in light of contemporary reality.

Often the unintended consequences of policies and procedures work to undermine the actual effectiveness of services designed specifically to serve the needs of underprepared students. In today's climate of increased demands for accountability in the form of degree completion rates within certain time frames, or other quantitative measures which often fail to recognize the unique life situation needs of developmental education students, policies and procedures can have a profound effect on the overall effectiveness of developmental education.

Online admission procedures, placement test requirements, and other expectations that underprepared students must manage can and often do have unintended consequences. Navigating this complex set of rules and processes often exceeds the capabilities of underprepared students. It is essential that all policies be viewed through the lens of its impact on underprepared students. For example, can and do these students have access to online registration services? Do students who predominantly speak a language other than English understand the telephone and computer

instructions associated with gaining admission or access to the institution? A number of such examples were identified by the external evaluators during the visit. These reflect a failure to align policies with the contemporary realities of students' lives and the nature of the population of underprepared students at Bakersfield College.

The institutional requirement concerning the writing sample is one indicator that, in effect, denies access to many students. All writing samples have to be evaluated by members of the English faculty, and this arrangement requires a long turnaround time to evaluate. This has led to only two access times per year, and these limited windows of opportunity may unintentionally limit access of students. These policies and procedures may exceed the capacity of underprepared students to persist long enough to take advantage of the actual resources available within the institution.

In addition, the use of a single, "high stakes" test to make critical decisions about student placement or progress is generally considered to be poor practice by assessment experts (Morante, 2007; Sedlacek, 2004). Slight adjustments in the reading times and dates are being made to adjust to the recent change in testing procedures that allows students to take the placement test on a drop-by basis; however, such adjustments are not enough to address this problem.

Another example of a policy which has unintended consequences

concerns the use of placement scores provided by sister institutions within the Kern County Community College district. If students take a placement test at a sister institution Bakersfield College does not accept their scores for the admissions process. This requires that students, many of whom are likely to be poor and working full-time, must invest extra time and expense in taking an additional placement test. These are just two minor examples of the types of policies and procedures which have good intentions but have unintended outcomes which basically fit another time and circumstance in the institution's history.

#### Recommendations

*Recommendation 1 - Remove unintended barriers to access for underprepared students by involving faculty and staff within the institution in a comprehensive review and revision of policies and procedures associated with admissions and placement.*

The open admissions process for Bakersfield College involves a number of organizational offices and functions. For example, the writing sample illustrates only one dimension of the cross-functional operation. There are many others that may be identified by administrators, faculty, and students if a sustained effort were undertaken to do so. The Assessment Office, academic advisors, English Department, Academic Developmental Program, and the Counseling Department as well as many others need to investigate what essentially half or more of the student population really needs in order to expedite access and to offer effective services.

*Recommendation 2 - Revise policies and procedures to enhance access by underprepared students.*

It is apparent from the interviews and data reviewed by the external evaluators that a number of improvements could be made to enhance access and service to underprepared students by revamping or slightly revising a number of institutional procedures and policies. Like any large, complex organization, sometimes a change in policy or procedure in student services may not be in alignment with policy or procedure in an area dealing specifically with services to underprepared students. It is imperative that the institution analyze these implications and take the necessary steps to make sure that unintended consequences of policies and procedures have been removed as barrier for effective service to underprepared students.

**Campus Climate for Developmental Students and Courses**

Bakersfield College is like most other community colleges in this country in that there is a constant evolution and change in the circumstances in which they operate (Cohen & Brawer, 2003). Funding streams change, enrollment patterns shift, communities undergo major economic transitions, etc. These changes likely impact the climate under which developmental education must operate.

Based on interviews and data reviewed by the external reviewers, it is apparent that the campus climate for having an effective developmental education program is very positive. Although faculty and administrators may

express varying views on the role of developmental education and its importance within the Bakersfield College community, the essential elements of an effective campus climate are present. Granted, there are numerous resource alignment and operational procedure adjustments that the institution must address that would improve that climate. But most administrators and faculty have expressed a willingness to address these issues.

Faculty hired 20 years ago in a particular academic discipline may well find themselves dealing with extraordinarily small or extraordinarily large class sizes and other academic challenges due to the aforementioned significant enrollment shifts. Based on observations, interviews, and materials reviewed by the external evaluators, the fundamental climate for supporting developmental education at Bakersfield College is very positive and strong. While it is obvious that some faculty may be somewhat threatened by these enrollment shifts, there is a genuine willingness and commitment to address the realities of the changing nature of the student body in a positive and effective manner.

Nevertheless, there are some aspects of the campus climate that are not conducive to excellence in developmental education. Most notable among these is the language used by some faculty members to describe developmental students and the programs that serve them.

A basic maxim of developmental education is that we must accept students where they are and move them as far as they can go (Boylan, 2007). The key operational term here is the word "accept." Some faculty and perhaps a few administrators are careless in their conversations with and about developmental students. Comments such as "they should have learned this in high school," or "they shouldn't be here in the first place," or "if you re-take the test maybe you won't have to waste your time in basic skills classes," all contribute to undermining student morale and may undermine the effectiveness of developmental education efforts. Kegan and Lahey (2001) argue that the language used in talking about developmental programs and their students has a major impact on how they are perceived and treated. Boylan et al., (2004) found that community colleges that carefully attended to the language used in describing their students and programs tended to have strong retention and graduation rates for developmental students.

Unfortunately, little attention has been paid to the language used at Bakersfield College in describing developmental programs and addressing developmental students. The institutional leadership has, by default, allowed inappropriate language to be used in describing developmental education and in dealing with developmental students. There is absolutely no excuse for advisors to suggest to students that academic development



courses should be avoided. There is no excuse for faculty to pass judgment on students regarding their lack of preparation. There is also no excuse for any stigma to be attached to the Academic Development Department, its courses, or its students. To the extent that such things exist, it is because they are permitted to exist by administrators as well as faculty and staff.

### Recommendations

*Recommendation 1 - Review the language used to describe developmental programs and courses in college publications.*

It is recommended that a committee of developmental education faculty review all campus publications to insure that the language used to describe developmental students and programs is positive and affirming.

Where such language is derogatory or demeaning, it should be revised.

*Recommendation 2 - Develop a listing of comments and descriptors that should not be used in developmental courses.*

The same committee of developmental education faculty should also develop a list of terms and expressions that should not be used by anyone on campus in referring to developmental education. Examples of such terms include:

"You should have learned this in high school,"

"If you'd worked harder you would have known this,"

"Maybe you can avoid those non-credit developmental courses,"

"If you don't know this you don't belong here."

These are just a few examples of the sorts of words, terms, and expressed attitudes that undermine developmental education and stigmatize students enrolled in developmental courses. To the extent possible, these should be entirely eliminated in the campus culture.

### **Conclusion**

Key administrative leaders at Bakersfield College are to be commended for recognizing that developmental education is not only a major function of the institution but a function that is critical to performing the college's mission. The extent to which there may be a gap between this recognition and the resources assigned to developmental education is more likely to result from resource constraints than from a lack of concern or commitment. Also, although the leadership team of Bakersfield College acknowledges that additional resources may need to be allocated to developmental education activities, they have not known where to start and which investments may result in the greatest return. The fact that this review is taking place is an indication that the college's leadership is willing to take action once they decide upon a plan that will yield the greatest benefits to developmental programs, courses, and students.

As this report indicates, the single greatest problem with developmental education at Bakersfield College is the lack of a coordinated, focused, and systematic effort. It is hoped that the information provided in

this and previous reports will enable institutional decision-makers to determine how to coordinate the many campus courses, services, and activities serving underprepared students.

The “bad news” from this and other reports is that improving developmental education at Bakersfield College will probably require a long-term, labor intensive, and costly process. Major coordination of effort, some realignment of policies and procedures, and additional resource allocations are likely to be necessary. The “good news” is that the college already has in place most of the essential courses and services necessary to serve underprepared students well. It also has committed and well-qualified faculty and staff to provide these courses and services.

Perhaps the most important “good news,” however, is that the changes in policies, procedures, organizational structures, and instructional techniques necessary will benefit ALL students and programs at Bakersfield College. The research and literature of the field is clear and consistent in indicating that what works to insure that underprepared students succeed academically and are retained is also what works to insure success and retention for all community college students.

**Review of Administrative Leadership at Bakersfield College - Delano  
Campus**

*Reviewer: D. Patrick Saxon, M.B.A., Ed.S., (Assistant Director, NCDE)*

The Delano Campus operates as a satellite instructional facility of Bakersfield College. There are two sites - the Delano College Center (DCC) and the Delano Science and Technology Building (DST). This campus offers access to students living in Delano and surrounding areas of Northern Kern and Southern Tulare counties. Delano offers traditional and online instruction and support services on a limited basis. These services include counseling and advising, assessment, computer resources/labs, tutoring and ESL tutoring, registration, and a bookstore (open only three weeks of each semester). An agreement with Delano High School enables the satellite campus to supplement the amount of classroom space and expand course offerings.

Administrative leadership is the responsibility of the Campus Director (a position that is currently being filled) who reports to the Bakersfield College Vice President of Student Learning. There are 7 full time instructional faculty in the academic areas of English, ESL, Academic Development, Biology, Mathematics, and Child Development. Other faculty positions are filled with adjunct personnel or full time faculty from the Bakersfield College main campus. Support service personnel include one full time academic counselor and two full time Financial Aid advisors. Other office staff and support service personnel include a Site Office Coordinator, 2 full time Counselors, an Admissions and Records Technician, a Technician for the

Extended Opportunity Programs and Services, a Complex Manager, three part time Teaching Assistants for Distance Learning, a part time Clerical Assistant, two grant funded full time Financial Aid advisors, a full time Educational advisor funded 50% through Title V, and one part time assistant.

The Delano Campuses were visited on July 9, 2007. Due to scheduling constraints, the visit lasted about 2 hours and consisted of interviews with 5 members of the staff and faculty. The evaluator was D. Patrick Saxon, Assistant Director of the National Center for Developmental Education. Bakersfield College - Delano documents and web links were also provided as information sources. The evaluator received a limited tour of the facilities and briefly met and spoke with administrative staff.

Kerr employed the metaphor of "nations" that exist at every college (Cain, 1999). These nations have a tendency to define their own constituents, territory, jurisdiction, and standards of operation. At Delano, the rules of engagement appear to be defined quite differently from those of the Bakersfield College main campus. Much of this difference is affected by its unique organizational structure, the personnel and clientele, and a limited availability of resources. The Delano campus personnel have worked to establish their "nation" and to have it operate as effectively as possible in the midst of rapid enrollment growth, limited facilities and resources, and excessive leadership turnover.

## Professional faculty and staff

The faculty and staff of Delano are a cohesive group of professionals with a strong sense of pride and commitment to the students that they serve. They consistently express a strong desire to serve the unique needs of their students amidst the pressures of a campus experiencing growing pains. They have maintained integrity and motivation in the face of leadership turnover and lengthy, uncertain development of the campus (meaning that they lack timelines or specific plans for campus growth and development).

The Master Plan (Bakersfield College, 2006-2007) document states that the Delano campus is staffed “below average” for a facility of its size. It calls for professional staff members that are “cross-trained, adaptive, and skilled” (p. 103). It is apparent that the faculty and staff wear many hats in order to cover the instructional and administrative needs of the campus. There is a visible lack of administrative support staff and student support services personnel. As one staff person said, “This requires the faculty and staff of Delano to multitask and work as a team in order to meet our commitment to students.” A consistent message from the Delano faculty and staff is that they want to offer excellent “customer service” to students and, where possible, “one-stop shopping” to meet these clients’ educational needs.

Some of the staff expressed pride in being a part of the local community. They had grown up in the surrounding counties and held a strong

belief that they are making a difference through their service at Delano. They cited examples of the importance of being involved in the community and suggested many benefits the Delano campus offers to local students. The Delano faculty and staff hold a strong commitment and loyalty to the community in which they operate.

Conversely, there are areas of concern that the Delano faculty and staff feel strongly about. In many cases, they feel isolated from the Bakersfield College main campus. For example, there is a lack of communication flow from the main campus leadership which makes them feel "in the dark" about planning and growth issues. As one interviewee put it "Sometimes we don't know what the plan is... there is not much communication from the main campus." There is a sense that the Bakersfield College main campus personnel who are in charge of these areas lack the time or inclination to visit Delano and communicate with the faculty and staff on a regular basis.

Delano faculty members also expressed their desire for a centralized satellite campus facility and comprehensive programs where students can begin and complete their Associate of Arts degree. There is a sense of concern about seeing this vision come to fruition.

### **Student population concerns**

A consistent message from the faculty and staff is that Delano students

are “different.” These students are certainly nontraditional as they are predominantly Latino, and most are part-time and attend classes during evenings. The Bakersfield College Master Plan document suggests that 60% of Delano students attend courses that begin after 4:00 p.m. (Bakersfield College, 2006-2007). Delano campus personnel consistently expressed their concern that support services and class offerings accommodate the needs of this nontraditional student population.

However there is more to the story about the Delano students. One particular faculty member described the students as being quite different from even those who attend the Bakersfield College main campus. As mentioned, most Delano students are Latino (more than 70% according to the Bakersfield College Master Plan) - particularly Mexican Latino. Many are first generation American high school graduates. The implications of this are probably best described in a quote from an interviewee:

“Although in most places in the U.S., this (Mexican Latino culture) remains tagged as a ‘minority’ culture, in Delano it is a dominant socio-cultural perspective. However, institutions such as hospitals, schools, and the colleges operate more in keeping with the hegemonic or dominant American culture, which (these) students and their families often cannot successfully navigate. They often lack the awareness of how these



institutions work in order to use them to their maximum benefit.”

Many of the students at Delano have demanding family and work responsibilities. One staff member suggested that student educational responsibilities often cannot take priority over family commitment. Students may also lack an understanding of what college means and they may be unable to meet out-of-class demands such as tutoring or counseling. They may lack the time to participate due to family commitments, or they may lack the means of transportation or resources to physically participate.

Because of these strong family ties and resource challenges, it is important to engage and involve the parents when working with these students. Parents must play a role in prioritizing student learning and participation in college classroom and learning support activities. The faculty members believe that Delano students are hard-working and committed to their studies; however, this is only part of the student success “equation.” Both students and their families need support and development in understanding and acclimating to the American educational culture.

For many Delano students, travel to the Bakersfield College main campus is a barrier to participation. In some cases, however, it is prescribed in order for them to access support services or to eventually access courses needed to complete certain Associate of Arts degree programs. Some

students may even have difficulty traveling back and forth among the two Delano facilities in order to fulfill academic or support service needs. It is believed, by many faculty and staff, that a significant portion of Delano students wind up dropping out due to a lack of means to transfer to distant campus programs.

It is also believed that, in general, students who attend the Bakersfield College main campus are savvier to the demands of college and their responsibilities for participation and success. As mentioned, it cannot be presumed that Delano students possess the socio-cultural awareness that it takes to succeed in college. These concerns may manifest themselves as attrition statistics. A lack of American college "cultural capital" may cause them to "slip through the cracks academically and otherwise." These unique needs of the Delano student population emphasize the importance of methodically planning and building a comprehensive campus. The desired vision of the Delano faculty and staff is to offer complete Associate of Arts degree programs and support services tailored to meet the needs of Delano students - all in a centralized location.

#### **Leadership of the Delano Campus**

Delano has a campus director position that reports to the Dean of Student Learning. This position has experienced considerable disruption in recent history, and is currently vacant. While it appears that the director is

intended to be an administrative leader of the campus, it is likely that they have not been functioning as such in recent history. Several confounding variables have likely contributed to this. The rapid growth rate of the campus and faculty, decentralized structure of facilities, inadequate levels of support staffing at both DCC and DST, and significant separation (distance) from the Bakersfield College main campus all contribute to a lack of visible presence, and possibly overwhelming logistical demands on the person occupying this position. It also appears that the past director spent a significant amount of time in the planning of capital resource development. As a result, certain local leadership, operational, and political priorities have been neglected to some extent. Some of those interviewed suggested that the past campus director "lacked visibility and accessibility." The development and logistical concerns of this director appears to have frequently left less time to effectively represent and serve the needs of the two-campus faculty, staff, students, and on-site operations.

A likely byproduct of the leadership history of Delano is noticeable in the organizational delineation of communication and authority. It appears that these structures are established quite informally and intuitively through working relationships, rather than by transparent and efficient chain of command structures. Rank-and-file staff members at Delano have developed their own functional relationships with various administrative leaders of the

Bakersfield College main campus. Personnel who have working experience with or exceptional access to administrative decision makers often make resource requests directly through these channels. They argued that this serves the Delano campus more efficiently and effectively than “filtering requests through a campus director.” Nonetheless, this process may serve to undermine the development of a comprehensive view by the administration of the needs and priorities of Delano. It may also be a contributing factor to a lack of “downward” or even lateral communication flow from the administrative ranks of Bakersfield College to the faculty and staff of Delano.

On a positive note, most interviewees expressed satisfaction with the visibility of the Bakersfield College President at the Delano campus. They cited many examples of his speaking engagements and visits to the Delano campus and community. This presence seemed reassuring to the faculty and staff during a time of leadership instability at the campus.

#### **Leadership and Developmental Education (or ACDV)**

Some interviewees expressed a concern that the Delano campus is stigmatized due to its primary function as an entry level education provider. Because Delano is currently providing several developmental education and ESL courses, some faculty perceive that they are engaged in more developmental education than the main campus. They are concerned that Delano may be becoming a “developmental education” mill.

The ongoing lack of adequate student support services and administrative staff may also contribute to this thinking. Although more support and administrative staff may represent a problem at all campuses, it is particularly apparent at Delano.

Any perceived isolation of the Delano faculty from the Bakersfield College main campus may also confound the problem. For example, it was mentioned that most faculty meetings and development opportunities are held at the main campus rather than Delano. As a result, Delano employees feel less valued because the onus typically lies with them to garner extra time and resources to attend these activities. So it is quite possible that developmental education and the prominent role that it plays at Delano strongly connects with their perceived image as "second class citizens" of the Bakersfield College community. Words and actions by the Bakersfield College leadership regarding one entity will likely reflect on the other.

Another area of concern that may reflect on Delano and its constituency is the lack of training and development available to faculty and staff. One specific request that has been continually made is for faculty training on the new state-of-the-art audio-visual technology in the DST classrooms. Two years after its installation, this training has yet to take place.

Other statements made by interviewees suggest a positive view of

developmental education in general. It was stated that administrators do not say much publicly about developmental education; therefore it appears that their *actions* must do most of the “talking.” And the faculty and staff do believe that some actions taken with regard to developmental education are inherently positive. For example, it is believed that hiring consultants (the National Center for Developmental Education) to examine and make recommendations for improving developmental education sends a positive message regarding the importance of developmental education.

In a broader context, the faculty and staff do believe that the Delano campus should and will someday operate as a more comprehensive campus. This belief was built on messages from the leadership and the Bakersfield College Master Plan document (Bakersfield College, 2006-2007). However, the growing pains facing Delano appear to have stifled appropriate planning and implementation of this vision. As a result the faculty are currently committed to doing a quality job of providing entry-level and developmental education. They feel that, in most cases, they are preparing Delano students for a general education transfer package where students will move on to take specialized courses at the Bakersfield College main campus or California State University. While certainly a worthy endeavor, there remains this daunting disconnect between the function the campus is performing versus the vision that faculty and staff believe that it will one day be performing.

As noted, the developmental education function does not totally serve the unique needs of the Delano student population. Ultimately, the Delano faculty are left wondering about plans for the direction of growth in programs and services. The cognitive dissonance created by this scenario may ultimately prove harmful to the morale of faculty and staff. It is fairly clear that, whatever the reality of the situation, faculty and staff at Delano believe they are not only outside of the communications loop but that they receive inadequate communication and support from the main campus.

### **Recommendations**

As one interviewee put it “(Delano) is like a small town that struck oil and now must decide what to do with it. There is an incredible lack of foresight, planning, and vision among the ranks.” It appears that many of the problematic issues at Delano are caused by rapid growth, “porous” campus leadership, and a lack of strategic planning (or communication of those plans) to the rank and file. Some of these recommendations go beyond the scope of developmental education however, given that a primary function of Delano is developmental education, the reviewers believe it is appropriate to provide them.

***Recommendation 1 - Re-establish and communicate Delano’s vision and plan with its constituents.***

What are the primary functions of Delano? What programs and services will Delano provide over the long-term? It is obvious that Delano has yet to

meet the expectations of providing comprehensive education and support services to its clientele. At this time it is important to acknowledge where Delano is and to create and communicate a plan for moving it toward the desired vision. The Bakersfield College Master Plan currently outlines staffing, facility, and equipment needs and desires. The problem is that faculty and staff lack information about priorities and actions that will be taken in the near future to meet these needs and continue going forward with the stated vision for the campus.

A scaled plan is needed that will take Delano forward in a series of progressive steps. The planning process should involve those that are most affected by it - specifically the Delano faculty, staff, and students. Plans must be realistically attainable and designed to meet the unique needs of the Delano student population. If such plans already exist, it is apparent that the faculty and staff need to be aware of them and become involved in the implementation, evaluation, and revision of them. Many specific areas for planning were mentioned in interviews. Some of the more consistently cited areas in need of attention are:

*a. Plan for adequate administrative staff.* At minimum, there should be a staff person available to greet students and their families, and answer questions during Delano operating hours. Currently, students are entering the DST and “wandering around” until they find someone to speak with. This



staff person should be bilingual and have quality customer service skills. They may also be the central communication point between faculty and students when operational changes are needed such as moving or canceling classes.

Another commonly cited staffing need was a full-time computer lab technician. Currently, teachers are reluctant to assign tasks in the DST computer lab because there is no one available to supervise the lab or offer immediate technical assistance. If Bakersfield College administrators expect technology to be used appropriately, they must provide for appropriate staffing to support technology use.

*b. Plan for appropriate development of the Delano Science and Technology facility (DST).* Faculty and staff stated that they have yet to know what the priorities are for the new DST building. While classes and activities have already begun in this facility, there seems to be no plan for efficiently maximizing its use. The faculty and staff have many ideas about this and they should be consulted in any such planning.

*c. Plan for centralizing the Delano Campus.* The Bakersfield College Master Plan cites the problems of expense and the “impact upon staff” of supporting two locations. While the distance between the two locations may be considered relatively short (approximately 5 miles) it does adversely impact the staff and students. It has been suggested that students are

sometimes confused about which site to go to for a particular course or service. Conflict also arises in scheduling when a student must travel between the two facilities for consecutively scheduled classes. While it appears that centralizing Delano facilities is desired, stating this as a priority and identifying the appropriate steps to accomplish it would be in order.

*Recommendation 2 - Establish performance and learning outcomes.*

The Bakersfield College Master Plan suggests that learning outcomes have yet to be developed for the Delano campus. Jenkins (2006) stated that effective community colleges focus on student retention and learning outcomes, while less effective colleges are primarily concerned with enrollment. It was suggested that past directors seemed more concerned with filling classes than developing outcomes. Appropriate measures of performance and success at Delano need to be established, communicated, and evaluated as soon as possible.

*Recommendation 3 - Establish and communicate the priorities of the campus director.*

As there are differences of opinion as to the primary function of the Delano campus, so are there also differences of opinion in what should be the priorities of the campus director. Perhaps the strategic direction of Delano is now shifting from facility "build out" to program and resource development. If this is indeed the case, new initiatives are needed to move toward unifying and representing the collective voice of the faculty, staff, and students of

Delano. In recent history, it appears that the campus director has focused on the following concerns:

conducting physical facility planning and development,  
scheduling and filling the courses currently provided at Delano, and  
building partnerships and resource sharing agreements with local  
education entities.

As (or if) there is a move toward centralizing the Delano campus and offering comprehensive programs and support services, perhaps the priorities for the campus director should change. Some suggestions for changes in priorities are:

increasing the flow of communication between the Bakersfield College leadership and the Delano faculty and staff,  
advocating development and team-building among the Delano faculty,  
unifying and representing the "voice" of Delano to the college administration,  
focusing on developing and evaluating academic program quality,  
prioritizing and allocating scarce resources, and  
applying institutional research to better serve student and program needs.

Ultimately, the campus director needs to have a strong presence in campus leadership. This person should advocate, communicate, and represent the

Delano vision.

*Recommendation 4 - Communicate a consistently positive message about developmental education and ESL.*

While Delano may someday become a more comprehensive campus, it currently operates as a significant provider of academic development and ESL courses. It is likely that any messages communicated about Delano will be projected to its students and these functions - academic development and ESL. Therefore, it is important that the words and actions of the leadership express that the Delano faculty, staff, and students are a valued part of Bakersfield College operations. Several suggestions were given to assist in achieving this end. They are:

include developmental faculty, staff, and students in planning for Delano programs and facilities,

hold regular faculty meetings and development opportunities at the Delano campus,

publicly mention the contributions and successes of Delano staff and students at community and campus events,

systematically communicate the vision, plans, and progress of the Delano campus to its constituents, and

acknowledge the needs and concerns of the Delano faculty and staff, and share information with them on any progress toward addressing them.

*Recommendation 5 - Treat students as valued customers.*

As the prolific business management consultant, writer, and thinker Peter Drucker noted “a company’s primary responsibility is to serve its customers” (Williams, DuBrin, & Sisk, 1985). Boylan and Saxon (2006) applied this analogy to successful developmental education programs identified as offering a student centric approach. In successful programs, students are viewed as “customers” who are purchasing education services. The success of these consumers is a measure of institutional success. The effectiveness of the institution is measured by the effectiveness with which students are served. As mentioned, the Delano student population is unique in many ways. It is important that leadership and the ranks of faculty and staff understand who their students are and how best to meet their learning needs. Considerations for improving student success at Delano may include:

- hiring appropriate administrative staff available to meet with students and families and address their questions and concerns,
- conducting and sharing research on the characteristics and learning needs of Delano students,
- offering faculty orientation and development programs that address best practices for working with Delano students,
- scheduling faculty office hours and student support service appointments to meet student needs,
- publicly sharing the message that students are valued members of

Bakersfield College, and

promoting parental “buy-in” and involvement in students’ education by hiring bilingual staff and faculty, and increasing community outreach and involvement.

This is consistent with earlier recommendations made for the main campus which suggests that the language and attitude experienced by students in their contact with college representatives has an impact on their views of the college and ultimately, their retention (Boylan, Bonham, Clark-Keefe, Drewes, & Saxon, 2004).

*Recommendation 6 - Examine and promote equitable distribution of resources.*

In maintaining a commitment to developmental education and ESL - and in this case, a primary function of the Delano campus - the distribution of funds and resources to Delano should appear relatively fair to the amount of revenue generated from them. The distribution of funds and other resources to Delano does not appear to match the resources generated by the Delano Campus. This is apparent in many ways, particularly the noticeable lack of administrative and clerical personnel. This issue may lead one to question funding models and budget priorities.

It should be noted that this comment is based on a generalization by the consultant that many developmental education programs are often used as “cash cows” to support other, high cost, institutional activities and

programs. Developmental education is typically treated by institutions as a low-cost program that operates at high capacity, thereby generating revenue and allocations in excess of the funding committed to supporting it (Saxon & Boylan, 2001). The extent to which this is true of developmental education at the Delano campus is unknown as no information was made available on this topic at the time of the program review. It is worth noting, however, that on the main campus; about 65% of the revenues generated by developmental education are reinvested in developmental education activities. In the reviewers' experience, this represents a slightly higher percentage return than on many other campuses.

### **Conclusion**

It is clear that the Delano campus provides Bakersfield College with an opportunity for growth and service. The management of this growth however, along with the unique characteristics of the student population, presents significant challenges. During this challenging period it is important that a vision for the campus be established and communicated. Leadership may be best served by fostering a collaborative environment for developing the vision and by providing realistic expectations for achieving it. Moreover, the leadership of Delano should assume a more visible role in the operations of the campus. This would send a strong message affirming the importance of the Delano campus, faculty, and students.

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