MEMORANDUM

To: Chief Academic Officers
From: Lexa Logue, Executive Vice Chancellor and University Provost
Date: June 27, 2013
Subject: Changes in Remedial Policy and Practice

Over the past several years, the Office of Academic Affairs (OAA) has undertaken a careful review of the policies and practices shaping developmental education at CUNY. The Office has undertaken extensive research on its own and in collaboration with external researchers. It has also consulted widely with the academic administration of the colleges that currently offer remedial instruction as well as with faculty. A special ad hoc committee of presidents, convened by the Chancellor last year, conducted and reviewed much of this work. The following guidelines and policy changes reflect the results of all of these actions.

Acceleration of Remedial Instruction

An accumulating body of evidence documents the importance of commencing and completing remedial instruction as quickly as possible, with appropriate structure and support for students. To this end, the following policies and practices should be implemented immediately at every college at which they are not already in effect.

1. Students should be encouraged to take their proficiency exams as soon as possible after they receive notification of admission and after taking advantage of available opportunities for test orientation and preparation.

2. CUNY colleges should actively advertise summer immersion programs to students entering in the fall. They should promote them at the colleges’ feeder high schools and via social networking tools. Colleges should actively recruit students for immersion and should expand immersion as needed to accommodate larger numbers.

3. All students who have a single developmental need (e.g. in mathematics) will be required to begin a remedial intervention immediately, either before matriculating or in their first semester. Students who have two needs, and if those two needs are reading and writing, will be required to address both needs immediately. Students who have needs in both math and either reading or writing will be required to pursue one of three alternatives: begin
remediation in the summer or winter prior to their first-time enrollment, begin remediation through traditional remedial courses in both remedial areas in their first semester, or enroll in the CUNY Start program in their first semester. Requirements for triple remedial students will be the same except that such students will be particularly encouraged to enroll in the CUNY Start program.

4. Once students have commenced remediation they will be required to pursue it continuously without interruption until they have completed it. Colleges will enforce this policy with registration stops, effective at the latest spring 2014.

5. Students who do not pass a remedial course will be provided with advisement and academic support to help them while they immediately address the course they did not pass.

6. Colleges with high numbers of equated credits in remedial courses will be assisted in reducing them, either by other colleges that have already done this with comparable courses, and/or by the central office.

**Mathematics Proficiency**

CUNY has long maintained distinctions among minimum proficiency in mathematics, admission requirements, and placement criteria. Students who meet the minimum proficiency standard qualify for at least one credit-bearing mathematics course, but they do not necessarily qualify for admission to a bachelor’s program. Similarly, students who meet the minimum proficiency standard do not necessarily qualify for placement into all credit courses. Colleges and departments set the specific admission criteria for entry into bachelor's programs, as well as the placement criteria for courses. These standards may be set higher, but not lower, than the minimum proficiency standard.

The standard for college readiness in mathematics should be uniform across CUNY. The need for uniformity has become more urgent with the implementation of the Pathways Initiative, which requires the transfer of credit for courses taken in satisfaction of the mathematical and quantitative reasoning requirement of the common core. Creation of a uniform standard will end the possibility that a student judged proficient at one campus may be judged not proficient at another campus to which the student transfers. A uniform standard will also facilitate communication with prospective and current students and faculty.

Therefore, effective for fall 2014 admission, all current and returning CUNY students, as well as new applicants for admission (including transfer students from outside of CUNY), may meet the new standard in any one of the following ways:
a) Earn at least an 80 on any New York State Regents exam and complete high school Algebra 2/Trigonometry or a higher level course.
b) Present an SAT math score of 500 or higher (the current standard is 480 at the community colleges, 500 at the comprehensives, and 510 at the senior colleges).
c) Document successful completion of a credit-bearing math course at a CUNY college or other regionally or New York State accredited institution (if the learning outcomes are deemed appropriate). Successful completion is a passing grade within CUNY and C or better for non-CUNY courses.
d) Document successful completion of elementary algebra at a CUNY college or other regionally or New York State accredited institution (if the learning outcomes are deemed appropriate). Successful completion is a passing grade within CUNY and C or better for non-CUNY courses.
e) Present COMPASS test scores of 45-40 or higher (currently the standard is 35-40 at the community colleges and 45-45 at the senior colleges).

Students who meet this standard qualify to take at least one credit-bearing course in mathematics at any undergraduate college in the University to which they are admitted and in which they enroll. (At the college’s option, that course can be designed for students who are proficient but who do not place into college algebra or a higher-level course, or can be designed for students who do not plan to pursue a math-intensive major.)

Effective fall 2014, the following groups of current and former students will also be deemed to have met the minimum proficiency requirement in mathematics:

a) CUNY associate degree holders;
   b) Students who were proficient based on the standard in place at the time of their admission;
   c) Students who have met the current COMPASS Elementary Algebra (Math 2) cut score of 40, irrespective of the Pre-algebra (Math 1) score.

**Elementary Algebra**

1. Under current policy (my memorandum dated 4/16/12), access to short-term interventions for students who do not pass elementary algebra has been limited to students who score between 56 and 59 on the CUNY Elementary Algebra Final Exam (CEAFE) and who have a class average of at least 84. Feedback from some departments suggests that this guideline may be overly restrictive. Colleges are in the best position to determine the capacity of their workshops and to determine which students are the best candidates for these interventions.
Effective immediately, eligibility for short-term workshops and immersion is left to the discretion of the college and department. Each college will henceforth set its own criteria for entry to math workshops and for taking the CEA FE a second time. Short-term interventions (of the college's choosing) should be available for students who come close to passing. For example, winter immersion is an option to be encouraged for students who come close to passing elementary algebra in the fall.

2. Effective spring 2014 at the latest, any course given at a CUNY community or comprehensive college for which the CEA FE is the official final exam will be titled “Elementary Algebra.” Guttman Community College is exempted from this policy because of the unique structure of its course. Uniformity of title for this course will make it easier for chairs, counselors, and others to determine if a student is elementary algebra proficient and therefore exempt from Elementary Algebra in any two-year program, whether at a community or comprehensive college.

3. Effective spring 2014 at the latest, the only grades given in Elementary Algebra will be P/R or S/R with the following exceptions and understanding: (a) some colleges may opt to use the P/S/R in cases in which the S grade would indicate a higher level of pass for the course and could be used for placement purposes, (b) some colleges may opt to use a U grade to indicate that a student has failed Elementary Algebra a number of times. (Note that the W and WU grades would still exist.)

Use of COMPASS for Minimum Proficiency and Placement Testing

At this time, by default, entering students who do not meet the minimum proficiency standard by some other means are administered both the pre-algebra and elementary algebra modules of COMPASS. A few students (about 1% of test takers in fall 2012) pass the elementary algebra module but not pre-algebra. Under the new exit standards, students need only exit from elementary algebra to qualify for credit-bearing courses. Students who meet the elementary algebra standard should qualify for a credit-bearing course rather than be placed into a pre-algebra class on the basis of a low pre-algebra score.

To accomplish this goal, effective for fall 2014 admissions, students who are administered COMPASS for minimum proficiency testing should be given the elementary algebra module first. Only those test takers who do not meet the University’s cut point on this module will be routed to the pre-algebra module.

Students who have met the minimum proficiency standard will continue to take COMPASS for placement into the STEM track should they wish to pursue this track. Qualifying cut scores for credit-bearing STEM courses are set at the discretion of each college, and the college may require students who do not meet these cut scores to participate in an intervention.
If you have any questions about the implementation of these policies please feel free to contact me or Dean David Crook.

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