



Montana University System

Office of the Commissioner of Higher Education

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DEVELOPMENTAL EDUCATION STEERING COMMITTEE PROPOSAL

ADVANCING DEVELOPMENTAL EDUCATION IN THE MUS AND ENHANCING SUCCESS FOR UNDERPREPARED STUDENTS

MUS Developmental Education Steering Committee

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PROPOSAL

The Developmental Education Steering Committee forwards the following strategies to advance developmental education reform with the following goals:

- Bolster system and institutional approaches to developmental education needs for current students and in anticipation of increased need in math and writing preparation for incoming cohorts experiencing learning loss due to the COVID-19 pandemic;
- Direct more students to math and writing courses, possibly through default placement into corequisite courses, that increase timely college-level gateway course completion, an important benchmark for retention, graduation, and student cost savings;
- Align system-level data practices including common systemwide tracking for developmental education, policies impacting developmental education ([301.17](#)) and placement ([301.18](#)), and remedial success performance funding metrics to better support campus efforts to better serve developmental education needs;
- Provide support to institutions through professional development, technical assistance in data structures and data use practices, and developing communities of practice to sustain best practices on placement, advising, and co-requisite pedagogy.

In order to improve time-to degree, retention, and graduation for vulnerable students, the Development Education Steering Committee recommends the following four activities to enhance the MUS approach to

MONTANA STATE UNIVERSITY ~ Campuses at Billings, Bozeman, Great Falls, and Havre

THE UNIVERSITY OF MONTANA ~ Campuses at Butte, Dillon, Helena, and Missoula

Dawson Community College (Glendive) ~ Flathead Valley Community College (Kalispell) ~ Miles Community College (Miles City)

providing appropriate academic support for all students to complete foundational math and writing credits early in their degree programs

1. Placement Review and Recommendations

Develop recommendations for a shared, system-wide, research-based approach to placement. Committee should review both current placement strategies and best practices in placement. Desired practices should include multiple measures to demonstrate preparedness with the expectation of placing students in credit-bearing, college-level math and writing courses with established guidelines for exceptions for prerequisite placement.

Review and recommendations should be guided by three principles. Develop placement strategies that:

- a. increase gateway course completion, shorten time and reduce cost to successful gateway course completion, and increased likelihood of retention and graduation;
- b. identify and implement practices demonstrated to support historically underserved students include underprepared, low-income, American Indian, and adult learners;
- c. account for implications of placement approaches on increasingly seamless enrollment across the MUS for students who either transfer among MUS institutions or who are cross-enrolled at two or more MUS institutions.

2. Data Tracking & Performance Funding Metric

Provide recommendations for data tracking and the remedial success performance funding metric that align institutional data practices and system incentive structures to increase gateway course completion in math and writing. Review and recommendations should address data tracking models for accurate information on corequisite courses given a variety of course structures, student placement, and gateway course completion.

Recommendations should address improvements to the MUS Performance Funding metric for remedial success for two-year colleges. The current performance funding remedial success model measures “Percentage of first-time freshmen enrolling in at least one remedial Math and/or Writing course during their first academic year and continuing on to complete a college level Math or Statistics and/or Writing course within two academic years from any campus within MUS.” Recommended revisions should incentivize institutions to support students into more timely gateway course completion and should assess a larger population of students than only those taking pre-requisite courses. Committee should work closely with OCHE to model recommended metric’s impact on institution’s performance funding allocation and ensure that proposed metrics are measurable using data from the MUS Data Warehouse.

3. Developmental Education Policy Review & Revision

The Developmental Education Steering Committee will review and make recommendations for revisions to the Board of Regents [Developmental Education Policy 301.18](#). Specifically, the committee will make recommendations for a policy framework based upon current evidence-based and data informed best practices that better align with current campus and system practices and

that support gateway course completion early in degree path, increased affordability for students, and stronger persistence and completion rates for institutions.

4. **Institutional Assessment and Reform Planning**

To bring resources to ongoing institutional transformation that aligns with advances in placement strategies, changes to performance funding metrics, and potential policy changes, the Developmental Education Steering Committee will organize and host professional development and institutional planning opportunities to support reforms. Campuses will assemble broad teams, including senior representatives, from impacted areas including

- academic administration,
- student success leads,
- math and writing faculty as well as placement coordinators for each,
- registrars, and
- advisors.

Teams will work collaboratively across the system to develop communities of practice facilitated by the steering committee. Campuses will develop institutional plans that are tailored to local institutional goals and that align with the shared goals of enhancing the MUS approach to developmental education.

Guided planning will include support from local expertise and national partners including the Dana Center and Complete College America. Institutional teams will participate in activities that provide best practices and guided planning in areas including:

- Institutional goal setting
- Assessment and review of developmental education budget models that promote increased student success, affordability, and better return on investment for institutions;
- Pedagogical best practices for
 - foundational skills,
 - effective corequisite models for math and writing,
 - fostering student engagement,
 - driving equitable student outcomes,
 - developmental education in eLearning environments,
 - advising for developmental education success and
 - the math pathway that best aligns with a student's academic and career goals;
- Building strong data structures and information flows to support success in developmental education

Institutional teams will attend an initial planning and assessment launch session, participate in workshop development throughout the spring 2023, and attend a system convening in Spring 2023 with the goal of implementing institutional plans starting Fall 2023. In coordination with the Developmental Education Steering Committee, OCHE will organize follow-on activities throughout 2023-2024 to sustain faculty communities of practices, continued institutional implementation and troubleshooting, and sharing of best practices.