

Los Medanos College Developmental Education Program Organizational Structure

Research/Effective Practice

Research suggests that centralized developmental education programs are more successful than decentralized programs. (Boylan, 2002; Donovan, 1974; Boylan, Bliss, & Bonham, 1997; Roueche & Baker, 1987; Roueche & Snow 1977.) Centralization is characterized by developmental courses and services that are highly coordinated, housed in a single department or program, and headed by a chair or director. The CQIN/APQC (2000) study, as summarized by Boylan (2002), found that although the overwhelming majority of exemplary developmental education programs were centralized, exemplary programs that were decentralized exhibited the same high level of integration and communication among courses and services, as well as having an administrator who was either officially or unofficially responsible for campus-wide coordination of developmental education activities. In their analysis of data from the National Study of Developmental Education, Boylan, Bliss, and Bonham (1997) found that highly coordinated decentralized programs produced outcomes comparable to centralized programs, including comparable student success rates in developmental courses. Additional traits of a highly coordinated decentralized effort include: regular meetings of all those involved in the delivery of developmental courses and services; articulation of common goals and objectives for all developmental courses and services; and the integration of developmental courses and academic support services.

The need for a centralized or highly coordinated organization for developmental education programs is effective practice A.3 in *Basic Skills as a Foundation for Student Success*.

LMC Current Practice (2007)

LMC has a decentralized developmental education program that is coordinated by a faculty member (or a team of faculty members) at a total of 0.50 release time. This Developmental Education (DE) Coordinator oversees the work of two faculty DE Leads, one in English and the other in math, both of whom receive 0.50 release time to coordinate professional development and assessment activities related to developmental education in their respective departments.

The DE Coordinator also facilitates the work of the Developmental Education Committee. This committee is charged with the following responsibilities:

1. Coordinate the assessment of the Institution-level Student Learning Outcomes of the Developmental Education Program including
 - a. *Direct Measures* of student learning: e.g. holistic assessment of final exams or papers in capstone developmental English and math courses (English 90 and Math 30) to ascertain student achievement of program student learning outcomes.
 - b. *Indirect Measures* of student learning: Work with the Office of Institutional Research to establish an on-going research agenda that provides indirect measures of student achievement of program outcomes, addresses research needs specific to program initiatives, and provides information pertinent to making decisions for program improvement.
 - c. *Qualitative Measures*: facilitate the use of surveys, focus groups, etc. to document student perception of their learning

2. Support proper placement of students into the developmental course sequences in English and math
 - a. Implement and support best practice in placement as supported by research in the field of Developmental Education
 - b. Coordinate cut-score validation studies to insure proper placement of students at matriculation
 - c. Instigate other research with OIR to monitor the impact of prerequisites

3. Support curriculum development and improvement that
 - a. is aligned with the DE Program SLOs
 - b. responds to assessment results
 - c. integrates the principles of best practice as defined by research in the field of education

4. Coordinate professional development opportunities, such as Teaching Communities, for DE faculty that
 - a. responds to assessment results
 - b. supports faculty in their efforts to effectively teach to the DE Program SLOs

5. Coordinate the integration of precollegiate instruction and academic support services in order to
 - a. Respond to assessment results
 - b. Implement best practice in the integrated use of academic support services, such as tutoring, lab services, supplemental instruction, the Reading and Writing Center, counseling services, and learning communities

Membership of the Developmental Education Committee:

Coordinator(s) of the Developmental Education Program
Developmental Lead in English
Developmental Lead in Math
ESL Lead
Reading and Writing Center Coordinator
Tutor Coordinators from math and English
Representative from the Counseling Department
Senior Dean of Instruction
Senior Dean of Student Services

The Math Department also has a Developmental Math Committee that meets weekly to coordinate assessment, professional development, support services, and curriculum development for developmental math courses.

References

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- Research and Planning Group for California Community Colleges (RPgroup)/Center for Student Success (CSS). (2007). *Basic Skills as a Foundation for Student Success in California Community Colleges*.
- Roueche, J., & Baker, G. (1987). *Access & excellence: the open door college*. Alexandria, VA: The Community College Press.
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