

COMMITTEE ON EDUCATIONAL POLICY

The Early Start Program and Academic Preparation Update

Presentation By

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Background

At its May 2009 meeting, the Board of Trustees approved the establishment of an Early Start program that would commence in summer 2012. Freshmen who did not demonstrate college-readiness in mathematics, English or both would be required to begin to address these deficiencies in the summer before their first term.

At its March 2014 meeting, the board received a detailed presentation providing an overview and progress report of the Early Start program. Summer 2014 marked the first time all new regularly admitted freshmen needing additional preparation in English and/or mathematics were required to participate in Early Start. Prior to 2014, only those students needing additional preparation in math and those most at risk in English (bottom quartile) were required to participate. In summer 2014 that expanded to include all students needing additional preparation in English. The Early Start program, in addition to various academic preparation efforts throughout the CSU, continues to provide students an opportunity to begin their first term of enrollment better prepared for the academic challenges they will face.

This information item provides a progress update since the last report to the board including data from summer 2014 Early Start, proficiency of the fall 2013 freshmen Early Start cohort one year later, and overall academic preparation trends.

Summer 2014 Early Start

Once admitted to the CSU, students have the opportunity to enroll in Early Start courses at the campus at which they intend to enroll (destination campus) or at a campus near their home (service campus) in the summer prior to their first term. The Early Start courses established by faculty at each of the 23 campuses provide the targeted foundation necessary for improving student

preparation. Students can choose from a 1-unit introductory course at minimum (15 hours) or a 3- or 4-unit course that will provide more in-depth preparation. In summer 2014, 83 percent of Early Start students enrolled at their destination campus. The majority of students elected to take the 1-unit course (87 percent in English and 65 percent in math).

In fall 2014, more than 60,000 freshmen enrolled in the CSU and more than 24,000 of them were required to participate in Early Start English (ESE) and/or Early Start mathematics (ESM), with just over 10,500 participating in both. Approximately 2,200 new freshmen finished their college-preparation requirements in English, and began their fall term college-ready. Nearly 3,700 entered college-ready in mathematics as a result of summer 2014 Early Start course completion. Of those students enrolled in Early Start English and/or Early Start mathematics, 94 percent of ESE and 93 percent of ESM students satisfactorily met the requirement.

Fall 2013 Early Start Cohort - Proficiency One Year Later

Of the freshmen entering in fall 2013 needing additional preparation in English and/or mathematics, after completing their Early Start requirement, 85 percent (22,107 students) reached proficiency within one year. Three percent (784 students) failed to achieve proficiency in one or both subjects after their first year but were permitted by the campus to enroll in fall 2014. Eleven percent (2,817 students) did not achieve proficiency in one or both subjects at the completion of their first year and were not allowed to re-enroll in fall 2014.

Academic Preparation Trends

The regularly admitted freshmen class has grown from just under 48,000 students in 2010 to nearly 63,000 students in fall 2014. The percentage of the entering freshmen class determined to be college-ready in both English and mathematics at the point of graduation from high school has increased from 43 percent (fall 2010) to 54 percent (fall 2014). Additionally, the percentage of the entering freshmen class who need additional preparation in both English and mathematics at the point of graduation from high school has declined from 28 percent in fall 2010 to 21 percent in fall 2014.

The Early Start program has successfully enhanced pre-existing campus and system efforts to improve the number of freshmen prepared for college-level mathematics and English when they begin their first term. In summer 2010, existing CSU programs improved proficiency in both English and mathematics by one percentage point resulting in 44 percent of the 2010 freshmen class starting their first term at the CSU college-ready in English and mathematics. Comparatively, summer 2014 Early Start courses improved proficiency in both English and mathematics by five percentage points resulting in 59 percent of the entering freshmen class being prepared for college-level English and mathematics.

Summary

Summer 2014 Early Start was the first time all freshmen needing additional preparation in English and/or mathematics were required to participate. The data indicates that the Early Start program, in combination with other academic preparation efforts, continues to provide students with the opportunity to begin their first term better prepared for the academic rigor they will face in the CSU. While student readiness and Early Start efforts differ by campus, all CSU campuses and their faculty focus ongoing and collaborative efforts on improving student success from admission through graduation. As the Early Start program continues to develop and adapt to student needs, it is expected that best practices will continue to emerge and further inform system efforts.