

***STUDENT DEVELOPMENT***  
***BOARD RULE 400.0100.00***  
***ASSESSMENT STUDIES OF ENGLISH AND MATHEMATICS***  
***BOARD OF TRUSTEES MEETING: JUNE 24, 2010***

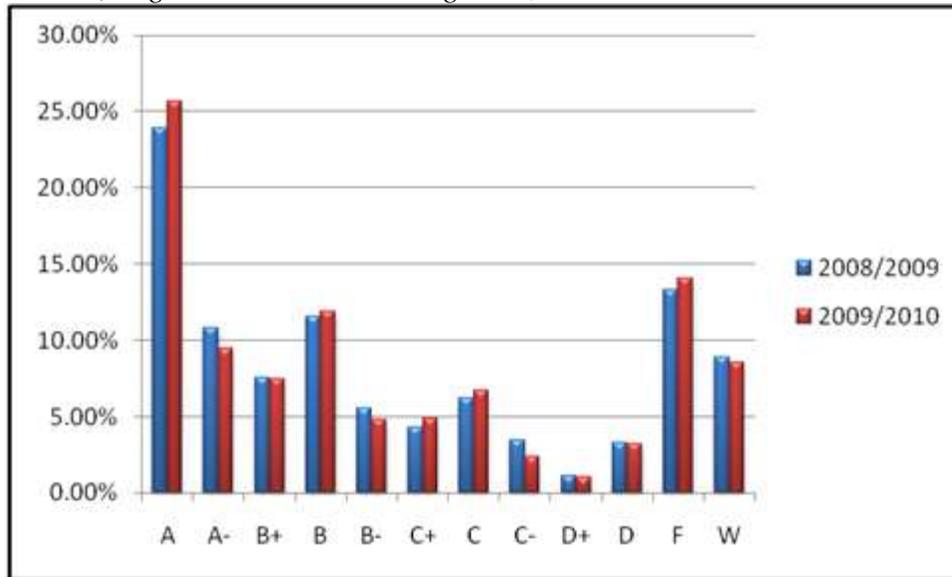
Belmont Technical College offers college-level math and English courses to support transfer and technical programs of study at BTC and to help students acquire the knowledge and skills for meaningful transfer and/or employment. Success rates for college level math and English courses are reported annually in June to the Board of Trustees (Board of Trustees, *Ends Policies*, Section IV, 400.0100.00 Student Development). BTC’s systematic approach to assessing English and mathematics courses takes into account requirements for the various programs of study within the college.

English and mathematics courses function as general-education requirements at BTC, supporting the technical programs and the new AA/AS transfer degrees. As such, the courses address students’ needs for accessibility to course content at all levels, and adherence to standards required in the workplace and for successful transfer.

***Data***

This report focuses on English and mathematics courses and presents data in two formats. Chart 1, *English and mathematics grades, 2008/2009 and 2009/2010*, shows paired bars representing the distribution of grades earned by students who completed English and mathematics courses during summer, fall, and winter quarters for last year and this. English and math grades for 2008/2009 are shown in blue bars and are to the left in each pairing. The red bars represent percentages of grades by categories earned during the 2009/2010 academic year.

Chart 1, *English and mathematics grades, 2008/2009 and 2009/2010*



The second and third charts compare success and non-success in English, Chart 2, and mathematics, Chart 3. The vertical axes in these charts are calibrated to show the numbers of grades earned by students in 100 and 200 level classes for summer, fall, and winter quarters in the 2009/2010 academic year. Success is defined as grades of “C” minus or higher; non-success is defined as grades of “D” plus and lower. The non-success category for both English and mathematics includes the grades assigned as “W” for those students who withdrew from classes after the eighth week of classes.

Chart 2, *Success in English, 100 and 200 level courses*

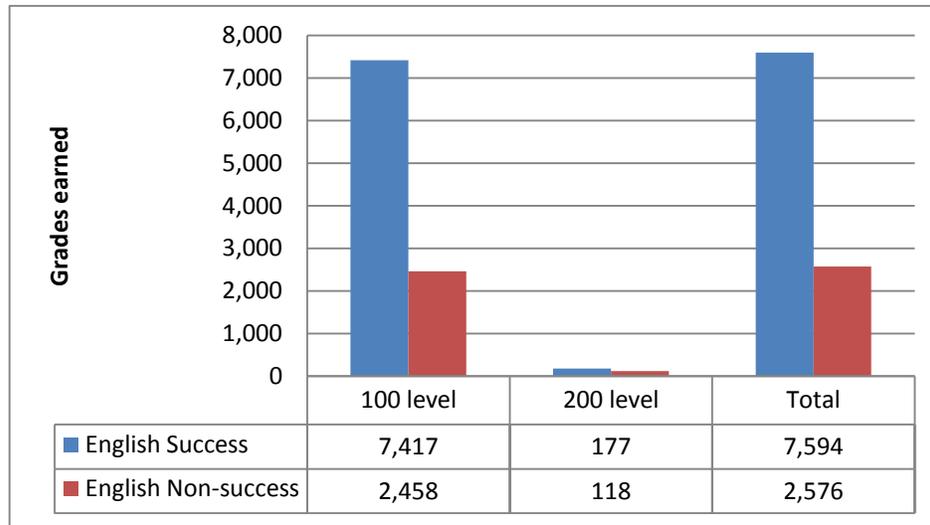
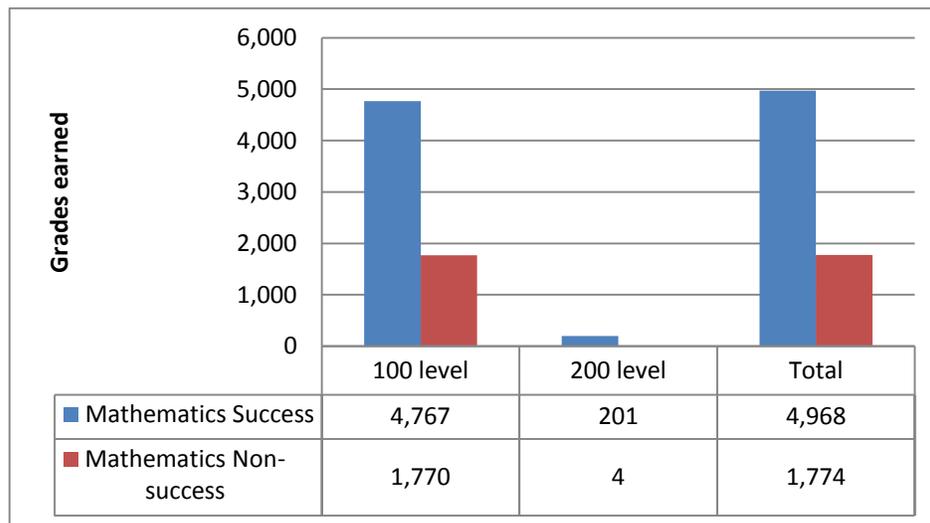


Chart 3, *Success in mathematics, 100 and 200 level courses*



### Analysis

The three charts in this report are based upon students’ grades. Overall, 74.67 percent of English grades in 100 and 200 level courses were “C” minus or higher. In the 100 and 200 level mathematics courses, 73.69 percent of the grades earned were “C”

minus or higher. These rates are similar to success and non-success rates based on grades for the five-year period reported last year.

Comparison of data over the last five years with success rate data in mathematics courses for the 2009/2010 academic year reveals those success rates are remarkably similar. In college-level mathematics classes during the 2004, 2005, 2006, 2007, and 2008 academic years, the success rate was 73.8 percent. During the 2009/2010 academic year, the success rate in mathematics courses was 73.69 percent. A comparison of data for English courses for the same time periods also is similar; the success rate over the last five years is 75.4 percent; the success rate in 2009/2010 is 74.67 percent.

Similarities between overall success rates in English and mathematics courses suggest that there is some degree of uniformity in instruction and grading. English and mathematics courses are taught by both full-time and adjunct faculty. The implementation of a new master syllabus in the winter of 2009 encourages uniformity in standards as well. Belmont's Strategic Plan includes a commitment to the development of program-level workshops in teaching methods and content specific to programs and individual courses. These strategies also are aimed at increasing uniformity of instruction and grading.

### ***Conclusions/Recommendations***

Strategies designed to improve assessment of English and mathematics courses are in initiation and planning stages. The Strategic Plan proposes a formal mentoring program for all new faculty members. Implementation of a faculty mentoring program will include assistance with the building of course content required for transfer, class visitation, guidance with improvements to teaching methods, documentation of progress, academic advice, team teaching, and "expert" guest visits to class. The new mentoring model also will build on the guidelines and resource materials currently available for adjunct instructors and be aimed at increasing student success rates.

Based upon analysis of data gathered during summer, fall, and winter quarters of this academic year, planning is under way to enhance assessment of English and mathematics courses. First steps toward strengthening assessment of the courses have been taken. Additional steps for targeted improvement include the following activities: 1) define course goals; 2) identify measurable course outcomes; and 3) establish benchmarks for achievement. In the future, course assessment will be based on analysis of results from measurable course outcomes. Action plans for 2010/2011 call for evaluation of effectiveness of implemented assessment strategies, and revisions to the assessment process to improve alignment of benchmarks and outcomes. The ultimate goal of the assessment process is to improve students' learning and achievement of skills in English and mathematics.