

**AGENDA ITEM C3: STUDENT DEVELOPMENT**  
**BOARD RULE 400.0100.00**  
**COMPLETION RATES IN TRANSITIONAL STUDIES**  
**BOARD OF TRUSTEES MEETING: JULY 28, 2011**

The Life Long Learning Continuum depicts students' progress from college entry through certificate or degree completion and on to a four-year institution or employment. Critical points in students' academic journeys as reflected on the continuum are analyzed, and supports and intervention are implemented. Systems and programs are designed to maximize students' success as they continue along their learning paths. The Transitional Studies Program was designed as a part of the Life Long Learning Continuum to maximize student potential and growth and represents a set of developmental education reading, math, and English courses. Transitional Studies courses are not college-level but serve to help students stretch their skills and to reach college-level readiness. Once students experience success in developmental coursework, they move to college-level courses, and their potential for success in college-level courses is increased.

Upon admission to the College, students take an "Accuplacer" placement test or present scores from another accepted instrument (ACT, SAT, or "Compass"). Students' scores determine required placement on various levels in one or more transitional studies courses in the following areas: reading, math, and/or English. The College has identified benchmarked scores for each course in the transitional studies course sequences, and students are placed accordingly.

Student success in all transitional studies courses is monitored. A key indicator of students' success can be interpreted from transitional studies course-completion rates.

***Data***

Data for this report were drawn from the student information system without personal identifiers. To be considered successful in a transitional studies class, a student must earn a "C" or higher; a student must experience success in a transitional studies class in order to enroll in the next transitional studies reading, math, or English course in sequence or to enroll in the first college-level English or math course. Data are presented in a table that depict the course label, the number of students receiving grades for that quarter, the percent of students who experienced success in that class, and the percent of students who did not experience success. For this analysis, **voluntary student withdrawals are not counted as *non-success***.

Data for transitional studies completion rates are presented and analyzed for two fall quarters because the majority of students enroll during fall quarter. Thus, there are more students in these groups for analysis. The first table displays completion rates for fall quarter in the 2010/2011 academic year. Table 2 provides similar data for the previous fall quarter, 2009/2010.

Table 1, *Fall 2010 Completion rates in transitional studies courses*

Course label	Course Name	Number of students receiving grades	Percent successful	Percent not successful
ENG081	Writing I	71	75%	25%
ENG082	Writing II	91	78%	22%
ENG093	Reading I	85	69%	31%
ENG094	Reading II	199	70%	30%
MAT094	Prealgebra	274	73%	27%
MAT095	Introductory Algebra	185	68%	32%
MAT097	Intermediate Algebra	30	60%	40%
MDS096	Personal and Academic Development	35	57%	43%
<i>Totals</i>		970	71%	29%

Table 2, *Fall 2009 Completion rates in transitional studies courses*

Course label	Course Name	Number of students receiving grades	Percent successful	Percent not successful
ENG081	Writing I	47	66%	34%
ENG082	Writing II	61	79%	31%
ENG093	Reading I	52	71%	39%
ENG094	Reading II	233	76%	34%
MAT094	Prealgebra	119	70%	30%
MAT095	Introductory Algebra	348	70%	30%
MAT097	Intermediate Algebra	39	38%	62%
MDS096	Personal and Academic Development	17	76%	34%
<i>Totals</i>		916	72%	28%

### ***Analysis***

Overall, the data for fall quarter 2009 reveal that 72 percent of students who enrolled in transitional studies courses completed those courses successfully with a “C” or higher. The overall completion rate for fall quarter 2010 was 71 percent, which is a one percent decrease from fall 2009. It is also important to view the success rates in individual courses to gain a solid, overall view of student success in transitional studies courses. In fall, 2009, the success rate in Writing I was 66%. Student success in Writing I rose to 75% in 2010, a nine percent increase. Student success in Prealgebra also increased in fall 2010. The success rate was 70% in fall 2009 and 73% in fall 2010, a three percent increase. A more substantial increase in student success was noted in an Intermediate Algebra. The increase in student success in Intermediate Algebra from fall 2009 to fall 2010 was 22%.

Four courses show a slight decrease in successful completions from fall 2009 to fall 2010. Those courses are Writing II, Reading I, Reading II, and Introductory Algebra. Decreases in the success rates in these courses were one percent, two percent, six percent, and two percent respectively. A more significant decrease in student success is reflected in the data for

successful completions in MDS (multi-disciplinary studies) 096, Personal and Academic Development. The decline from 2009 to 2010 was 19%. The face of MDS096 changed from fall 2009 to fall 2010. The web-based courseware used in 2009 was replaced in 2010 with more rigorous and intensive web-based courseware (and no additional hours were added to the course). An additional section and instructor were added, and student recruiting for the course was not as selective for fall 2010 as it was for fall 2009. The difference between the success rates in MDS096 from fall 2009 to fall 2010 may be attributed to one or more of these factors.

While success in transitional studies courses is one way in which to view students' preparation for college-level coursework, another way to examine success rates in transitional studies is to analyze students' success in their subsequent, college-level courses, and that analysis will be addressed in the August 2011 monitoring report.

### ***Discussion***

The July 2008 monitoring report recommended examining students' success in light of best practices. That recommendation warrants a response in this report as well.

- *How do transitional studies students compare with students in other two year institutions? Find a sound basis for comparison so we can interpret data and make recommendations.*

The July 2009 monitoring report highlighted national developmental coursework success rates of 29 selected two-year community and/or technical colleges as reported by Gerlaugh, Thompson, Boylan, and Davis (2009) and discussed comparisons of those success rates with Belmont's students' transitional studies success rates (withdrawals excluded). To date, an updated study and comparable study of pass rates in transitional or developmental courses has not appeared in the literature. The table below represents the 2009 published data and compares those success rates to Belmont Technical College's fall 2009 and 2010 success rates.

*Table 3: Retention and Pass Rates in Developmental Studies in 29 Two-year Institutions and in Belmont Technical College fall 2009 and fall 2010*

Subject Area	National Pass Rate	Belmont Technical College Pass Rate Fall 2009	Belmont Technical College Pass Rate Fall 2010
Developmental Reading	76%	73%	76%
Developmental Writing	73%	75%	70%
Developmental Math	68%	67%	70%

The data suggests that Belmont Technical College students perform as well as their national counterparts in reading and slightly better than their national counterparts in developmental math. In addition, the data reflects an increase in developmental reading and math student success from fall 2009 to fall 2010 for Belmont Technical College students; however, their writing success rates were slightly less than their national counterparts' success

rates. In addition, the data indicates that Belmont Technical College students' success in developmental writing dipped slightly in fall 2010.

Another study with comparative data was reported in the July 2010 monitoring report. In early spring 2010, The Ohio Board of Regents provided Ohio community colleges with data<sup>1</sup> that compared student success in English (reading and English) and math for all Ohio community college students. Developmental course completion rates for the 2008/2009 academic year for Ohio community college students and Belmont Technical College students were set forth and discussed in the July 2010 monitoring report. Updated data will be presented in future monitoring reports as soon as that data becomes available from the Ohio Board of Regents.

Additional recommendations from the July 2009 and July 2010 monitoring reports, which warrant mention and response in this report, follow.

- *(2009) Calculate Belmont Technical College students' success rates in first college-level courses without voluntary/administrative withdrawals so that Belmont Technical College's transitional studies students may be compared with a national sample and interpretations, conclusions, and recommendations may then be made.*

The calculations and data presented in this monitoring report reflect success rates without voluntary/administrative withdrawals.

- *(2010) Continue to employ practices/approaches, such as active learning, cooperative and team learning, developmental instructor training (grade inflation, expectations for students, active learning, and delivering a challenging curriculum and assignments), supplemental instruction, critical thinking, and updated texts and technology so that success rates will increase in 2010-2011 academic year.*

The above practices have become standard and best practices in Belmont Technical College's transitional studies program.

- *(2010) One possible vehicle for guiding the development of updated transitional studies program goals and objectives and the identification of appropriate data collection/analysis is the National Association of Developmental Education's Self-Evaluation Guide (Thayer and Cole, 2009). Explore this tool and consider its use as a transitional studies program guide for 2010-2011 academic year.*

The Transitional Studies Redesign Task Force has identified the "Assessment Tool for Effective Practices in Basic Skills" from California's "Basic Skills as a Foundation for Student Success" as a most useful tool for data collection and analysis in the redesign of its transitional studies program. The National Association of Developmental Education's (NADE's) "Self-Evaluation Guide" is a secondary tool that will be used by the task force.

- *(2010) Assess and record student success in transitional studies courses and foster student success through the development and implementation of learning outcome assessment rubrics. Develop rubrics for all developmental courses and pilot their use, in an incremental manner, beginning fall 2010.*

Learning outcome rubrics have been designed for developmental reading and English; they will be used to assess student learning in all multidisciplinary studies (MDS) courses beginning fall 2011. Learning outcome rubrics will be designed during the upcoming academic year for developmental math.

---

<sup>1</sup> Glenn, Darrell. "Developmental Education/Community College Student Success Data Meeting." 3 June 2010. E-mail and attachments to Chief Academic Officers, Community and Technical Colleges. 15 June, 2010.

### ***Conclusions and Recommendations***

The transitional studies program at Belmont has been undergoing a rigorous and energetic transformation. Led by the Transitional Studies Redesign Task force and sparked by the College's latest AQIP action project, its charge has been to overhaul transitional studies at Belmont to enhance student success in transitional studies and subsequent college-level courses. Data presented has reflected fairly solid student success in transitional studies in traditional developmental courses to date, especially in comparison to national data, although some slight downward trends were noted and discussed. In the near future, some hills and valleys are to be expected in the data, such as that which was reflected in the first monitoring of MDS096, "Personal and Academic Development." As new transitional studies courses, systems, and process rise to a level of consistency and strength, though, it is anticipated that future data will reflect consistent improvement in students' success. To that end, the following recommendations and targets for improvement are in line with the recommendations presented in the aforementioned AQIP action project, are reflected in the goals of the College's transitional studies redesign, and will contribute to student success in transitional studies:

- Enhance hiring, retaining, and developing instructors to be highly qualified and effective developmental education instructors.
- Continue to promote and facilitate collaboration among departments, especially student services and student learning, to promote student success in developmental education.
- Promote innovative, effective delivery of developmental education instruction to include active learning, learning teams, effective use of technology, critical thinking, and college success skills.
- Redesign transitional studies courses/curriculum format and design to include the fine tuning of the following MDS and accelerated courses and assessment of student success in each course: MDS094 (Personal and Academic Success I), MDS096 (Personal and Academic Success II), MDS097 (Personal and Academic Success-Math), ENG095 (Writing II—Accelerated), and MAT098 (Intermediate Algebra—Accelerated).

### ***Targets for Improvement***

- Strengthen all systems and processes, in light of the College's Life Long Learning Continuum, from transitional studies students' entry into the College and developmental education, through their developmental experience, and out of and into college-level courses, to contribute to greater student successes.
- Strive for a consistent two percent increase in all transitional studies courses as measured by the percent of students in each course who earn a "C" or better.
- Work toward a two percent increase in student persistence in developmental education as measured by the percent of students who test into and take at least one developmental class in fall term and persist to subsequent fall terms.