

Recommendations to the Campus Task Force on Developmental Education
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Various recent reports by external agencies and reviewers have characterized the institution's developmental, academic support, and retention efforts and initiatives as lacking continuity and coherence. The issue is critical, and paramount to achieving the goals outlined in the Kentucky Postsecondary Education Improvement Act and fully implementing Kentucky's Public Agenda within the institution. The Office of Enrollment envisions and desires greater collaborative efforts that will effectively ameliorate this perceived status. We believe that the present recommendations will:

- (1) Better synchronize freshman level program initiatives, regarding developmental experiences, academic support services, and retention efforts;
- (2) Better prepare those students for successful collegiate level study; and
- (3) Result in the strengthening of the freshman level courses, experiences, and retention.

Rationale

Among the various external reports, the seminal influence on these recommendations is the 2003 Baker Hostetler Report (*BHR*). The report acknowledges the challenges associated with providing meaningful opportunities for under-prepared students to develop the academic competencies essential for raising their level of achievement in the Liberal Studies core curriculum and their respective majors.

It further encourages the institution to build on apparent strengths, in aligning programs and priorities with mission, societal need, student demand, and personnel and infrastructure capabilities.

To significantly improve the institution's current developmental liabilities, the *BHR* encourages the institution to focus on resolving the debilitating issues regarding: (1) staffing levels; (2) class size; (3) organizational structure; (4) staff assignments and expertise in teaching developmental courses; (5) feasibility of appointing a director/coordinator to oversee all components of developmental experiences; and (6) faculty participation in state and national forums and conferences related to developmental experiences.

According to the *BHR*, developmental experiences are done "almost apologetically," and lack coordination, enthusiasm, and accountability. While they consume a significant portion of time, energy, and financial resources, these experiences critically impact the institution's retention and graduation rates. Moreover, since developmental experiences and the First-Year Experience Program share the overarching goal of empowering students and retaining those with the potential to thrive in an academically challenging environment, the *BHR* encourages more effective linkages of the institution's developmental initiatives with those of the First Year Experience Program.

Recommendations to the Task Force

- Fully articulate and disseminate an institutional mission statement for developmental education at KSU
- Revise current guidelines for admission to require that Students with an admission index of 320-400 be granted conditional admission.
- Provide infrastructure funding with the submission of a plan for delivery of underprepared student services that includes assessment of current services, workforce professional development needs, and goals for underprepared student performance.
- Create timelines and goals for grades in courses and retention to the second year.
- Implement a campus wide effort to develop online and alternative strategies (in addition to traditional coursework) to address student developmental needs, using the statewide online mathematics placement test pilot project as a model for all subject areas.
- Critically review developmental education staffing data, including part-time/full-time status and earned credentials.
- Review and incorporate the Kentucky Association for Developmental Education Faculty Training Outline as part of the orientation of developmental faculty.
- Work with the Collaborative Center for Literacy Development and other partners to improve/upgrade developmental educators' teaching skills.
- Implementation of the New College Model

Implementation of the New College Model

The final recommendation is submitted in compliance with the findings of the Baker Hostetler Report and various additional external reports. It also is consistent with our desire to improve the efficiency of the related operational components and to maximize student success at the institution. The proposed organizational structure appears in the table that immediately follows this narrative.

The majority of new students entering postsecondary education leave their initial college or university without completing a degree, and retention rates have declined since the early 1980s at four-year institutions, both public and private. While more than half of all

students who withdraw from college do so during their first year, there is accumulating evidence that the first two years of college represent a more vulnerable period for student learning and cognitive development.

As an operational construct, the New College would function as a transitional mechanism for all first time KSU students with less than 36 semester credit hours. The proposed implementation of this construct acknowledges the critical nature of both the first and second years on attrition and retention efforts, and proposes intensive supervision for an extended period of this time. The New College at Kentucky State University will extend the precepts and examples developed and employed in *Comprehensive Academic Bridge Program (CABP)* to include an additional four transitional semesters of postsecondary study. The 2005 pilot program resulted in a 100% rate of success, regarding the transition of a cohort of at-risk, first generational students from Kentucky public high schools into postsecondary study.

The college would serve as a virtual clearinghouse for structuring and gauging the prescription and fulfillment of (1) developmental experiences, and (2) the Liberal Studies Core/General Education Requirements. Again, OEM desires to:

- (1) Better synchronize freshman level program initiatives, regarding developmental experiences, academic support services, and retention efforts;
- (2) Better prepare those students for successful collegiate level study; and
- (3) Strengthen and improve the freshman level courses, experiences, and retention.

Students will transition into the degree program of choice, upon completion of the prescribed developmental and/or Liberal Studies Core requirements,. Students completing the 36 hour core are conferred formal certificates that document their readiness to assume more selective studies and degree options. Inherent in this model are the following:

- (1) The need for some students to begin specialized study while within the New College. On such occasions that students demonstrate the ability to do such, certificates will be conferred that reflect this level of specification, consistent with the current institutional CIP codes.
- (2) The need to reorganize and restructure various units.
- (3) Investment in additional staff and developmental faculty.
- (4) Crucial coordination and synchronization of various cohorts, e.g., Academic Bridge, students with various levels of developmental needs, students with no developmental needs.
- (5) The conferral of the proposed additional certificates will have a positive impact on the institutions graduation rate.

Various national student surveys indicate that the fear of academic failure and obtaining assistance with academic skills are among the most frequently cited concerns of

beginning college students. A basic tenet of the New College will be our belief that academic support is more effectively delivered and received if it is not isolated from, but integrated within, the content of courses and classroom learning. Students who seek and receive academic support improve both their academic performance and develop higher self-expectations for future academic success. However, many at-risk students have trouble recognizing that they are experiencing academic difficulty, and are hesitant to request assistance even if they recognize such a need. The New College will ensure that basic academic skills are effectively applied and mastered, under the rubric of a clearly articulated and overarching theme and regarding adjusting to academic and social challenges, utilizing academic support systems, and strategies for improving academic performance. Student cohorts will be tracked for the entire duration of their postsecondary education and experiences, contributing the requisite level of accountability.

The New College will engage students in experiences that are designed to enhance their academic background and experience. Students will work with developmental faculty members, First Year Experience counselors, and the Academic Center for Excellence, who will assist them in adjusting to the academic and social challenges that await them. To facilitate a smooth and timely advancement through the post secondary educational system, students will transition through the New College while being engaged in a tailored learning community model.