



Mt. San Antonio College

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President/CEO

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October 5, 2017

Martin A. Ramey
Academic Senate President

Dear Marty,

I am writing to respond to your letter dated September 27, 2017. I appreciate the clarity with which you articulate the Academic Senate's concerns. In response, I have reviewed the issues you identified, interviewed managers, and can now share my response with you. My goal is to demonstrate that your concerns are fully addressed and that appropriate safeguards are in place to prevent repetition.

History:

Students at one site were given a Math placement test which they were unable to pass. At the request of the High School principal, rather than retest the students, a lower level math class was scheduled and students were enrolled with no further testing. This enrollment required an override, which was entered. This oversight was discovered after the class had been in session for approximately two weeks, and a decision was made to allow the class to continue. A follow-up in-person meeting, which included the faculty member, the Mt. SAC math department chair, and the Associate Vice President of Instruction, resulted in concurrence that no student's performance warranted an administrative withdrawal, an option made available if a student was at risk of doing poorly due to lack of preparation for the course work. Nevertheless, the summative result is that college policy was not followed.

At a second site, the placement test was not administered, yet students were enrolled via override in a course with a prerequisite of eligibility for English 68. It was later in the term that this situation drew attention. While student's high school GPAs were reviewed as a first step in predicting whether any intervention was needed to protect student's college grades, it is not a substitute for appropriate placement processes. Subsequent conversations with the faculty member, confirmed by exam performance, indicated that all students have the potential to pass the class. Nevertheless, the summative result is that college policy was not followed.

I share the Academic Senate's concern that deviation from college policy may have lessened the ability of enrolled students to pass these classes and thus could have larger implications for their academic future. It is important to know that performance in these classes would not harm their progress toward high school graduation. Furthermore, faculty report that the only students in danger of poor grades are not putting in the effort necessary to succeed.

Your letter also suggests that Dual Enrollment sections received preference over on-site sections because they were allowed to continue with limited enrollments. While two low-enrolled sections were allowed this fall, this is a standard enrollment management mechanism for supporting new programs and is implemented on campus when needed. As our experience with Dual Enrollment deepens and the new guidelines are fully implemented, fewer cases of low enrollment are anticipated.

Findings and Remedies:

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Timelines for implementation were initially developed to respect all college policies and procedures established for placement and enrollment. Those timelines anticipated that the intake process for high school students in dual enrolled classes would conclude prior to our registration period. As implementation progressed, it became evident that some factors involved in bringing college classes to this new situation required adjustment to the timeline, particularly the high school student scheduling timeline extended well into late summer. As different college units made necessary adjustments to this unexpected situation, communication between them was insufficient, and roles of those disparate units were not well enough defined to handle the practical aspects of implementing college policy and procedure.

Through discussion with several of the administrators who have roles in the dual enrollment process, it is evident to me that there was no conscious disregard of college policies. Rather, incomplete messages between units that utilize different terminology can lead to following a policy that is correct in some situations but does not apply to dual enrollment. For example, courses with restricted enrollment such as nursing employ overrides for enrollment so that a misunderstanding of dual enrollment as restricted enrollment would not question an enrollment override. One unit seeing the need for immediate assessment retesting does not translate into another unit taking action to make that happen.

To safeguard against a repetition of timeline, communication, and role definition issues, it is evident that a more intentional means of planning, training, and communication must be developed to ensure consistent practice. Additional staff in Instruction and Student Services are currently being hired and charged with responsibility to work within all guidelines and college policies as they liaison with high school staff. The additional staff will join the dual enrollment implementation team to specifically address planning, training, and communication. They will provide regular reports to DEMAC, documenting such. For dual enrollment cycles going forward, I will personally review staff reports regarding compliance with guidelines, procedures, and policies.

The Dual Enrollment Mutual Agreement Committee (DEMAC) developed and adopted guidelines (attached) for high school procedures and internal process, specifically addressing the experiences of this first implementation cycle. Guidelines clearly define requirements for student placement, mandatory training for high school and college staff, and establish program deadlines. Internal guidelines also reinforce mandatory appropriate placement, require documentation of placement results reviewed by college managers and Academic Senate, and set deadlines for schedule development. DEMAC will assure that these guidelines are consistently implemented and followed.

Although there were inconsistencies in the two instances cited, I want to share with you that at the present time, we are offering seven other dual enrollment courses at other high schools. 100% of students were assessed prior to enrollment in these courses and met the eligibility criteria. All indications are that students are performing well in these courses. Additionally, as a follow up, 100% of the students who enrolled in our pilot at Diamond Ranch high school last year successfully passed.

At the present time, a total of 30 dual enrollment sections are scheduled for the 2017-18 academic year, a plan that is being held firm. Additional high school districts are requesting that we explore placing dual enrollment classes on their sites. Initial conversations identifying their interest and specifying our requirements for further consideration have occurred, and commitments will be developed, reviewed, and approved in a timely and deliberate manner following agreed upon processes. I have also invited you to join the district in exploration of an Early College High School, a process that will span multiple months prior to reaching a recommendation. These are important inquiries that require transparent and open communication.

Thank you for this opportunity to respond to your concerns. I look forward to continuing this conversation and share your commitment to finding a positive resolution to this matter.

Sincerely,

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Bill Scroggins, President/CEO

Attached:

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Internal Guidelines for Mt. SAC Dual Enrollment Program

Note: Internal Guidelines must be met or the process will be considered incomplete and will cancel the start of the Dual Enrollment courses.

1. Mt. SAC determines level of assessment
2. If students do not pass the placement assessment, then Mt. SAC will offer lower assessment to determine what courses will be offered
3. Class schedules will be created at least 3-6 months in advance of the primary semester
4. 1 Faculty Member & 3 Managers Sign off on Program Assessment Results
 - Instruction: Director, Dual Enrollment
 - Associate Dean, Counseling or Designee
 - Assessment & Matriculation Director
 - Senate President or Designee

UNDERSTAND THE INTERNAL AUDIT AND WILL MEET ALL GUIDELINES ABOVE BEFORE DUAL ENROLLMENT COURSES COMMENCE:

DIRECTOR, DUAL ENROLLMENT:

Director, Dual Enrollment Signature: _____ Date: _____

ASSOCIATE DEAN, COUNSELING OR DESIGNEE:

Associate Dean, Counseling or Designee Signature: _____ Date: _____

ASSESSMENT & MATRICULATION DIRECTOR:

Assessment & Matriculation Director Signature: _____ Date: _____

SENATE PRESIDENT OR DESIGNEE:

Senate President or Designee Signature: _____ Date: _____