

September 27, 2017

**Via E-mail**

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William T. Scroggins, Ph.D.  
President and CEO  
Mt. San Antonio College  
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Re: Concerns Arising from Dual Enrollment Offerings – Fall 2017

Dear President Scroggins:

On behalf of the Academic Senate, the Senate's Executive Board would like to express our concerns over the recent and troubling revelations that nearly 60 high school juniors and seniors in three dual enrollment classes at two local high schools were not properly assessed as required by College policies and state regulations. This letter follows our meeting with Dr. Joumana McGowan, Associate Vice President of Instruction, and Francisco Dorame, Associate Dean of Counseling, of September 21, 2017. While we commend them for their willingness to answer our questions openly in the interest of transparency, difficult questions remain that should be answered. Until the Executive Board is able to review the information promised to us and continue our conversations, we ask that the College freeze dual enrollment and Early College High School programs and/or partnerships at their current state until our faculty's confidence in the College's ability to properly assess all students is restored.

Specifically, in meeting with Joumana and Francisco, we have learned that some 32 students in two sections of MATH 71A – Intermediate Algebra (CRNs 24218 and 24219) at West Covina High School (WCHS) should have completed a level 2 math assessment prior to being enrolled.<sup>1</sup> As you know, MATH 71A carries a prerequisite of MATH 51 or 51B or a qualifying score on the current department placement test. Despite this prerequisite, the students were never administered a level 2 assessment.

In this instance, it appears that the principal did not want his students assessed at the lower level and demanded assessment on the higher level 3 assessment.<sup>2</sup> This was despite knowing that both WCHS and Mt. SAC had agreed to offer the MATH 71A class at the school in the Fall prior to the test, and also knowing that such a level 3 test was improper. Normally, for a student to be eligible for MATH 71A, assuming (s)he had failed the level 3 test, (s)he would be required to take the level 2 test and then proceed according to the placement. That did not happen here. Our policies were overlooked and disregarded by

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<sup>1</sup> The level 2 assessment determines placement into our MATH 61, 71, 71A and 71X courses.

<sup>2</sup> This level 3 test determines placement into our college level math courses, those being MATH 100, 110, 120, 130, 150 and 160. It does not determine placement into 71A.

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more than one person. Whatever influence or persuasion prevailed, it is simply unacceptable to allow students to bypass these requirements.

To comply with Mt. SAC's Catalog, our Schedule of Classes, our Administrative Procedures 4260 and 5011, and Cal. Code Regs. Tit. 5 § 55003, these students are to be given the appropriate assessment test *prior* to being enrolled into classes. This was not done.

We have also heard anecdotal evidence from the teacher assigned to these classes that some of these students are underprepared for these courses, yet they remain enrolled in the class. Keeping students who have not demonstrated their ability to succeed in our classes is alarming. Our faculty and everyone on our campus are stewards who look after the best interests of our students. How can anyone say that placing these students in this class was in their best interests? What happens if these students fail this course, or if the instructor feels pressure to pass students if a large number are failing?

This is a complicated predicament. If these students are allowed to remain in the classes but do not pass them, they will have begun their college careers on the wrong foot. Not only will their grades be memorialized in college transcripts, but a failing grade may *well limit their choices for being accepted by the school of their choice when they apply for admission to colleges. There are also concerns that a failed course might jeopardize a student's progress toward high school graduation.*

Perhaps more alarming, at Rowland High School, a SOC 1 - Sociology class (CRN 23914) was not given any assessment whatsoever despite a class prerequisite of "Eligibility for ENGL 68." While we understand that the high school believes that its students will be successful in the course, relying on the fact that the students have GPAs of 3.6 or higher, this is not yet how we place students into our classes.

We are also concerned that, with a fill rate of 50% (a rate that is lower than our enrollment management standards) the class was allowed to continue even though four sections of the same class were cancelled on campus due to low enrollment. The same concern arises with respect to a MATH 71A section offered at WCHS that had a mere 8 students while the class has room for 36. This concerns us because an on-campus section of MATH 71A was canceled due to low enrollment.

*Regarding prerequisites, we have specific guidelines as to when they may be overridden.* These are contained in AP 4260. The AP along with Title 5 regulations prohibit waiver of such prerequisites but do permit challenges when the student demonstrates one of the following grounds:

- That the College accepts prerequisite or requisite courses from regionally accredited colleges and universities in the United States. *This does not apply here.*
- That a student may also request a prerequisite or requisite variance to demonstrate that the student has the knowledge or ability equivalent to the prerequisite or requisite for the course in question, but has not formally met the established prerequisite or requisite. It is required that when such a circumstance arises, that the student must go to the department chair of the department for that course. *Here, it appears that no one ever consulted our Math, English or Sociology departments regarding the assessments or eligibility requirements.*
- That the prerequisite course has not been made reasonably available, and waiting until the prerequisite or requisite is offered will create an undue delay in meeting educational goals. *Again,*

*it appears that this is not the case, as we could have easily offered the prerequisite course or performed the right assessment.*

- The prerequisite or requisite is being applied in a discriminatory manner. *There is no allegation of such and, even if there were, Title 5 would still require these students be assessed properly.*
- The prerequisite violates the provisions of the State Education Code. *Again, this does not apply per the same reasoning as above.*

We are convinced that these actions evidence a certain and conscious disregard of College policies in favor of promoting high school classes and students over Mt. SAC classes and students. Not only are such actions unfair and potentially infringe on Title 5, they violate the spirit of our Administrative Procedure on Enrollment Priorities and potentially subject the College to risks from faculty and students injured by these decisions. These actions also raise questions about the overall administration of this program and other instances in which assessment policies and applicable laws may have been violated.

When the Dual Enrollment Joint Task Force met, it was agreed, for all intents and purposes, that these courses would be equivalent to the courses taught on the College campus. Instead, we have now seen that, not only were assessments waived in three sections but there appears to be a restricted enrollment process and a skirting of enrollment policies to ensure that these sections go forward. The task force also agreed unanimously that any assessments and prerequisites required by the College would remain in force and be applied to high school students in the same way as regular Mt. SAC students. See Administrative Procedure 5011.

The Senate Executive Board is deeply troubled that these students may be underprepared to succeed in these courses. In the race to build a dual enrollment program, mistakes were made and students' futures and our academic standards have been compromised.

While Dual Enrollment Mutual Agreement Committee works to investigate the full scope of problems in the administration of this program, the Senate Executive Board formally requests that the College place a hold on developing new partnerships and any new course offerings in the dual enrollment program until such time as we send a follow-up letter indicating our concerns have been addressed. We further request that the College refrain from pursuing an Early College High School partnership with local districts until such time as a Senate task force can be convened to establish appropriate consultation and oversight with regard to academic components and report to the Senate and the Board of Trustees.

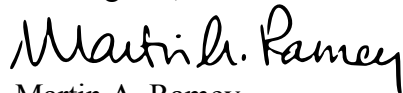
We also request that Resolution 17-09 In Support of AB 288 Partnerships be reviewed by the College and that future partnerships follow that model. Under this legislation, Mt. SAC is given the flexibility to hold classes throughout the day and to deliver not only college-level coursework but developmental education courses as well. As you are well aware, the spirit of AB 288 intends to make college a possibility for underserved populations and those interested in vocational or CTE fields.

We also request a review of the placement testing oversight process for all of placement examinations held off campus, and that all future dual enrollment program placement exams be overseen or attended by a full-time Mt. SAC faculty member from the appropriate academic department.

We are open to further discussions and updates on the matter, but do plan to bring this to the attention of the entire campus so that departments and faculty are informed when they make decisions about Dual Enrollment and Early College High School. You, along with any other member of the management team, are welcomed to address the full Senate at a future meeting or to provide a response that addresses these concerns. It is not our place to inhibit programs that benefit our students and lead them to better lives. It *is* our purview and our place to review policies and programs of potential harm to students, and to make recommendations based upon AB 1725.

We look forward to a positive resolution to this matter.

Best regards,



Martin A. Ramey

Academic Senate President

on behalf of and in agreement with

Lina Soto, Vice President  
Bruce Nixon, Secretary  
Eric Kaljumägi, Faculty Association President  
Joan Sholars, Faculty Association Vice President  
John Vitullo, Curriculum Liaison  
Tim Engle, Director  
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