

TO: Advisory Workgroup on Fiscal Affairs

FROM: Darcie Harvey, Senior Consultant SCFF, Chancellor's Office

RE: Transfer-Level English and math Issues

The Advisory Workgroup on Fiscal Affairs will be meeting on January 11, 2019 to discuss various components of the Student Centered Funding Formula (SCFF). The SCFF topics to be discussed include: Base Allocation and the calculation of the three-year average, Transfer-Level English and math for students who complete the courses in different districts, timeframe for completion of Transfer-Level English and math, and courses considered for completion of Transfer-Level math. This memo provides background information on two of the Transfer-Level English and math issues and is accompanied by an Excel spreadsheet of relevant data. A follow up memo on courses included in Transfer-Level math will be circulated at another meeting.

Completion of Transfer-Level Mathematics Course and Transfer-Level English Course Within First Year of Enrollment

Statutory language states that:

“Each community college district shall be granted two points for each student who successfully completes both transfer-level mathematics and English courses within the student’s first academic year of enrollment, based on prior year data.”

Prior academic year is defined as Summer, Fall, Winter, Spring.

Feedback from the field has questioned whether the current calculations are optimal given that students who start in the Spring are not given the same amount of time to complete the metric as students who start in the Fall.

Research staff at the Chancellor's Office performed an analysis of this issue for 2016-17. The first calculation is of the number of students who met the current definition of success for the Transfer-Level English and math and returned a value of 21,421 successful outcomes. The second calculation gives the number of additional students who completed Transfer-Level English and math within their first year (by following up the entire year from their first enrollment term). This calculation returned an additional 2,647 students.

Students who complete Transfer-Level English and math in different districts

Currently, if a student completes Transfer-Level English in one district and Transfer-Level math in a different district no Student Success Outcome funding on this metric results for either district. However, some questions have arisen about changing this practice in the future.

To make an informed decision about this current practice it is relevant to ask the following questions: to what extent is this occurring? What are the monetary ramifications for districts? Is this practice happening in certain districts more than others? Why do students take in multiple districts (is this because of course availability issues or because of student preferences)?

Research staff at the Chancellor's Office performed an analysis on this issue for 2016-17 and found that systemwide there were 22 students that completed both Transfer-Level English and math but in different districts. This analysis suggests that students in general tend to take both courses in the same district.

A Datamart analysis of course availability shows that there are differences in the number of course sections of Transfer-Level math versus Transfer-Level English. In general, more English courses are offered than math courses. The table below shows an example of this issue in one college. For a student at Alan Hancock in Fall of 2017 if that student wanted to complete both math and English in the Fall semester there were 11 more English course sections to choose from than math course sections. Similar patterns occur in other colleges. This analysis suggests that for the small number of students who take the courses in different districts the reason could be because of limited math course offerings within their district.