Mark Drummond, Chancellor
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April 6, 2005

The Honorable Fabian Nuñez
Speaker, California State Assembly
State Capitol
Sacramento, CA 95814

Dear Mr. Speaker:

Enclosed is a report to the Legislature and the Governor that includes recommendations from the California Community Colleges Board of Governors for district-specific reporting of educational outcomes. This report is being sent pursuant to legislation enacted last September [AB 1417 (Pacheco)], which called on the Board to make recommendations for "...the design of a workable structure for the annual evaluation of district-level performance in meeting statewide educational priorities..." We believe these recommendations are well tailored to the uniquely varied educational needs and missions of the California Community Colleges.

The enclosed report benefited from the significant input of staff of the Department of Finance and the Legislative Analyst's Office, as well as the input of nationally recognized experts in community college accountability and the input of college leaders throughout our system. We believe that the report is responsive to the requirements of AB 1417.

Implementation of this reporting framework would require the enactment of legislation and a relatively modest augmentation of resources for the System Office. If implemented, the recommended framework would provide valuable information not only to State policymakers, but also to local community college districts. Over time this could contribute toward improved instruction and related programs for students. We look forward to working with the Legislature and the Governor in this important area.

Sincerely,

Mark Drummond
Chancellor

Enclosure

cc: The Hon. John Laird, Chair, Assembly Budget Committee
The Hon. Judy Chu, Chair, Assembly Appropriations Committee
Members of the Assembly Budget Subcommittee No. 2 on Education Finance
Members of the Assembly Higher Education Committee
Elizabeth G. Hill, Legislative Analyst
Board of Governors

Chancellor's Office
California Community Colleges

# AB1417 Performance Framework for the California Community Colleges

## A Report to the Legislature, pursuant to AB1417

March, 2005

California Community Colleges Chancellor's Office
www.cccco.edu

# AB1417 PERFORMANCE FRAMEWORK FOR CALIFORNIA COMMUNITY COLLEGES

The following is a report to the Legislature and Governor that provides recommendations on the design of a workable structure for the annual evaluation of district-level performance for California Community College districts. This report is being submitted by the California Community Colleges Board of Governors (BOG) pursuant to the requirements of AB1417 (Pacheco), [Chapter 581, Statutes of 2004].

Questions regarding the report or its contents can be directed to Patrick Perry, Vice Chancellor of Technology, Research & Information Systems at the California Community Colleges Chancellor's Office, pperry@cccco.edu or 916-327-5912.

# AB1417 Performance Framework for California Community College Districts

### Background

AB1417 (Pacheco) [Chapter 581, Statutes of 2004] charged the Board of Governors *"to provide recommendations, based on information to be developed in a study to be conducted by the Chancellor of the California Community Colleges, to the Legislature and the Governor regarding the design of a workable structure for the annual evaluation of district-level performance in meeting statewide educational outcome priorities"*. The legislation further states that the recommendations *"shall be based on information and data provided by a study to be completed the Chancellor of the California Community Colleges, with the input of institutional representatives of community college districts."*

### Process

The State Chancellor's Office of the California Community Colleges contracted with the Research and Planning Group for California Community Colleges (RP Group) Center for Student Success (CSS), the RP Group's research and evaluation organization, to carry out a study to develop a set of performance frameworks and performance indicators for discussion and review. Appendix A lists the members of the Research and Planning Group/Center for Student Success.

The RP-CSS was also charged with the task of assembling an "External Panel of Experts", as specified in AB1417. The External Panel consisted of six members who have a great deal of community college accountability experience on a national level. The External Panel reviewed the draft framework twice and provided comment and guidance in the project, and has given the proposal high marks. Appendix B lists the members of the External Panel. This External Panel review satisfies AB1417's requirement of consulting "*with individuals with demonstrated expertise in higher education accountability and evaluation*."

The Chancellor created an Oversight Committee to provide policy perspective for the project. This consisted of five members from the Community Colleges Chief Executive Officers Board/League and Community College Academic Senate. The Oversight Committee met on four occasions between December 2004 and February 2005, and was instrumental in refining the proposal into the form it is today, and has given its approval to the framework as meeting the requirements of AB1417. Appendix C lists the members of the Oversight Committee.

The Community Colleges Consultation Council has reviewed the proposal twice (meetings in January and February, 2005) and has also agreed that the proposal meets the requirements of AB1417.

Community College groups and interested parties were given an opportunity to review and comment on the proposal; this occurred in late January-early February 2005. Vice Chancellor Patrick Perry made a total of seven field presentations during this time explaining the proposal and fielding input and questions. Much of the input was used to refine the final product that was taken to the Consultation Council in February.

AB1417 also specified that the Department of Finance and the Legislative Analyst's Office be consulted. This has occurred along the way, including two meetings in January and February with representatives of these entities.

Finally, the proposal enclosed herein was approved by the Community Colleges Board of Governors (BOG) at its meeting on March 7, 2005.

### Operating Assumptions

In developing the draft framework model and proposed reporting metrics, the RP-CSS and Chancellor's Office (System Office) staff developed a number of operating assumptions that provided decision support for either inclusion or exclusion of model types or particular measurements.

*Proposed Criteria for California Performance Framework*. AB 1417 calls for the design of a "workable structure" to evaluate district level performance. A "workable structure" for annual evaluations of district performance requires that such a framework:

1. Supports measures for accountability based upon both the state's educational priorities as well as local district priorities[1];
2. Reflects the breadth and scope of the missions and functions of the California community colleges;
3. Uses measures that will provide a fair and equitable view of a district's performance including such factors as the educational needs of the service area population and size and capacity of the institution(s);
4. Provides clear, straightforward performance information that can be understood by the general public;
5. Relies upon available data that are accessible to district-level research offices and/or the State Chancellor's Office.
6. Enables Districts to pursue improvements.

[1] State law delineates the mission and functions of the CCC. Community colleges are to offer academic and vocational education at the lower division level for both recent high school graduates and those returning to school; to advance California's economic growth and global competitiveness through education, training, and services that contribute to continuous workforce improvement. Essential and important functions of the colleges include: basic skills instruction, providing English as a second language, adult noncredit instruction, and providing support services that help students to succeed.

The proposed model attempts to encompass these fundamentals in structure and substance.

*Sources of Data*. There are three major sources of data for performance models for the California community colleges. They are:

1. Community college data contained in the Management Information System (MIS) at the State Chancellor's Office;
2. Community college performance data located at the districts;
3. New data generated from research studies and surveys mandated and funded by the state, or new data generated and paid for by districts as a result of a district level decision.

The proposal attempts to maximize the usage of existing data sources where applicable so as to minimize institutional burden on collecting new data.

## The Proposal: A Performance Framework for the California Community Colleges

The Board of Governors of the California Community Colleges recommend the framework described below for district-specific reporting of priority educational outcome measures. This recommended framework would provide valuable information not only to state policymakers, but also to local community college districts, which over time could contribute toward improved instruction and related programs for students. This framework, if approved through legislation and funded through the annual budget act, would result in an annual report to the Legislature and the Governor that would include the elements described below.

### Performance Categories: What Areas to Measure

Four performance categories are identified:

1. *Student Progress and Achievement: Degree/Certificate/Transfer.* Performance metrics in this category attempt to isolate and measure student achievement for students who show behavioral intent to earn an AA/AS/certificate or transfer to a four-year institution.
2. *Student Progress and Achievement: Vocational/Occupational/Workforce Development*. Performance metrics in this category show success and outcomes for students in vocational/occupational/workforce development courses and programs.
3. *Pre-collegiate Improvement (Basic Skills and ESL).* Performance metrics in this category show success and progress in basic skills and English as a Second Language (ESL) curricular activities.
4. *Participation.* Performance metrics in this category portray student participation as defined by participation rates in the system as compared to the State's adult population.

Other areas of community college missions were discussed, including fiscal health and noncredit curriculum and programs, but were not included as they were either not applicable to the AB1417 mandate or were already reported in some other venue.

### Performance Framework: How To Report

The panel is recommending two levels of aggregation for the performance framework:

1. *District Core Indicators*. Each District Core indicator would be aggregated and reported on at the District level. The System Office would provide the data and calculate the report for core performance indicators across each of the state-established performance categories.
2. *System Indicators*. System performance metrics within the four performance categories would be aggregated at the statewide level (with possibly demographic breakdowns for the State as a whole). The System Office would calculate and perform the system indicators.

Note that system indicator metrics are not simple statewide aggregations of district core indicators; the set of district core indicator metrics are different than the set of system indicator metrics. Some system indicator metrics are unable to be broken down at a district level, are nonsensical to be evaluated on a district level, or violate the "fair and equitable" caveat of the framework. System indicators, however, do represent in many cases well-established performance metrics that show system progress or help policymakers evaluate changing environments and the effects of policy decisions that affect performance.

#### Performance Metrics: What to Report

Please refer to the "Draft Proposed Metrics" section of this document (Appendix D) to see the exact draft set of proposed metrics.

#### District Profile

It is proposed that before reporting the draft metrics, each district report will feature a "district profile", which would include background and explanatory information about the district and who it serves. This would include, but not be limited to:

- Description of the population served by the district (breakdowns of students by race, gender, age, citizenship, and other student descriptors)
- Description of any special limitations confronting the district that may inhibit institutional capacity to deliver educational services
- Description of key ratios (student to counselor, full-time faculty to part-time faculty)
- Historical funding and FTES (full time equivalent students)

#### District Analysis and Response

We propose that Districts have a review period of annual draft reporting that would enable them to provide an analysis statement of the performance metrics that will be included in the final annual report.

#### Other Implementation Issues

The following are recommendations regarding implementation of the reporting framework.

- *Do not codify exact metrics into law or budget language.* This locks both the system and the State into an inflexible situation in the future should priorities change.

- *Allow for continual examination of model efficacy*. The reporting framework and associated metrics should have the flexibility to be modified in future iterations to capture new data sources, new measurements, or to eliminate metrics that show inadequate validity in measuring what the system and State desire. Changes to the model and its metrics should be an option discussed annually by all involved parties, which, at a minimum, should include the Chancellor's Office, the Department of Finance, and the Legislative Analyst's Office.
- *Allow for 60-day review period by districts*. Districts should be allowed a review period of at least 60 days to examine annual data to ensure its accuracy and respond. Should data seem inaccurate, this time frame should be sufficient to resubmit MIS data and have it recalculated for final submission.
- *Allow for funding tie-in with data submission/review requirement.* It is important that cooperation of the districts occur with the submission of data necessary for the timely reporting of the proposed framework. It is equally important that districts annualy review their performance figures for self-assessment. It is proposed that districts would ensure timely and proper data submission and review the annual report, or the possibility would exist that local assistance funding could be withheld from them.
- *System Office resources will need to be addressed*. Although we have done our best in the design of this reporting framework to minimize the creation of a large reporting bureaucracy, the existing staffing levels in the Technology, Research, and Information Systems Division are not adequate to implement the framework. Moreover, because recent severe budget cuts have reduced overall staffing in the Chancellor's Office (from 215 positions in 2001-02 to 144 today—a 33 percent decline), the ability of the Chancellor's Office to redirect staff to accomplish additional workload is effectively exhausted. We estimate that an augmentation of about $400,000 and four additional positions would be needed for the Chancellor's Office to implement the proposed framework. This would allow for the creation of the annual report only; this estimate does not include any costs associated with subsequent compliance monitoring or technical assistance.

#### Performance Evaluation

It is the recommendation of the RP/CSS Review Panel (with the endorsement of members of the External Panel of Experts and the Oversight Committee) that the State of California utilize the existing district and state level infrastructure for performance evaluation within the AB 1417 System. This is a system of "value-added" self assessment that looks at the array of performance metrics and evaluates a district's most current performance against that district's past performance. Such evaluation could include comparisons of current performance to prior year performance, a three-year running performance, or performance against a baseline year for that district. District performance should not be made directly against the performance of other districts nor should it be made against artificially generated pre-defined standards due to inherent incomparabilities and exogenous factors that affect district performance.

However, the annual reporting is proposed to include some comparitive peer-grouping information that will enable local districts and policymakers to view district performance against various peer groupings (such as districts with similar size, similar distance to transfer partners, similar levels of student academic preparedness upon entry, etc.).

Triggers to in-depth evaluation should be continual declines in outcomes over a period of time that are outside the band of normal annual fluctuations; for instance, a continual three-year decline in performance in a metric (where a statewide average over the same time period is not also in decline) might warrant a review or other possible intervention to help assess how the decline could be affected or rectified. The most important outcome of the evaluation should be local engagement in assessing why performance is in decline over a longer period of time, and in the creation of local mitigating interventions. Regardless of a district's relative performance against other districts, a decline of performance metrics over time should be a warning flag that causes local analysis and intervention.

After a few years of implementation, the districts and the System Office will have a better understanding of the performance measures and how well performance evaluation is functioning. This review should include an evaluation of the effectiveness of the actual measures themselves in terms of whether they provide districts with good information for institutional improvement on behalf of their students.

The possible levels of review and intervention and technical assistance are subject to the level of resources the State wishes to devote to these activities. Additional actions or activities undertaken by the System Office beyond producing the annual performace report will also require augmentation of resources, and the State needs to consider the cost-benefit of such actions so as not to create an inefficient reporting/compliance monitoring beareaucracy. The System Office, along with the Department of Finance and the Legislative Analyst's Office will be discussing these options should implementation of this proposed framework occur.

#### Conclusions

This report provides the Legislature and Governor, as specified by AB1417, with recommendations for "…the design of a workable structure for the annual evaluation of district-level performance in meeting statewide educational priorities…" We believe these recommendations are well-tailored to the uniquely varied educational needs and missions of the California Community Colleges. The recommended framework would provide valuable information not only to state policymakers, but also to local community college districts, which over time could contribute toward improved instruction and related programs for students. Implementation of this framework would require the enactment of authorizing legislation and a relatively modest augmentation of resources for the Chancellor's Office.

Appendix A

**Member Profiles**
**Research and Planning Group/Center for Student Success**
**Panel for California Community College Performance Framework Study**

***Dr. Judith A. Beachler*** is Director of Institutional Research at Los Rios Community College District. Her background includes a Ph.D. in Public and International Affairs (University of Pittsburgh, PA), with a minor in Higher Education Policy and research experience on the relationship between higher education and economic development, in addition to 16-years of experience in community college management, institutional research and planning. Judy was also a former member of the RP Group Board.

***Dr. Robert Gabriner*** is the Director of the Center for Student Success of the Research and Planning Group. He is also a former President of the RP Group and editor of the RP ijournal. He is Dean of Research, Planning and Grants of City College of San Francisco. He has a doctorate in educational policy and a masters degree in history. Formerly a history instructor for twenty years in the Peralta Colleges in Oakland, California. Dr. Gabriner is one of the architects of the Community College Reform Act of California (AB 1725).

***Dr. Craig Hayward*** is the Director of Institutional Research for the Mendocino-Lake Community College District. His educational background includes a Bachelor's degree in Journalism from Boston University and a doctorate in Human Development from the University of California, Irvine. He has taught psychology, research methods and statistics for all three public systems of higher education in California. He is currently Vice President of the California Association of Institutional Research and a member of the RP group.

***Dr. Kenneth Meehan*** is Director of Institutional Research at Fullerton College and President-Elect of the Research and Planning Group for California Community Colleges. He is the former editor of the RP eJournal of Research, Planning and Practice. He has served as the Southwest Regional Director of the National Council for Research and Planning. He has consulted with the National Center for Educational Statistics and served as the statewide IPEDS trainer for California. He also served on the National Joint Commission on Accountability Reporting, statewide Transfer Data Technical Workgroup and currently sits on the Advisory Committee for the National Study of Community College Instructional Costs and Productivity and provides research consultation to statewide Algebra Pathways Project. Dr. Meehan has authored several hundred professional publications and presentations.

***Dr. Brad C. Phillips*** is the founder and Executive Director of the California Partnership for Achieving Student Success (Cal-PASS) project; a statewide initiative to gather and track student outcomes from K-16 institutions. His background includes a Doctorate in Applied Social Psychology from Claremont Graduate University. He recently transitioned from Senior Director of Institutional Research, Planning, and Academic Services at the Grossmont-Cuyamaca Community College District, located in El Cajon, California, part of San Diego County. He has co-authored articles on data sharing that have been published in *Community College Journal, Journal of Applied Research in the Community Colleges and Community College Times.*

***Dr. Andreea M. Serban*** is Associate VP for Information Resources and Director of Inst. Assessment, Research and Planning at Santa Barbara City College. She is the RP President, Chair of the AIR Publications Committee and Associate Editor of SCUP's journal * Planning for Higher Education. Dr. Serban is author of three books and many articles. She has written extensively and made presentations on accountability, and performance reporting, funding and indicators.

**Member Profiles**
**State Chancellor's Office Team**

***Patrick Perry*** is Vice Chancellor in charge of Research, Planning, Technology and Telecommunications and MIS Services at the State Chancellor's Office of the California Community College system. He has served in the State Chancellor's Office for six years.

***Willard Hom*** is Director, Research & Planning Unit, at the State Chancellor's Office of the California Community Colleges. His background includes more than twenty years of research in the areas of health services, employment/labor, and community colleges.

Appendix B

**Member Profiles**
**External Panel for California Community College Performance Framework Study**

***Dr. Trudy Bers*** is Senior Director of Research, Curriculum and Planning and Executive Assistant to the President (both roles at Oakton CC, Des Plaines, IL). Her background includes a doctorate in political science (University of Illinois-Urbana) and service as 1995-6 president of the Association for Institutional Research and president of the National Council for Research and Planning.

***Dr. Joseph Burke*** is Director of the Rockefeller Institute's Higher Education Program (State University of New York). His background as a teacher, administrator, and researcher includes service as President (12 years at SUNY College at Plattsburgh), Provost (9 years with the SUNY system), and various publications covering topics that include performance indicators/funding in community college systems, system governance, and academic outcomes assessment. Burke edited the recent publication *Achieving Accountability in Higher Education: Balancing Public, Academic, and Market Demands (Jossey-Bass: October 2004)*.

***Dr. Peter Ewell*** is Vice President of the National Center for Higher Education Management Systems (NCHEMS, Boulder, CO). His background includes a doctorate in political science (Yale) and work as Coordinator for Long-Range Planning (Governors State University), a faculty member (University of Chicago), and author (six books on improving undergraduate instruction).

***Dr. Andrew M. Gill*** is professor of economics at California State University Fullerton (with emphasis in labor economics and econometrics). His background includes a doctorate in economics (Washington State University) and extensive research in human resource topics, including the role of community colleges in the economy. He recently co-authored (with Dr. Duane E. Leigh) *Evaluating Academic Programs in California's Community Colleges*, a monograph published in 2004 by the Public Policy Institute of California.

***Dr. James Jacobs*** is the Associate Director for Community College Operations at the Community College Research Center (Columbia University) and the Director of the Center for Workforce Development at Macomb Community College Warren, Michigan. His background includes extensive analysis in the area of community college-based workforce development and service. He is currently the President of the National Council of Workforce Education (AACC).

Appendix C

**Member Profiles**
**Chancellor's AB1417 Oversight Committee**

**Kate Clark** is the President of the statewide Academic Senate. Before her tenure as president, she served as vice-president of the state Academic Senate. She teaches English at Irvine Valley College.

**Nicki Harrington** is the Superintendent/President of Yuba College and a member of the CEO Board, Community College League of California.

**Brice Harris** is the Chancellor of the Los Rios Community College District and President of the CEO Board for 2004/5.

**Jane Patton** is the division chair in the Communication Studies Department at Mission College. She has taught at Mission College since 1986.

**Diane Woodruff** is the Director, Strategic Initiatives, for the Community College League of California (CCLC). Before joining the CCLC in 2002, she served as Superintendent/President of Napa Valley College.

# Appendix D

## AB1417 PERFORMANCE REPORTING PROJECT: PROPOSED METRICS

- **<u>District Core Indicators</u> – required and reported for all districts, calculated by the Chancellor's Office**
- **<u>System Indicators</u> – reported on a system wide aggregate basis only; calculated by the Chancellor's Office**

| CATEGORY | NUMBER OF DISTRICT CORE INDICATORS | NUMBER OF SYSTEM INDICATORS | TOTAL NUMBER OF SYSTEM AND CORE INDICATORS |
|---|---|---|---|
| Student Progress and Achievement: Degree / Certificate / Transfer | 2 | 3 | 5 |
| Student Progress and Achievement: Vocational / Occupational / Workforce Development | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| Pre-collegiate Improvement/Basic Skills/ESL | 3 | 1 | 4 |
| Participation | 0 | 1 | 1 |
| TOTAL | 6 | 7 | 13 |

| Indicator Name | Definition | Data Source | Comments |
|---|---|---|---|
| ***STUDENT PROGRESS AND ACHIEVEMENT: Degree/Certificate/Transfer*** | | | |
| | | | |
| ***District Core Indicators*** *(reporting will be for all Districts; calculated by System Office)* | | | |
| Student Achievement and Progress Rate (for "Cohort A" students) | Percentage of cohort of first-time students with minimum of 12 units earned who attempt degree/certificate/transfer threshold course within 6 years of entry ("Cohort A") who are shown to have achieved ANY of the following outcomes or value-added measures of progress within 6 years of entry:<br>• Earned any AA/AS or Certificate<br>• actual transfer to a four-year institution (student shown to have enrolled at any four-year institution of higher education after enrolling at a CCC)<br>• achieved "Transfer Directed" (student successfully completed both transfer-level Math AND English courses)<br>• achieved "Transfer Prepared" (student successfully completed 60 UC/CSU transferable units with a GPA >=2.0 in those transferable courses)<br><br>and/or<br><br>• earned at least 30 units while in the CCC system (value-added threshold of units earned as defined in wage studies as having a positive affect on future earnings) | System Office MIS | Uses "Cohort A" as denominator.<br><br>"Cohort A" attempts to measure students who have crossed the same threshold equally at each District, regardless of institutional mission or size.<br><br>The indicator measures what percentage of the cohort achieves any type of the aforementioned measures of success or progress.<br><br>It is proposed that the "earned 30 units" portion of this rate be examined at implementation and possibly reported separately. |
| Persistence Rate of "Cohort A" students, first year to second year | Percentage of cohort of first-time students with minimum of 12 units earned who attempt degree/certificate/transfer threshold course within 6 years of entry who return and enroll at any time in their second year anywhere in the system. | System Office MIS | Uses "Cohort A" as denominator.<br>Standard year-to-year persistence rate calculation for outcomes-oriented students. |
| ***System Indicators*** *(reporting will be at a Statewide aggregate level; calculated by System Office)* | | | |
| Annual Volume of Transfers to Four-year institutions | Volume of most current full-year transfer counts from CCC to other four-year institutions of higher education. | Receiving institutions; possible data match | Commonly used transfer volume metric; shows how State and receiving institution admittance policies affect current year transfers between segments. Not useful to measure at a district level because of volume incomparability between districts. |
| Transfer Rate to Four year institutions for Community College system | Transfer rate based on first-time freshman cohort analysis of student behavioral intent to transfer. | System Office | System level transfer rate, to be broken out by segment of transfer destination and student demographic. Based on current transfer rate methodology. |
| Annual Percentage of Baccalaureate students graduating UC and CSU who attended a community college | Percentage of all graduating students from any CSU or UC campus that has enrolled in one or more of the community colleges prior to graduation. | System Office | This system metric will provide the state with a full picture of the extent to which baccalaureates students utilize the California community colleges to achieve their baccalaureate educational goals. |

| Indicator Name | Definition | Data Source | Comments |
|---|---|---|---|
| ***STUDENT PROGRESS & ACHIEVEMENT: Vocational/Occupational/Workforce Development*** | | | |
| | | | |
| ***District Core Indicators*** *(reporting will be for all Districts; calculated by System Office)* | | | |
| Annual Successful Course Completion Rate (VOCATIONAL COURSES) | Most recent annual rate of successful course completion in VOCATIONAL courses. Successful is defined as having been retained to end of term with a final course grade of A, B, C, or CR. SAM A, B and C ONLY. | System Office MIS | Specifically for Vocational Courses, as these are a priority area for the State. |
| ***System Indicators*** *(reporting will be at a Statewide aggregate level; calculated by System Office)* | | | |
| Annual Volume of Degrees/Certificates conferred by Program | Volume of most current full year of AA/AS/Certificates conferred, broken down by degree type and program (major TOP code). | System Office MIS | Commonly used degree/certificate volume metric; shows annual system production of award recipients by program subject area (nursing, accounting, auto mechanics, etc.) Not useful to measure at a district level because of volume incomparability between districts; not all districts offer all types of programs. |
| Increase in total personal income as a result of receiving degree/certificate | Statewide increase of median personal income of AA/AS/Certificate students taken at some point after award conferral. Students shown to be still enrolled will be taken out of the calculation. | System Office MIS | System level degree and certificate attainment rate. Methodology of devising "behavioral intent to earn degree/certificate" would need to be developed. |

| Indicator Name | Definition | Data Source | Comments |
|---|---|---|---|
| ***PRE-COLLEGIATE IMPROVEMENT - BASIC SKILLS - ESL*** | | | |
| | | | |
| ***District Core Indicators*** *(reporting will be for all Districts; calculated by System Office)* | | | |
| Annual Successful Course Completion Rate (Basic Skills Courses) | Most recent annual rate of successful course completion in Basic Skills courses. Successful is defined as having been retained to end of term with a final course grade of A, B, C, or CR. | System Office MIS | Specifically for Basic Skills Courses, as these are a priority area for the State. Evaluation issues are similar to other Successful Course Completion rates shown above. |
| ESL Improvement Rate | Percent of students who attempted/completed at least one credit ESL course in a term who attempted/completed a higher level ESL course or a college level course within two years of taking the ESL course (a two-year cohort examination). The various combination of attempted-attempted, completed-attempted, or completed-completed will be determined at a alter date. Only students starting at 2 or more levels below college level/transfer level will be counted. | System Office MIS | Shows progress through basic skills curriculum. Districts without ESL programs would be waived from this indicator. |
| Basic Skills Improvement Rate | Percent of students who attempted/completed at least one credit basic skills course in a term who attempted/completed a higher level basic skills course in the same discipline (reading, writing, math, respectively) or a college level course within two years of taking the first basic skills course (a two-year cohort examination). The various combination of attempted-attempted, completed-attempted, or completed-completed will be determined at a alter date. Only students starting at 2 or more levels below college level/transfer level will be counted. | System Office MIS | Shows progress through basic skills curriculum. |
| ***System Indicators*** *(reporting will be at a Statewide aggregate level; derived by System Office* | | | |
| Annual Volume of basic skills improvements | The annual volume of students completing coursework at least one level above their prior basic skills enrollment. | System Office MIS | Same methodology as PFE Metric #5. |

| Indicator Name | Definition | Data Source | Comments |
|---|---|---|---|
| ***PARTICIPATION*** | | | |
| | | | |
| ***District Core Indicators*** *(reporting will be for all Districts; calculated by System Office)* | | | |
| None. | | | |
| ***System Indicators*** *(reporting will be at a Statewide aggregate level; calculated by System Office* | | | |
| Statewide Participation Rate (by selected demographics) | Statewide aggregated participation rates by various demographic elements, including ethnicity, age group, and gender. Participation rates determined by unduplicated annual headcount attending divided by adult population (18-65) in California, as per census and DOF estimates. | System Office MIS; census; DOF | Measures what percentage of students (by demographic) attends CCC's statewide. This metric is best measured at a statewide level due to inability to centrally define district/service area boundaries and because of students attending across district boundaries. |

**Briefing Paper**
**On Performance Evaluation within an Accountability System**
**An Addendum to the AB 1417 Performance Reporting Project Report**
**February 2005**

*The purpose of this paper is to review common approaches to performance evaluation in accountability systems, in order to recommend a workable approach for California Community colleges, as the system seeks to meet the requirements of district-level accountability required by AB 1417. The recommendations within this paper capture commonly held views about the most appropriate approach to evaluation held by members of the following groups:*

- *The RP/CSS Review Panel, charged with developing a performance framework and indicators for discussion and review related to the implementation of AB 1417*
- *Members of a Panel of External Experts, charged with reviewing and recommending changes to the work of the RP/CSS*
- *The Statewide Oversight Committee of CA Community College Leaders, charged with reviewing and recommending changes to the work of the RP/CSS*

## Common Approaches to Performance Evaluation

Approaches to performance evaluation in accountability systems have been varied. Some of the most common approaches include: (1) some version of comparing institutions to each other within a system; (2) comparing institutions to a common standard or benchmark; and (3) an improvement approach, which looks at individual institutional performance as it changes over time, as initiatives are undertaken to improve student performance. Additional approaches are usually some combination of the three.

Through **versions of comparing institutions (1),** aggregate student achievement measures are compared to each other at the institutional level and/or to a statewide "average." When using averages, many institutions will be above the average, but large numbers will also be below it. Moreover, by definition, the basic underlying assumption to comparing institutions is that some institutions are doing well in serving their students and some are not. By their very nature, such systems dictate that there will be winners and there will be losers, regardless of the actual level of performance that is achieved for each measure. Such systems are adjusted from time to time, by considering exogenous factors, an attempt to "level the playing field" or by creating peer groups for analysis, as another means of leveling the playing field. Because so many of the differences among colleges are due to factors beyond the control of the colleges, such performance evaluation systems rarely achieve sufficient fairness. Performance evaluation systems that rely on comparisons of institutions fail to capture the full environmental complexity in which a college serves its students, e.g., local demographic shifts, state of the local economy, varying political cultural contexts, varying educational levels of students enrolling and seeking services, varying student goals, institutional governance, institutional finances subject to state budget constraints, and the like.

With versions that **compare institutions to a common standard or benchmark (2)**, aggregate student performance in institutions is evaluated relative to an established standard or benchmark, either by specifying scores as standards to be met, or specifying general categories of scores, such as "advanced," "proficient," and "below proficient." Although this approach looks to establish an acceptable level of performance, it too falls short, due to the same varying levels of complexities facing the colleges that are described above. As pointed out by a member of the External Review Panel who has expertise and experience in performance evaluation systems, deciding what the standard should be in such systems is a "daunting task." Much of this is due to this varying levels of complexity. For example, how can a standard be comparable for a community college that serves primarily an urban area with low socioeconomic and educational levels to those of a suburban community college where socioeconomic levels are high, K-12 resources are high and students are generally supported throughout their education by educated parents?

With the **institutional student improvement approach, sometimes referred to as "value-added" (3)**, individual institutional performance changes are tracked from year to year by looking *at* the environment

(i.e., the inputs, such as student abilities upon entry and the various other environmental inputs, mentioned above) to develop interventions and *assessment of progress over time*. This approach mitigates the problems of the previously described methods because the institution is compared with itself within the context of the complex environment in which it operates, an environment that continually evolves over time. The value of this approach is that it is student-centered, focusing on where students start and how they progress. This approach includes a review of interventions that are implemented to help students improve their performance. An additional important strength of this approach is that it can account for achievement reflected both by self-defined student goals (that vary across districts), as well as by statewide goals. For example, immigrant students, who first come to colleges with a goal to improve their English speaking, may achieve their goal and leave; the college experience has assisted these students to be successes, in terms of their individually defined goals. These students indeed improve, despite the fact that the improvement does not contribute toward the overall institutional performance objective that has been designated in a statewide system. Nonetheless, through the institutional student improvement approach, the goal achievement of these immigrant students can and should be documented by districts. The value of this performance approach is that institutions pause, look at student performance changes over time, undertake their own self-evaluation to understand those changes within the institution's environmental context, and implement programs and services for student performance improvement. The key here is the issue of ***self-evaluation for continuous improvement***. This approach is used by many states, including Washington, Tennessee, Missouri, Ohio, Kentucky, Minnesota, and Arkansas. (Chapter 5, Performance Funding For Public Higher Education: Fad or Trend? New Directions for Institutional Research Burke and Serban, 1998)

An underlying premise for the following proposal is based upon the fact that there is a strong culture of institutional self-assessment, which has grown from the grass roots level in California, as faculty strive to find new ways to help students learn. This culture of institutional self-assessment has been greatly enhanced by accreditation processes and the state's accountability system, both of which require faculty and managers, not only to find new ways to help students, but also to document, evaluate and alter these new initiatives, as appropriate.

## Recommended Approach for California

The California community college performance evauation system, developed to meet the requirements of AB 1417, will contribute to the already rich array of self-assessments and external evaluations that assist colleges to measure their effectiveness, develop new programs and services to help students succeed, and improve teaching, learning and the prudent use of resources. In interpreting the meaning of the perfomance indicator data, it is crucial to recognize that districts and their colleges operate within diverse environments and cultures, and it is these attributes that shape opportunities, challenges, advantages and disadvantages to promote and have students achieve.

The new performance system will be of paramount value to community college constituencies, particularly to students, if the system emphasizes the use of the data by the districts to examine themselves. While there may be a temptation to rank institutions based on the performance indicator data, doing so is likely to divert attention away from improvement. As pointed out by External Panel of Experts member, Trudy Bers, "Institutions that are ranked lower will feel challenged to explain themselves and institutions ranked higher will succomb to self satisfaction, while consideration of the diversity of institutions and their environments is lost."

External Panel of Experts member, Peter Ewell makes a further point, by suggesting that not only is ranking inappropriate, it may encourage districts to serve constiutiences that will improve performance, rather than meeting real educational needs in the local community: ""You are certainly right to reject rankings--and in fact (reject) any approach that will try to distinguish levels of institutional performance based on fine cut criteria and in areas where student clientele is the major factor. In fact, since student characteristics are the major driver in almost all of these measures, you can make the further point that adopting rankings would induce institutions *not* to serve their public missions by seeking a different clientele. "

And finally, External Panel of Experts member Joseph Burke suggests that the institutional student improvement model, is the best evaluation to follow: "I strongly endorse the institutional improvement approach as the one that best fits student development and district needs, which vary tremendously among California community college districts. The improvement approach puts the accent where it belongs on the student and the district and not on institutional comparisons, which are misleading."

National experience with ranking systems has been controversial, evidence that rankings have let to institutional improvement is sparse and consensus about the value of rankings does not exist. As such, introducing rankings into the new AB 1417 System is unlikely to have benefits and is very likely to create controversy and misunderstandings that will divert attention away from the important goal of improvement.

California has a broad culture of institutional self-assessment that already exists in its districts, driven by internal mechanisms that have been developed, as well as external review requirements. Among the *many* systems currently in place are:

- College and district level institutional effectiveness reporting structures
- Program review processes that involve internal reviews as well as external reviews by local business advisory groups, by professional peer groups and external accrediting agencies
- Faculty-initiated inquiry and training, dedicated to instructional improvement in the classroom (known as flex activities and workshops)
- District and college level comprehensive self-assessment through the external institutional accreditation process as well as through the external program accreditation processes mentioned above
- Accountability to the U.S. Dept. of Education related to Vocational Technical Education Act and the Integrated Postsecondary Education System requirements
- Matriculation and Student Equity review processes
- The new learning assessment reporting requirements instituted by the regional accreditating board for junior and community colleges in all western states (ACCJC), and finally,
- The Partnership for Excellence project initiated in the late 1990s (soon to be replaced by the AB 1417 system)

These systems currently in place in all community college districts of California demonstrate a strong culture of self-assessment. Likewise, a great deal of systemwide evaluation is conducted by the State Chancellor's Office. Therefore, it is the recommendation of the RP/CSS Review Panel (with the endorsement of members of the External Panel of Experts and the CA Community College Oversight Committee) that the state of California utilize the existing district and state level infrastructure for performance evaluation within the AB 1417 System. Specific to this are the following recommendations for evaluation, once initial implementation of AB 1417 takes place and measures are generated:

1. Once generated, District Core and State Level Core measures should be sent to the districts for review to prepare an evaluation of the data within the local context. This evaluation should be discussed broadly across the district and with the Board of Trustees, culminating in a report that is sent to the State Chancellor's Office that includes:

    - A brief review of any change in district core measures over time (*minimum* of three years)
    - A brief discussion of why district core measures are important in the local context
    - A brief description of limitations and/or advantages beyond local district control that impact district core measures
    - A brief description of specific action plans for improvement, as appropriate

2. The State Chancellor's Office should provide an overview/summary report to the Board of Governors, Department of Finance and the Legislative Analyst Office of the District Core, State Level Core and themes gleaned from the district reports.

**Upon Gaining Experience with the AB 1417 System:**

After a few years of implementation, the districts and the State Chancellor's Office will have a better understanding of the performance measures and how well performance evaluation is functioning to help students succeed. This review should include an evaluation of the effectiveness of the actual measures themselves in terms of whether they provide districts with good information for institutional student improvement.

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