

**ACADEMIC AFFAIRS COUNCIL**

**AGENDA ITEM: 6.I**

**DATE: July 26, 2010**

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**SUBJECT: Math Placement**

Two campuses have asked that the Math Placement guidelines and processes be revisited. SDSU has asked that the policy limitations and processes guiding enrollment in courses lower than placed be reviewed. SDSM&T has asked that the policy requiring those students with high ACT subscores or AP/IB coursework to complete the COMPASS to be placed.

Placement in math courses is governed by section 4 of Board policy 2:7.

*Effective Spring 2000, entering students must show evidence of their level of academic preparation prior to their enrollment into their initial mathematics and English courses. All entering students seeking an associate or baccalaureate degree must provide valid Enhanced ACT scores (within the last five years) or must take the ACT COMPASS examination in the areas of writing skills, mathematics, and reading. All non-degree seeking students enrolling in English and mathematics courses must provide Enhanced ACT scores or must take the ACT COMPASS examination in the areas of writing skills and mathematics.*

This policy is implemented through a set of approved placement guidelines. Section four outlines the processes required for initial placement.

**A. Initial Placement**

**1. First-Time Students with Valid ACT Scores**

- a. For all students with valid ACT Assessment scores, the Enhanced ACT English and ACT Math scores will be used to determine placement into initial English and mathematics courses.*
- b. Placement is determined by the ACT and Compass Placement Score matrix (Appendix A).*
- c. Valid ACT Assessment scores are those scores that were earned by the student within five (5) years of the date of initial enrollment within the Regental system.*
- d. If a student has multiple ACT scores, the highest ACT Math and ACT English scores are used for placement purposes.*

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**RECOMMENDED ACTION**

**Discussion and recommendation.**

Further in this section, the guidelines do state that the process must be followed and placement is binding unless an exception is granted.

### ***C. Inappropriate Enrollment***

- 1. Unless granted an exception, students are required to enroll in the initial English and mathematics coursework indicated by the placement process.*
- 2. Regental universities will use the prerequisite course checking function of the Colleague software to insure students are enrolled appropriately.*
- 3. Students who disregard placement directives and are found to be enrolled in the incorrect course will be administratively withdrawn from that course and enrolled in the correct one.*

The guidelines do allow exceptions.

### ***B. Exceptions***

#### ***1. Placement into a Lower Course***

*Students who wish to enroll in courses that are lower than indicated by their placement scores must request an exception from the Vice President for Academic Affairs or designee by submitting a completed exception form.*

#### ***2. Placement into a Higher Course***

- a. Students who wish to enroll in courses that are higher than indicated by their placement scores may challenge their placement by sitting for the COMPASS examination.*
- b. A student who is still unable to earn the necessary prerequisite for enrollment in the higher course may request an exception by submitting a completed exception form to the Vice President for Academic Affairs or designee.*
- c. Students seeking an exception must provide evidence, to the satisfaction of the VPAA or designee of the university offering the course, that they have the necessary level of preparation to have a reasonable chance of successfully completing the higher level course. Evidence the VPAA or designee may take into consideration when deciding whether to grant an exception includes high school coursework, level of motivation, etc.*
- d. Exceptions must be approved prior to the official add/drop date for the term in which the student is enrolled.*
- e. Students challenging their placement must pay a testing fee as determined by SDBOR to cover the cost of COMPASS testing.*

SDSU has asked that the requirement that students request an exception to enroll in a lower course be revisited. Specifically, at SDSU exceptions are routinely granted to students placed above College Algebra allowing them to enroll in this course since it meets the requirements of their program of study.

SDSM&T has raised a related issue. Students with ACT math subscores of 35/36 (SAT scores 760-800) and with AP Calculus BC scores of 5 will be given credit for MATH 123 and MATH 125 as required by policy. At the same time, policy requires the students to complete the COMPASS before they are allowed to enroll in Calculus III even though completing this exam adds no information of value to the process, assuming the student scores above 40 on the Trig portion. The institution has requested that the guidelines be revised to permit flexibility.