

BOARD OF HIGHER EDUCATION
REQUEST FOR COMMITTEE AND BOARD ACTION

COMMITTEE: Academic Affairs

NO.: AAC 15-40

COMMITTEE DATE: June 9, 2015

BOARD DATE: June 16, 2015

EXTENDING CAMPUS WORK IN THE AREA OF DEVELOPMENTAL MATHEMATICS

MOVED: The Board of Higher Education hereby amends AAC 14-12 to:

1. Extend the period of experimentation and evaluation of the developmental math campus pilots to encompass sufficient time to allow for the collection of additional data on the success of students in credit-bearing courses. The Board asks the DHE to bring a recommendation upon completion of the evaluation study.
2. Charge the Department of Higher Education to provide an evaluation plan to the BHE in Fall 2015 encompassing both quantitative and qualitative analyses of the campus pilots. The plan shall identify the measures of success that will be used in evaluating the pilots and the timeframe for continuing the experimental period and establishing new BHE policy based on the results of the pilots.

Authority: Massachusetts General Laws Chapter 15A, Section 6

Contact: Dr. Carlos Santiago, Senior Deputy Commissioner for Academic Affairs

BACKGROUND

In response to a October 2013 report from the Task Force on Transforming Developmental Math Education, the Board of Higher Education approved a series of pilot initiatives aimed at helping students advance more quickly to credit-bearing courses while obtaining the skills needed for college-level work. The Board voted to:

- Set the 2014–15 academic year as a “pilot study year” during which campuses are strongly encouraged to revise the content, sequencing, and timeframe of their developmental math offerings;
- Urge campuses to design general “academic pathways” for all students, including math sequences consistent with the academic requirements of each pathway or “meta-major,” such as social sciences, liberal arts, and STEM (science, technology, engineering and math);
- Set an intermediate fall 2018 goal of increasing by 20% the rate of students completing a first gateway-level course within two years of enrollment; and
- Authorize the Commissioner to convene an implementation team to promote best practices by campuses during the 2014–15 academic year.

Preliminary Analysis

Campuses began piloting the use of GPA and other placement methods in fall 2014. Fifteen campuses used new GPA placement standards, ten campuses used modified GPA placement standards (using GPA plus SAT score or Math GPA) and seven campuses continued to use Accuplacer. Preliminary results show more students are placing into college-level math given the new placement standards, and they are succeeding at the same rates as other students. This means that more students are completing college-level work *without* the need for remedial classes.

Next Steps

Campuses will be allowed to continue piloting the use of GPA as a placement method. DHE staff will present their findings from the first year of the pilots, Academic Years 2014-2015, to the Board in Fall 2015. This report will include a qualitative component prepared by the University of Massachusetts Donahue Institute. DHE staff will prepare and submit an evaluation plan based on this analysis to the Board in Fall 2015.