

Learning Recommended Action Items

California State University-San Marcos

- We need to have one place where all requirements are clearly defined (*High priority*)

We need to have one place where all university requirements are clearly defined (including anything that would result in a registration hold if not satisfied), the outcomes are listed for each requirement, the reasons and philosophy for why we as an institution value these outcomes, and the consequences for not completing each requirement. We recommend that this takes a home in GEL instruction.

- Assess first year learning and co-curricular needs (*High priority*)

We recommend that all requirements, goals, and anything that trips up students or places a hold on their record be put into a required GEL course.

- Use a web-based tracking system for FTF requirements (*High priority*)

Use a web-based tracking system so that students can easily access all their requirements, see what has and hasn't been accomplished, and find deadlines and requirements at a glance in one location.

- Establish consistent learning outcomes for GE courses to be used across all sections (*High priority*)

Establish consistent learning outcomes for GE courses to be used across all sections. Many courses have established learning outcomes, but they are not being measured or measured across all sections.

- Establish required training especially for new or adjunct faculty (*High priority*)

Establish required training especially for new or adjunct faculty on these desired outcomes before their instruction begins. Provide opportunities and incentives for lecturers and graduate teaching associates to attend refreshers on best practices or common practices.

- Assess and build the GEL course (*High priority*)

Many discussions in our meetings concluded with many different ideas or goals should find their home in the GEL course. We recommend that the GEL course be dissected and put back together with learning outcomes shaped by evidence from this FOE study and best practices first year programs. This should include library and career modules of GEL as well as requirements such as the CCR or alcohol education requirement to see if they should be stand alone functions, or best wrapped into the GEL course or some type of supported first year student requirement bundle.

- Maximize use of Lower Division Roadmaps (LDRs) (*High priority*)

Encourage students and their advisors to make use of the Lower Division Roadmaps (LDRs). Inform students about the LDRs before Orientation and encourage students to use these as the primary tool when registering for courses.

- Expand peak advising times (*High priority*)

The student focus group asked for easier access to advisors on campus and recommended group or open question advising times during university hour and peak times. Students felt lost and frustrated with the lack of walk-in appointments available.

- Commission a study to compare ELM scores with pass rates in remedial math classes (*High priority*)

Because Math 051, 051C, and 115 have high DFWI rates, we need to commission a study regarding the placement of students in remedial math classes. What we need to find out is whether students are appropriately placed into Palomar Math 15, Palomar Math 50, and our Math 051/051C. We can do this by comparing pass rates to ELM (Entry Level Mathematics) score as well as finding out what other campuses are doing in this regard. After we get the data, we can determine if we need to change our placement practices: we might need to change the cut scores for placement in each of these classes, or another possibility would be to implement the MDTP (Mathematics Diagnostic Testing Project) exam to place students who need remediation in math into the correct course.

- Consider adding Supplemental Instruction or lowering class sizes for Math51 (*High priority*)

Since Math 051 and Math 051C have low pass rates, consider adding Supplemental Instruction or lowering class sizes to increase the effectiveness of the courses. Also investigate what other approaches might work to improve student success.

- Commission a study to compare ELM scores with pass rates in College Algebra (*High priority*)

In response to the high DFWI rates in Math 115 (College Algebra), we need to commission a study to compare ELM scores with pass rates in College Algebra to determine whether an ELM score of 50 is sufficient to ensure that a student is ready for College Algebra. If not, we need to think about what to do: again, we might want to use the MDTP to determine readiness for College Algebra, and we also need to think about what to do for students who are not ready for College Algebra yet passed the ELM (e.g., we could add Supplemental Instruction for these students, or recommend GEM 100 for students who do not have a specific GE math requirement for their majors).

- Mandate intrusive first year advising (*High priority*)

Mandate intrusive first year advising - every student would meet with an advisor before some given point in time (such as before the start of Fall classes), and in particular prior to registration for the Spring semester.

- Conduct FTF assessment (*High priority*)

Data and exit surveys need to be consistently collected and complied on the reasons for failure and withdrawals from the University and linked to those student's remediation rates and look into any potential risk characteristics that could be better supported. The findings could then be incorporated into GEL classes.

- Implement a math placement system. (*High priority*)

Investigate the best practices regarding placement and implement a math placement system. For math, ELM is not enough, it only indicates readiness for college level mathematics, and does not distinguish students ready for college algebra or precalculus from those ready for calculus.

Students should be required to take a math placement test prior to registering for classes, either at orientation or possibly require it prior to signing up for an orientation session. Perhaps give students priority registration upon completion of a placement test to encourage early testing.

- We recommend that most first year students take GEL and specifically take GEL in the Fall semester (*Medium priority*)

We recommend that most first year students take GEL and specifically take GEL in the Fall semester only. Waiting until Spring puts them at risk of not connecting to the institution early and at risk of going down the wrong path or not understanding the direction and outcomes we want for them. The Lower Division Roadmaps (LDRs) already recommend this for most students, with rare exceptions for certain majors and situations where other courses will better serve a student's needs.

- We need hold action plans. (*Medium priority*)

We need to find out what percentage of students have registration holds at the end of their first year and put action plans in place to prevent students from failing to complete their hold requirements.

- Do more to recognize and encourage students who excel in their university work (*Medium priority*)

Do more to recognize and encourage students who excel in their university work. For instance, start an honors program. Having an honors program could help keep the best and brightest of North County to stay in North County and would help raise the bar for all students. The program could include the following opportunities:

- Have an honors learning community.
- Develop honor sections of GE, math, science, or other courses.
- Have more celebrations for those who excel such as a Dean's list or celebrations.

- Start a peer mentor/leader program as recommended by both faculty and the student focus group (*Medium priority*)

Start a peer mentor/leader program as recommended by both faculty and the student focus group.

- Explore training opportunities for faculty. (*Medium priority*)

Explore training opportunities for faculty. In particular, continue and strengthen efforts to provide training before the Fall semester with focus on innovative practices, opportunities for connection between faculty, consistency of core course outcomes, and assessment of effectiveness from previous year's efforts. Additionally, promote ongoing faculty meetings throughout the year with opportunities for faculty to collaborate, share, and learn from one another.

- Establish evaluation and documentation tools for GE course outcomes. (*Medium priority*)

- Investigate where support and resources should be available for FTF requirements (*Medium priority*)

Investigate where support and resources should be available for FTF requirements such as the CCR.

- Further analysis needed (*Medium priority*)

We recommend further study in this area if more analysis on placement and advising does not come out in other areas of FOE.

- Math 115 may have a higher failure rate due to certain majors taking the class that do not need to or a time gap from their last high school math class. More study or information is needed on math class placement advising. Advisors don't get into the pros or cons of the choice between taking GEM 100 or MATH 115.
- Investigate best practices and staffing patterns for advising to FTF with careful attention to ratios of advisors to FTF.
- Look into the requirement of forcing students to meet with an advisor first when seeking withdrawals outside of the add/drop period.

- Train GEL instructors in basic advising and roadmap principles (*Medium priority*)

- Document, promote, and publicize (*Medium priority*)

Documentation needs to be collected university wide by one department and well promoted and publicized and achievements celebrated.

- Start a peer mentor/leader program as recommended by both faculty and the student focus group (*Medium priority*)

Start a peer mentor/leader program as recommended by both faculty and the student focus group.

- Encourage testing earlier (*Medium priority*)

Encourage/require students to take the Entry Level Mathematics (ELM) and English Placement Test (EPT) earlier. For non-exempt students, we could not allow them to attend Orientation until we have their scores.

- Increase learning communities (*Medium priority*)

Link GEL sections with certain sections of high DFWI courses to create additional learning communities organized to support students in these courses. For example, the curriculum for the summer GEL 110 course could be adapted to pair a GEL course with any remedial math course.

Increase learning communities and support for faculty to link courses and co-circular opportunities.

- Support regular faculty meetings for the highest DFWI classes (*Medium priority*)

Support regular faculty meetings for the highest DFWI classes to discuss solutions and best practices.

- Increase summer remediation programs (*Medium priority*)

Increase summer remediation programs that help students get past the ELM or otherwise prepare them for math or writing courses.

- Form an advisory Writing and Reading Across the Curriculum university level committee (*Medium priority*)

Form an advisory Writing and Reading Across the Curriculum university level committee composed of members from each department/program. The mission is to support the CSUSM writing requirement with solid advice to the First Year faculty since Adjunct faculty especially need support in how to plan their courses to satisfy the writing requirement. The chair should be the Writing Center director or a LTWR professor with a strong composition background.

- Share with incoming students during their orientation advising, the failure rates in FY courses (*Low priority*)

Share with incoming students during their orientation advising, the failure rates in FY courses.

- Recommend that learning outcomes are developed and documented for co-curricular programs (*Low priority*)

- Consider accepting approved math courses that can be taken at community colleges (*Low priority*)

Consider accepting approved math courses that can be taken at community colleges that can satisfy our remediation requirements.

- Look into mandated learning communities for Spring semester (*Low priority*)

Look into mandated learning communities for Spring semester with additional resources for those who fail in the Fall semester.