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# Assessment Program Review

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Evergreen Valley  
College

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## **Mission Statement for the Program:**

The mission of assessment services is to provide an assessment process in computational and language skills to all students.

## **Program Description:**

The assessment program at Evergreen Valley College provides on campus and off campus testing for all non-exempt matriculating students. The assessment office offers assessment/placement tests for persons whose first language is English and for persons whose first language is other than English, as well as placement tests for math. Additional assessments are provided for career testing using the Strong Interest Inventory and Myers Briggs Type Indicator (MBTI). Academic test proctoring services are also available as requested by instructors.

Assessment is a holistic process through which Evergreen Valley College assessment and counseling staff collect information about students. The intent of assessment is to increase the chances of student success by ensuring appropriate placement into courses in the curriculum.

## **List of Staff and Titles:**

Jeff Norment, Assessment Specialist

Supervisor: Victoria Lugo, Dean of Counseling and Matriculation

## **External Contributing Factors:**

The most important external contributing factors to the assessment process are the California Education Code and accompanying Administrative Regulations. California Community College Title 5 Regulations, Sections 55500 – 55514 establish statewide requirements and standards for providing access and equality of educational opportunity for all students including standards for assessment.

In accordance with Title 5, Section 55502 (b)

“assessment” means the process of gathering information about individual students to facilitate student success. Assessment may include, but is not limited to, information regarding the student’s study skills, English language proficiency, computation skills, aptitudes, goals, learning skills, career aspirations, academic performance, and need for special services. Assessment involves the collection of such information at any time, before or after enrollment, except that the process of assigning a grade by an instructor shall not be considered part of the assessment process. Once a grade has been assigned and recorded in a student’s transcript it can be used in the assessment process.

Additionally, Section 55502 (c) defines assessment instruments as follows:

“assessment instruments methods or procedures” mean one or more assessment instruments, assessment methods, or assessment procedures, or any combination thereof. These include but are not limited to, interviews, standardized tests, holistic scoring processes, attitude surveys, vocational or career aptitude and interest inventories, high school or college transcripts, specialized certificates or licenses, educational histories and other measures of performance. The term “assessment instruments, methods or procedures” also include assessment procedures such as the identification of test scores which measure particular skill levels, the administrative process by which students are referred for assessment, the manner in which assessment sessions are conducted, the manner in which assessment results are made available, and the length of time required before such results are available.

### **External On-Campus Factors:**

There are several factors that must work simultaneously in the assessment process. The first is the process of the student taking the placement tests and being proctored. This portion of the assessment process is conducted single handedly by Jeff Norment. The second factor is the “academic” side of assessment which includes instructional faculty involvement in the selection of testing instruments and counseling faculty utilizing multiple measures. An additional factor is the requirement by the State of California that all testing instruments are to be approved by the state Chancellors Office. The District has very limited choices about which assessment instruments it can use to test an increasingly diverse student body.

### **Internal Factors:**

The leadership of the assessment component has been inconsistent. Over the past five years, there have been five different administrators overseeing the counseling and matriculation departments, including assessment. As a result of this instability, the assessment component has been operating separately from the other matriculation components, leading to inconsistencies in the application of multiple measurers and lack of faculty input on the use of testing instruments and cutoff scores.

### **Student Learning Outcomes (SLOs)**

Student Learning Outcomes for the Assessment component are listed below:

- Outcome 1 I understand the rules regarding retaking the assessment
- Outcome 2 I understand the prerequisite rules
- Outcome 3 I know the staff I can ask if I have questions about the scores or classes.

Student learning outcomes surveys have not been distributed since the Spring of 2005. During that time, 70 surveys were distributed to students indicating that students learned “Nothing”, “Very little”, “Some”, “A Lot” and “A great deal”. The results are summarized below:

**Outcome 1:**

73% of the students said they understood the rules regarding retaking the assessment either a lot or a great deal. 14% knew “some”, 10% knew very little, and 3% (two students) said they didn’t understand the rules.

**Outcome 2:**

73% of the students said they understood the prerequisite rules either a lot or a great deal. 17% indicated that they knew “some” with 9% knowing “very little”. 1% (one student) didn’t understand the prerequisite rules.

**Outcome 3:**

69% said they knew which staff to ask regarding questions about scores or classes: 21% knew “some” about this; 6% knew “very little” and 4% knew nothing.

The student learning outcomes that were developed in 2005, must be revised and updated to more accurately reflect the didactic reasons for assessment. The first thing students should know about the assessment test is the reason for the test. The first outcome should be changed to:

**Outcome 1:** I understand the reason for the assessment test and how the results will be used

Students also need to know that the assessment test results are advisory, and there is a process to challenge the matriculation placement. The second outcome should be changed to:

**Outcome 2:** I understand the process for challenging the placement test results if I disagree with the recommended placement level.

## Available Data and Establishment of Baselines

Below is a table of data taken from the California Community Colleges Data Mart. This data will be used to establish baselines for future program reviews.

| <b>Student Matriculation Placement Assessment Services<br/>2006-2007</b> |               |                |
|--|---------------|----------------|
| <b>Students Directed to Assessment Testing</b>                           |               |                |
| <b>Ethnicity</b>   | <b>Number</b> | <b>Percent</b> |
| African American   | 638           | 5.71%          |
| American Indian/Alaska Native  | 55            | 0.49%          |
| Asian  | 3228          | 28.91%         |
| Filipino   | 1071          | 9.59%          |
| Hispanic   | 3050          | 27.31%         |
| Other Non-White  | 165           | 1.48%          |
| Pacific Islander   | 111           | 0.99%          |
| Unknown/No Response  | 1180          | 10.57%         |
| White Non-Hispanic   | 1669          | 14.95%         |
| <b>TOTAL</b>   | <b>11167</b>  | <b>100.00%</b> |

Source: California Community Colleges Chancellors Office

The Assessment office had 11,167 students referred to assessment services during the 2006-2007 academic year. The high number of referrals can be attributed to the fact that in 2006-2007, all applicants to the college's nursing program were tested to validate that they were at the appropriate prerequisite levels for Math and English. The college also has a practice of testing all high school concurrently enrolled students, even if they will not be taking Math or English courses at the college.

| <b>Student Matriculation Placement Assessment Services</b> |               |                |
|--|---------------|----------------|
| <b>Students Exempted From Assessment Testing</b>           |               |                |
| <b>Ethnicity</b>   | <b>Number</b> | <b>Percent</b> |
| African American   | 138           | 7.05%          |
| American Indian/Alaska Native                              | 12            | 0.61%          |
| Asian  | 641           | 32.75%         |
| Filipino   | 164           | 8.38%          |
| Hispanic   | 478           | 24.43%         |
| Other Non-White  | 39            | 1.99%          |
| Pacific Islander   | 21            | 1.07%          |
| Unknown/No Response  | 130           | 6.64%          |
| White Non-Hispanic   | 334           | 17.07%         |
| <b>TOTAL</b>   | <b>1957</b>   | <b>100.00%</b> |

Source: California Community Colleges Chancellors Office

There were 9,957 students who were exempted from the assessment component. New students may be exempted from the Assessment component of matriculation if they:

- are enrolling in open curriculum classes only;
- are enrolling in non-AA applicable courses other than pre-collegiate basic skills;
- are enrolling in apprenticeship courses only; or
- have AA, BA, or other college degrees.

Previous reading, writing, and math coursework successfully completed (with a C grade or better) may be used for placement purposes in lieu of the corresponding placement test(s).

### **Program Strengths:**

The college tries to accommodate all of our current and potential students by offering testing all the time. Anecdotal evidence from EVC faculty indicates that the recommendations from the placement results are consistent with how students are successful in courses.

### **Program Weaknesses:**

The assessment center facility itself was dark and unwelcoming. There were lights that needed to be replaced and the building was long overdue for repainting. The computers and furniture in the facility were outdated and needed upgrading. Matriculation funds were used to replace all 30 computers in the assessment center in the Spring of 2007. In addition, the arrangement of the computers was

reconfigured to provide the students with a better testing environment. The building has also been painted during the summer of 2007.

There is only one staff member (1.0 FTE) in the center making it difficult for scheduling when that individual needs to take vacation time or other time off. The current incumbent changes his schedule to accommodate evening and weekend students. When the incumbent is testing off campus, the on campus facility is closed.

Currently, students are able to take the placement test as often as they want without limitations. The EVC catalog reads: "If students think that test results do not reflect their true ability, they may retake the test, take a department-approved challenge exam, or make a course selection based on a counselor's recommendation." In response to this, student often take the test more than one time when they do not like the results of their test scores. A subcommittee in the counseling department is currently addressing this issue, and an Assessment Test/Retest policy should be sent to and approved by the academic senate by the end of the Fall 2007 semester.

Ideally, the selection of test instruments must involve the instructional faculty. Both discipline instructors and counselors should be involved in the multiple measures identification process. Currently, discipline instructors have limited involvement in both the selection of testing instruments and multiple measures identification. There is limited program coordination between assessment and counseling schedules. In addition, students that have been tested are often unable to obtain down their assessment scores. There has been difficulty downloading the scores into the college's Datatel system.

### **Program Goals and Areas for Improvement:**

It is recommended that another 50% assessment specialist be hired to provide outreach testing services to the ESUHSD. This staff member will also be able to cover for the incumbent during his absence. There also is a great need for a faculty assignment as "Assessment Specialist" to assist in the selection of testing materials and cutoff scores.

When assessment tests are given off campus, the "paper/pencil" tests are used. It is recommended that lap top computers be purchased so that on-line compass assessment tests can be administered off site. Research has shown that the compass on line assessment tests provide more accurate indicators of student success in recommending course placement.

### **Actions, Strategies, and Timeline:**

**Action:** Hire 50% Assessment Specialist.

**Strategy:** Secure funds from the college to hire this very important position by October 2007.

**Action:** Meet with District ITSS staff to determine why tests are not always in the Datatel system.

**Strategy:** Schedule meeting with ITSS manager by September 30, 2007

**Action:** Cease practice of testing all high school students.

**Strategy:** Meet with Assessment coordinator by September 7, 2007 to ensure that concurrently enrolled students are only tested when they take an English or Math course.

**Action:** Adopt new SLO's and disseminate surveys regularly.

**Strategy:** Assign clerical staff in counseling office to draft new SLO survey forms for assessment by September 7, 2007.

**Action:** Assign Pat Perkins as the faculty Assessment Specialist.

**Strategy:** Pat will be attending the Northern California Community College Assessment Association (CCCAA) Conference at Cosumnes River College in Sacramento on Friday, October 12, 2007. In addition, she will be attending other trainings on matriculation so that she will gain expertise and can serve as a resource and liaison to the assessment coordinator.

## **Annual Report on SLOs:**

Unfortunately SLO's were not administered in the assessment component since 2005.

## **Mid-Term Progress Review:**

Many practices have been changed in the assessment office. Previously, the coordinator would change the centers hours according to individual testing needs. This was confusing to students, who would not know from one week to the next when testing was available. As of June, 2007, the Dean has directed the assessment coordinator to work from

8:00 to 5:00 Monday, Tuesday, Thursday and Friday, and from 10:00 to 7:00 on Wednesday. Any changes to the assessment center hours must have prior approval from the Dean. In addition, Patricia Perkins, matriculation counselor will serve as a liaison to the assessment center to communicate faculty perspectives and needs. This will improve the quality of services to both faculty and students.