

Questions for Consideration

The Center encourages colleges to review their own data in light of the disconnect between students' desire to succeed and the reality of their outcomes.

While fine-tuning assessment and placement practices will help more students, it will only partially address the need to dramatically improve the ways colleges work with underprepared students. Too often, assessment and placement lead students into developmental education rather than college-level coursework. Further, the current design of developmental education produces too few successful students, and this high failure rate urgently needs to be fixed.

Finding solutions that will increase completion rates is difficult work that requires straightforward conversations about long-held beliefs and practices. The issues and questions raised below can help guide colleges as they continue grappling with the complex issues related to assessment, placement, and developmental education.

- **Advising for all.** Is your college making sure every student works with an advisor during the first term of enrollment to develop a course of study based on his or her academic and career goals? Is advising continuous? Is advising inescapable? Is it part of coursework?
- **Assessment preparation.** How actively does your college encourage students to prepare for placement exams? What supports do you offer to help them?
- **Multiple measures for placement.** Is your college expanding the tools it uses for placement? Is your college using multiple measures—e.g., high school GPA, courses taken in high school, etc.—so placement decisions are based on a more complete picture?
- **Identification of students' needs for support.** Does your college's intake process include a system for identifying the types and level of academic and non-academic support each student will need to successfully complete college-level gatekeeper courses within his or her first year?
- **Courses that are aligned with students' academic programs.** Does your college's placement process account for students' areas of study? For example, does your college differentiate math pathways, which can allow more students to complete appropriate math requirements while preparing them for their chosen careers or transfer?
- **Corequisite courses.** Is your college offering students corequisite courses, those in which students concurrently enroll in a developmental class and a higher-level class?
- **Accelerated developmental education.** Has your college implemented any models of accelerated developmental education so students can move more quickly to gateway courses?
- **Scaling up.** Is your college moving toward implementing successful pilot interventions at scale?
- **Faculty members' role.** What types of early assessments are faculty members conducting, and what should they do when a student's placement seems inappropriate? Does your college have a policy requiring faculty to recommend a higher or lower placement for students—or even a mechanism for doing so? Are faculty trained and empowered to talk with students about placement?
- **Student-level data.** Is your college using data to track the progress of all students (part-time and full-time) to identify students who need more support? Does your institution measure the success of college-readiness efforts in terms of the number and percentage of entering students who successfully complete college-level gatekeeper courses within their first year?

Many have contributed to developing questions such as these. Most recently, a group of higher education organizations released *Core Principles for Transforming Remediation Within a Comprehensive Student Success Strategy*.

Visit www.ccsse.org/nr2016 to learn more about this and other resources.