

Dear esteemed colleagues,

Mathematics is among humanity's greatest achievements. Each of its diverse subjects tells a rich history spanning cultures, geography, and time. A fundamental awareness of its power and beauty is essential to any robust education. Mathematics serves as a playground for the logical interplay of ideas. Mathematics gives a common tongue to the observations that inform our understanding of the natural world. Mathematics gives a predictive framework for society's innovations – from the mundane to the fantastical. Are our students deserving of this knowledge?

When we congratulate ourselves on early college but the only degree offerings in most rural farming towns are Spanish and Agriculture, I find myself scratching my head. Are we making students aware of *all* opportunities available to them? By denying them the mathematics necessary to make a truly informed decision are we being equitable? Or are we merely providing an alternative menu while we say, "Go ahead. Order whatever you want." Our college commits immense human capital to explain student thoughts, feelings, and desires. But analytics cannot capture human connection. In the several years I have taught B72, I begin with the genesis of the course – AB705. When students learn the option of remediation has been legislated away, they are appalled and angry. Students enter our college with mathematical baggage. For many, this means years of failure and frustration. But here is what we ignore – their resilience! They want to learn. They want to fill the holes. They want to be educated. And they are willing to work for it. In the world before AB705 you will find stories of students starting in Math B50. They started with learning about place value. For many, their 7-year-old children were learning more advanced mathematics. Yet from this place of inspiring humility, they would progress through our battery of courses – even repeating at times. Some reached Statistics and celebrated. Others worked all the way through differential equations. More than a couple of these stories include offers to universities such as Berkeley. These stories will now be relegated to legend and lore.

Let's be clear. The law requires students to take a transfer-level math and English course within their first year of college. Many of our students are woefully unprepared – and they know it! Since its inception, community college has been an alternate path to a 4-year degree; and our students welcome a fresh start. Math B75 and B72 exist in order to give students the mathematical tools for success within the confines of AB705. The law allows for these classes as either prerequisites or as an option for self-selection. These valuable courses sit on the chopping block as we speak. The efficacy of these classes is being evaluated based on data collected during the Covid pandemic. Can we all agree that policy ought not be made based on student behavior during the Covid pandemic? Yet our administration is poised to do precisely that. At the very least, our students should be allowed the option of Math B75 or B72. The administration would have them set sail in either Statistics and Probability or Pre-Calculus – and for many without proficiency in algebra! We all know there are students merely checking boxes en route to degree completion while others are on a journey of lifelong learning of which BC is a blessed stepping stone. Please, let them captain their own ship. On a campus where we are deeply concerned with students *feeling* like they matter, eliminating the option of these courses is a blatant declaration that they, in fact, do not.

It is naive to think that we can withstand the full weight of state-level policy. However, there are options. But if the elimination of our pre-transfer courses is a foregone conclusion, then I implore all disciplines to join your voices with this plea – not because it will change anything but, rather, so we may add a sense of pride when we say with nostalgia, "We were...BC."

Thank-you for your consideration,

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