Developing and using institution-set standards at Bakersfield College

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Bakersfield College has a long history of developing institution-set standards (ISS) for metrics and outcomes that highlight various key aspects of student success. In September of 2017, this long-standing practice was formalized in a document titled “Institution-Set Standards History and Process at Bakersfield College”. That document also included the BC Process for Falling Below Institution-Set Standards. This seven-step process calls for the Office of Institutional Effectiveness (OIE) to notify the president “when the college has not met an ISS (by a significant difference)”.

This process has been invoked for two areas of BC’s ISS in the past year: basic skills fall course success rate; and transfer-level math completion. In the case of the basic skills course success rate, the fall 2017 rate was marginally below the standard (i.e., 54.4% vs. 55%). In discussing this finding with BC’s data coaches and with Academic Senate in spring 2018, it was determined that this type of dip was likely due to the scaling up of multiple measures assessment and placement practices which was preventing academically prepared students with stronger high school GPAs from being placed into basic skills. As documented in notes from the data coaches meeting and the Academic Senate meeting, it was decided that the course success standard should remain at 55% and that additional academic support services should be directed to students in basic skills courses in order to support their success. Of course, shortly thereafter, the requirements of AB 705 led to a complete restructuring of how students are supported to maximize their success in transfer-level coursework which is currently requiring a rethinking of the college’s approach to basic skills curriculum and instruction.

In the case of the transfer-level math metric, there was a question as to the validity of the data in the CCCCO Scorecard since it did not include students who successfully completed Psychology B5 – Elementary Statistics for the Social and Behavioral Sciences (PSYC B5). PSYC B5 satisfies general transfer-level (and local GE) math requirements, so its inclusion is critical to accurately determine the rate at which incoming students complete transfer-level math in their first year. Both the data coach team and Academic Senate agreed that OIE should calculate the transfer-level math completion rate with PSYC B5 included. Over the summer, OIE developed the improved transfer-level math metric, by replicating the CCCCO Scorecard cohort and tracking transfer-level success in the first year. While transfer-level math completion rates did increase with the inclusion of PSYC B5, the college met the standard in only one of the past five years. This finding means that the process will now advance to the next step in the BC Process for Falling Below Institution-Set Standards. OIE has prepared a report which is being submitted to Educational Administrators Council (EAC) and the Student Services Administrative Leadership Team (SALT) who will consider and document potential solutions. Those potential solutions will be forwarded to the Faculty Chairs and Directors Committee (FCDC), College Council, and Academic Senate for discussion and suggestions for action before the OIE collects input from all groups and communicates the decisions to the president who will direct appropriate resources to the solution. Finally, OIE will prepare a report which details this process including a review of the gap, the timeline, and any decisions or actions taken. This report will be document in the Renegade Scorecard.