

Learning Support Advisory Committee Meeting Minutes
March 26, 2015
Middle Georgia State College

Ricky Weaver called the meeting to order at 3 pm and asked all attendees to introduce themselves. She then mentioned that the USG Academic Advisory Council will need a new Learning Support (LS) Chair for next year. She recommended we elect a secretary, as well, to take meeting minutes when the Directors meet. **Ricky, I cannot remember nor did I write down how you said the nominations will be handled.** The last LS Directors' meeting minutes she was able to locate are from 2007. If anyone knows how to locate any minutes between then and now, please let Ricky know. Barbara Brown said she is able to post any information, minutes, etc. on the USG site.

Questions regarding new policies and procedures, including the new Foundations/Co-Requisite model for Learning Support and the Math Placement Index (MPI) and English Placement Index (EPI), had been forwarded to Barbara Brown prior to the meeting. She answered them as follows:

1. Q. Are institutions that offer Foundations in a first short session, but do not believe students have a strong chance of success in the Co-Requisite course in a second short session, permitted to allow students to defer the Co-Requisite LS requirement to the following semester, and still also allow those students to take credit-bearing courses?
 - A. Barbara cited the Academic and Student Affairs Handbook (ASAH), 2.9.1 IV. H: *During each semester of enrollment, a student must first register for all required Learning Support courses before being allowed to register for other courses. This policy also applies to part-time students. Two exceptions are possible: In the event that a required Learning Support course is not available, a student may enroll in a course for degree credit if the student has met the course requirements, subject to the written approval of the president or designee* In other words, institutions do not have to offer half semester LS courses.
2. Q. Is there a way students can appeal to take a full load after they reach the 30 earned hour limit if they have not exited from Learning Support?
 - A. No. There is no mechanism in the ASAH for an appeal of this nature. Additionally, students who have earned 30 credits without exiting LS are likely doing so by repeatedly withdrawing from or not passing their LS coursework. This causes completion, Satisfactory Academic Progress (SAP), Financial Aid, and Area A compliance issues. Transfer students are allowed 30 additional institutional hours, further complicating the completion problem if they fail to exit LS within 30 additional hours.
3. Q. Are there any LS pre-requisites for eCore courses?
 - A. eCore is not set up to provide Learning Support, including providing the Gateway course for students in a Co-Requisite LS course at his/her home institution. Adequate support is simply not available to those students. Barbara did clarify, however, that so long as a student has met the pre-requisites for an eCore course, there are no rules barring a student in, e.g., Co-Requisite Algebra, from taking an eCore Psychology.
4. Q. If students who have no LS requirements opt to take Foundations or Co-Requisite LS courses, are they to be treated the same as students who are required to take LS courses with regards to: a) the

two attempt limit on Foundations; and b) not being able to take anything except required credit/CoRequisite courses after 30 earned hours if they have not exited?

- A. a) According to ASAH 2.9.1 IV.K, students who are not required to take LS courses in a disciplinary area may elect to enroll in LS courses in a non-required area for institutional credit or on an audit basis. Such students are limited to a maximum of two attempts if they elect to enroll in Foundations-level English or Math, and must move on after two attempts whether or not they pass the Foundations course/s. They are not subject to the requirements specified in Section IV.B, which requires students who are placed into a Foundations LS course to pass the course before progressing to the Co-Requisite LS course. Nor are they subject to a one-year LS suspension. There is no limit on attempts for any students who enroll in Co-Requisite Learning Support courses. b) According to Section IV.H, students who have accumulated a maximum of 30 semester hours of college-level credit and have not successfully completed required LS courses may enroll only in LS courses until requirements are successfully completed, but this policy does not apply to volunteers nor to students institutionally required to take LS.

A brief discussion ensued about what currently qualifies as Institutionally required versus System required, given the new EPI/MPI but the remaining COMPASS cut scores in the Learning Support policy. Barbara said that, until fall 2016, since schools may continue to use COMPASS scores for placement purposes, those cut scores may still be used to define System and Institutionally required. She also acknowledged that the next year of transition will be the most difficult, the MPI/EPI will never be perfect, and we should continue to focus on the goal of disadvantaging the least number of students possible.

5. Q. If a student passes the Co-Requisite LS course but not the Gateway course, must s/he repeat both courses.
- A. Yes. The goal of the Co-Requisite courses is to support students in successfully completing the collegiate course. If students have not been able to pass the collegiate course, co-requisite support is still needed.

A brief discussion followed about whether or not Financial Aid would pay for a repeated CoRequisite LS course. If an institution sets up the course as repeatable, Financial Aid will pay.

6. Q. Are there System course descriptions for the Foundations courses: MATH 0987, MATH 0988, MATH 0989, ENGL 0989, like there are for Gateway Math and English courses?
- A. No. There are no standard course descriptions. All LS courses are designed to prepare students for success in the college-level courses. Institutions are provided latitude in designing the courses to best serve their student populations on their campuses. Different schools are using different approaches – Emporium, lab, SI, etc., and should be allowed to focus on the skills their students need to pass the collegiate class.
7. Q. Part of ASAH 2.9.2 II states *“For some students who score below the cutoff EPI or MPI, COMPASS test scores add some additional information over that contained in HSGPA and SAT/ACT; those students will be required to take the appropriate COMPASS tests.”* Yet a recent document discussing LS updates, in the Formula Logic section, states *“If student is just below the collegiate-level placement cutoff or a floor score, recommend that the student take the appropriate COMPASS.”* What students who have an MPI/EPI based on HSGPA and SAT/ACT should take COMPASS? Is it required or recommended? How will Admissions identify the ones who should test?

- A. “Recommended” is more appropriate than “required.” However, if a student does not agree with his/her placement based on HSGPA and SAT/ACT, the COMPASS testing is the only way they can challenge their placement. The students who should be (routinely) testing are those who are just below the cut-off between LS and Gateway placement, just below the cut-off for Co-Requisite (placed into Foundations), or just below the cut-off for admissibility. Institutions should only test students who stand to move up by virtue of COMPASS. Students whose MPI/EPI are in a range that would require a very high COMPASS score to boost their placement should not be required to test. Barbara will be sending out revised EPI and MPI calculators so we can play with those numbers to determine what COMPASS scores would, e.g., boost a low Foundations score into Co-Requisite.

A question was raised about how the new EPI/MPI formulas will work in Banner – whether the highest MPI/EPI would be populated into the student’s account if s/he already had an MPI/EPI, but also took the COMPASS test. The answer is no. The new MPI/EPI would be calculated, so students who are *electing* to take COMPASS should be informed that the possibility exists for their new MPI/EPI to be lower after COMPASS. Additionally, when calculating MPI/EPI, institutions will need to input either SAT or ACT, whichever best serves the student. The calculator will not take both ACT and SAT and determine which is the higher MPI/EPI.

8. Q. Regarding LS attempts, the decision was recently made to not count successful semesters (grade of A, B, C, or S) in a LS Foundations course as an “attempt.” This decision arose out of consideration for the student who successfully passes a non-STEM Math Foundations course and who subsequently changes to a STEM major. The student would not have the passing semester in the non-STEM Foundations course count toward the two-attempt count in Foundations. For example, if a student takes and passes MATH 0988, Foundations for Mathematical Modeling, in his first attempt and changes his major to a STEM major, he will then have up to two attempts in MATH 0989, Foundations for College Algebra. The question concerns the newest definition of attempt – could we simplify it to say that “non-passing grades or symbols except W or WM count as attempts”? The other question concerns how Banner will recognize the non-passing grades as an attempt but not count A, B, C, or S grades.
- A. Yes. The System will need to work with GeorgiaBEST to determine the best way to track attempts in Banner using the new definition.
9. Q. A LS policy update reads, “*Students who voluntarily leave a USG institution for periods of one calendar year or longer must be retested with the COMPASS in any previously unsatisfied LS area,*” and later states, “*students who return after an absence of a year or more may have their MPIS and/or EPIs recalculated based on COMPASS only.*” Which is it – may or must? And will the old EPI/MPI need to be deleted in order for a new EPI/MPI to be calculated based on COMPASS alone?
- A. ASAH 2.9.2 IV.O states: *Students in Learning Support who voluntarily leave a USG institution for periods of one calendar year or more must be retested with the COMPASS in any previously unsatisfied LS area. Such students may be readmitted without LS requirements if they meet the institutional criteria for exemption. Students who do not score high enough on the COMPASS test to exempt LS may be placed in either Foundations-level or Co-Requisite LS, depending on institutional placement policies.*

10. Q. If an institution satisfies a student's LS math requirement with a D in a Co-Requisite Math (e.g., a D in MATH 1111 w/any grade in MATH 0999), but the student has a RHSC deficiency in math, what happens? Must the student retake MATH 1111 and pass with a C or higher? Does the D satisfy the RHSC deficiency?
- A. ASAH 3.2.6 language is "*students who have RHSC deficiencies and who successfully complete collegiate courses addressing all of their deficiencies within their first 30 credit hours will be considered as having satisfied the deficiency or deficiencies.*

Thus, if an institution grants credit in Area A for a D in a Gateway math, then this *should* satisfy the deficiency. However, since other institutions might not grant credit for a D in a Gateway math, transferability of the D and satisfying the RHSC deficiency could be a problem.

Questions were then posed for the institutions by other institutions.

11. Q. How many credit hours and contact hours are the LS courses in the Co-Requisite pairs at each institution?
- A. Answers varied – typically 1 or 2. If faculty are paid by contact hours, versus credit hours, as many science and physical education faculty are, this could create a problem for the institution.
12. Q. How are schools scheduling the Co-Requisite courses? Are they linked in Banner? Who is putting Co-Requisite students into blended Gateway courses and who is putting all the students into a Gateway course comprised of all Co-Requisite students?
- A. Answers varied. Atlanta Metropolitan, e.g., created 2 CRNs for the same Gateway course, capping each at 15 (a blended class). After registration, those CRNs will be merged into one CRN. Some schools are using a student attribute that looks for registration in a Co-Requisite and then forces the registration into the Gateway course.
13. Q. How are schools handling the interim testing and placement guidelines? A. Most schools appear to still be using COMPASS scores for placement.
14. Q. Which COMPASS tests are institutions offering?
- A. Many schools are using the standard Reading, English, and Math COMPASS, looking at a combination of Reading and English scores for English placement. Because eWrite is more expensive to administer, some schools are not using that until later. The new 6.0 version of COMPASS is set for a fall 2015 roll-out, at which time all schools must be using it.
15. Q. How are institutions working with students who started LS under the old model, but have not exited?
- A. One school (GPC?) mentioned that any student who makes an IP in the current LS will be permitted to take Co-Requisite LS and any student who makes an F will be required to take Foundations. Barbara Brown also stated that it is "perfectly reasonable to allow extra attempts during the transition period."
16. Q. Have any institutions observed any impact (up or down) on enrollment among their LS population?

- A. Some have noted a decline, especially when the rule was implemented that students with 3 LS requirements be declined admission, but enrollment should increase overall with the implementation of MPI/EPI.

Respectfully submitted by Dede deLaughter