2007-2010 Basic Skills Completion and Improvement Rates for Credit Courses: Narrative Response

1. In terms of expenditure from the basic skills allocation, what were the top five basic skills activities/interventions for your college during the last year?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Effective Practice &amp; Strategy</th>
<th>Planned Action, 2010-2011</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A.3.2</td>
<td>Basic Skills Coordinator</td>
<td>Based upon the institutional structure, a dedicated administrator or faculty is/are clearly identified and accorded responsibility for college-wide coordination of basic skills program(s).</td>
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<tr>
<td>B.3.1</td>
<td>Counseling</td>
<td>A proactive counseling/advising structure that includes intensive monitoring and advising serves students placed into developmental courses.</td>
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<tr>
<td>B.4.1</td>
<td>Financial Aid</td>
<td>Outreach and proactive mechanisms exist to educate developmental students about various opportunities to acquire financial aid.</td>
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<tr>
<td>C.1.2</td>
<td>Professional Development</td>
<td>Professional development activities for developmental education faculty and staff are actively supported by senior administration</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D. 10</td>
<td>LIAs, Tutors</td>
<td>Programs provide comprehensive academic support mechanisms, including the use of trained tutors.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2. In what ways do you think these five activities/interventions impacted your basic skills improvement and completion rates?

The above strategies were highly beneficial to our campus efforts at supporting basic skills students. For example, our combined/averaged completion rates for 2008-2009 and 2009-2010 demonstrate improvement when compared to 2007-2008. Although our rates were better for 2008-2009 than in 2009-2010 (this could be linked to our robust 2008-2009 BS funding), overall Cabrillo showed a 1.5-0.8% gain (respectively) when compared to our 2007-2008 rates. Our combined/averaged

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1 Please note that these “top five activities/interventions” are not necessarily reflective of Cabrillo’s top five basic skills efforts or effective practices—i.e., establishing a Basic Skills Committee, expanding our learning communities, etc.

2 Increases/decreases in funding might have been (at least one) determining factor. Our 2008-2009 successful course completion rates were highest, which coincides with our biggest Basic Skills allocation year.
improvement rates, however, paint a different story, showing a 2.9-1.1% decline (respectively) when compared to our 2007-2008 rates. Some possible factors for this drop:

- The state’s ailing economy and drastic campus budget cuts, which have had a dire impact on instructional and student services.
- Unlike English or math, not all certificates/degrees require students to take a sequence of Reading courses.
- ESL programs serve a unique population of students, and there are complex reasons as to why these students may not continue on the ESL/English course sequences.

Notwithstanding, Cabrillo remains deeply committed to supporting our basic skills efforts and will continue to explore ways to boost our improvement rates.

3. **What activity/intervention worked particularly well for your college/center? Please explain.**

- The basic skills coordinator position (A.3.2) has been essential in helping our basic skills committee and campus efforts thrive in addition to serving as a liaison between our college and the Chancellor’s office. The fact that Cabrillo will soon institutionalize this position is further evidence of our commitment to “clearly identify[]” and “accord[] responsibility for college-wide coordination of basic skills program(s).”
- Identifying basic skills academic and financial aid counselors (B.3.1 & B.4.1) has been key in our efforts to recruit, inform, support, and retain our basic skills students. Both put in enormous amounts of hours counseling students 1:1, making visits to classrooms, conducting presentations and workshops, helping with our learning community outreach efforts, and participating in our basic skills committee work.
- Reaching out to large numbers of faculty members via professional development opportunities (C.1.2), such as On Course, has helped us train hundreds of faculty members on effective/best practices. Through qualitative data, faculty members who participate in these and other workshops report that they gained valuable strategies to help them better engage, motivate, and retain students.
- Providing funding for LIAs and tutors (D.10) has undoubtedly benefited our basic skills students’ educational efforts, giving these students the additional support they need (beyond the regular classroom) in order to succeed.

4. **What activity/intervention didn’t work well for your college/center? Please explain.**

All of the above activities/interventions significantly helped support our campus-wide basic skills efforts. What “didn’t work well” was the grim fact we were forced to cut programs/support/hours due to the huge reduction in Basic Skills funding. These cuts were devastating and may have impacted our completion/improvement rates. As indicated in footnote 2, our 2008-2009 completion rates demonstrated significant gains, which coincided with our largest BSI allocation year.
5. What challenges did you face in engaging in these activities/interventions?
   Budget cuts forced a painful reduction to newly-launched services/programs/hours. We had to make sweeping cuts to tutorials, LIAs, early assistance program workshops, counseling availability, professional development requests, etc., causing a drastic reduction in services for basic skills students, programs, and faculty training opportunities. These cuts, coupled with the larger college budget cuts, are an ongoing challenge.

6. What type of support, financial or otherwise, do you need to engage more deeply in these activities/interventions?
   - Increase in funding
   - More BSI-funded professional development workshops
   - More cross-dialogue between colleges and opportunities to showcase local effective practices/strategies
   - Adequate follow up or continuation of BSI professional support endeavors—i.e., the “network” and “BRIC” seemed to dissolve as quickly as they formed. The intended support or collaborations, it seemed, didn’t always flourish or follow through. A coordinated 3CSN four-college (Cabrillo, Hartnell, MPC, Gavilan) Basic Skills Symposium originally planned for September 2011 also didn’t materialize; we are hoping to reschedule for February 2012.

7. Additional comments:
   Cabrillo’s Basic Skills Committee (BSLCAC) would like to thank BSI for the ongoing funding and support.