

CALIFORNIA COMMUNITY COLLEGES

CHANCELLOR'S OFFICE

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May 5, 2017

Dear Colleagues,

I would like to update you on the progress of the Common Assessment Initiative and the changing landscape of assessment in our system.

The Common Assessment Initiative (CAI) project team has been working hard to create assessment tools for math, English, and English as a second language (ESL). These CAI assessment tools have always been envisioned as components of a multiple measures approach to assessment. Recent research on current effective practices has further validated the benefits of integrating the use of assessment tools into a more comprehensive approach to assessment. Examples of multiple measures for assessment include high school GPA, grades for specific coursework, test results from the EAP, SAT, or ACT, and other non-cognitive information. Further, the use of high school transcript data, along with other student data such as GPA, has demonstrated stronger predictive value than using standardized placement exams alone in placing students in college courses. In particular, numerous studies have documented significant improvements in student outcomes when colleges use a multiple measures model and utilize the highest placement generated by the various measures.

As you know, the CAI is a very ambitious project that has encountered challenges and delays that have affected some of our colleges. I am fully aware of these impacts and can assure you that my executive team is working to clarify our next steps, taking into account recent research on multiple measures. Additional technical review of the project is underway, and will be completed by the end of May. I am confident that we will deploy an effective assessment system that will benefit students, especially those from disadvantaged educational backgrounds who, recent research indicates currently are being unnecessarily placed in remedial instruction due to an overreliance on standardized testing for placement.

Please be assured that the Chancellor's Office staff is committed, first and foremost, to the success of our students. As a former college president, I appreciate and value this commitment. I also value the ability of colleges to be experimental and innovative in order to improve upon best practices and meet the needs of our diverse student body.

We will continue to update you on the status of the CCCAssess tools over the coming months, as well as pending legislation such as Assembly Bill 705, which would require community colleges to use high school performance information to increase the probability that students will complete college-level math and English within one year. We will also continue to inform you about training and technical assistance available for successful multiple measures approaches and provide information to colleges to explain how to access that training and technical assistance for upcoming assessments.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Eloy Ortiz Oakley".

Eloy Ortiz Oakley