



**Mississippi Institutions of Higher Learning  
Office of Academic and Student Affairs  
*Strategic Planning Meeting – Remedial  
Programming***

**Best Practices**

## **Best Practices in Remedial Education**

- **Clarify the appropriate roles of universities in meeting the education needs of skill-deficient youth and adults.** Universities should review both their stated missions and current practices to determine the extent to which the remediation portion of their mission is clear and ambiguous to constituents.
- **Provide a centralized structure for remedial education courses and services.** Developmental education courses and services require coordination and communication in order to be effective. This is best provided within the context of a centralized developmental program.
- **Require accurate assessment and placement of students in learning environments (i.e., courses, labs, tutorials, etc.) appropriate to their needs.** Students need remediation for a variety of social, economic, and psychological reasons. If they are to succeed, students pursuing degrees must be accurately assessed and placed in the environment that best meets their need.
- **Provide opportunities for initial training and ongoing professional development for educators working with underprepared students.** Remedial education requires specialized training in the content and processes of effective teaching and preparation in the understanding and appreciation of cultural and ethnic differences.
- **Hold institutions accountable in determining to what extent students receiving remediation are benefiting from it.** Ongoing systematic evaluation in both cognitive and affective domains of learning is necessary to determine the effectiveness of remediation.

- **Provide the resources needed to train faculty and staff in the use of advanced learning technologies.** Advanced learning technologies, particularly computer-driven learning systems, are more important (if not essential) to effective and efficient remediation. On-going professional development of individuals working with students needing academic assistance is vital to the success of any remedial education program.
- **Foster a process for determining the specific knowledge, skills and attitudes functionally literate students need in a 21<sup>st</sup> century global economy.** Policies can help educators determine the nature of appropriate remediation. Institutions should periodically redefine what it means to possess the basic skills (reading, communication (oral and written), computation, and thinking and problem solving) necessary to live and work in a global economy.
- **Provide opportunities for university remedial educators to collaborate with secondary leaders regarding the knowledge, skills, and attitudes essential for successfully entering a degree program.** Remediation is not solely the function of a university or even a community college. In order to reduce the need for remediation, educators at the secondary, community college, and university levels must communicate with one another about what students need. Creating two-year/four-year agreements for serving four-year students with remedial needs.
- **Facilitate grassroots involvement of remedial educators in all areas of policy development.** Serious and respectful dialogue between policymakers and policy implementers will help ensure the kind of policy that makes a difference in students' lives.

- **Identify reasonable faculty: student and/or staff: student ratios appropriate for effective and efficient remediation.** Meeting the cognitive and affective needs of remedial students requires a large one-on-one time investment. There are labor intensive requirements associated with effective remediation. Remediation that works the first time around is more cost effective and efficient for educators, students and society as a whole.
- **Assure access, diversity and educational opportunity for all academically underprepared students.** Historically, remediation of academic skill deficiencies has been the vehicle to bring at-risk populations into the mainstream of society making it possible for them to achieve the American dream of self-sufficiency. Remedial education programs should embrace the diversity of the community and the country and provide effective and efficient remediation to all populations of students.
- **Identify alternative means of meeting the needs of students.** One alternative is universities contracting with community colleges to provide remediation for students admitted with deficiencies. Community colleges have become adept at solving hard-core remedial problems. It is cost effective for both the postsecondary education system and for the state.
- **Establish learning communities.** Learning communities and the underlying collaborative pedagogy meet the needs of students as well as faculty. They provide an environment conducive to peer learning and faculty engagement.
- **Clearly define a statewide mission for remedial education and coordination of remedial education activities at the state level.** Develop a statement of

missions, goals, and objectives and insure that these are shared by faculty, staff, and students participating in the program.

- **Identify common criteria for assessment of student competencies.** Strategies should be identified for a common criteria for student competencies based on a common assessment instrument designed to assess eligibility for mandatory placement and for exiting from all remedial courses, such as, (1) a common and simplified course numbering system below the 100 level, (2) common course syllabi, (3) a common system for evaluation for student performance in all remedial courses, and limiting the total the hours of remedial coursework to 30 credit hours.
- **Establish a common state-wide tracking system.** A common state-wide tracking system should be implemented for the purpose of program evaluation. The tracking reports should be included in the developmental/remedial education section of Institutional Effectiveness reports submitted to the Board.

## References

- Adelman, Clifford (1998). "The Kiss of Death? An Alternative View of College Remediation." *National Crosstalk*, vol.6, no. 3. San Jose, CA: National Center for Public Policy and Higher Education.
- Boylan, H.R., Bonham, B.S., & White, S.R. (1999). Developmental and remedial education in postsecondary education. *New Directions in Higher Education*, 199(108), 87-101.
- Education Commission of the States. (2000, February) *Remediation: A Must for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century Learning Society*. Denver, Co
- National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) (2007). *The Condition of Education: 2007*. Washington, D.C., U.S. Department of Education, Office of Educational Research and Improvement.