

TITLE 5 SECTION 55003: POLICIES FOR PREREQUISITES, COREQUISITES AND ADVISORIES ON RECOMMENDED PREPARATION

FIRST READING (PUBLIC HEARING)

Presentation: *Barry A. Russell, Vice Chancellor, Academic Affairs*

Issue

The proposed changes to title 5 calling for content review for the application of prerequisites went to the Board of Governors in May 2010 where some questions were expressed by members about the effects on students. The Prerequisite Task Force was convened by the Academic Senate to develop responses to those concerns and provided additional information at the July and September, 2010, Board of Governors meetings. In addition, meetings were held with various constituent groups around the state gathering input to strengthen the proposed changes, focusing on the need to increase student success while protecting student access.

This is the first reading of significantly revised language in title 5 section 55003.

Background

For several years, conviction and evidence have been growing that current requirements for establishing prerequisites in California community colleges have sacrificed student success in order to increase student access. Current regulation prohibits colleges from establishing prerequisites unless significant numbers of students prove unsuccessful in courses; therefore, faculty can justify prerequisites only when students fail, which is *not* the outcome faculty strive to provide for their students. Although faculty have continued to try to maintain a high level of academic quality and rigor, increased numbers of skill-deficient students enrolling in classes will undoubtedly result in unintentional decline in academic rigor on many campuses. Observers from both inside and outside of the California Community College system have called attention to this problem,¹ and in spring 2009 the Academic Senate called for changes to the title 5 regulation in this area. In early 2010, the Academic Senate convened a Prerequisite Task Force with representatives from the Academic Senate, the Chief Instructional Officers, the Chief Student Service Officers, and the Chancellor's Office to guide reform in this area.

¹ See Nancy Shulock, *Rules of the Game* (2007) and Elizabeth L. Hill, Legislative Analyst's Office, *Back to Basics: Improving College Readiness of Community College Students* (2008)

The Prerequisite Task Force has concluded, and the Academic Senate agrees, that changes to title 5 should be *permissive* and that colleges that are satisfied with the current regulations be permitted to continue to use them. For most colleges, however, the proposed title 5 revision will mean that California community college curriculum committees may rely on *content review*—the process used by higher education faculty throughout the United States—to establish prerequisites that provide skills in reading, written expression or mathematics for courses other than another course in communication or computation. The Prerequisite Task Force also reiterated that the title 5 regulations continue to require colleges to monitor and address any disproportionate impacts that may result from these regulation changes. The Academic Senate has provided training for faculty on effective practices for content review and, in November 2010, adopted the paper “Student Success: The Case for Establishing Prerequisites Through Content Review” that describes the reasons that content review is sufficient as a process or methodology to establish prerequisites. Attachment 5 contains the abstract of this paper.

The primary goal of this regulation change is to increase *student success* throughout the California community colleges. Developing mechanisms to ensure that students have the skills necessary to succeed in college level instruction is vital to educational success for hundreds of thousands of California community college students.

It is also vital to the economic well being of the California Community College system that more students be able to pass college courses the *first* time they enroll, so that limited capacity can be made available to students enrolling and succeeding on their first attempt rather than to students who need to take classes two and three times before they can earn a passing grade.

In this final version of changes to title 5, section 55003 subdivision (i) has been added to require community colleges to report new prerequisites established during the year as part of the annual MIS data collection cycle for districts. This data can then be used to report student progress in course offerings, student demographics and assess potential disproportionate impacts.

The proposed regulation was presented to Consultation Council for review at its meeting on December 16, 2010. Although there was overall support of the proposed regulations, there were comments voiced from some members for clarifications or an expressed need for more discussion within their organization. In response to these comments, language was added to proposed subdivision (c)(2) requiring a district plan assuring that courses are reasonably available to students when prerequisites or corequisites are established using only content review. The intent is that students who have not met a prerequisite will be able to enroll in appropriate courses while completing the prerequisite course and, if a new prerequisite or corequisite is established, course sections will be reasonably available for students to complete the new requirements. Subdivision (l)(2) was clarified to require that districts will be required to monitor the impact on student equity and, when disproportionate impact is indicated, consult with the Chancellor (or designee) to develop steps the district will take to correct the disproportionate impact.

Conclusion

The proposed regulations are presented to the Board for a first reading. The Board should hold a public hearing and consider any testimony which is offered. It is anticipated that the regulations will be presented to the Board for final action at its March meeting.

Staff: Stephanie Low, Dean, Academic Affairs

ATTACHMENT 1

Board of Governors of the California Community Colleges Proposed Revisions to the Title 5 Regulations: Policies for Prerequisites, Corequisites and Advisories

1. Section 55003 of article 1 of subchapter 1 of chapter 6 of division 6 of title 5 is amended to read:

§ 55003. Policies for Prerequisites, Corequisites and Advisories on Recommended Preparation.

(a) The governing board of a community college district may establish prerequisites, corequisites, and advisories on recommended preparation, but must do so in accordance with the provisions of this article. Nothing in this subchapter shall be construed to require a district to establish prerequisites, corequisites, or advisories on recommended preparation; provided however, that a prerequisite or corequisite shall be required if the course is to be offered for associate degree credit and the curriculum committee finds that the prerequisite or corequisite is necessary pursuant to sections 55002(a)(2)(D) or 55002(a)(2)(E). Unless otherwise specified in this section, the level of scrutiny required to establish prerequisites, corequisites, and advisories on recommended preparation shall be based on content review as defined in subdivision (c) of section 55000 or content review with statistical validation as defined in subdivision (f) of this section. Determinations about prerequisites and corequisites shall be made on a course-by-course or program-by-program basis.

(b) A district governing board choosing to establish prerequisites, corequisites, or advisories on recommended preparation shall, in accordance with the provisions of sections 53200-53204, adopt policies for the following:

(1) ~~the process for establishing prerequisites, corequisites, and advisories on recommended preparation. Such policies shall provide that in order to establish a prerequisite or corequisite, the prerequisite or corequisite must be determined to be necessary and appropriate for achieving the purpose for which it is being established. District policies shall also specify the level of scrutiny that shall be required in order to establish different types of prerequisites, corequisites, and advisories on recommended preparation. At a minimum, prerequisites, corequisites, and advisories on recommended preparation shall be based on content review, with additional methods of scrutiny being applied depending on the type of prerequisite or corequisite being established. The policy shall provide that the types of prerequisites described in subdivision (c) may be established only on the basis of data collected using sound research practices. Determinations about prerequisites and corequisites shall be made on a course-by-course or program-by-program basis.~~

(2) Procedures to assure that courses for which prerequisites or corequisites are established will be taught in accordance with the course outline of record, particularly those aspects of the course outline that are the basis for justifying the establishment of the prerequisite or corequisite.

(3) the process to ensure that each section of the prerequisite or corequisite is to be taught by a qualified instructor in accordance with a set of objectives and with other specifications defined in the course outline of record, as required in section 55002 for all courses.

~~(3)~~(4) The process, including levels of scrutiny, for reviewing prerequisites and corequisites to assure that they remain necessary and appropriate. These processes shall provide that at least once each six years all prerequisites and corequisites established by the district shall be reviewed, except that prerequisites and corequisites for vocational courses or programs shall be reviewed every two years. These processes shall also provide for the periodic review of advisories on recommended preparation.

~~(4)~~(5) The bases and process for an individual student to challenge the application of a prerequisite or corequisite.

(c) A district governing board choosing to use content review as defined in subdivision (c) of section 55000 to establish prerequisites or corequisites in reading, written expression or mathematics for degree-applicable courses not in a sequence shall first adopt a plan specifying:

(1) the method to be used to identify courses to which prerequisites might be applied;

(2) assurance that courses are reasonably available to students when prerequisites or corequisites have been established using content review as defined in subdivision (c) of section 55000. Such assurance shall include sufficient availability of the following:

(A) appropriate courses that do not require prerequisites or corequisites, whether basic skills or degree-applicable courses; and

(B) prerequisites or corequisite courses;

(3) provisions for training for the curriculum committee; and

(4) the research to be used to determine the impact of new prerequisites based on content review.

~~(e)~~(d) Prerequisites or corequisites may be established only for any of the following purposes:

(1) the prerequisite or corequisite is expressly required or expressly authorized by statute or regulation; or

(2) the prerequisite will assure, consistent with section 55002, that a student has the skills, concepts, and/or information that is presupposed in terms of the course or program for which it is being established, such that a student who has not met the prerequisite is highly unlikely to receive a satisfactory grade in the course (or at least one course within the program) for which the prerequisite is being established; or

(3) the corequisite course will assure, consistent with section 55002, that a student acquires the necessary skills, concepts, and/or information, such that a student who has not enrolled in the corequisite is highly unlikely to receive a satisfactory grade in the course or program for which the corequisite is being established; or

(4) the prerequisite or corequisite is necessary to protect the health or safety of a student or the health or safety of others.

~~(d)~~(e) Except as provided in this subdivision, no prerequisite or corequisite may be established or renewed pursuant to subdivision (b)(3) unless it is determined to be necessary and appropriate to achieve the purpose for which it has been established. A prerequisite or corequisite need not be so scrutinized using content review as defined by subdivision (c) of section 55000 or content review with statistical validation as defined by subdivision (f) of this section, until it is reviewed pursuant to subdivision (b)(3) if:

(1) it is required by statute or regulation; or

(2) it is part of a closely-related lecture-laboratory course pairing within a discipline; or

(3) it is required by four-year institutions; or

(4) baccalaureate institutions will not grant credit for a course unless it has the particular communication or computation skill prerequisite.

~~(e)~~(f) Content review with statistical validation is defined as A course in communication or computation skills may be established as a prerequisite or corequisite for any course other than another course in communication or computation skills only if, in addition to conducting a content review (as defined in subdivision (c) of section 55000) and the compilation of, the district gathers data according to sound research practices and which shows that a student is highly unlikely to succeed in the course unless the student has met the proposed prerequisite or corequisite.

(g) If the curriculum committee, using content review with statistical validation, initially determines, pursuant to section 55002(a)(2)(E), that a new course needs to have a communication or computation skill prerequisite or corequisite, then, despite subdivision (d) ~~(e)~~ of this section, the prerequisite or corequisite may be established for a single period of not more than two years while the research is being conducted and the final determination is being made, provided that all other requirements for establishing the

prerequisite or corequisite have been met. The requirements of this subdivision related to collection of data shall not apply when:

~~(1) baccalaureate institutions will not grant credit for a course unless it has the particular communication or computation skill prerequisite; or~~

~~(2) the prerequisite or corequisite is required for enrollment in a program, that program is subject to approval by a state agency other than the Chancellor's Office and both of the following conditions are satisfied:~~

~~(A)(1) colleges in at least six different districts have previously satisfied the data collection requirements of this subdivision with respect to the same prerequisite or corequisite for the same program; and~~

~~(B)(2) the district establishing the prerequisite or corequisite conducts an evaluation to determine whether the prerequisite or corequisite has a disproportionate impact on particular groups of students described in terms of race, ethnicity, gender, age or disability, as defined by the Chancellor. When there is a disproportionate impact on any such group of students, the district shall, in consultation with the Chancellor, develop and implement a plan setting forth the steps the district will take to correct the disproportionate impact.~~

~~(f)(h) Prerequisites, corequisites, and advisories on recommended preparation must be identified in college publications available to students as well as the course outline of any course for which they are established.~~

(i) By August 1 of each year districts establishing prerequisites, corequisites or advisories shall submit to the Chancellor's Office in the manner specified by the Chancellor the prerequisites and corequisites that were established during the prior academic year. Districts shall also specify the level of scrutiny, i.e., content review as defined in subdivision (c) of section 55000 or content review with statistical validation as defined in subdivision (e) of this section, used to determine whether the prerequisite or corequisite was necessary and appropriate for achieving the purpose for which it was established.

~~(g)(j) Prerequisites establishing communication or computational skill requirements may not be established across the entire curriculum unless established on a course-by-course basis.~~

~~(h)(k) The determination of whether a student meets a prerequisite shall be based on successful completion of an appropriate course or on an assessment using multiple measures, as required by section 55521(a)(3). Any assessment instrument shall be selected and used in accordance with the provisions of subchapter 6 (commencing with Section 55500) of this chapter.~~

~~(i)-(l)~~ If a prerequisite requires precollegiate skills in reading, written expression, or mathematics, the governing board of a district shall:

(1) ensure that ~~nondegree-applicable basic skills~~ courses designed to teach the required skills are offered with reasonable frequency and that the number of sections available is reasonable given the number of students who are required to meet the associated skills prerequisites and who diligently seek enrollment in the prerequisite course.

(2) monitor progress on student equity in accordance with section 54220. Monitoring shall include:

(A) conducting an evaluation to determine the impact on student success including whether the prerequisite or corequisite has a disproportionate impact on particular groups of students described in terms of race, ethnicity, gender, age or disability, as defined by the Chancellor.

(B) where there is a disproportionate impact on any such group of students, the district shall, in consultation with the Chancellor, develop and implement a plan setting forth the steps the district will take to correct the disproportionate impact.

~~(j)-(m)~~ Whenever a corequisite course is established, sufficient sections shall be offered to reasonably accommodate all students who are required to take the corequisite. A corequisite shall be waived as to any student for whom space in the corequisite course is not available.

~~(k)-(n)~~ No exit test may be required to satisfy a prerequisite or corequisite unless it is incorporated into the grading for the prerequisite or corequisite course.

~~(l)-(o)~~ The determination of whether a student meets a prerequisite shall be made prior to his or her enrollment in the course requiring the prerequisite, provided, however, that enrollment may be permitted pending verification that the student has met the prerequisite or corequisite. If the verification shows that the student has failed to meet the prerequisite, the student may be involuntarily dropped from the course. If the student is dropped, if the applicable enrollment fees are shall be promptly refunded.

Otherwise a student may only be involuntarily removed from a course due to excessive absences or as a result of disciplinary action taken pursuant to law or to the student code of conduct.

~~(m)-(p)~~ Any prerequisite or corequisite may be challenged by a student on one or more of the grounds listed below. The student shall bear the initial burden of showing that grounds exist for the challenge. Challenges shall be resolved in a timely manner and, if the challenge is upheld, the student shall be permitted to enroll in the course or program in question. Grounds for challenge are:

(1) The prerequisite or corequisite has not been established in accordance with the district's process for establishing prerequisites and corequisites;

(2) The prerequisite or corequisite is in violation of this section;

(3) The prerequisite or corequisite is either unlawfully discriminatory or is being applied in an unlawfully discriminatory manner;

(4) The student has the knowledge or ability to succeed in the course or program despite not meeting the prerequisite or corequisite;

(5) The student will be subject to undue delay in attaining the goal of his or her educational plan because the prerequisite or corequisite course has not been made reasonably available; or

(6) Such other grounds for challenge as may be established by the district governing board.

~~(n)~~(q) In the case of a challenge under subdivision ~~(m)~~(p)(3) of this section, the district shall promptly advise the student that he or she may file a formal complaint of unlawful discrimination pursuant to subchapter 5 (commencing with section 59300) of chapter 10 of this division. If the student elects to proceed with the challenge, completion of the challenge procedure shall be deemed to constitute an informal complaint pursuant to section 59327.

~~(o)~~(r) District policies adopted pursuant to this section shall be submitted to the Chancellor's Office as part of the district's matriculation plan pursuant to section 55510.

Note: Authority cited: Sections 66700 and 70901, Education Code. Reference: Sections 70901 and 70902, Education Code.

ATTACHMENT 2

Attachment 1 sets forth the full text of the revised section 55003. In addition to minor, technical changes, the following changes are proposed.

1. For clarity and to make room for new language, existing subdivisions were renumbered when necessary.
2. Language is added to proposed subdivision (a) to specify that community college districts choosing to establish prerequisites, corequisites or advisories must use either **content review** or the current method of **content review with statistical validation**. The last sentence is moved from existing subdivision (b)(1).
3. Language is deleted from proposed subdivision (b)(1) to remove redundancy with subdivision (a).
4. Proposed subdivision (b)(3) is added to require district governing boards choosing to establish prerequisites, corequisites, or advisories on recommended preparation to include in their policies the procedure to ensure that only qualified instructors teach prerequisite or corequisite courses.
5. Proposed subdivision (c) is added to require district governing boards choosing to use content review (without statistical validation) to establish prerequisites or corequisites in reading, written expression or mathematics (basic skills), to first adopt a plan, with specified elements, setting forth the process they will use to establish the prerequisites or corequisites.
6. To provide clarity in proposed subdivision (e), references to subdivision (b)(3) are removed as no longer necessary. References to content review and content review with statistical validation are added to clarify that neither level of scrutiny is necessary before imposing prerequisites or corequisites under certain circumstances specified in subdivisions (e)(1), (e)(2), and (e)(3).
7. Existing subdivision (e) is separated into proposed subdivisions (f) and (g). Existing subdivision (e)(1) is moved to proposed subdivision (e)(4) to be included as one of the specified circumstances under which scrutiny is not required.
8. Proposed subdivision (f) is further revised to provide a clear definition of content review with statistical validation. Language is deleted that limits colleges to conducting only content review with statistical validation.
9. In proposed subdivision (g), the phrase “using content review with statistical validation” is added to clarify that the exceptions set forth therein are applicable only to prerequisites or corequisites that have been established using content review with statistical validation

and not applicable to those established using only content review. Existing subdivision (2) is incorporated into the main subdivision (g).

10. Proposed subdivision (i) is added to require districts establishing prerequisites, corequisites or advisories to report to the Chancellor's Office new prerequisites and corequisites established during the year as part of the annual MIS data collection cycle for districts. This data can then be used to report student progress in course offerings, student demographics and assess potential disproportionate impacts.
11. In proposed subdivision (k), reference to section 55521 (a)(3) is added to make clear that multiple measures are not satisfied by the use of two or more instruments that are highly correlated.
12. In proposed subdivision (l), reference to governing board is deleted as it is not necessary or consistent with other subdivisions. This subdivision is separated into subdivisions (l)(1) and (l)(2) for clarity. In proposed subdivision (l)(1), the phrase "nondegree applicable basic skills" is deleted as redundant with the introductory sentence in subdivision (l) that refers to "precollegiate skills in reading, written expression, or mathematics." In proposed subdivision (l)(2), language is added to require districts establishing prerequisites or corequisites to monitor the impact of these additional requirements on student equity.
13. The last sentence in proposed subdivision (o) is changed for clarity.

ATTACHMENT 3

Prerequisite Training

to be provided by the Chancellor's Office and the Academic Senate

There has been longstanding agreement within the Academic Senate Executive Committee and the Prerequisite Task Force (which includes representatives from the statewide bodies representing the CEO, CIO, CSSO, R-P and Student Senate organizations) that training on the use of content review should be provided before local curriculum committees establish cross-disciplinary prerequisites. This training would take place in two stages:

Training to be provided by the Chancellor's Office and the Academic Senate: The Chancellor's Office and **the Academic Senate** should provide annual training on the use of content review.

There is already a working model for this in the training currently provided by the Chancellor's Office for compliance with Education Code §70901, §70902 and Title 5 sections 55000, 55002, 55006, 55070, 55100, and 55130 for Stand Alone Training. This training is provided annually as part of the Academic Senate's annual Curriculum Institute and it is supplemented by webinar trainings for those colleges unable to send representatives to the Curriculum Institute. The training includes the text of relevant statute and regulatory language and a PowerPoint presentation elaborating on several of the more important details in law and regulation.

Following a "train-the-trainer" model and using materials made available at the Curriculum Institute, local curriculum committee chairs (and other administrators and faculty who receive training at the Curriculum Institute) return to their campuses in the fall and provide training locally.

Additional Training Provided by the Academic Senate

In addition to organizing the annual Curriculum Institute, the Academic Senate organizes two plenary sessions and other conferences during the academic year. The Academic Senate commits to including sessions on content review, addressing implementation and enrollment management questions, and developing the tools necessary to evaluate the effect of prerequisites, with special attention to disproportionate impact. The Academic Senate will develop additional resources, including examples of effective practices, to guide the work of colleges.

ATTACHMENT 4

FAQs: Enrollment Management & Student Options

It has been clear from the earliest conversations that the most challenging part of establishing prerequisites will be the way in which they are phased in. Too gradual or narrow a phase-in is likely to result in students enrolling in other classes. A too aggressive implementation will shift an unmanageable level of student demand to basic skills and unrestricted course sections. Here are some questions colleges should ask as part of the development of their local plan for applying prerequisites based on content review.

Q: What level of commitment to basic skills course offerings exists in the system at present?

A: The variation is enormous. According to data reviewed by the *System Advisory Committee on Curriculum* (SACC), students enrolled in a basic skills class ranges from 4.8% to 57.4%. Because of this vast range in existing commitment to basic skills, it is impossible to mandate that colleges commit a *predetermined* percentage or number of sections to new basic skills course sections. Nevertheless, it is evident that in the short run, many colleges will need to add basic skills course sections.

Q: What information should be gathered before colleges establish new prerequisites?

A: Colleges should collect data on student success and retention in high demand transferable courses, disaggregated by ethnicity. Colleges should focus on those courses in *which* the success rates are low. Some of this information is available via Datamart, though it is aggregate by discipline and not available on a course-by-course basis.

Q: What questions should colleges ask about those courses?

A: Once colleges have identified courses with low success rates, research should conduct two kinds of research.

(1) Colleges should conduct a *qualitative* review of the existing course outlines and see if they require skills for which a basic skills prerequisite might be warranted.

(2) Colleges should conduct *quantitative* research to determine the numbers of students taking these class who would already meet prerequisites. Colleges with little flexibility to add or shift course sections could establish prerequisites in courses which enroll a smaller number of students who would need to be accommodated in other classes. Colleges with greater flexibility to add or shift sections might look at classes with lower rates of student preparation, knowing that they will need to provide increased access to basic skills course sections.

Q: Won't new prerequisites trap underrepresented students out of classes altogether?

A: No. Virtually all colleges in the state use a computer-based priority enrollment method for enrolling students in classes. While the criteria for determining a student's enrollment priority varies, a student who seeks to enroll in a class for which there is a prerequisite should still have access to both basic skills sections and to other non-restricted transferable courses. It is the students with the latest enrollment time slot who are at risk, but that is the result of reductions in funding and other factors, not prerequisites.

ATTACHMENT 5

Abstract of the ASCCC Adopted Paper on Prerequisites

“Student Success: The Case for Establishing Prerequisites Through Content Review”

adopted by The Academic Senate For California Community Colleges, 13 November 2010

In order to provide a formally adopted and widely available explanation regarding the Academic Senate’s support for changing Title 5 regulations regarding prerequisites, the adopted paper, “Student Success: The Case for Establishing Prerequisites Through Content Review,” is being made available to faculty and other interested parties throughout the state. The following abstract summarizes the paper and the current position of the Academic Senate. The entire document may be found at:

http://www.asccc.org/sites/default/files/AppendixD-Resolution%209.11_Content_Review_Paper_0.pdf

Abstract:

In the 1990s, the Academic Senate collaborated with the statewide Chancellor’s Office and other leadership groups in the state to revise Title 5 regulations, to draft *The Model District Policy* (Board of Governors, 1993) and *Prerequisites, Corequisites, Advisories, And Limitations On Enrollment* (Chancellor’s Office, 1997), and the Academic Senate’s own *Good Practice for the Implementation of Prerequisites* (adopted 1997). These documents established a requirement that most prerequisites had to be statistically validated in order for enrollment in a course to be restricted, effectively requiring faculty to justify prerequisites by failing students. As a result of the difficulties created by this requirement, many colleges chose not to apply prerequisites to their courses and instead allowed students to self-diagnose their own levels of preparation. After a decade of policy and practice promoting relatively unhindered student enrollment in course sections throughout the curriculum, faculty have concluded that the consequence of this situation has been a decline in the level of student preparation necessary for success in a limited but crucial range of courses in community colleges. In addition, the quality of instruction is likely to have been negatively impacted as faculty attempted to facilitate the success of students who were not appropriately prepared, lacking the knowledge and/or skills necessary for a reasonable chance of success. For these reasons the faculty have adopted resolutions urging expanded use of content review—a method for establishing prerequisites already promoted in the policy documents of the 1990s. This paper indicates why faculty believe expanded reliance on rigorous content review as a means of validating prerequisites is necessary to improve student success. In addition, the Academic Senate is preparing separate papers on related topics, including (1) multiple measures and (2) transition strategies colleges can use as they revisit and in some cases expand the number of legitimate prerequisites in their curriculum. Changing the process for the establishment of prerequisites is just one of many on-going efforts to increase student success, a goal of all faculty but one most recently renewed as colleges initiated efforts to improve success in the basic skills curriculum as a component of the Basic Skills Initiative in preparation for an increase in the math and English requirements for the earning of an associate degree.