

Testimony for Public Hearing on SB 40, HB 5028 and HB 5029
SB 40 AN ACT CONCERNING OPEN ACCESS TO COLLEGE LEVEL COURSES.
*HB 5028 AN ACT CONCERNING THE ALIGNMENT OF COMMON CORE STATE STANDARDS
WITH COLLEGE CURRICULUM.*
HB 5029 AN ACT CONCERNING COLLEGE READINESS ASSESSMENTS.

We are faculty members at Southern Connecticut State University and elected members of Southern's University Curriculum Forum Steering Committee, which guides and oversees the undergraduate curriculum on our campus.

We agree with the spirit of HB 5029 that would institute a high school college readiness assessment in the sophomore year and subsequent remediation plans (if needed) for students planning to go on to college in the remaining two years of high school. We also know that should this bill be passed, it will be several years before colleges and universities see the fruits of these efforts.

Because of this time lag, we are not in support of SB 40, which seeks to prohibit requiring students to take remedial courses in college.

A common misunderstanding is that low Bachelors Degree completion rates are due to student enrollment in college remedial courses (Adelman, 2006; Bettinger & Long, 2005). In fact, low graduation rates are linked to a lack of preparation at the secondary school level (Attewell et al., 2006). In other words, there is either a misalignment between what is expected of high school graduates compared with what is expected of college freshmen, or a lack of adequate preparation to achieve those standards prior to high school graduation. Until this problem is solved, remedial instruction is critical in helping underprepared students gain access to higher education. Some facts to support this appear below:

1. The best predictor of student success in college is secondary school preparation.
 - In examining the records of 17,499 Colorado students, it was clear that if students were not proficient on the state assessment as early as the sixth grade, they were likely to require remediation in their first year of college (Lefly, Lovell & O'Brien, 2011).
 - A rigorous high school curriculum is a strong predictor of college readiness (Adelman, 2006). Students who take challenging coursework, such as four years of college-preparatory English and three years each of college-preparatory mathematics, science, and social studies, are less likely to need remedial courses than students who don't take such a rigorous curriculum (Abraham & Creech, 2002).
2. If a student is not college-ready by the time s/he reaches that level, remediation is important in order to increase the chances of success.



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- In a study conducted on outcomes of remedial students at public colleges in Ohio (the fifth largest public higher education system in the U.S.), it was found that students who received remediation in math and in English were over 15% and 9% more likely to complete a college degree in four years respectively.

- 3. Providing access to college classes by students who do not meet minimum proficiencies does a disservice to them and may result in:
 - Higher failure rates in college-level courses
 - Longer graduation times as students re-take courses
 - Lack of retention as students become demoralized and prematurely drop out
 - Loss of financial aid due to students not meeting GPA requirements to continue to receive financial aid, and/or reach the end of time or funds available to pay for their higher education

We want to support a successful and timely completion of students' degree programs at our colleges and universities. We think that adequate preparation is the key, and that students should be able to demonstrate college ready competencies prior to beginning any college degree program. We also think that remediation is best done in high schools and local school districts to keep the cost of high education within a reasonable range.

Until Connecticut high school graduates can demonstrate such competencies and high school remediation programs are in place, however, colleges and universities can best support student success by continuing to require them to take remedial courses when they are warranted.

Thank you for your time and consideration of these important issues affecting all of us in the State of Connecticut. Please contact us if you need additional information.

Martin Hartog, Ph.D., Chair, Undergraduate Curriculum Forum
Deborah Weiss, Ph.D., Chair, Liberal Education Program Committee
Gregory Adams, Ph.D., Chair, New Programs and Innovations Committee
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