

RISING REMEDIAL PLACEMENT EXAM RESULTS AND WAYS TO REDUCE THEIR NEGATIVE IMPACT ON STUDENT PROGRESSION

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Abstract:

An increasing number of incoming first year college students are placing into remedial math and English courses. There is speculation that this is due to the pandemic and increase in online high school education over the past few years, resulting in ill-preparedness in those subject areas. The increased volume of students with remedial placements is negatively impacting their ability to start college-level English and/or Math courses in their first semester of study at Rutgers. Additionally, this is causing delayed graduation, incurred costs for students, and a strain on academic departments where more class seats are needed. By exploring ways to increase enrollment in specific courses, promote a campaign of uniform communication surrounding placement testing and the potential to host summer bridge programs, it could reduce costs incurred by students, reduce the high demand put on academic departments for seats in courses, and improve on-time graduation for those impacted.

Primary Stakeholders:

- School Advising Staff/Deans
- University Registrar's Office
- English Department
- Math Department
- Office of Institutional Research & Academic Planning (OIRAP)
- Undergraduate Admissions
- First-year Students

Key Steps/Activities:

- Survey recent incoming first year class about placement tests to gather student perspective.
- Obtain remedial placement testing results for New Brunswick Schools to identify the population of students impacted as well as summer enrollment reports for specific subjects
- University First Year Experience Committee meeting held specifically to address placement testing results.
- Stakeholder meetings to create marketing/communication plan to go out to all admitted students and discuss summer bridge option.

Effectiveness Measures:

- Create sub-committee of Advisors to evaluate and compare data and report to First Year Advising Committee.
- Comparison of remedial placement test scores as well as summer enrollment annually to look for trends
- Survey of students prior to implementation as well as post-placement tests to identify the impacts of the new communication plan.

Communication/Engagement:

- Work with the Vice Provost to include placement testing as a regular agenda item for the meetings of the existing First Year Experience Committee.
- Incorporate this topic into wider Committee meetings and Campus partner meetings to streamline communication surrounding placement testing and advising.

Proposed Timeline:

Jan/Feb: Stakeholders meet to develop communication plan; **March:** Communications are sent to admitted students; **May/June:** School Advisors review test results and identify students with remedial placements. Advising is provided to these students about available options (summer courses, bridge program); **October:** Survey students.

Current Status/Future Directions:

For now, I have chosen to focus on a smaller population, specifically first year PharmD students. To take into account student feedback regarding their experience around placement tests, I worked with my sponsor to design a survey. I have distributed the survey already to the Class of 2027 and plan to review and analyze the responses in May. I plan to discuss the results with my sponsor, which will not only help inform the onboarding process for next year's incoming class, but also help start the conversation with other stakeholders.