

**The Good, the Better, and the Ugly:
 Developmental Education Past, Present, and Future**

Adam Florida, Middlesex Community College, CT

Inside this issue:

Developmental Education—Past, Present and Future	1
President’s Column	3
Social Justice Award	4
Announcements	6
LAANE Awards	7
Upcoming Conferences	9

It is an unfortunate truth that more and more students are arriving at college underprepared for college-level coursework. In fact, the *Chronicle of Higher Education* cites a recent College Board report revealing that “[o]nly 43 percent of 2012’s high-school graduates are prepared for success in college.” The fact that fifty-seven percent of college-bound students are not ready to perform college-level work has led to an increasing need for colleges to offer developmental classes.

Perhaps nowhere is this need more evident than at the community college. With an open-enrollment policy, many community colleges pride themselves on granting everyone the opportunity to begin earning his/her college degree. That is why they offer specific non-credit classes designed to help students strengthen their areas of weakness and build a strong foundation for future success in college-level classes.

At Middlesex Community College (MxCC) in Connecticut, developmental classes have taken many forms over the years and evolved over time as faculty adapted to meet the demands of an ever-changing population. However, this evolution is about to stop because Connecticut’s lawmakers have seen fit to mandate how developmental education should be offered. A new CT law will force educators to ignore what has

worked in favor of something as yet undefined.

Offering developmental courses is nothing new for MxCC. Because most new students enroll without having taken the SAT or ACT, they are required to take the Accuplacer (one of the most commonly used placement tests across the U.S.). Their results are used to determine the appropriate level of class for them.

On average, sixty-five percent of the incoming students place into developmental English courses, and seventy percent place into developmental math. From self-paced to paired courses, from co-taught courses to those with a supplemental instructor, various class models exist to meet the diverse needs of each student and help him/her master requisite skills. Most importantly, these models have worked: success rates in each of the above-mentioned “hybrids” are significantly higher than those in the traditional classes. These results have led many faculty who teach developmental classes to formulate a set of core beliefs regarding how best to serve this population of students; they benefit from a cross-curricular

Continued p. 2



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approach, so the transfer of skills is made explicit to them: individualized instruction, often provided by an in-class tutor; from connections with professors, one another, and the institution; and from the psycho/social support provided by a strong peer group and dedicated teachers. These beliefs led to the formation of a new way to offer developmental education: the Transitional Year Program (TYP).

This past fall, MxCC began piloting the TYP. Students in the program will move through their developmental courses together while also taking certain credit bearing courses. Enthusiastic professors dedicated to teaching developmental courses have signed on to teach this cohort of students and have collaborated to design curricula that will reinforce skills across disciplines. Two English courses are being co-taught while both the English and math courses have an embedded tutor. Thus, the idea is to devote more time to the students and to get them more connected to peers and faculty as support systems. Ideally, this will result in increased individualized instruction and a strong sense of community and belonging.

Identified by their placement scores, eligible students received information about the program, and the available seats filled quickly. With the first semester having just come to a close, it is still too early to assess any hard data. Anecdotally, both the professors and students involved have called it a tremendous success. On an informal survey, one student commented, “The program builds community and feels like a family,” which echoes the exact goals the faculty hoped to achieve.

Unfortunately, a new Connecticut law threatens to undermine not only this innovative program, but all of the state colleges’ developmental education programs. Public Act 12-40, signed by Governor Dannel Malloy on May 31, 2012, places the state dubiously at the forefront of higher education reform. The law threatens to undercut student success and retention by disregarding the developmental courses that have proven absolutely essential to so many students’ continued, long-term success. The law mandates that “multiple commonly accepted measures of skill level” will determine if a “student is likely to succeed in college level work with supplemental support.” If this is the case, then the institution “shall offer such student remedial support that is embedded with the corresponding entry level course in a college level program.” However, if students are “below the skill level required for success in college level work” with embedded supplemental support, they shall either be offered an “intensive college readiness program,” or institutions may still offer “a maximum of one semester of remedial support that is not embedded.”

What does all this mean? First, it means that that the state colleges legally cannot allow students to take any more than one semester of developmental coursework. At Middlesex, there are currently two developmental levels each of reading, writing, and math; the law will eliminate all of the lowest level courses—courses in which, most recently, 11%, 28%, and 47% of MxCC students placed respectively. Clearly, many students whose literacy and numeracy are well below the college level may need more than just one semester to become “college ready.” However, should students not succeed in a single developmental semester, they will be farmed out to “intensive college readiness programs” (ICRP). Since this law was passed without any concrete plans for what these will be, it is impossible at this point to define them. At the time of this writing, though, the very imprecise facts are as follows. Unlike with current developmental college classes, students’ financial aid will not cover ICRP.

Continued, p. 5

President's Column

Regina McCarthy, UNH Manchester

In a recent meeting with a number of faculty and staff colleagues, one of my faculty colleagues said, "We are a faculty of teaching and learning." Our institutions strive to be excellent in teaching and to foster excellence in learning for our students. Our faculty are students, as well. Those of us who are staff are teachers and learners, too. My colleague's remark, seemingly obvious, is also elegant; our disciplinary faculty support and partner with staff in academic enrichment, support and transition. That culture of collaboration can be born of budgetary necessity but also emerge out of a shared desire to provide high impact practices that engage our students in their own learning for academic success and that retain students at our institutions.

What are examples of collaborations or partnerships shared by faculty and staff professionals in teaching/learning? At UNH Manchester, we have an ongoing collaboration of the Center for Academic Enrichment (CAE), Library, First-Year Writing faculty, and peer writing tutors to train our writing tutors to be research mentors. This has proven to be an excellent example of a faculty/staff collaboration that is cross-department, cross-function and a collaboration in which each is teacher and learner.

Each section of First Year Seminar (FYS) has a 'visiting professor'. The visiting professor shares academic expectations, institutional values, and successful student behaviors, as well as what it means to be a scholar

in a specific academic discipline. Disciplinary faculty and our First Year Experience staff collaborate on student engagement and success.

One of my faculty colleagues said that he finally learned—after decades-- how to teach first year writing from his class link tutor. He learned contemporary strategies that would have greater impact on his students. The teacher became the student. The tutor became the teacher of the teacher. The first year writers benefitted. At the heart of this collaboration was our Center for Academic Enrichment, our comprehensive learning center.

As you think toward the 2013 LAANE conference, please consider a proposal illustrating the best of your faculty and staff collaborations across departments or disciplines in pursuit of student engagement, success, and retention.



“That culture of collaboration can be born of budgetary necessity but also emerge out of a shared desire to provide high impact practices that engage our students in their own learning for academic success and that retain students at our institutions. “

LAANE President Receives Social Justice Award

Regina McCarthy, Assistant Dean of Academic Student Services at UNH Manchester and President of LAANE, was the recipient of the 2013 UNH Social Justice Award. The following is taken from the University's press release.

* * * * *

“Regina has been the face and voice of social justice at UNH Manchester before social justice was even a movement on college campuses. Social justice is her most deeply held core value,” says colleague and Director of Academic Counseling Carol Swiech.

McCarthy is a social justice educator for the University; a member of UNH Manchester's Student Veteran Advocacy Team; and the founder and member of the college's Diversity and Inclusive Excellence Committee. She also serves as a representative to the University Council for Inclusive Excellence and Equity and is a member of the statewide groups The NH Inclusive Learning Communities and the NH Multicultural Student Affairs Consortium. In 2012 McCarthy was also elected to serve a second two-year term as President of the Learning Assistance Association of New England.

The Social Justice awards honor UNH community members who have demonstrated excellence and integrity with respect to advancing social justice issues within our community and beyond. Each year, one faculty member, one staff member, one graduate student, one undergraduate student and one student organization is recognized for his or her role in providing outstanding leadership, courage and positive role modeling in promoting social justice issues such as diversity, equity, and human rights.

McCarthy was also the recipient of the UNH Presidential Award of Excellence and the UNH Professional Advising Award. She was also the first recipient of the UNH Manchester award for outstanding service to students.”



Visit LAANE's web site at:



www.LAANEchapter.org

This alone will marginalize an entire population by effectively barring them from continuing their education; it will also undermine community colleges' long standing mission.

There is still one remaining mandate to the CT state colleges regarding those students deemed "likely to succeed in college level work with supplemental support." This necessitates the creation of new college level English and math courses with embedded support for the students who are underprepared for the "regular" college level English and math courses. First, this raises the questions of what exactly "embedded support" will look like and how it will be financed. Additionally, there is concern that the classes with embedded support still hold students accountable for the same outcomes as the traditional classes; otherwise, these chimeras are nothing more than watered down versions of college level courses, and the credits being earned do not signify that students have the skills needed for continued success.

Finally, there is one other seemingly well-intentioned, but horribly misguided aspect to the law that will ultimately (and ironically) eliminate the need for any of the aforementioned changes to developmental education. The law charges that "each public high school and public institution of higher education shall complete curricular alignment to enable the successful completion of the high school mathematics and language arts curricula...to be the indicator of readiness for college level work." High schools must "use available evaluation methods for early assessment of the potential for college readiness of each student enrolled in the eighth and tenth grades in a public school." Aligning high school and college curricula seems like a logical way to address the fact that so many students are leaving high school underprepared for college.

Unfortunately, by 2016, when the alignment is supposed to be complete, *every* student who graduates high school will be presumed college ready. This, of course, will ostensibly negate the need for *any* type of developmental education as it will allow every high school graduate to enroll in college level courses should he choose to do so. This part of the law is predicated on the naïvely optimistic fallacy that there will ever be a time when *every* student who receives a high school diploma is college ready, which is difficult to view as anything more than an ignorantly utopian pipedream.

While this law is specific to Connecticut, it poses a portentous possibility of things to come in other states and demonstrates the dire repercussions of non-educators dictating educational policy. They cling fast to the simplistically myopic view that changing the way the law reads will magically change students' ability to read (and write and do math *and* forgo countless other support systems). They fail to realize

That not all students learn the same way or at the same pace. Countless lessons learned from years of delivering developmental education are being ignored by bureaucrats, and a very uncertain future looms on the horizon for Connecticut's students and educators. With an ever-increasing number of students coming to college with deficient skills, it is more important than ever to offer the most effective developmental programs possible. We have seen what works; we have improved upon it; our solutions are now illegal. Unfortunately, the future of developmental education is shrouded in ambiguity, and the need to *get it right* could not be greater.

¹Peterkin, Caitlin. "By the SAT Standard, Less Than Half of College-Bound Seniors Are Ready." *The Chronicle of Higher Education*. 24 Sept. 2012. Web.

²"Substitute Senate Bill No. 40. Public Act No. 12-40: AN ACT CONCERNING COLLEGE READINESS AND COMPLETION." *CT.gov*. 6 Oct. 2012. Web.





Save the Date!

LAANE Regional Workshop

Diversity Journey for Developmental Educators

Friday, June 7, 2013

UNH Manchester, Manchester, NH

8:30am-12:30pm

Registration at 8:30am and program starts at 9:00am.

Breakfast provided. Grab and go lunch on your own.

Save the Date!

30th Annual LAANE Conference

October 18, 2013

Location: Greenfield Community College, Greenfield, MA

Keynote Speaker: Joseph Cuseo

Professor Emeritus, Psychology; Director, First Year Seminar

Marymount College, Los Angeles, CA

34th Kellogg Institute for the Training and Certification of Developmental Educators

When: June 29 – July 26, 2013

Where: Appalachian State University in Boone, NC.

What: The Kellogg Institute is a summer professional development program for developmental educators and other professionals dedicated to promoting the success of underprepared and disadvantaged postsecondary learners. The Institute seeks to improve and support the delivery of Developmental Education courses and services via implementation of research-based best practices and design.

Faculty 2013: Dr. Ed Morante, Dr. Barbara Bonham, Dr. David Arendale, Dr. Geri Miller, and Dr. Hunter Boylan.

Additional details and the application form are available on the National Center for Developmental Education web site:

<http://ncde.appstate.edu/kellogg-institute>

Enrollment is limited to 45 participants, so apply today!

Attendees of this summer's regular Kellogg Institute can also apply for the week-long Advanced Kellogg Institute. Advanced Kellogg Institutes are open to Kellogg alumni and offer a week-long opportunity to focus on a single critical issue in developmental education. The topic for 2013 is "Integrating Academic Support and Instruction." Graduate credit is available. Visit <http://ncde.appstate.edu/kellogg-institute/advanced-kellogg-institute> for more information or to apply.

Contact: Denise de Ribert, Director, Kellogg Institute
(828) 262-2805 email: kellogg@appstate.edu

LAANE Awards—2012

LAANE Scholarship Recipient

This year's scholarship winner was Ms. Amanda Hoag, a student in the liberal arts program at Berkshire Community College with a concentration in Peace and World Order. Amanda has distinguished herself academically at Berkshire community College and is a high honors dean's list student. She works on campus in the Tutoring Center providing clerical support, and she is also a peer tutor in English and Human Growth and Development. For a number of years she has served as a volunteer for community-based programs, including Berkshire Citizens for Peace and Justice. In her scholarship application essay, Amanda wrote, "I love to learn and help others to learn. I love being a student so much that I am sad to think about graduating. I plan to move on to a four year school for a bachelor's degree and eventually achieve a master's in education." Amanda's nominator, Ms. Liz Recko-Morrison, coordinator of assessment and testing and adjunct instructor of psychology, had this to say about Amanda: "Ms. Hoag is working to change not only her future but that of everyone whose life touches hers." When notified electronically of her selection for the scholarship, Amanda commented that her motivation and enthusiasm have been renewed by LAANE's recognition. We applaud Amanda for paying her knowledge forward and working for social justice.

Outstanding Service to Developmental Students

Ms. Dorothy "Dot" Sherman was recognized for the LAANE Award for Service to Developmental Students. In her undergraduate years Dot was a tutor at the University of New Hampshire at Manchester and distinguished herself by becoming a master tutor. She now is an adjunct instructor of composition at UNH Manchester as well as an adjunct instructor at Rivier College in Nashua, New Hampshire.

Dot Sherman was recognized for her passion in serving students and for her ability to transform her students to scholars. Her nominator said, "Dot Sherman is exceptional in all ways. With passion and singular purpose she desires to convert the non-readers and non-writers to scholars who can situate themselves in the academic community. She meets students where they are as writers and improves their writing in dramatic ways. She is exceptionally knowledgeable about the discipline and about the teaching of writing. She can see the good in students and she is perceptive and insightful. She is compassionate and has great empathy for students and a desire to create an inclusive classroom of respect and differentiated instruction. She focuses on the worth and dignity of each student."

LAANE Award to a College Administrator for Outstanding Support for Developmental Education

Linda Cavanaugh, co-chair of the mathematics department at Greenfield Community College is this year's recipient of the award for outstanding support to developmental education

providing the encouragement of role modeling. This partnership of tutoring and teaching remains integral to developmental education at Greenfield Community College. When Linda served the college as academic dean, she manifested her philosophy that teaching across disciplines improves student learning exponentially. She encouraged faculty to teach in learning communities of their own design. As a professor, administrator, and department chair, most important to Linda is the success of students." Cavanaugh's own words breathe life into the nomination, "Students have been made to feel that being unsuccessful in math is their own fault. ... We make meaning out of mathematics by developing the concepts and digging deeply into the math. Cre-ating a sense of safety in the classroom allows

Continued p. 8

Continued from p. 7

students to take risks with each other. One of my key beliefs is making sure students have a sense of success as early as possible in order to develop a beginning confidence that they will need in order to proceed."

Award for Outstanding Research

Publication

LAANE annually presents an award for outstanding research publication to recognize an individual or individuals who have authored a published article, book, periodical, or monograph in the field of developmental education. This year LAANE presented the outstanding research award to the conference keynote, Dr. Brenda Matthis of Lesley University, whose twin interests of technology to advance and support learning and inclusive curriculum design speak to the membership of LAANE.

This year, LAANE recognized Dr. Mathis for research and professional commitment to 21st century teaching and supporting all students across the learning spectrum. Her work in universal design—a set of principles for curriculum development that give all individuals equal opportunities to learn—makes learning more inclusive, a principle to which LAANE is committed.



LAANE Executive Board

President: Regina McCarthy
UNH/Manchester
400 Commercial St.
Manchester, NH 03102
(603) 641-4142
regina.mccarthy@unh.edu

Vice-President: Sarah Bedingfield
Great Bay Community College
277 Portsmouth Ave.
Stratham, NH 03885
(603) 641-4142
sbedingfield@ccsnh.edu

Recorder: Edward (Ned) Bradford
Curry College
1071 Blue Hill Ave.
Milton, MA 02186
(617) 333-2248
ebradfor@post03@curry.edu

Treasurer & Membership Coordinator Michael Chandler
Center for Academic Enrichment
UNH/Manchester
400 Commercial St.
Manchester, NH 03101
michael.chandler@unh.edu

Newsletter Editor: Susan Lemire
Centers for Learning
UMass Lowell
61 Wilder St.
Lowell, MA 01854
(978) 934-2948
susan_lemire@uml.edu

Upcoming Professional Conferences

Professional conferences, workshops, symposiums, and in-service meetings are of considerable importance to our development as teachers, administrators, professors -- to all professionals. They introduce us to ideas and revive our interests in our career. We network, share experiences, gain insight, and often return to our respective institutions more enlightened and feeling less alone in our work. If you know of a conference you would like to see your colleagues attend, please send that information to Susan Lemire, LAANE Editor, at 978-934-2948 or at Susan_Lemire@uml.edu or UMass Lowell, 61 Wilder St., Lowell, MA 01854

New England Faculty Development Consortium (NEFDC) Spring 2013 Conference

The New England Faculty Development Consortium Spring 2013 Conference will be held Friday, June 14, 2013 at the Westford Conference, Westford, MA. The theme of the Conference is ***“Engaged Learning: Impacts and Implications.”*** The keynote speaker is Prof. John Saltmarsh from the College of Education, UMass Boston. For more information about the program and registration visit the NEFDC web site at www.nefdc.org/

NYCLSA Symposium on Developmental Education

The NYCLSA Symposium will be held at the Genesee Grande Hotel in Syracuse, NY, April 7-9, 2013. The theme of the Symposium is: ***“Advocating for Student Success: Speaking with One Voice.”*** Dr. Hunter Boylan will deliver the keynote address. For more information, visit the web site at www.nyclsa.org

National Council of Teachers of English (NCTE)

2013 Annual Conference

The NCTE Annual Convention will be held November 21—24, 2013 in Boston, MA. The theme of the Conference is

“(Re)Inventing the Future of English.”

For more information, visit the NCTE website at www.ncte.org/annual.

National Academic Advising Association (NACADA) Annual Conference

The National ACademic ADvising Association is holding its 37th Annual Conference, in Salt Lake City, Utah, Oct. 6-9, 2013. The theme of the conference is ***“Success Elevated: Greatest Advising on Earth”*** For more information, visit the NACADA website at www.nacada.ksu.edu/Events-Programs/Events/Annual-Conference.aspx

Northeast Writing Centers Association (NEWCA)

The NEWCA Annual Conference will be held at the University of New Hampshire, Durham, NH, April 13-14. The theme of the Conference is

Writing Enriched, Writing Enhanced: Writing Centers and Writing Across the Curriculum as Partners and Agents

For more information, visit the web site at

<http://www.northeastwca.org/2013-conference/>