

**AE Advisory Council Meeting
ESE – Malden – Room 301
March 29, 2019
Minutes**

Present: Chair, *Mary Sarris, Kate Anderson, Ernest Best, Barbara Krol-Sinclair, Ana Liria Tizol Cantor, Patricia Marshall, Jeff McLynch, Stacy Randell*

Conferenced-in: *Maureen Carney*

Sick: *Jamie Camacho*

ESE/Adult and Community Learning Center (ACLS Staff): Co-Chair, *Wyvonne Stevens-Carter, Toby Maguire, Cliff Chuang, Lorraine Domigan*

Introductions:

Wyvonne welcomed all to the March meeting.

Jeff McLynch asked to change the comments from the last meeting's minutes to add the words "adverse consequences." It was moved, and all approved the change to the sentence on page 6 of the minutes to read, "...process of result in low-performance programs being defunded that could have adverse consequences for access."

Approval of minutes: In favor Wyvonne, Mary, Barbara; All in favor of approving with the change for Jeff – approved.

Announcements

Patricia Marshall, Deputy Commissioner MA Department of Higher Education, updated the Committee that they have passed a new [Common Assessment Policy for English and Math](#) which now allows the use of high school GPA scores to place students into college level, credit-bearing English and mathematics courses. She will send it to the Council. Essentially, the policy for English courses uses 2.7 GPA for students who are no more than 10 years out of high school and there is an SAT option and some other options related to their four-year admissions standards; it is a complex policy. The policy for Math courses is a 2.7 GPA for anyone who has been out of high school for less than three years and there is a great deal of flexibility for our institutions. The 2.7 GPA standard may be used up until calculus and then we recommend using Accuplacer for placement in calculus. For students who do not qualify under the GPA standard, we have created Accuplacer cut scores for our math pathways which are quantitative reasoning, statistics, education and the calculus pathways.

Pat has been having conversations about trying to develop some crosswalks with other types of tests with two of them being the HiSET / GED tests for placing students. This is a

very important step for Higher Education because they have not revised our Common Assessment Policy since 1998. This was after five and a half years of very close work. There is still some controversy about not using Accuplacer and particularly with the switch to the Next Generation Accuplacer, but it is a common assessment policy. This is the first step, and we remind the campuses that we are hoping to have further conversations to further improve the policy. The Department of Higher Education will also be looking very closely at the performance of the Higher Education institutions through their performance measurement system and how the gateway courses of Math and English relate to the number of students who are completing gateway Math and English within their first year of study.

Wyvonne Stevens-Carter asked whether the Accuplacer will no longer be used to place students into their courses and wanted to confirm that they can use their GPA.

Pat responded that they can use the GPA and they are giving their institutions a lot of flexibility and then holding them accountable on the performance measurement system. She does not want the type of policy limiting them as they did in 1988, so, it opens the door to use GPA. They have not mandated it but are highly recommending it.

Wyvonne said that it was interesting since it comes on the heels of an HSE Specialist being asked to convert their GED test scores into GPA and we do not currently have the capacity to do so. She didn't think it was for the state of Massachusetts, but rather for another state. GED does have a certain test score level where you can bypass the Accuplacer. HiSET does not have the same matrix. She is looking at the college ready test scores.

Cliff Chuang stated that ESE is proceeding with the appointment of Wyvonne Stevens-Carter to be the permanent director of ACLS, so now he is sharing this exciting news with the AE Advisory Council also. He has already shared this information with the Directors' Council. He will be making a formal announcement once all the i's are dotted and t's are crossed.

Wyvonne responded that she is looking forward to continuing our partnering and working together.

Directors' Meeting Update

We have our Annual DM meeting May 22. ACLS did a survey of the field and received feedback on what information program directors would like covered:

- program accountability system, which we spoke at our last meeting in January 2019
- a culturally responsive leadership workshop being held by one of our own DESE leaders, Cheryl Camacho, and our keynote speaker
- LACES and Ed Grants
- CALM (curriculum on math) and MA ELPS (revised ESOL learning standards)
- HSE – what is new and coming from Michael Farma
- Leveraging Technology

- AE Input for State Plan 2020 – working on new state plan now

Stacy asked if trauma/informed care and mental health workshop was being thought about for the DM; Wyvonne replied that it may or may not happen, but it is on the list.

Stacy also asked about the session on culturally responsive leadership and whether it includes socio-economics and family configuration since sometimes the topic only focuses on race and ethnicity, and those aren't the only components of culture to affect leadership. What exactly does it entail? Cliff would like to hear more of what Stacy is thinking at a later date.

Other work ACLS is doing is preparing for a Fiscal/Data Audit; putting in place an RFR for a Multi-year system Evaluation; three applications have been received and we are in the process of reviewing, scoring, and proposing a vendor to be hired to assess our system. This was mentioned at our last meeting in January, and we are now moving forward.

Research Update - Cliff Chuang

There was information in the ACLS March mailing about this research project, and there are up to about 20 programs that are interested. We are working with two researchers who are doctoral students at Harvard, Kirsten Slungaard Mumma and Blake Heller, who had previously done an initial phase of this project for Framingham ESOL Plus program and which we presented initial results to our Board of Education in December. We would like to expand the pool of programs in the research study to demonstrate system-wide impact rather than the single program impact. There is a webinar scheduled for next Thursday, April 4th, Cliff will be sending out information on that to programs who have expressed interest on Monday, 4/2 or Tuesday, 4/2 on how to log in and other information. Basically, we are looking to see what the return of investment is for our ESOL programming, civic engagement through voting records, educational outcomes, employment outcomes, wage outcomes, and criminal justice outcomes. We are going to try to connect it to as many things as possible. Key to this design is implementation of some sort of lottery-based selection process rather than a first-come, first-served process. We are targeting programs that always have more students than seats. Whether it is through a lottery, or first-come, first-served, we are still not going to be able to serve everyone. The lottery design allows the researchers to attribute causal impacts to improved outcomes rather than wondering, or whether it just happens to be based on other factors. There will be a kick-off session for those who decide they would want to opt in on May 22 at the DM meeting. He is hoping to provide information to the Legislature and the Governor about the value of our state adult education system because the waitlists are so long and make the case to increase funding to help reduce the waitlists.

Barbara Krol-Sinclair asked if the research project can't include second generation factors of the impact on children's high school graduations, etc. Cliff said that the Framingham pilot is already beginning a parallel study of all the school age children connected to the parents and using SYMS to track, so that is part of it and that is why we need more scale.

Wyvonne Stevens-Carter noted that at the last meeting that one of the FY19 priorities was building capacity for our system, and she is happy to present a couple of items that we have on our list to do. ACLS will be rolling out our continuation application that will continue funding for those that were in our Open and Competitive bid. We are hoping to get that out to programs soon, as well as our professional development system RFP.

Wyvonne also mentioned three new initiatives based on the additional funding proposed by the Governor. ACLS is looking at 2M plus for new programs and additional seats in current programs to come into the system. We know that this money is not guaranteed to continue; if it doesn't, ACLS will have to adjust funding.

- Funding is primarily targeted and funded for Black and Latino communities and ESOL students.
- Focus on STEM programs, connections with programs doing SNAP.
- New IET/IELCE RFP – we know that we did not fund three regions this year, but we are offering funds to partner for Berkshire, Bristol and Metro North. Bob LePage sent a resource about the IT company CISCO providing training for our programs. It takes about \$20K to get the technology up to scale to run these programs. Training is free, and we sent this information out in a recent monthly mailing.

Mary Sarris asked how that would work, and Wyvonne said she doesn't know yet; we need to think it through to see if it is a match. There is money that may be available.

Toby said that to be an eligible applicant for IET/IELCE, programs do not have to be currently funded to apply for this RFP. If programs have a partner who is doing education and can do the training with a credential, then they can apply.

Kate Anderson asked if Berkshire/Bristol, and Metro North applied for the IET/IELCE originally. Wyvonne said that ACLS did not receive applications in two of the three regions.

New Workplace Education RFP coming out approximately for \$450K. There are two phases: Phase I is a planning grant to see if it is a good fit, and Phase II is for three-year funding. This may be an opportunity for adult students who are working to receive instruction at their work place and be released for a couple of hours for education.

Jeff McLynch asked about the increase for FY19 by Governor – these numbers tally to 3.5M.

Wyvonne – Wyvonne responded to Jeff that these would be capacity-building grants to support programs that may have underestimated their cost per student. ACLS is looking at a number of options.

Cliff – There will be expectations on seats and serve students to continue level funding – there is some flexibility.

Wyvonne also told the Council that ACLS is being asked about the funding in FY19, which is being audited; as programs report to us, we report to others.

Wyvonne – Policy changes are coming since ACLS was audited by US Department of Education in June 2018. There were issues with the Administrative cost. Not less than 95% of funds must be spent on adult education direct services and literacy activities; not more than 5% may be spent on admin costs (planning, administration, including carrying out performance accountability requirements, professional development, providing adult education and literacy services in alignment with local workforce plans) including state approved indirect costs. We are advocating for 25% - they are stating that we have the highest state admin cost rate. Cliff stated ACLS needs to have that rationale in the continuation RFP – supplemental not supplanted – This is a WIOA federal requirement. ACLS mixed them together.

Indirect cost and Match:

Our programs typically apply for indirect cost – previously Community-Based Organizations got 5% indirect cost cap – the 8% is in the language in the federal grants. We need to define direct to indirect costs. FY19 programs have historically been approved 20%; they were allowed to take direct **8%** on grant and use 12% dollars on their match. The Feds never allowed this. These are big hits to our programs and how they have been doing business.

Active seats

Policy Manual

Each student enrolled occupies an active and unique student seat (i.e., a seat filled by one, and only one, unique and unduplicated student at a time). As students leave the program, seats need to be refilled in order to remain active and maintain enrollment. With the exception of providers whose primary mission is to serve homeless, CALC and AECI program design must demonstrate a commitment to serving a minimum of 50 students on an ongoing basis.

Working Definition: An active seat is the measure of any unique student who attends an ESE-funded ABE class in any given month. A student who holds an active seat may or may not have an assessment recorded in the month counted.

What the data shows – ACLS will check and cross check before any information is sent out to programs.

Cliff – we have hard data and should be working with programs to ask what is happening. For example, did you actually meet the person in a seat that you were funded for? What do we do? We are trying to start the conversation; we would welcome ideas.

Ernest – a lot of people who live in these neighborhoods do not even know that there are programs in their neighborhood, or that programs even exist. We need to do a better job on reaching out and communicating about the availability of programs.

Mary asked what the issues are that results in seats not being filled. Is it transportation, childcare? She noted that the ESOL demand is very high.

Stacy said there are no buses that go to the North Shore Community College campus. Hoping all WIOA partners can help problem-solve transportation.

Cliff – If programs are not able to enroll the number of students they projected and spend the grant, we need to show programs the data we have. If the data is wrong, we will have to figure that out with programs, but we have to start with the data to determine what is happening and why regarding low enrollment.

Wyvonne suggested that we need to have a conversation on how to achieve higher enrollment numbers. There is a lot of shifting and changing with classes online. Are we changing and shifting for our students? Distance learning, blended learning; there are a lot of things that we do provide. Classrooms may not work for our students; we need to figure out how to get to those students.

How do we build capacity and how do we do that?

Meeting adjourned at 3:10PM.