

Student Success Committee's Response to The Chancellor's Directive to Cancel Pierce College Classes

Barriers:

We see a number of problems with this directive, including:

1. This directive from the Chancellor is a clear violation of 10+1 areas, specifically "Curriculum, including establishing prerequisites and placing course within disciplines; "Degree and certificate requirements;" and "Educational program development."
2. There seems to be a lingering misconception that these courses are parts of the English and math sequences. This is not the case. No AB705 students will be placed in these courses. However, we should not take away a student's right to choose to take them after making a well-informed placement decision at the campus.
 - a. English 21 -- Pre-705, this course was considered two-levels below transfer level. However, post-705, Pierce no longer has an English sequence. This course is not part of any sequence with pre-requisites. Rather, it is an optional class independent of English 101 that students who wish to work on grammatical and sentence-writing skills can take.
 - b. Math 110/115 – These were "two-level below" (115) and "three-level below" (110) under the previous math sequence which no longer applies. They are now optional classes that nobody places into. They are there to serve students who feel that they want to review some math fundamentals (110) before entering Statway as well as for students transitioning from the current sequence into AB 705 who choose to avoid skipping levels before entering transfer-level math classes. These classes are not to be offered past fall 2019, as they are to be replaced by Math 075 – a new course we designed that is also optional under AB 705 offering fundamental topics in mathematics. We are to offer limited sections starting spring 2020.
 - c. Learning Skills 1/2 – These credit/no credit courses are designed for students in need of fundamental study and learning skills within the context of reading and writing. It was never intended to be a part of the English sequence. It was briefly used as a "stop gap" measure pre-requisite for English 21 after English stopped offering 20a. However, it was never intended to be that, and the faculty have already made appropriate changes to the curriculum to meet the needs of students who want to focus on strengthening their learning processes.
3. We were provided no evidence that students were consulted in this policy decision. Students need to be a part of the conversation and the decision making-process before major conclusions are drawn about what they want and/or what confuses them.
4. The Student Success Committee, including Pierce College English, math, and learning skills faculty, are in full support of AB 705. We recognize that the current AB 705 plan will address the needs of most of our transfer-bound students. However, we also recognize that we serve all students, and as a community college, transfer-bound students, non-transfer bound students, and students who need additional support to reach their educational goals, are all a part of our community. Again, while no AB 705

student will be placed in these courses, students should have the choice to take them if they want to.

- A. Students who have learning differences and/or disabilities - One of the largest areas of concern around AB 705 is how we plan to serve our students who have disabilities, learning differences, and/or other types of disabilities that impact their ability to be successful in transfer level courses in the first year. Currently, Pierce has approximately 1,200 students registered with DSPS, most of whom do not have a goal of transfer. AB 705 addresses the history of institutional racial discrimination that the old placement and developmental sequence model represents. At the same time, it's important to keep in mind that "equity" also includes students who learn differently and/or have different educational goals. Many students who have learning differences or disabilities will thrive under AB 705. At the same time, others will choose to take courses that offer them additional support before, during, after, or instead of enrolling in these transfer-level courses.

According to Pierce College's latest SEA data, there are clear equity gaps for students who have disabilities in the areas of both "Access" and "English and math pathway completion." Thus far, we have not seen the needs of this population addressed in the AB 705 plan. Students should have the opportunity to choose courses that will help them build the fundamental skills they need. We do not place these students into these courses, but we should not take away their ability to choose them. If students with disabilities do not have access to classes to support their success at Pierce College and provide that additional support to prepare them for transfer level courses, particularly for continuing students, the campus may be opening itself to potential ADA and OCR complaints.

- B. Career/Technical Education Students - Part of the college mission is to help students gain career and technical proficiency. Up to 40% of our students are CTE students, many of whom enroll to gain a specific skill and have no plans to transfer. Many CTE students will thrive under AB 705. At the same time, other students may want to choose to take a class that covers English and math fundamentals either before, concurrently, or after taking the course required for an associate's degree.
- C. AB 705 will provide sufficient preparation for many of our students. At the same time, by continuing to offer a few of these courses, we continue to serve the needs of all students on our campus:
1. English 21 -- This class serves an important student population -- those who wish to strengthen grammatical skills without the rigors of an English 101 course. Many of these students are working adults or individuals with special needs. These individuals have a right to take a class that focuses on the skills they wish to develop, skills which are not the focus of English 101.
 2. Math 110/115 - Many students taking math 110 are registered with special services. Some have coaches they bring to class. These students usually have it as a goal to take a math class at college, or continue on with the Statway curriculum. To take away a developmental-level math

course from these students would be to take away an opportunity for them to choose to be a part of the community.

3. Learning Skills 1/2 – Many students taking Learning Skills classes have learning differences. Several are enrolled with Tierra del Sol, and some bring coaches with them to class. For these students, these courses are a low stakes (CR/NC) opportunity to learn about how to “do college” concurrently or before taking other college classes. This is the only class that caters specifically to this population. By eliminating this entire department, the college would be eliminating the only academic department designed with these students in mind.
5. With our current dip in enrollment and our focus on student retention, we need to meet the needs of all of our students. If we do not offer the courses the students want to take, students will go to colleges outside of LACCD that provide the classes they want to take.
6. This move would mandate the elimination of an entire department (Learning Skills) with no consultation and no viability study.

Potential Solutions:

We would be open to a number of potential solutions, including:

1. Recognizing that this language may be confusing for some people, explore ways to clarify that these courses are not part of the English and math sequences. There are no longer sequences, and no one places into these courses. Rather, these are courses that are offered based on the students’ desire to master the skills offered.
2. Reduce the number of offerings of these courses to minimize potential budget impact.
3. Revise the CORs so they are less confusing to people who may be under the false impression that these classes are a required part of the English or math sequences. We can clarify this in the searchable schedule of classes, printed class schedule, and the catalog that these are not pre-requisites.
4. Select a different course name (where applicable) that currently exists so that these offerings are less confusing.
5. (For Learning Skills) Offer other Learning Skills courses or Learning Foundations courses, which are specifically designed to meet the needs of populations with learning differences.
6. Conduct a viability study to decide how to best serve students who may not find the offerings under AB 705 adequate for their needs.
7. (For Math) Offer Math 110 and 115 in Fall 2019 only as a transition to AB 705 and replace them with Math 075 in Spring 2020 – limit number of offerings to what’s needed – we will have a better idea after Fall 2019.