Remedial/Developmental Writing

As a core tenant our mission, Honolulu Community College endeavors to provide higher education to all members of the community who can benefit. As an open-door institution, we must help underprepared students not yet ready to take on college-level instruction. To address this need, the College instituted a policy in 2011 requiring mandatory placement testing for incoming students, with subsequent first-semester enrollment in remedial/developmental English or Math courses when needed. With this policy, instruction was realigned to the supervision of the English and Math departments from the College Skills Center tutoring facilities.

The remedial/developmental curriculum includes three levels: ENG 9, ENG 19, and ENG 22/60. These courses parallel a series of Reading courses: ENG 8, ENG 18, and ENG 21. These courses are housed in the Essential complex, which includes three classrooms, one computer lab, a Writing Center for tutoring, workrooms, and support and retention services.

The mission of the developmental writing and reading program is “to prepare and advance students to college-level writing and reading as quickly as possible.” For students seeking the AA, AS, or other degrees, the minimum requirement for the General Education Communications Foundation is college-level ENG 100.

Part II. Analysis of the Program

Although the Demand indicator shows the Health Call to be “Unhealthy” because of a decline in student semester hours taught (item 3), this decrease actually highlights the success of the program. The program objective is to advance students out of remedial/developmental writing classes as quickly as possible. Some students put in more effort to improve their writing skills and can achieve competency faster than others. These students are allowed to advance in our writing sequence. For instance, if a student excels in ENG 9, the student can leap over ENG 19 the following semester to take ENG 22. A dedicated student also can jump from ENG 19 to an accelerated ENG 100 course (implemented in Spring 2013). The impact of this is evident by sharp declines in enrollments in the stages below college-level English (items 23a, 25a, 27a) in the Effectiveness section. Allowing students to move up in our writing sequence helps them achieve success quicker.

Also positive is the AtD cohort enrollment, which increased sharply to 417 (item 9), a significant increase above the goal of 3% a year as well as above the goal of 260 by 2015.

The Health Call for Efficiency was “Healthy,” helped by a high 87% fill rate (item 12), showing strong interest in the classes offered. The other factor is the involvement of full-time faculty in teaching remedial/developmental classes (item 14). English faculty are
committed to teaching all levels of English classes from the essentials level (remedial) to writing intensive literature courses.

In reference to Effectiveness, the Health Call is “Unhealthy,” but as noted above the decline in enrollments reflect the success of the program because students can accelerate to higher levels. In addition, the retention rates show significantly high rates, all above 85% (items 20, 21, 22). The completion rates have risen or remained the same (items 23, 25, 27), and the withdrawals have decreased (items 24, 26, 28), mostly from the strengthened and proactive retention center. The retention center calls students when they do not attend or when they fail to turn in assignments regularly.

An Essentials Lab, where students can work on writing assignments or online grammar exercises, and a Writing Center, where students can get individual tutoring on papers or attend workshops on writing skills, strengthen the program.

**Action plan**

From the 2013-14 academic year, ENG 100 became a requirement for all students pursuing CTE degrees. This policy puts an additional load on the English department. To maintain full-time faculty participation in teaching remedial/developmental courses, an additional instructor is necessary. The action plan, part of the Liberal Arts plan, calls for hiring one English full-time faculty. Otherwise, more remedial/developmental courses need to be staffed by lecturers, affecting the full-time faculty indicator (item 14).

The developmental writing program helps underprepared students progress in their education so they can graduate or transfer to baccalaureate institutions.

**Resource Implication**

Continued funds for this program, particularly for student workers who staff the Essentials Lab, are uncertain. An amount of $34,000 is needed to keep the program in operation each academic year.

The Writing Center requires $20,500 a year to operate, most for paying students who are monitors and writing coaches for the center.

Although the budget request to hire an additional full-time English faculty was deemed by the four key college committees to be high priority, there were not enough funds available for the $52,000 position for the 2014 fiscal year. Funding of the position will again be requested for the next fiscal year.