

Departmental Activities, Research Findings, and the National Trend Towards Acceleration

The following pages document some of the recent work we have been doing in the Department of Developmental Education, including a list of research findings that highlight some of our successes during 2006-2011. As you can see from the research findings below, we have seen much improvement in relevant student success rates. I have pulled this information from the NADE certification report to highlight information you might find helpful in talking with other faculty and administrators in the upcoming months. Page numbers are provided to aid you in going to the report if you want to look at this information in context.

Departmental Activities

Two assessments—the 2002 external study and the 2007 self-study—found many strengths in the developmental education program at UAF. Even before we became a department, we had well-trained faculty with common goals and objectives, providing varied instructional methods based on learning theory, assessing students regularly and giving them feedback, providing support services to both rural and urban students, and using formative evaluation strategies to refine and improve courses and services. We have a centralized program with clearly defined mission, goals and objectives, and we even have institutional support a little higher than is found at most research universities (p. 33).

As a result of these two assessments, the Developmental Education Department, Developmental Studies Committee and other appropriate personnel met to determine student assessment and placement as they relate to UAF admission standards. Mandatory placement verbiage was changed in the catalog in Fall 2007. BANNER registration blocking was implemented for Math in Spring 2008 and for English in Fall 2009. (Mandatory placement in Reading has not yet been implemented.) (p. 53).

Other work done in the department to support students as mandatory placement took effect were as follows. Our Math Fast-

show how many students didn't go on to take a college-

what we expected and targeted with mandatory placement. As for the

rather than its students. And we have seen the failure of isolating Developmental Education programming to the community college given that our students integrate developmental education courses into their ongoing course of study (p. 70).

This would cause a number of problems for the large percentage of UAF students who are nontraditional. They do not need an isolated developmental program at a community college separate from the university. They need to be enrolled in whatever program they are ready for, with developmental courses integrated into that program, and accessible on the campuses where they are taking other classes. Because they go part-time at school, often working full time and having family obligations, they need to be able to take whatever time they need to finish their educational objectives. This matches with a recent measure from the Education Department, which broadened graduation rate reporting required for institutions of higher education to include part-time and other students who have previously attended post-secondary education. The new statewide Stay on Track incentives program offers students financial incentives if they take 15 credits a semester; this program does a disservice to students who will not pass their classes if they take that many of them (we already have this problem now), who cannot go to school full-time: it sounds like a message to part-time students that full-time students deserve more incentives than they do, when really, the latter seems more correct. Measures of post-