

**Academic Preparation Initiative
Developmental Studies Redesign Project
Tennessee Board of Regents and Education Commission of the States
2007 Report**

Summary of Project

In October 2006, the Fund for the Improvement of Postsecondary Education (FIPSE) of the U.S. Department of Education awarded the Tennessee Board of Regents (TBR) a grant for the Academic Preparation Initiative (API). The API will provide a comprehensive revision of the developmental studies curricula in math and English, teaching and learning methods, and assessment strategies at institutions in the TBR system. Methodology developed by the National Center for Academic Transformation (NCAT) will be used to conduct pilots. Both NCAT and the Education Commission of the States (ECS) are partnering with TBR to facilitate the curricular revision and to incorporate the use of technology to further the goals of the project. Documentation of the process and outcomes of the project will provide the opportunity for the initiative to be transferable so benefits can be replicated in other states.

Specifically, the API will broaden access and success, and create a more affordable system of higher education for students by developing and implementing a more efficient delivery and assessment system to insure college readiness. Expected outcomes include: an increase in completion rate for students needing remediation, a reduction in the amount of time students spend on remediation, and therefore, a decrease in the amount of fiscal resources students dedicate to remediation before progressing to college level courses.

To accomplish the goal, the API will inform and build upon current initiatives in Tennessee to align curriculum and assessments between secondary and postsecondary education. The project will result in a more customized program of intervention to meet the needs of underprepared students as they pursue a postsecondary education. The development of better placement systems to more precisely diagnose deficiencies in competencies needed to be college ready, combined with modularization of the curriculum, will reduce time and resources required to complete a postsecondary program of study. More students can be served with the limited resources available for postsecondary education.

Work Progress (as of December 31, 2007)

Building Commitment and Foundation for Reform (Months 1-6)

A statewide task force is in place and has met face-to-face five times and conducted work through e-mail and conference call communications. The 18-member task force represents 14 different TBR institutions and the TBR Central Office. The *TBR DSP Redesign Task Force* has heard presentations and currently is working with data and recommendations coming from 1) the Tennessee Department of Education and their work to revise statewide high school standards, 2) P-16 initiatives, 3) the statewide Teacher Quality Initiative, 4) ACT College Readiness Standards, 5) standards established by other

professional organizations to address college readiness and 6) the work being done through the American Diploma Project.

Planning and Design

There has been systemwide involvement in the six stages of the NCAT process. To date, we have completed the first four stages: 1) program development, 2) building awareness and commitment, 3) orientation, selection and training of participating course redesign teams, and 4) individualized consultation during the planning stage. During fall 2007, TBR institutions began stage 5-redesign implementation. This is being accomplished by remodeling space; purchasing equipment, computers and software; and making administrative decisions to accommodate data collection, student registration and communications. Details of this process, including workshops, development of proposals for pilot programs, submitting applications for funding, and award decisions can be found on the NCAT website at: http://www.thencat.org/States/TN/TNArchived_Info.htm. In August six pilots were funded as follows:

<u>Institution</u>	<u>Amount Supported by FIPSE Grant</u>
Austin Peay State University (Math)	\$40,000
Chattanooga State Technical Community College (Math)	\$40,000
Cleveland State Community College (Math)	\$15,000
Jackson State Community College (Math)	\$40,000
Northeast State Technical Community College (Reading)	\$40,000
Columbia State Community College (Reading/Writing)	\$36,668
Total:	\$211,668

Abstracts of the six funded pilots can be found at: <http://www.thencat.org/States/TN/TN%20Project%20Descriptions.htm>. Each of the six pilots will be presented at the 2nd Annual NCAT conference in Orlando, FL in March 2008. All pilots will begin January 2008.

In addition to these six funded projects, there are a number of non-funded pilots being implemented. Because of the system-wide involvement and the work already given to this initiative by primary design teams at each university and community college, some institutions made a commitment to pilot a redesign of their developmental studies program with the use of institutional funds. The six funded pilots are being closely monitored by NCAT. Other pilots are being held to the same rigorous standards and monitored by TBR staff with advice from NCAT and ECS. Stage six - capacity building and scaling, will begin toward the end of the pilots which continue through spring semester 2008.

While the pilots are initially focused on improved learning and reduced cost per student through modularization and incorporation of technology, there are three Redesign Task Force Sub-Committees in place: 1) English Curriculum Revision Committee, 2) Math Curriculum Revision Committee, and 3) Assessment Revision Committee. These groups are composed of seven to nine expert faculty from different TBR institutions working to identify specific competencies that may define "college ready," align developmental studies curriculum with high school and college level curriculum, and evaluate current

and potential assessment tools and policies. Another committee to address the need for new funding models will be appointed in January 2008.

Each of the 19 TBR institutions has identified a *DSP Redesign Campus Contact*. These individuals are invited to participate in task force meetings as appropriate, and receive frequent communications so that each campus is aware of progress and concerns, and has the opportunity to provide input and feedback as issues arise.

TBR and ECS staff support the work of the task force and sub-committees through coaching, answering questions, setting up meetings and conference calls, assisting with the identification of research and technologies to support their work, and guiding the work to support the objectives of the API.

ECS has developed a web site that is scheduled to launch in 2008. Reports have been gathered with access provided to the task force and sub-committees. ECS and TBR staff provided two national presentations and another is scheduled for the League of Innovation conference in March 2008.