

# APPENDIX D

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Excerpts from  
Chapter V: Remedial and Developmental Education

**POSTSECONDARY  
PLANNING:  
A JOINT REPORT**

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**Minnesota State Colleges and Universities  
University of Minnesota**

## V. REMEDIAL AND DEVELOPMENTAL EDUCATION

Developmental and remedial education encompass both coursework and academic support services for students who need help meeting the academic requirements of the college-level curriculum. The terms “developmental” and “remedial” are often used interchangeably in practice, but the research literature defines “remedial” as work that should have been completed in high school, while “developmental” covers college-level work in a context that includes a special focus on strategies for success in college. Researchers at the University cite and apply this distinction in inquiry and practice, while MnSCU institutions use the two terms interchangeably.

Preliminary data suggests that even this distinction is too broad. Anecdotal information reveals that students take developmental and remedial courses for many reasons, e.g., often to refresh skills so they feel better prepared for specific college coursework. Moreover, as the data indicates, the vast majority of students engaged in remedial or developmental education take only one to two courses. When combined, the anecdotal information and the available hard data suggest that a deeper analysis would be useful to help system administrators more accurately understand the patterns of use in developmental and remedial education. The systems, then, could collaborate more effectively to develop appropriate solutions for the various user groups, e.g., better communication regarding preparation expectations, lifelong learning needs, immigrant populations, etc. (see Section VII, pp. 38-41, for recommendations).

Developmental and remedial courses and services provide basic academic skills necessary for successful college-level study and generally are in the areas of reading, writing, mathematics, study skills, and English as a Second Language (ESL). Developmental and remedial courses carry college credit for financial aid and athletic eligibility purposes, but not all may be used to meet requirements for a diploma, certificate, or degree. Most institutions also provide academic support programs that do not generate credits. Learning centers, supplemental instruction, tutoring, and advising programs are examples of such academic support.

All Minnesota public postsecondary institutions admit some students who have need for remedial and/or developmental instruction. Developmental and remedial instruction expands access to higher education for those students who have the ability to succeed in college, but need extra help to improve their basic skills. Some students take remedial courses because they have not taken the necessary coursework in high school. Other students, who have taken the necessary courses, may still need to take one or more remedial or developmental courses, based on their placement exam results. Many of these individuals have been out of high school for a number of years and have forgotten skills they once had mastered.

MnSCU institutions have the mission of providing open door access to higher education. The colleges are not selective in admissions and admit all students who can benefit from higher education. Consequently, a number of students admitted to the colleges are not ready for college-level courses. MnSCU colleges, with the exception of Metropolitan

State University, have the most extensive array of remedial courses and academic support services.

Universities with the mission of offering baccalaureate and graduate degrees offer fewer remedial courses. Because these institutions are more selective in their admissions, entering students are, on average, better prepared for college-level work. Nonetheless, most universities both in Minnesota and across the country offer remedial courses. In 1995, 93 percent of the public institutions in the nation, including 81 percent of four-year public institutions, offered at least one remedial course (*The Condition of Education 2000*, National Center for Educational Statistics). Nearly all of Minnesota's public post-secondary institutions offered at least one course in remedial mathematics, reading, or writing in 1999-2000.

### **Developmental Education in the Metro Alliance**

The two-year institutions of the Metro Alliance are open access, open enrollment institutions. This means that all applicants with a high school diploma or GED are admitted to the colleges. However, admission to the institution does not guarantee admission to college-level courses or entry into specific programs. To ensure that students are adequately prepared for college-level courses, the ten community and technical colleges give mandatory entry-level skills tests in reading, writing, and mathematics. Some also test for English as a Second Language. These tests, thus, serve a dual purpose: to assist students in registering for appropriate courses that will support their future success in college, and to ensure standards of quality for the college-level curriculum.

Students who lack the college-level skills are routinely advised to gain those skills by enrolling in developmental courses. The Metro Alliance two-year colleges have addressed these deficiencies through a strong curriculum of developmental courses. This curriculum is designed to take students from where they are at and move them quickly forward to college readiness. Metropolitan State University offers no remedial or developmental courses; rather, Metro State students needing developmental education are referred to a two-year college.

MnSCU College Readiness Tests reveal a large-scale lack of preparation to do college-level work on the part of entering students:

- 85 percent of new entering students are not ready for college-level mathematics
- 43 percent of new entering students are not ready for college-level writing.
- 24 percent of new entering students are not ready to read at the college level.

These results are for all students, including recent high school graduates and older, adult students. Over the years the results have remained consistent. The numbers for Metro Alliance two-year institutions parallel those elsewhere in Minnesota and in the nation. These results are similar for all students, including recent high school graduates and older, adult students.

Century College and Inver Hills Community College are meeting with high schools in their service area to identify and work on strategies to improve student success from pre-K through college. The meetings have involved principals, college administrators, counselors, and high school and college faculty members. However, most of the entering students in Metro Alliance two-year colleges are not recent high school graduates. The average age for students entering metro colleges is between 26 and 29 years.

### **The Role of the University's General College**

The University founded General College (GC) in 1932 to study the typical college student of the time and develop an appropriate educational experience for those who probably would not complete four years of postsecondary study. For more than 50 years, the college evolved to meet the changing needs of a range of students seeking access to higher education through the University of Minnesota. In January 1986, the regents of the University approved the discontinuance of the college's baccalaureate and associate degree programs by summer 1991, and the phasing out of its certificate programs by 1988.

These changes reflect the University's commitment to mission differentiation and underscore the important role General College plays in fostering academic success for all students. GC enrolls students who require special preparation because of personal circumstances or previous education. It has a special mission to support first-generation and urban students. GC also supports students from colleges across the University by administering a variety of services that affect the educational experience of many students (e.g., TRIO, child care grant program, Upward Bound), as well as by providing developmental assistance to students who are admitted to other colleges but who need special support in certain areas (particularly math).

Under its new mission, the college faculty and staff concentrate their full attention and research on the preparation of students for transfer to schools and colleges of the University and other higher education institutions. Over the past ten years, GC has raised its admission standards to try to admit those students who have the best chance of succeeding in a research university environment. Except for a limited set of remedial courses in mathematics, all General College courses carry full University credit toward graduation. While continuing to provide access for a range of students who might otherwise not qualify for admission to the University of Minnesota-Twin Cities campus, it has paid close attention to the qualities and characteristics that will predict student success, and has used that information to help select the students with the greatest potential. At the present time, enrollment is limited to 850 new freshmen (down from a high of 971 in 1999), and in the future GC will severely curtail its admission of students with an AAR score (a combination of high school class rank and ACT score) of less than 70.