

Academic Policy Brief OAA-20-01

Phasing Out Remedial Education in Favor of Co-Requisite Courses

September 16, 2020

Dear Provosts:

As we start a new school year under unusual circumstances, I write to reaffirm our commitment to phase out traditional, stand-alone remediation by fall 2022. Both the Chancellor and I have spoken about this goal publicly and CUNY has recently referenced it in [publication](#). Although the transition to remote learning and the conditions of the ongoing pandemic have created many challenges for our University, we should not let them derail the substantial progress and investments we have made in improving developmental education. Since the Developmental Education Reform Task Force released its recommendations in 2016, CUNY has invested over \$8 million dollars in funding from the City of New York and Strong Start to Finish (see recent CUNY [case study](#)) to reform developmental education. To make the most of the investment, we should continue with this work over the coming year, focusing on creating the best course structures for our students and their learning experiences.

I realize that I write to you at a time of rapidly shifting demands and great uncertainty about our budget, enrollments, and conditions for work and study on our physical campuses. I want to thank you, your faculty, and your staff for the tremendous work you have all done over the past six months to guide us through the shift to remote learning. I know it has not been easy and the coming months will continue to make great demands on all of you. However, I have been incredibly impressed by the creativity, resilience, and commitment of our community during these difficult times and it makes me very optimistic that we can continue to make academic improvements. As you start to plan your courses for spring, I am hopeful that our new learning circumstances may even create some opportunities for innovative thinking and offerings. My office encouraged colleges to use their remaining CUE and City developmental education reform funds this past year to support migrating corequisite courses online, and the preliminary student outcomes data for spring 2020 are promising.

The Office of Academic Affairs (OAA) staff and I would like to work with you over the coming months to develop a plan for each college to fully replace traditional remediation with corequisite courses and pre-matriculation interventions by Fall 2022. To provide more information, please find the following information below my signature block:

- **Technical Guidance Memorandum OAA-20-01:** This memorandum follows the September 4, 2019 Technical Guidance Memorandum OAA-19-01, which detailed how CUNY would implement new assignment to developmental education using CUNY's

Proficiency Index. This memorandum gives more information about how students who are assigned to developmental education will receive instruction exclusively via corequisite courses and pre-matriculation interventions.

- **Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) OAA-20-01:** CUNY Developmental Education Delivery Changes. These FAQs bring together responses to several questions that OAA has received from campuses about the scale-up of corequisite remediation. These FAQs supplement those associated with OAA-19-01.

This final push for full-scale reform implementation is meant to establish a realistic timeline for reaching our goal that takes into account local circumstances.

In addition to providing funding, over the past three years OAA has also hosted summits and workshops for faculty and administrators to learn from peers within and outside CUNY who have transitioned to corequisite courses. We are planning new professional development and other convening opportunities for the coming year to assist faculty and administrators with implementing successful corequisite courses online. OAA has also provided informational support to colleges by communicating data, research outcomes, and guidance for corequisite course design and implementation. We continue to welcome your feedback and requests for additional ways OAA can support the scale-up of corequisite courses. We encourage you to continue to make use of the CUNY's existing Strong Start to Finish infrastructure for communication and reporting infrastructure for assistance.

Please share this letter and its enclosures with relevant faculty and staff. In particular, these changes may impact enrollment, advising, scheduling, and finances, so all of these college units should be consulted as you develop your traditional remediation phase-out plans.

I encourage you to reach out to me and my office with any concerns or questions that you and your team may have.

As always, I look forward to the hard, important work ahead.

Sincerely,

JL

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José Luis Cruz, Ph.D.

Executive Vice Chancellor and University Provost

The City University of New York