

**Planning for Success in Gateway Courses  
Curriculum Alignment of English, Math, & Economics  
Bainbridge State College**

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**Project category**

Planning for Success in Gateway Courses

**Overview of the Project**

Bainbridge State College (BSC) proposes to align our gateway English and Mathematics courses with the Common Core State Standards (CCSS) so that college courses build on what high school students already know and can do. Also included in this alignment process is our core Economics course, ECON 2106, Principles of Microeconomics, which we plan to offer as an ACCEL course at Thomas County Central High School and need to align with their end-of-course test. A committee for each of the three disciplines will be responsible to close the gap between the two sets of standards and assure alignment.

**Impact on Completion**

Bainbridge State College will create a pathway for high school students that enables them to better understand college expectations and transition from high school to post-secondary education. This transition, facilitated by standards and assessment alignment, should improve student success and completion of gateway courses.

### **Potential Lessons to be Learned**

Completion of this project will provide the College, and other USG institutions, with important information about developing aligned instruction and the various administrative, collaborative, and pedagogical issues to be solved. Whatever the outcome of the project, there should be much to be learned about how to proceed with similar projects on our campus or any campus in the USG system.

### **Area of Need and Defined Potential Impact on Completion**

Applications from our 12-county area high schools have declined by 16% in the last three years. In addition, 16.5% of our full-time Associate of Arts (AA) majors completed 150% of the required credit hours for their degree. We believe we can reverse this trend by better aligning our core courses with high school standards and by building better relationships through working closely with high school faculty and advisors on this project. Aligning gateway courses will provide a smooth transition for high school students into college-level work and will motivate them to further success as they continue working on a degree.

### **Connection to the Campus Completion Plan**

Our CCG plan calls for us to demonstrate learning continuity to students by connecting college coursework with key concepts and assessment methods in the high school curricula for a seamless transition. In addition, we are working to increase campus-wide involvement in partnerships designed to improve preparedness for college, such as expanding dual enrollment opportunities and STEM partnerships in Decatur, Seminole, Miller, and Early Counties. Our planned mentoring program will connect our students in the Honors Program and in honor societies with high school students in Decatur, Seminole, Grady, and Early counties and will be further enhanced by curriculum alignment. This spring we will begin offering remote COMPASS diagnostic testing at high schools in four counties and sharing diagnostic data with the high school. This activity will be further enhanced by aligning curriculum that better prepares students for college-level work and helps decrease time to completion as students exempt Learning Support needs through early remediation at the high school level.

These strategies will build continuity and familiarity for students since preparation for the transition will begin in high school. As a result, we expect an increase in course completion ratios and a decrease in the program completion hours.

### **Professional Development Model to be Employed**

The task of aligning the current BSC English, Math, and Economic standards with the CCSS standards will be accomplished by one core team that will be subdivided into three discipline-specific teams. The core team will comprise the Dean of Arts and Sciences, the Instructional Coordinator for Arts and Sciences, the Director of

Learning Support, faculty representing English, Math, and Economics disciplines, and a P-12 standards expert from Decatur County High School who was our partner at the last summit. Faculty involvement will assure ownership of the changes and will also facilitate autonomy in the discipline-specific decisions. Our Director of Learning Support is involved because of our high percentage of non-traditional learners (58%) who have been out of high school five or more years. Therefore, this project will pave the way for us to begin work to align our Learning Support classes with our gateway classes.

**Potential for Lessons Learned and Models for Other Institutions**

The faculty charged with aligning BSC English, Math, and Economics standards with the CCSS will engage in and develop transitional curriculum working in partnership with high school teachers, a rich field for lessons in collaboration, pedagogy, and consensus.

**Major Project Phases**

| PHASE                                 | DATES                       | DESCRIPTION  |
|---------------------------------------|-----------------------------|--|
| Phase 1<br>Project Planning           | July 1 to<br>August 1       | During this time, the core committee and the discipline specific sub-committees will be formed. The sub-committees will familiarize themselves with CCSS and the current BSC standards for their respective disciplines.   |
| Phase 2<br>Standards<br>Alignment     | Fall semester,<br>2013      | In this phase, CCSS and BSC standards and assessments will be aligned as the teams work together and with our high school partners.  |
| Phase 3<br>Implementation<br>Designed | Spring<br>semester,<br>2014 | The P-12 CCSS expert will review the newly aligned BSC standards and assessments, and will work with the subcommittees to realign as necessary. Syllabi will then be revised to incorporate the newly aligned standards and assessments. Full-time and part-time faculty will be trained on the newly aligned standards and methods of assessment. |
| Phase 4<br>Implementation             | Summer<br>semester,<br>2014 | The new curriculum is implemented.   |

**Goals and Objectives**

The initial goal for Summer, 2013 is to identify committee members for English, Math, and Economics subcommittees and hold a planning meeting. The goal for

Fall, 2013 is that the sub-committees will familiarize themselves with the CCSS and current BSC standards, identify the gaps between the two sets of standards, and begin the alignment process. Spring of 2014 will see the completion of the standards alignment process followed by a review. English, Math, and Economics faculty (both full-time and part-time) not on the sub-committees will be trained on the newly aligned standards and methods of assessment. The year-long project will culminate with the administration and completion of a process evaluation survey and the analysis of the survey results.

| <b>Goal</b>   | <b>Indicators of success</b>   |
|---|--|
| Standards and assessment are aligned.                       | Review of standards and assessments deems them aligned.  |
| New curriculum and assessments are used in gateway classes. | Faculty trained on the newly aligned standards and methods of assessment.  |
|   | Review of syllabi demonstrates implementation of new standards and assessments.  |
| Student success and completion is improved.                 | Increase in course completion ratios for gateway courses and a decrease in the program completion hours for AA and AAS degrees |

#### Data Sources for Evaluation

Evaluation of the process (through surveys and focus groups) will be implemented in Summer, 2014. The student success rate as measured by comparison of pass rates of aligned courses (compared to past English, math, and economics courses) will be conducted beginning after implementation in the Summer of 2014. In addition, training sessions for faculty will be assessed for continuous improvement.

#### **Consideration for Sustainability**

The alignment of standards and assessment in these three courses will provide BSC and the USG with a working model that can be used or improved to align other courses. BSC is committed to creating a process that faculty will use to contribute to the success of our students.