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# High School-to-Postsecondary Connections and Postsecondary Readiness

Andrea Venezia

Associate Professor & Associate Director,  
Institute for Higher Ed Leadership & Policy

California State University, Sacramento

March 23, 2013

# Structure of presentation

- I. History of the separation between K-12 and postsecondary
- II. Policy levers to connect the systems
- III. Drilling in on assessment and placement: One-Shot Deal report
  - a. Research questions
  - b. What did we do?
  - c. What did we find?
  - d. Dissemination and Impact

# Historical Disconnect

- Greater separation between secondary and postsecondary than in most countries.
- Curricula and assessments developed separately.
- Governance is completely separate between systems.
- Often difficult to track students across systems (disconnected data systems).
- Finance is separate.
- Few incentives for collaboration.
- Many programmatic efforts in place, few systemic approaches.

# What Happens Once Students Start in Community College? One-Shot Deal: Main Questions

- What are the current assessment and placement policies in California's community colleges?
- What did students know about assessment and placement policies and practices prior to entering into a community college in California (retrospectively)?
- How do students experience those policies and practices?
- What kind of variability is there regarding policies/practices and students' knowledge/experiences?

# What did we do?

- Review of five community colleges' assessment and placement materials and websites
- Focus groups with students at five community colleges (28 focus groups, 257 students)
- Community college counselor interviews (N=12)
- Survey of matriculation officers statewide (N=73)

# What did we find?

- Students view matriculation as a one shot deal
- High school preparation:
  - Low expectations
  - Lack of information about community colleges
- Assessment of incoming students:
  - Uninformed about assessments and unaware of content and format
  - Unaware of stakes

# Findings, continued

- Counseling
  - High student-counselor ratios
  - Long wait lines and limited attention
  - More satisfaction with dedicated programs
- Post-assessment confusion
  - Uneven enforcement of rules
  - Inconsistent policies across colleges
  - Lack of clarity about retake policies
  - Confusion about “multiple measures”
  - Student frustration and impact on aspirations

# Framing of the recommendations

“These recommendations are directed...toward ensuring that more students experience components of matriculation not as a series of one-time, disjointed events, but more as an integrated process that engages students in early preparation activities; provides practice tests and early diagnostic assessments; offers tailored online support, guidance, and career and educational planning, as well as in-person individual counseling; provides course placement through transparent policies and practices that students understand; and offers accelerated opportunities for students to fill specific academic gaps and otherwise complete basic skills more quickly.”



# Recommendations: Work Across K-12 and Community Colleges

- Early outreach to middle and high schools
- Connecting high schools and community college curricula
- Sending clear messages (requires uniformity)

# Recommendations: Experiment with Innovations

- Diagnostic assessments
- Counseling practices (electronic/online)
- Boot camps
- Developmental education models

## Contact information:

Andrea Venezia

[venezia@csus.edu](mailto:venezia@csus.edu)

One-Shot Deal can be accessed at:

[www.wested.org/online\\_pubs/OneShotDeal.pdf](http://www.wested.org/online_pubs/OneShotDeal.pdf)