

**Ronald McNair Disadvantaged Student Program FY 2010-2011  
Program Narrative**

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## Statement of Need

In the early years of the Haughey First Year Program, college admission standards were raised from a minimum high school GPA of 2.70 (1998 and 1999), to a minimum 2.90 (2000), and in 2001 to the current requirement of 3.00 on 16 college preparation units. With the admission standard as a filter through which outcomes can be viewed, some encouraging trends emerge. Among these trends are freshman to sophomore persistence as indicated by the percentage of students who are enrolled as of the third semester census date.

Since the Haughey Program has come into full effect, persistence of all students at Bridgewater State College (BSC) has increased, rising from 69% for the Fall 1999 entering class to 80% for the Fall 2007 entering class. For special admits and students with documented disabilities, persistence among those who entered in 2007 (defined as percentage of students who complete their third term) was 75% and 78%, respectively. Among students with disabilities who participated in the pre-college workshop, however, the rate of first to second year persistence was 88%. Such improvements suggest that the series of mandatory contacts, array of programs, and systematic delivery of academic support services have had a marked impact on the transition success of BSC students. The campus is equally interested in whether a strong emphasis on the transition to college of first year students positions them for success and persistence into and beyond the third college year. Third year persistence for the class entering in 1998 was 83%, but has risen to 89% for the 2006 entering class and the six year graduation rate has reached 51%.

Observed outcomes associated with recent targeted course initiatives through which development of college-level reading, writing, and math skills and a successful transition to college are supported also serve to reinforce the commitment to the model. Outcomes specific to targeted Writing I through which developmental reading and writing needs are addressed reveal that students in targeted sections pass the course at nearly the same rate as students who earn placement in regular Writing I (see Table 1).

**Table 1: Targeted ENGL101 D/F/W/IN Rates Compared to Rates in Regular ENGL101 Sections**

Semester	TENGL101 D/F/W/IN	D/F/W/IN in subsequent ENGL102	Regular ENGL101 D/F/W/IN	D/F/W/IN in Subsequent ENGL102
2005F	18%	17%	16%	16%
2006F	19%	25%	15%	15%
2007F	12%	17%	12%	15%
2008F	8%	17%	15%	15%

Of equal interest is the question of how students who completed targeted sections fare in subsequent Writing II, a course that is not systematically supported by attached learning assistance. These results are also displayed in **Table 1**.

Another initiative, begun in 2005, aims to address the learning challenges of students who declare majors that require calculus. The model of this effort is to identify students with Accuplacer Elementary Algebra scores that indicate need for developmental mathematics, in preparation for enrollment in pre-calculus. Enrollment in targeted sections of FRSK 102 Freshman Skills Math affords these students a curriculum that covers all skills and knowledge considered prerequisite to pre-calculus study, as well as the support of an undergraduate math coach who facilitates weekly group study sessions. Students who present Accuplacer Elementary Algebra scores nearer to the cut score required for regular placement in pre-calculus enroll in targeted sections of that course and also benefit from the support of a math coach. The grade outcome results for these targeted sections, compared to outcomes among all unsupported course sections are displayed in Table 2.

**Table 2: Targeted FRSK 102 and MATH 100 D/F/W/IN Rates Compared to Rates in Regular FRSK 102 and MATH 100 Sections**

<b>Semester</b>	<b>TFRSK 102 F/W</b>	<b>Regular FRSK 102 F/W</b>	<b>TMATH 100 D/F/W/IN</b>	<b>Regular MATH 100 D/F/W/IN100 D/F/W/INATA</b>
<b>2005F</b>	19%	15%	35%	50%
<b>2006F</b>	27%	21%	47%	27%
<b>2007F</b>	14%	19%	28%	31%
<b>2008F</b>	5%	18%	18%	31%

Current efforts in AY2009-2010 include 12 fall semester course sections of targeted ENGL 101, serving about 240 students, 7 fall semester course sections of targeted math sections with emphasis on improvement of program effectiveness, and a pilot section of targeted MATH 110 Statistics designed to deliver learning assistance to students with declared majors that require successful completion of statistics for progress in the major. Of the 31 students offered placement in this supported section of statistics, 45% are first generation college goers, low-income, and/or students of color. A successful pilot of the model of attaching learning assistance to this gateway course will inform future planning regarding ways of better supporting the transition to college and rigorous majors for students from underserved populations. Continued McNair funding will significantly support the ability of the Academic Achievement Center to enhance/launch and sustain these innovative approaches to ensuring full educational access for our students.

## Program Description

BSC sponsors a series of new student orientation sessions considered mandatory for every beginning first year student. Requiring orientation attendance guarantees the advising program excellent access to students prior to matriculation. Students participating in orientation complete mandatory placement testing in reading, writing, and mathematics. And during orientation, two advising sessions are conducted by faculty advisors with the assistance of student orientation leaders and academic counselors (graduate assistants) from the Academic Achievement Center (AAC). These sessions are designed to systematically prepare new students for the process of building a first semester course schedule. Special placements in courses with attached learning assistance are facilitated through advising, and attention is given to providing students an understanding of how to successfully manage their academic lives.

Prior to the start of fall semester, students with documented disabilities are invited to participate in a two-day, residential, pre-college workshop designed to launch their college experience in a highly supported way. Participating students benefit from a variety of workshops focused on understanding self, learning techniques for successfully managing time and the academic demands of college, becoming further aware of and familiar with campus resources and geography, and a meaningful opportunity to form friendships with new classmates and peer leaders who support the program.

Over the past several academic years, the Haughey First Year Program has launched efforts to use entry assessment and admission standing to identify students at-risk or likely to experience a challenging transition to college. The model involves collaborations between faculty instructors and the faculty directed learning assistance services of the AAC. Specifically, such collaborations give permission for students with academic risk, as identified by admission standing and/or entry assessment of reading, writing, and/or mathematics skills, to be placed in targeted sections of courses to which focused learning assistance is attached. Thus, students who are deemed at-risk in the areas of reading or writing enroll in sections of Writing I that require participation in a weekly book club, a weekly supported group study session, and an individual session each week with an undergraduate writing fellow. Through this initiative, all Bridgewater State College students have the opportunity to earn college credit for writing I, even when developmental needs in reading and writing exist. Those who deliver the learning assistance are trained and supervised by faculty directors of learning assistance services (Study and Research or the Writing Studio). Students in targeted ENGL 101 placement also receive additional individual academic advising contact with their assigned first year advisor. Through these advising contacts, needs for tutoring to support success in other first semester courses is assessed with referral to tutoring services facilitated, as needed.

Students who place in pre-college mathematics who are in majors that require calculus enroll in sections of the prescribed course to which undergraduate math coaches are attached. Math coaches also support sections of targeted pre-calculus and statistics in which students with entry assessment scores somewhat below what is required for enrollment in regular sections are placed. Math coaches are trained and supervised by the faculty director of Math Services within the AAC. All students in special math and statistics placement also receive additional individual advising contacts with their assigned first-year advisor. Through these advising contacts, needs

for tutoring to support success in other first semester courses is assessed with referral to tutoring services facilitated, as needed.

During the first college semester, beginning first year students participate in a series of three mandatory advising contacts. Each contact must occur in sequence, to ensure that each student has opportunity to learn skills and knowledge prerequisite for the next session in the sequence. The first, Large Group advising happens during the third and fourth weeks of classes, a timeframe chosen because students will by that time have received some feedback about their academic performance via quizzes and exams. A team of personnel, each of whom teaches the content related to a stated objective, presents Large Group sessions. Students who attend a session of Large Group advising are eligible to attend a session of Small Group advising. Those who fail to attend must complete a make-up session before moving on to the next advising step.

Small Group advising brings students together by-major with their assigned faculty advisor and other staff members. Separate sessions are sponsored for students with an undeclared major. The focus of these sessions is on teaching graduation requirements and skillful use of tools such as the degree audit, the schedule of classes, and the catalog, all of which allow students to assess their academic progress and make informed decisions.

Students who fulfill this requirement are eligible to meet individually with their faculty advisor to finalize course selection for the upcoming semester. This meeting is also an opportunity for faculty advisors to explore with each student, his/her academic experience and to encourage active utilization of support services, as needed. Again, it is important to note that first year advisors routinely monitor the semester experience of all students in special course placements in the interest of discerning early any transition challenges and unmet needs for learning support.

A final enhancement to the initial first year advising program is the inclusion of programming for students who do not thrive in the first semester and enroll for a second semester on academic probation. This program involves continued group and individual academic advising and concerted efforts to connect students with appropriate campus resources (e.g., Career Services, Counseling Center, and various learning assistance services) to provide maximum support as students strive to achieve good academic standing.

## Program Objectives and Projected Outcomes

Specified learning outcomes are the focus of mandatory advising contacts, the pre-college workshop for students with disabilities, and focused delivery of learning assistance for students with entry assessment results that indicate academic risk. **Table 3** displays the program objectives for each component of the first year program.

**Table 3: Measurable Program Objectives**

Component	Objectives
Pre-College Workshop for Students with Disabilities <b>[September]</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Student learns about his/her preferred learning style</li> <li>2. Student assesses his/her learning skills</li> <li>3. Student learns about available academic support</li> <li>4. Student learns about the college experience from continuing BSC students</li> </ol>
First Year Advising (5 mandatory contacts) <b>[June – December]</b> <b>[January – May if on academic probation]</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Student learns how to locate information about BSC policies and processes.</li> <li>2. Student learns about general education requirements, major requirements, prerequisites, and related course information</li> <li>3. Student learns ways to make full and effective use of the course offering bulletin, catalog, and other tools for course selection</li> <li>4. Student learns how to assess academic performance using course syllabi</li> <li>5. Student learns BSC academic standing policy, graduation requirements, and requirement for Dean’s List distinction</li> <li>6. Student learns how to calculate a grade point average</li> </ol>
Individual Academic Counseling <b>[September – December]</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Student develops a learning plan outlining support services to be used during a given semester</li> <li>2. Student meets regularly with an academic counselor or academic advisor throughout each semester for on-going assessment of academic support needs</li> <li>3. Student participated in on-going academic advising focused on establishing life and career goals, a sense of social and intellectual fit in college, and selection of major/minor</li> </ol>
Targeted Writing I placement when ACCUPLACER Reading <68 and SAT-V <500 <b>[September – December]</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Student practices strategies for successfully completing college level reading tasks</li> <li>2. Student practices strategies for successfully managing time</li> <li>3. Student practices strategies for successfully preparing for and taking college exams</li> <li>4. Student practices strategies for monitoring academic performance across his/her curriculum</li> </ol>
Targeted pre-college math placement when ACCUPLACER EA <60, SAT-M <540, and Calculus required in major <b>[September – December]</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Student learns mathematics skills prerequisite to success in pre-calculus</li> <li>2. Student learns strategies for successful mathematics learning</li> <li>3. Student practices strategies for successfully managing time</li> <li>4. Student practices strategies for successfully preparing for and taking college exams</li> <li>5. Student practices strategies for monitoring academic performance across his/her curriculum</li> </ol>

Component	Objectives
Targeted precalculus math placement when ACCUPLACER EA 61 - 81, SAT-M <540, and Calculus required in major <b>[September –December]</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Student learns mathematics skills prerequisite to success in calculus</li> <li>2. Student learns strategies for successful mathematics learning</li> <li>3. Student practices strategies for successfully managing time</li> <li>4. Student practices strategies for successfully preparing for and taking college exams</li> <li>5. Student practices strategies for monitoring academic performance across his/her curriculum</li> </ol>
Targeted Writing I placement when writing sample indicates pre-college writing and SAT-V <500 <b>[September – December]</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Student learns strategies for successfully completing college-level writing tasks</li> <li>2. Student practices strategies for successfully managing time</li> <li>3. Student practices strategies for successfully preparing for and taking college exams</li> <li>4. Student practices strategies for monitoring academic performance across his/her curriculum</li> </ol>
Targeted statistics placement when ACCUPACER EA 61-81, SAT-M <540, and statistics required in major. <b>[September-December]</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Student learns strategies for successfully mastering statistics course content</li> <li>2. Student practices strategies for successfully managing time</li> <li>3. Student practices strategies for successfully preparing for and taking college exams</li> <li>4. Student practices strategies for monitoring academic performance across his/her curriculum</li> </ol>
Content tutoring <b>[September – December]</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Students access group and/or individual tutoring as needed to support mastery of content courses across the first-year curriculum</li> </ol> <p>[Emphasis will be on working with BSC science departments to identify the skills and knowledge prerequisite to success in introductory courses and designing methods of systematically delivering learning assistance to students enrolled in high-risk science courses.]</p>

## Implementation Plan and Program Activities

Direct programs for students will continue to be implemented as part of the comprehensive first-year advising program at BSC. Using the results of the mandated entry assessments in reading, mathematics, and writing completed at New Student Orientation, students with indicators of academic risk are identified for placement in an appropriate course with imbedded learning assistance, and helped to complete appropriate registration.

Collaborations with the Department of Mathematics and the Department of English have flourished over the past couple of years and have now expanded to include sufficient course sections to accommodate all beginning first-year students for whom placement in either targeted math or targeted writing is indicated. In this way, all students from educationally disadvantaged backgrounds and all students with documented disabilities are provided special writing and math placements with attached learning assistance and additional academic advising, when deemed appropriate by entry assessment, thus aligning this project with the priorities for McNair funding.

Following New Student Orientation and registration, students with documented disabilities are recruited to participate in a pre-college workshop. This two-day experience leads participants into their first college semester and continued involvement with the staff of the AAC, there

assigned faculty advisor, participation in the learning assistance program imbedded in a first semester course, and the full range of academic support resources.

## Program Evaluation

The AAC is committed to evaluating its programs and services in an effort to guarantee that student success and enrollment persistence is supported in meaningful ways. Routine collection of data at the end of each semester informs decisions about the value of various facets of the program and guides decisions about necessary modifications. The data collection and evaluation plan is presented in **Table 4**.

**Table 4: Evaluation Plan**

<b>Plan for Evaluating Program Effectiveness</b> <i>(December – January) &amp; (May – June)</i>
1. Students’ persistence in school and progress toward degree will be assessed through collection of data including credit hours attempted, credit hours earned, semester grade point average, cumulative grade point average, and enrollment for succeeding semester.
2. The academic success of students will be assessed through collection of data including academic standing (good standing, probation, separation) and comparisons with like data for the entire undergraduate population.
3. Annual assessments of students’ success and satisfaction will be used to evaluate program effectiveness and to inform programmatic change.