Promising Pathways:
The Potential of High School Data to Spur Student Progress and Achievement

John J. Hetts
Director of Institutional Research
Long Beach City College
@jjhetts
Three goals

• Initiate reflection on student transition
• Briefly explain our research
• Introduce results of implementation of research as part of first cohort of the Long Beach City College Promise Pathways in F2012
Transition to College: Assessment and Placement

• CCCs are open enrollment institutions
  – Requires assessing and planning for educational needs of students.

• Most rely largely, if not entirely, on standardized assessment
  – Ease of administration
  – Transparency of administration
  – Impartiality of administration
  – Pre-approval
Consequences for student transition

• **Most** students placed into basic skills
  – **Significant** barrier to completion

• Colleges’ **first** interaction with most students is to tell them they’re not ready for college

• Implies that most students are not ready for college and are likely to fail
  – Convinces many, including students
Conventional Wisdom
Explaining Assessment Results

• It is a problem with today’s students
  – Students are simply, vastly unprepared for college
  – Kids these days ....

• It is a problem with public education
  – Public education is failing to prepare high school students
  – Teachers these days...
What If the Conventional Wisdom is Wrong?

- Substantial, long-term increase in IQ:

- 18-24 with HS degree: 90% - highest ever:

- National Assessment of Educational Progress: at highs in virtually every demographic category

- Research increasingly questions effectiveness of standardized assessment for placement
Bigger questions

- What if the problem is not with our students, but with how we have assessed their capabilities?

- Alternatively, what if the biggest barrier to our students’ successful transition to college is one that we have created and that we control?
Long Beach College Promise: Origins of Promise Pathways

- **Seamless Education**: Partnership between LBUSD, LBCC and CSULB founded in 1994

- **Long Beach College Promise**: began March 2008
  - LBUSD: Preparing students for college
  - LBCC: Promise Scholarship
  - CSULB: Local high school graduates receive preferential admission

- Despite:
  - years of partnership
  - increasing numbers of LBUSD students going to CSULB
  - improvement in LBUSD student performance on CST and EAP

- LBCC assessments of college readiness among LBUSD students not only did not improve – they have been declining.
Our research: we sought local answers to three questions

• What predicts how students assess and place into developmental courses?

• What predicts how students perform in those courses?

• How well are placement and performance aligned?
Our Research

• Five longitudinal cohorts tracking more than 7,000 HS grads who attend LBCC directly after high school
  – built with help of Cal-PASS

• Examined predictive utility of wide range of high school achievement data
  – most notably 11th grade California Standards Test (CST) scores and high school grades

• For predicting:
  – How students are assessed and placed into developmental skills sequences
  – How students perform in those classes
Alignment in English

Predicting Placement

Predicting Performance

* p < .05  ** p < .01  *** p < .001  x = p < 1 x 10^{-10}
Alignment in Math

Predicting Placement

Predicting Performance

* p < .05  **, p < .01, *** p < .001, x = p < 1 x 10^-10
Key Takeaways

• Assessment should predict how students will perform at our college
  – Standardized tests predict standardized tests
  – Classroom performance predicts classroom performance
  – More information tells us more about students than less information

• Significant opportunities exist to improve placement, student achievement, and students’ college experience.
Reimagining the Transition to College: Fall 2012 Promise Pathways

• ~1000 students received placement in English & Math using multi-method, evidence-based assessment
  – **English**: A or B in 12th Grade English (proxy)
  – **Math**: Predicted rate of success using all variables ≥ average success rate in course

• Prescriptive, full-time course load via first-semester success plan
*Alternative placement: Transfer-level Placement Rates

Transfer Level English

- 11% 2011 First time students
- 13% 2011 LBUSD
- 60% Promise Pathways

Transfer Level Math

- 7% 2011 First time students
- 9% 2011 LBUSD
- 31% Promise Pathways
First-term early educational milestone achievement

![Bar Chart]

- **Attempted Transfer Math**: 5.2% (F2011 LBUSD N=1660), 2.8% (F2012 Promise Pathways N=976)
- **Successfully Completed Transfer Math**: 8.2% (F2011 LBUSD N=1660), 5.5% (F2012 Promise Pathways N=976)
- **Attempted Transfer English**: 55% (F2011 LBUSD N=1660), 32.8% (F2012 Promise Pathways N=976)
- **Successfully Completed Transfer English**: 32.8% (F2012 Promise Pathways N=976)
- **Behavioral Intent to Transfer**: 8.2% (F2012 Promise Pathways N=976)
- **Behavioral Intent to Complete**: 62.9% (F2012 Promise Pathways N=976)
Success rates in transfer-level courses
Fall 2012

Neither of these differences approach significance, p > .30
How does it affect time to college-level work?

Average number of semesters to take English 1 by F2012 Non-Pathways Students by placement

Estimated number of semesters saved among F2012 Pathways English 1 Students by placement

1270 years of student time saved, or approximately 2.6 years per student
Could this change how we understand college readiness

College Readiness – S2012 Graduates, Unduplicated

- Adding Alternative Placement for all
- Adding LBCC college-ready (Accuplacer&Alternative)
- EAP college-ready

English: 30% (18% EAP colleges-ready, 6% Adding LBCC, 8% Adding Alternative)
Math: 27% (6% EAP college-ready, 6% Adding LBCC, 6% Adding Alternative)
What did LBCC gain through prescriptive, evidence based approach to transition to college

- **Dramatic increases** in students attaining early educational milestones, & **shorter times to do so**

- New discussion of research and instructional pedagogy, kick-starting **experimentation** and **innovation**

- **Strong challenges** to conventional wisdom and perceptions of students by administration, staff, faculty, and students themselves

- Concrete achievable steps that **any** college – can take to dramatically improve **all** of our students’ futures.
Contact Information

• Research questions
  – John Hetts,  jhetts@lbcc.edu or (562) 938—4052, Twitter: @jjhetts

• General questions about Promise Pathways
  – Mark Taylor, Director of College Advancement, College Advancement, Public Affairs and Governmental Relations,  mtaylor@lbcc.edu or (562) 938-4206
Additional Resources

• More information about our research
  – bit.ly/PathwaysResearch

• Background research
  – Achieving the Dream/Jobs for the Future summary of alternative assessment
    • bit.ly/AlternativeAssessment
  – CCRC research on Assessment, Placement, and Progression in Developmental Education

• RP Group’s Student Transcript-Enhanced Placement (STEPS) Project
  – bit.ly/RPSTEPS

• Similar CCC research and implementation:
  – Peralta CCD: bit.ly/LaneySTEPS
  – Grossmont-Cuyamaca: bit.ly/Grossmont