

Placement, Preparation, and Progress (PPP) Working Group Final Report

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Recommendations:

1. By mid-May, we anticipate recommending a contract for math placement and online proctoring services with ALEKS, a leading vendor for math placement software solutions, in preparation for a Summer 2020 launch.
2. We recommend creating a suite of one-credit, pass/fail STEM prep courses—targeting skills and concepts needed for success in chemistry, calculus, physics, biology, and related fields— for first-year students who require additional preparation prior to entry into our gateway courses. (OIRA data on DFW rates in gateway STEM courses, combined with anecdotal evidence about "killer courses" and their crippling effect on retention/progress, point to a clear need for action in this arena.) We further recommend:
 - a) that a pilot prep course—in Chemistry or another STEM field—be developed in 2019-20 by a small group of STEM faculty with support from CITL and Academic Affairs;
 - b) that the Office of Institutional Research and Assessment (OIRA) assist in articulating learning outcomes for that course and related STEM prep courses;
 - c) that OIRA assess student learning in the pilot course and in subsequent prep courses to affirm quality and improve outcomes; and
 - d) that these STEM prep courses be designed to allow for summer online delivery *and* fall/spring face-to-face delivery to maximize their usefulness to students and schools/departments.

Background/rationale:

The working group's main charge was to identify a math placement software solution. Following discussions with MAT faculty, Dave Hiebeler, Emily Haddad, Sara Henry, Robin Sherman, Peter Schilling, ALEKS sales representative Sam Hussey, and the associate deans, the PPP group scheduled an ALEKS demo for Thursday, May 9. Sam Hussey will lead it and will answer a mix of pre-planned and unplanned questions. Invitees include all of the above along with Monique

LaRocque, Gina Marquis (DLL), and Deb Allen. The MAT faculty will be asked to share a recommendation about ALEKS with Jeff St. John and Emily Haddad by May 17.

Resource information:

Jeff St. John will share an ALEKS cost estimate with Provost Hecker by June 1, 2019. Academic Affairs will then need to determine who in MAT/CLAS will serve as point person to work with Procurement, IT, CITL, etc. on adoption, training, and implementation.