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Developmental education rates rise slightly for second straight year

Higher education reforms lead to \$9.7 million in savings

DENVER – May 5, 2017: The number of Colorado high school graduates placed into developmental education, or remediation when entering college increased slightly in 2015-2016 over the previous year from 35.4 percent to 36.1 percent, according to this year’s report. That amounts to 7,838 students needing developmental education, or 366 more students than last year.

Despite the increase, the combined cost to the state and to college students enrolled in developmental education courses dropped to \$29.6 million, a \$9.7 million dollars cost savings from last year. The savings are the result of students taking fewer developmental courses thanks to significant reforms that allow students to earn college credit while receiving supplemental academic support.

Developmental education courses are designed for students who require additional instruction in basic academic competencies necessary to succeed in a college-level curriculum. Developmental education includes enrollment in traditional remedial education and Supplemental Academic Instruction.

Historically, the state has seen a downward trend in the number of students needing developmental education. Colorado’s developmental education rates are comparable with the nation and typically hover below 40 percent.

“I am pleased that the reforms adopted by our colleges and universities are showing promising results and yielding millions of dollars in savings to the state and students,” said Colorado Department of Higher Education Executive Director Kim Hunter Reed. “But we must reduce the need for developmental education. Ensuring that our high school students graduate academically prepared is critical to student success.”

Other report highlights:

- The percentage of female college students placed into developmental education was 37.9 percent, a slight decrease from last year. The percentage of male college students placed into developmental education was 34 percent, a slight increase from last year.
- At two-year institutions, 79.1 percent of African American students were placed into developmental education. At four-year institutions, 49.3 percent of African American students were placed into developmental education. Both rates decreased compared to last year.
- At two-year institutions, 71.4 percent of Hispanic students placed into developmental education (a slight increase compared to last year). At four-year institutions, the rate of Hispanic students placed into developmental education is unchanged from last year at 39 percent.

- When examining developmental education by subject, students almost equally required support in math and English.
- More than 63 percent of all developmental education courses were completed successfully, a 0.6 percent increase from the previous year.

In addition, today's revision of the Colorado Commission of Higher Education's Statewide Developmental Education Policy signals a paradigm shift in the way institutions approach placement and developmental education. Old policy suggested that no student should be left untested for possible remediation. The revised policy seeks to enroll students in credit bearing, college-level courses whenever possible; prevent unnecessary placement testing of students; and ensure students identified with a developmental need have additional opportunities to receive support in credit bearing courses.

Additionally, Colorado's admission policy was revised to permit students to meet admission requirements by demonstrated proficiency versus seat time. The Commission's Developmental Education policy aligns with the Colorado State Board of Education's Graduation Guidelines, thus providing transparent college-ready expectations to K12 students, counselors and parents. This will change the way students are assessed and placed into developmental education and should decrease the number of students inaccurately identified as needing developmental education.

The data used in this remedial report was gathered by the Colorado Department of Higher Education for academic year 2015-2016 as required by statute. [Read the complete report.](#)

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