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## **POLICY STATEMENT**

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### ***Higher Education Faculty and Staff Working in Learning Assistance-Related Fields***

#### **TOPIC: Developmental Education**

**General Statement:** Postsecondary faculty and staff working in learning assistance-related fields (e.g., academic support, tutoring, mentoring, disability support, remediation, developmental education) strongly endorse the need for developmental education courses and programs consistent with promoting equal educational opportunity.

**Specifically, that:**

- Developmental education programs and courses at postsecondary institutions are a response to a larger problem in education (such as the effects of poverty, ineffective secondary schools, ill-conceived standards) rather than a contributor to increased cost or ineffectiveness of postsecondary education.
- Although national debate has focused on the cost of college education, developmental education is a reasonable response to the current demographics of postsecondary enrollment. Current statistics reflect that 100% of public community colleges and 70% of public universities offer developmental courses [Parsad, B., & Lewis, L. (2004). *Remedial education at degree-granting postsecondary institutions in the fall of 2000*. Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics].
- Developmental education focuses on “personal and intellectual engagement,” a pedagogy of engagement that deals with the reality of students rather than an artificial “average” student. In fact, 60% of entering community college students place into one or more developmental courses [Bailey, T. (2009). Challenge and opportunity: Rethinking the role and function of developmental education in community college. *New Directions in Community Colleges*, 145, 11-30].
- Developmental educators by necessity employ creative, dynamic, and effective methods that reflect the best current knowledge about the brain and teaching and learning.
- Developmental education is the only widespread initiative at the postsecondary level that exclusively focuses on reading, writing, and math skills, skills that are universal and absolutely essential to any successful postsecondary experience.
- Developmental education incorporates courses and services that promote effective college study strategies such as time management, notetaking, memory techniques, and test-taking strategies, enabling students to make the transition to higher education.
- Developmental education is also the only widespread postsecondary initiative that attempts to address the problem of ESL (English as a Second Language) students. Failing to address ESL at the postsecondary level essentially creates an elitist postsecondary environment that privileges a select portion of the graduating secondary population.
- The annual cost of developmental education in the U.S. is about \$1.13-billion out of a \$234.8-billion higher education budget. This amounts to .048%, or less than half of one percent, of the

postsecondary budget [Pretlow, J., & Wathington, H. (2011). Cost of developmental education: An update on Breneman and Haarlow. *Journal of Developmental Education*, 35(1), 2-13].

**Therefore:** Organizations representing faculty and staff affiliated with learning assistance and developmental education in higher education support full funding for developmental education programs and courses and moreover recommend increased funding to research classroom methods and the efficacy of educational interventions. Because the landscape in higher education demographics is not likely to change soon, developmental education must become a higher priority.