

## **MNADE NEWSLETTER Summer, 2003**

### **A Note from the Editor**

This newsletter is an experiment in timing; we could really use some feedback from all of you about when you'd like to receive newsletters and how we can make the information most useful to you. We have a goal of two newsletters per year, with one following the conference and the other preceding it by some magical amount of time that is perfect for you!

Included in this newsletter is the conference registration form and preliminary program. We are sending it quite early in hopes that you can more easily plan for it on your syllabus and request faculty development funds right away in the fall semester.

This newsletter is timed to get you thinking about two interesting issues in developmental education at a time when you may actually have a moment to reflect on them! Give these two articles a read, and we can look forward to some good discussions while we are at Sugar Lake Lodge enjoying the fall leaves, an evening bonfire, and some much appreciated camaraderie!

Many thanks to David Arendale for his thoughtful article and to Susan Hipp for providing the report that Century College did on its important College Readiness study.

You may send newsletter feedback, articles, ideas for articles, or other suggestions to Linda Russell at [linda.russell@minneapolis.edu](mailto:linda.russell@minneapolis.edu).

### **Minnesota Association for Developmental Education**

Tenth Annual Conference

Sugar Lake Lodge, Grand Rapids, MN

Thursday/Friday, September 25-26, 2003

"Trends and Initiatives in Developmental Education: Past, Present, and Future"

### **Exploring Strategic Alliances and Connections**

**by David Arendale**

For many years the leading professional associations that are involved with learning assistance and developmental education have worked together informally on activities that promoted the field. Several years ago the associations created an umbrella organization called the American Council of Developmental Education Associations (ACDEA) to provide more structure to these discussions.

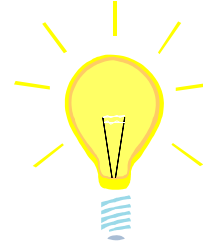
At the most recent meeting of ACDEA in Austin, TX during February 2003, the leaders from the member organizations (CRLA, NADE, and NCLCA) talked about a proposal from the NADE Emeritus Council to explore new alliances among the associations that might lead to more formal cooperative activities or might even lead to creation of a new professional association that each of the existing groups would join. These discussions have been occurring

## **MNADE NEWSLETTER Summer, 2003**

informally for many years. At the chapter level, there has been numerous examples of formal joint conferences and coordinated activities between CRLA and NADE. One of the best examples is with Texas.

The proposal from the NADE Emeritus Council mentioned that the American College Personnel Association (ACPA) and the National Association of Student Personnel Administrators (NASPA) are currently in discussions about the possibility of a consolidation of their separate associations. ACPA and NASPA has established a series of steps for exploring their potential consolidation and the implications for such an action. The proposal to the ACDEA suggested taking the best elements of their proposal for such an exploration by CRLA, NADE, and NCLCA.

Leaders from all three associations are currently reviewing the NADE Emeritus Council proposal for new and stronger strategic alliances. A decision will be made later this year whether the three groups agree to enter into the first stage of such formal discussions and explorations. There is no expectation that such discussions will lead to creating a new professional association, though that might be a recommended outcome. Before any decision was ever made, there would be numerous open dialogues and votes by the executive boards and memberships of each of the professional associations. Based on the timeline established by the ACPA/NASPA discussions, such a process could take five or more years.



### **Alignment Of High School Graduation Standards**

**With The Standards Of College  
Readiness:**

**The Century College Project**

**2002**

**Submitted by Susan Hipp**

During the 2001 legislative session, the Senate Higher Education Finance committee analyzed data on Minnesota's most recent high school graduates. The data provided details on how many needed developmental, pre-college work at colleges and universities. The two-year institutions in Minnesota State Colleges and Universities enrolled most of these students.

Throughout these legislative discussions, the dominant logic asserted that minimum graduation standard equated to college readiness. Exploring this assertion was the core focus of the Community College project.

**The Century College Project On  
College Readiness**

**For Recent High School Graduates**

## **MNADE NEWSLETTER Summer, 2003**

Following the 2001 legislative session, Dr. Larry Litecky, president of Century College, convened a meeting with 15 high school principals and superintendents from the northeast metro area. This meeting led to a project for teachers and faculty to discuss issues related to student learning/student success, including high school graduation standards. The faculty from Century College and the teachers from the high schools were organized into three work groups in reading, in writing and in mathematics. Century College worked with teachers from four high school districts; White Bear Lake, Stillwater, Mahtomedi, and North Saint Paul/ Oakdale/ Maplewood. Six-college faculty worked with 5-7 high school teachers in each of the three areas - reading, writing and mathematics.

Each of the three work groups met five times. They began meeting in February, 2002 and concluded by the end of April, 2002. Over the course of these meetings, the faculty and teachers came to agreement on a number of issues.

### **Observations And Analysis Of The Current Situation**

The major conclusion shared by each of the three groups could be stated as follows:

High school graduation, at a minimum achievement level, falls below the standard for college readiness in reading, writing and mathematics. The graduation standards guarantee basic

competence, not college readiness.

This reality was affirmed strongly by all three groups of faculty and teachers.

The question, "should high school graduation equate college readiness?" raised an interesting issue. The observation was made that high school graduation historically has never equated to college readiness. At one point in time, graduation from a college preparatory track in high school signaled college readiness. Over the past 25 years, with more high school graduates going to college, the alignment of high school to college has become less clear.

When the question, "can we improve the success of high school students as they go to college?" is asked, the focus on good practices occurs. Below are some observations about the current system which seem to inhibit learning:

- Passing the basic skills tests in high school does not mean that a student is college ready. The math and reading are tests at grade 8 levels, while the writing test is at grade 10. Since college level learning is grade 13, these tests are inadequate.
- The Profile of Learning remains a controversial approach from a number of points of view. For the purpose of this analysis, one central observation can be made. The college entry-level skills in reading, writing and mathematics cannot easily be linked to the profile. For example, mathematics learning is found in three of the profiles.

## **MNADE NEWSLETTER Summer, 2003**

- The fact that the graduation standards are under local control may mean that there really are no standards. The graduation standard means something different from one district to another, from one high school to another, and from one teacher to another.
- The culture within K-12 has shifted to one where passing tests and teaching to the tests are valued. Several participants thought students had less sense of their own responsibility for learning. Many students come to college with no experience of doing homework.
- While there are issues of misalignment in reading, in writing and in mathematics, the faculty and teachers in the reading work group pointed out that there is minimal instruction in reading in high school.
- Century College, as well as most higher education institutions, has not communicated the college readiness expectations to high schools. Within Minnesota State Colleges and Universities, the last decade has seen diminished conversation with K-12 partners.

### **Benefits of High School Teachers - College Faculty Meetings**

The five meetings in February - April, 2002 between the high school teachers and Century College's faculty were a very positive experience for the

participants. All three work groups enjoyed learning of each other's cultures. All were pleased with the open mindedness of participants and with the absence of "teacher- bashing."

College faculty learned of the substantial challenges facing high school teachers:

- large class size
- many course preparations
- student transience
- disciplinary issues, etc.

High school teachers learned of the student expectations for college readiness held by the faculty - consequences of the assessment tests, substance of the assessment tests, responsibility for homework, etc.

These three work groups in reading, writing, and mathematics are hopefully the start of a grassroots solution leading to greater student success. In fall 2002, the work groups will reconvene to propose actions designed to improve student success in reading, writing and mathematics. (See attachments A, B and C for the spring, 2002 work group reports.)

### **Next Steps**

In fall, 2002, the three work groups will build on ideas, which surfaced in winter/spring, 2002. One central category for improving initiatives involves alignment/ communication between the college and the high school. The other central category involves initiatives specific to either the high school or the college, which might enhance student learning in reading, writing and mathematics.

## **MNADE NEWSLETTER Summer, 2003**

While the work groups will address these issues in more detail in fall, 2002, several improvement suggestions emerged in the first round of meetings. The fall meetings will explore potential solutions, as well as how to implement those solutions. Here are some of those suggestions in both the alignment/communication category and the initiatives in either the high schools or the college category.

### **Alignment/ Communication Ideas**

Below are some suggestions for improving high school-college alignment and communications:

- Give the college entry- level skills tests to high school students. Determine how and when to do this. Use the computerized version of the assessment tests. Create a certificate of college readiness for those high school students who pass the tests.
- Focus on aligning the in-coming comprehensive tests taken in grade 11 to the college entry-level tests. It would be very helpful if a score in the comprehensive tests equated to a score on the college level entry tests.
- Attempt to align better the graduate standards content with the elements of college readiness. In addition, made sure that college faculty and high school teachers are teaching the appropriate content which seamlessly aligns. In a re-designed graduation standards

system, designate one level for passing and another level for college readiness.

- Create a more comprehensive analyses of high school grades, courses taken and tests scores to connect them to college-readiness. For example, the mathematics group thought a student needed four years of high school mathematics to be college ready.

### **Initiatives In Either High School Or College**

Below are some suggested initiatives for improving student success in either the college or the high school:

- Century College has agreed to participate in a project with General College at the University of Minnesota on a different approach to teaching students with skills deficiencies. The skills deficiencies are addressed in college level courses in a variety of disciplines. This approach uses supplemental instruction, tutoring and mentoring.
- High school language arts teachers could focus more on reading. Reading instruction is a substantial need in grades 4-12. An initiative in "reading across the curriculum" coupled with professional development in reading instruction for "content teachers" would also be beneficial. Reading skills are essential to do math successfully and to write well. Reading

## **MNADE NEWSLETTER Summer, 2003**

- instruction could be easily linked to study skills, as well as to critical thinking and meta-cognitive awareness. Direct reading instruction for all students across the curriculum is essential.
- Century College needs to offer more paired courses with a reading course, at the developmental or college level, as part of the pairing.
  - The State of Minnesota needs to reinstate the "reading certificate" for high school teachers to insure competence in reading instructors.
  - High schools need a strategic approach for students who have fallen 1-2 years behind grade level.
  - Counseling in high school could provide better information on pre-requisites needed to ensure college readiness.
  - The participants could expand the conversation over college readiness to include 4-year institutions, professional associations and students.
  - Century College should put information on its web site that includes up-to-date information about college readiness relative to courses, prerequisites and course descriptions.

There are additional ideas in appended reports from the three work groups. These ideas will be developed in more detail in fall, 2002. The focus of the fall work groups will be to identify improvement approaches/solutions, as well as how to implement those ideas.

*Note from the editor:* We are not running the subgroup reports (reading, math, and English) because of space, but they will be available in hard copy format at our fall conference.



**Questions about the fall conference should be directed to Dana Britt Lundell at [lunde010@tc.umn.edu](mailto:lunde010@tc.umn.edu)**

***MNADE NEWSLETTER Summer, 2003***

Susan Hipp, President  
Century College  
3300 Century Avenue North  
White Bear Lake, MN 55110