Common Assessment Initiative Steering Committee Meeting
Tuesday May 13, 2014
CCC Confer

CAI SC Attendees: Andrew LaManque, Arleen Elseroad, Jeff Burdick, Susanna Gunther, Kitty Moriwaki, Alicia Munoz, Phil Smith, Erik Cooper, Stephen Fletcher, Patricia Banday, Amanda Avallone, Kathy Booth, Tim Galloon, Jennifer Coleman, Shana Levine, Ken Sorey, Gary Bird, Caroline Durdella, Roxanne Metz, Mia Keeley, Debra Sheldon, Sonya Christian, Mary Kay Rudolph, Victoria Rosario, Darla Cooper, Louise Jaffe, and Marjery Regalado.

Opening:
Andrew called the meeting to order at 10:00 am and took roll.

Insight into C6 Consortium Work:
Jennifer explained that the presentation from C6 Consortium is for background information since they have been through a process that this committee might find helpful in developing the rapid timeline needed for this initiative. Their experiences might help guide the workgroups in their work.

Barbara Hioco, Executive Director of the Central Valley Higher Education Consortium, and two faculty leads, Ryan Jurado and Mai Decker, presented information on their experiences in developing a common assessment for the C6 Consortium. The Consortium has been around for 18 years and consists of 27 colleges, some of which are 4 year and some are 2 year institutions. A subset of the Consortium is C6, the Central California Community Colleges Committed to Change. From C6, 9 community colleges decided to participate in the common assessment project which began three years ago in August. They started out not knowing what was available and what they wanted to do, other than knowing that they were interested in looking at a common assessment that was different from what they had. The number one most important factor for them was that it had to be a faculty driven project, because faculty are the ones who know what goes on in the classroom, and what their students need. Their work began with 3 faculty leads, one from the north, one from the middle and one from the south of the Consortium region. The leads came together along with a vendor partner to lead the process. They targeted instructional faculty and other subject matter experts in: ESL, English, math, assessment, matriculation, and administration.

C6 made a decision that they did not want to bring everyone together with a blank canvas, instead they wanted to start with some guidelines as a framework: the test would be web-based and would include adaptive and diagnostic components; it would be accessible for students with disabilities; have a timeline of 2 hours; a price point; and common cut scores. Almost all of these were the same as the criteria set by the state (with the exception of common cut scores, which was a target priority for C6). They started with those guidelines and a general framework and brought together all the faculty members and specialists to determine they type of test they wanted to create. There was a long and intense process of bringing together faculty from many campuses. The faculty members worked extremely well together and came up with general guidelines for what they wanted to develop. They agreed that both adaptive and diagnostic items would be used for placement, which was different from other tests which used one or the other. The subject area blueprint criterion was developed by the faculty and test questions were reviewed by the faculty as well.

The most important factor was that the assessment was designed according to community college course standards, using CIDs and course objectives. They focused on transfer level courses which made it easier to delineate what should be included in the test and what shouldn't. The intention was for common cut scores for Transfer Level English and Degree Level Math, but since every college offers different lower level courses, there would be no attempt to determine or force cut scores for courses and outlines below transfer level. Additionally, background questions
were kept to a minimum: birthdate, name and a few other general information questions that
could be associated with the CCCApply application without duplicating all of the Apply questions.
They came up with a total of 6-7 background questions, with an adaptation that colleges could
add more questions.

The process of developing the blueprint guidelines started in November of 2012, and at that point
the vendor, McCann, was already part of the process. They decided to work with McCann
because they wanted to work with C6 and were willing to accommodate C6s' wishes. The test
questions were written by McCann, but the faculty was very concerned about the content and
form of the questions and wanted to have the opportunity to extensively review those questions.
Faculty members looked at and evaluated the test questions; they were able to actually sit down
and take the test and then provide feedback about necessary changes in test questions. The
process of review and evaluation is an ongoing one that will continue into the future. The test
framework and functionality guidelines were set up before the blueprints and test questions were
developed and evaluated. The guidelines were made known to McCann, as well as to the faculty
that were participating. The test content specifications were determined by the faculty and
subject area groups after the general test guidelines. Functionality and common features were
agreed upon, there were some elements that would be used universally, and others that could be
altered and campus specific. Background design, information and comments on the results page,
for example, were some of the elements that could be customized. Placement and local cut
scores would be set by local colleges. That common cut scores for Transfer Level English and
Degree Level Math will be accepted by all participating colleges is one of their goals. If a student
places into a developmental level based on local cut scores and then moves to another college in
the C6 system, their placement is determined by the college they change to, but they do not need
to retake the placement test. Their assessment score is transferred.

Mai explained that the blueprints were established around March 2013. So, from November 2012
to March 2013 there were series of meetings where faculty members gathered together to decide
on the blueprints. Kitty asked whether faculty review of McCann's content occurred earlier in
2012. Mai confirmed that the review process took just over a year. There were several stages to
developing the blueprints: everyone brought in objectives and determined which SLOs went with
each course; content review came afterward; reviewing the questions themselves; validation and
reviewing for bias; and then the ongoing process of evaluating and modifying which will probably
always continue. During the review process, McCann gave access to the questions online;
people didn’t have to sit there to look at them, instead they could review them at their own pace.

Why did C6 decide to work with McCann as opposed to College Board or another vendor or
institution? Barbara explained that from the beginning C6 wanted a test that could be changed
and modified as needed and McCann was willing to work with them. Ryan felt that the process
they used would be the same regardless of who they were working with, it wasn’t dependent
upon the vendor. Faculty were concerned that the intent was to change the curriculum, but the
process was built around using the curriculum to build the blueprints. In math for example, when
looking at the CID and the Title 5 update for the Calculus prerequisite, a majority of colleges had
Intermediate Algebra as a prerequisite, but they found that students in Calculus needed
Trigonometry. That information is an example of something that really helped to build out the
blueprint and the flowcharts. The ESL group, math group and English group sat together and
decided upon the different standards and the number of items per standard. They also decided
on the weight given to each standard. Barbara will send the final version of the math flowchart to
Jennifer, to share with the committee.

Kitty was concerned about having enough questions for placement for lower level students,
because it seems like test vendors tend to not address those students. If the McCann test
doesn’t differentiate between lower levels, will you be able to develop more questions and will you
have ownership of those items? Ryan thought that the main point is to find a test vendor that will
cooperate with what you want to do and not to continue working with them if they won’t. He noted
that when better options are available they should be used, like perhaps the ESL test that Kitty
has been working on. Barbara mentioned that McCann has expressed a willingness to incorporate local items, but they haven't gotten to that point yet because the test hasn't been used yet. Barbara noted that they have not done any work with Smarter Balanced yet, but they are aware it will need to be integrated at some point. Additionally, this will be one of several multiple measures, regardless of the platform that was developed, so they were aware that other elements would still need to be brought in. A writing sample was used for the English and ESL placement tests, with scoring done by McCann using artificial intelligence on a scale of 1-5. The cut scores have not yet been set, English faculty will determine appropriate cut scores for Transfer Level English.

Updates and Reports:

Pilot College Applications:
Ken and Jennifer provided updates on the progress since the last meeting. They have received completed applications from 7 colleges and they are aware of at least 5 more that are likely to come in. The application deadline is May 15th, so there may be additional ones that will come in by then. There appears to be pretty good diversity so far, and they are counting on several more applications from central and northern California. There also appear to be several that cross over with the multiple measures pilot colleges, which was a goal of the project team. Steering committee members should continue to encourage colleges to get in their applications. On May 15th the project staff will go through all of them and put them into a rubric of size, location and diversity. There are about 8-9 elements in the rubric. After the rubric scoring, the results and their recommendations of about 10 colleges will be brought back to the Steering Committee for evaluation and approval.

Workgroups/Faculty Stipends:
Ken is excited about the nominations for the workgroups, about 80 or so people have been put forward. The nominations have come from various sources including the Steering Committee and pilot college applications. The staff also met with the Academic Senate and they are putting forward their recommendations for faculty experts. Since they are hoping for some crossover from pilot colleges, they also sent the Academic Senate the names that were put forward from pilot colleges. The schedule for workgroups has been modified based upon the committee input. The new schedule adds several more meetings, and pushes the RFP process back a little further in the fall. There will be a pretty intensive schedule of meetings and offline discussions. The staff is looking with due diligence at what has already happened in California and around the nation with respect to common assessment and best practices, so they can provide exemplars and resources for the workgroups to use. The staff is also looking at Smarter Balanced assessments and others. The first role of workgroups is to put together the blueprints so that a coherent deliverable RFP can be put out. There is still flexibility to adjust the schedule if needed. After the RFP, there will be an ongoing process to hash out all of the details with the vendor.

The multiple measures workgroup will be finalized this week, with the others soon. Ken hopes to get the workgroup assignments out next week, but that is dependent upon when the Academic Senate recommendations are received. If they are delayed, there may be a hybrid notification; letting non-faculty members know that they are on the workgroup, and adding in faculty members after the results are returned from the Academic Senate. Committee members who have not yet put their names forward for workgroups should send those names to Shana, and she can pass on the ones that need to go to the Senate.

The new schedule of meetings adds another multiple measures workgroup meeting in July.

The Academic Senate has reconfirmed the faculty appointments to the Steering Committee, other than one change. CAI is still a little light on assessment staff and counselors. Debbie can help with finding more people in those categories.
Jennifer is also working with the Academic Senate and the other initiatives on finalizing faculty stipends. She provided input from the CAI discussion at the last meeting, and the Academic Senate provided input about processes and amounts. They are making sure that the faculty stipends are consistent across the three grants; then committee members will be able to have stipends and reimbursements for travel to meetings outside of geographic area processed through the Academic Senate. The funding will come from the grant budget, but the paperwork will be sent through the Academic Senate because they have the processes set up for it.

Debbie asked if there was still a need for a psychometric consultant for the initiative, and Jennifer confirmed that each group will probably have one. This is still in the discussion phase, they have a few names that have been put forward, but they probably need more. There might be a conflict between doing psychometric consulting and also doing the validation of the actual assessment, but it might be possible to get different consultants from in the same organization. Debbie will continue this discussion offline with Ken and Jennifer.

**RFI/Timeline:**
Ken announced that the draft RFI is being reviewed internally. Work was done to streamline and simplify from the previous work done by CCC Assess. It is now being reviewed at the Chancellor's Office and with the Gartner consultant, who will look at compliance aspects and best practice and they will get it back by the end of the week. At one of the next meetings there will be a workshop on ethical considerations to make sure that all committee members are on the same page with respect to how to interact with vendors during the RFP processes. This is a very high stakes issue for vendors and the state and they want to make sure that everyone clearly understands the rules.

In order to get input on the RFI soon, but not through email, so they will be having two webinars where the project staff will go over components of the RFI and have committee members provide feedback. Then they will ask members to think about it further and give more feedback later. They want to get the RFI out by early June, so the webinars will be on May 21st from 9-10am and another one on May 27th from 2-3pm. Committee members are being asked to attend one of the webinars.

The project staff is working to collect as much information as possible to inform the workgroups. They will do an environmental scan in the next week, and then get that information out to the committee for discussion as an agenda item. They are looking at what other states are doing with respect to assessment and multiple measures, as well as talking to experts and others involved in this work. The second component is renewing information from test vendors about what they can provide. The previous work was 2 ½ years ago, so the intent is to update that information with a new RFI to find out what vendors can do now, and what they can offer that may be new or different from information they provided previously. The information that is returned will form the basis for informing the workgroups as they begin work. This will give the workgroups the maximum amount of current information to work with so that they can think about what should go into the RFP that will help with the actual decision on vendors.

The intent is for all of this background information to be back before the first workgroups in content areas meet in July. The multiple measures workgroup will frame the whole initiative in a broader context, and their first meeting will be in June. The other workgroups will be: English, Math, ESL, and Test Platform. The Professional Development and Student Experience/User Interface workgroups will crossover between all three initiatives.

The project staff has taken into consideration the need to have time to for all the steps: develop the test, field test, review and validate the test, into their timeline. This is a large factor in the need to move pretty quickly. Another major factor is the interest from the legislature in seeing action and a product as soon as possible.
Communication Plan:
Jennifer explained that there are various public relations and marketing actions that are being initiated. The first newsletter with information about the three initiatives has gone out targeted to the various stakeholder groups. It provides information on the work that has taken place to date and progress to expect. Other approaches for getting information out about the initiative are also being pursued. Since the pilot applications have gone out the project staff has received a variety of phone calls and emails from various groups, including subject matter associations that want to make sure that they have representation. If any committee members have suggestions about how to make sure that the project has input from any stakeholders in the process, please forward those suggestions to Jennifer. Debbie suggested making presentations to conferences hosted by the different groups as well.

Member contact lists have been updated, including the recent addition of a new student member. If there are other changes in email or contact information, please make sure that gets to Jennifer.

Minutes from April Meeting:
Jennifer sent out the minutes from the April meeting and she has not received any corrections or changes. If there are any, please send them to her. She will then post the minutes on the public website.

Jennifer has been sending out documents for review through email, because there were some issues with the DropBox disappearing. They hope to resolve that issue going forward. The public website is for approved documents, while DropBox is intended for "in process" and discussion documents. Debbie suggested sharing the PowerPoint presentations, the Governance structure slides, and timelines from meetings so that they can be shared with others and used as a resource in presentations to constituent groups, because people in the field are hungry for that information.

Ethical Considerations Workshop:
As the committee is working through the RFI process and developing the RFP to send out, there are a number of ethical considerations that are critical for all committee members to understand. There are specific times for no contact with vendors and so on. At the next Steering Committee meeting there will be a workshop on things to watch out for; for example, don’t go out to lunch with the vendor, and other rules regarding contact with vendors. The workshop will allow everyone to be on the same page so that there aren’t any problems with vendors disqualifying themselves, or causing additional stress within the Steering Committee or elsewhere.

Scheduling:
The last face-to-face meeting was in March, and the next one will be in June. That is planned for the Courtyard Marriott at LAX, which worked well for some of the other initiative meetings with respect to in and out accessibility. Jennifer will send out a Doodle poll to determine the date for that meeting, probably in the third or fourth week of the month.

There will probably be an additional short online meeting sooner than the June in-person meeting in order to discuss pilot college applications.

Action Item:
There may be another meeting scheduled as an online call between now and the June meeting.

Responsibilities:
The pilot college application and the workgroups for multiple measures, English, math and ESL are all being coordinated by CalPASS, so Shana and Ken are the leads on those. Jennifer is the lead for working with Saddleback and with the Professional Development and Platform workgroups.
Meeting Location:
Debbie asked if the membership of the committee was pretty evenly split between north and south. She requested that if there were more members from the north, if it would be possible to have more of the face-to-face meetings take place in the north. Jennifer counted 11 out of 42 committee members from the south, or about 25%. Andrew noted that it might make sense to save money on travel by having more meetings in the north if there are more members in the north, but that it was important to also be conscientious of the fairness issue for the people who have to travel back and forth.

Caroline felt that in terms of efficiency in maximizing productivity and summertime meetings, it would be easier for faculty to travel in the summer rather than during terms when they are teaching. So, she asked that the decisions about meeting locations take faculty teaching schedules into consideration during the fall and spring, but she is willing to make accommodations in the summer, if that is the will of the group.

A suggestion was made to perhaps have the June meeting in the north, but then if there is a fall meeting to have it in the south. Jennifer thought that it would be reasonable to try to accommodate faculty teaching schedules and move forward with that if possible.

Debbie asked Tim to bring the idea forward to the OEL and EPL Steering Committees also, for the benefit of people who are on multiple committees.

Next Meeting: Jennifer will put out a Doodle poll this afternoon regarding the date for the June meeting.

Adjournment: The meeting was adjourned at 11:40 am.