

Report for the “Summer Courses” Action Team

Team members: Andrea Brian, Carl Cowen, Roger Schmenner, and Gayle Williams, chair.

Assessment of Critical Needs:

- A. Strengths:** The Department of Mathematics has an excellent course for students who need remediation in math before beginning their regular math curriculum.
- B. Weaknesses:** The charge given to the action team was to “encourage/require students at-risk to take remedial or preparatory summer courses, especially prior to enrollment at IUPUI.” The team met and discussed a number of problems or weaknesses associated with the charge:
- 1) IUPUI offers only one remedial course, Math 001. (*According to the May 2001 Agreement for the Continued Development of Regional Campuses of Indiana University and Purdue Universities and IUPUI, we cannot offer more than three remedial courses—one in mathematics, one in English, and one in the School of Education. The IUPUI English Department discontinued its remedial course a number of years ago. At about the same time, the IUPUI School of Education stopped offering reading courses, which were also remedial.*)
 - 2) Placement in remedial courses is based on the IUPUI placement tests. Students would need to have completed their placement tests in the spring semester, so that they would be ready to enroll in summer courses, but many students do not complete the placement tests until IUPUI summer sessions have begun.
 - 3) Entering freshmen are not able to use financial aid to cover the costs of summer courses prior to their freshman year unless they completed a FASFA form in their junior year in high school.
 - 4) The team also expressed concern about the possible impact on under-represented student groups. If, for example, the remedial courses were required of conditional admits, that decision might have a disproportionate impact on African American students since approximately 16% of conditional admits in fall 2006 were African American. That percentage is higher than the overall percentage of African Americans in the 2006 entering class.
- C. Opportunities:** The team members suggested the following possible approaches:
- 1) Restrict the offering to a control group—IPS graduates, for example.
 - 2) Work with the counselors in the high schools to identify students who are interested in attending IUPUI and may need remediation in math and English.
 - 3) Offer the summer courses at no costs to participants.
 - 4) Offer a break in tuition for fall semester to students who successfully complete the remedial summer courses.

- 5) Ask IMIR to do a thorough study on the impact of summer enrollment. One example of a research question is as follows: Do schools that offer a large number of summer courses have a higher graduation rate for their majors?¹

D. Threats: The team members did not identify a specific threat, but the placement testing problem was discussed by the group. The following suggestion was offered: The campus should work to ensure that math placement testing is available in local high schools, so that students who need remediation can be identified earlier in the process.

The “Summer Courses” action team did not complete its work because a campus committee was formed to develop a remedial summer plan. A copy of that plan for summer of 2007 is attached.

¹ The IMIR study is now underway and will be finalized at a later date.