MEMO

To: Dr. Vicki Riley

From: Larry Tackett

Subject: Pilot Program for Evaluating Math 92/93 Accelerated Sequence–All

Campuses

Date: 29 Jan 2012

Copies: Christina Sullivan

**OVERVIEW**

The concept of using course redesign to improve student outcomes in transitional education classes has been embraced and partially implemented at WVNCC for the past two years. The objective of these initiatives is to allow students to accelerate their time through trans ed classes, as well as improve success, retention, and college completion rates.

One approach we have tried is to offer Math 92 and 93, back-to-back in the same semester. Each class runs for the normal number of contact hours, but in order to fit those hours into an 8-week part of term the classes have run MWF for one hour and forty minutes. We have run this combination sporadically the past two years, all taught by Mary Marlin. This semester Tomas Horne, one of our adjuncts, is running it for the first time on the Weirton campus.

In addition to helping students move faster through these classes, it has proven to be particularly useful, and popular, for health care majors in that they can enter their programs one semester sooner than they could otherwise.

**PROPOSAL**

In order to determine if this delivery method makes sense for our trans ed math

students it is important that we conduct a controlled, well documented pilot study. I would like to recommend that we begin with a two semester, all campuses, evaluation of this acceleration approach. This study will look at the following data points:

* Course success rates
* Success rates for next class (MATH 108, or other appropriate)
* Retention rates
* Cost implications
* Focus group data to understand student experiences with this model of instruction

I would like to run this pilot study beginning with the fall 2012 semester, using this schedule:

New Martinsville: MATH 92 MWF 10:00-11:40 am 1st 8 wks Mary Marlin

MATH 93 MWF 10:00-11:40 am 2nd 8 wks Mary Marlin

Weirton: MATH 92 MWF 4:00-5:40 pm 1st 8 wks Tom Horne

MATH 93 MWF 4:00-5:40 pm 2nd 8 wks Tom Horne

Wheeling: MATH 92 MWF 2:00-3:40 pm 1st  8 wks Mary Marlin

MATH 93 MWF 2:00-3:40 pm 2nd 8 wks Mary Marlin

There would be similar schedules for spring 2013.

Mary has been invested in this approach since Steve Woodburn began evaluating various approaches for acceleration three years ago. Tom has expressed interest in being part of our efforts to improve our trans ed student outcomes and welcomes the opportunity to be part of this program.

I understand that there is a policy that full-time faculty do not teach on Friday afternoons so that they may attend meetings. This schedule will allow Mary to attend meetings at 1pm, when needed. Otherwise I would ask that this policy be waived for her for the duration of this pilot study.

**CONCLUSION**

As Chancellor Skidmore said at last fall’s all campus day, we need to evaluate and consider alternative methods to offer our transitional education students in order to improve success, retention, and completion rates. The current environment is not working sufficiently to produce the college graduates our state and nation need to compete in the world economy. Our Title III Grant centers on accomplishing these goals for our students by piloting and implementing new and innovative approaches to the problem. The accelerated MATH 92/93 method is one approach that has shown promise with our initial attempts. In order to know if it will truly work for us we need to conduct a pilot study that evaluates this method on all campuses at the same time, and for at least two semesters.

Our initial success of this method shows promise based on our initial, limited data. It appears to provide improvements in student success, retention, and completion rates, as well as cost savings. Will it accomplish the same results when done on all campuses, at the same time? The only way to know is to conduct a well-designed, statistically significant pilot study to determine those answers. That is the study I am proposing.