ASSESSMENT PROGRAM
UNIT PLAN UPDATE (11-21-2013) Student Services

I. OVERVIEW

		Date Submitted:	11/21/2013
Program/ Department	Assessment	**Administrator:**	Dr. Amy H. Lee
Department Chair/ Coordinator	Anna O'Neal, Assessment/LRC Assistant		
Completed by:	Caitlin Fischer, Assessment/LRC Instructional Assistant Anna O'Neal, Assessment/LRC Assistant		
Mission/ History Service provided *Brief, one paragraph*	Assessment is one of the major components of the community college process known as matriculation, which was created in 1987 by the California legislative mandate Assembly Bill (AB) 3. Assessment is a holistic process through which each college collects information about students in an effort to facilitate their success by ensuring their appropriate placement into the curriculum. Examples of this information include the student's English and math skills, learning skills, aptitudes, goals, educational background/performance, and the need for special services. Also taken into consideration during the assessment and placement process are the student's work experience, family obligations, motivation factors, and any other considerations that may affect their opportunities for success when making their course choices.		

Student Learning Outcomes (SLO's) *(or Service Area Outcomes- SAO's, or Program Learning Outcomes- PLO's)*	**Curricular and Program Assessment (PLO's):**
	SAO's: Upon leaving Assessment, students have the tools to:
	    1. Gain individual awareness of their entering critical thinking, decision making, and academic preparedness levels.
	    2. Develop an identity as COA college students.
	    3. Prepare to develop an SEP with their counselor.		

SLO/SAO/PLO Mapping to Institutional Learning Outcomes (ILO's)	As there are no SAO's as of yet institutionalized for the Assessment department, (see above), the SAO's cannot be mapped to the Institutional Learning Outcomes (ILO's). The essential functions of Assessment testing, however, can be mapped to COA's ILO's. **COA's Institutional Learning Outcomes (ILO's) 2013-14 are as follows:** As a result of their learning experiences at the College of Alameda, what are students able to do out in the world? 1. Solve problems and make decisions in life and work using critical thinking, quantitative reasoning, community resources, and civic engagement. **Assessment testing supports this goal:** By testing students' entering decision making and critical thinking ability, which provides a contextual foundation for their learning and development in this area. 2. Use technology and written and oral communication to discover, develop, and relate critical ideas in multiple environments. **Assessment testing supports this goal:** By providing an entering standard for students' written communication and comfort with using technology (i.e. computer-based testing). 3. Exhibit aesthetic reflection to promote, participate and contribute to human development, expression, creativity and curiosity. **Assessment testing supports this goal:** By serving as an entering path that begins to orient students to the COA environment. 4. Engage in respectful interpersonal communications, acknowledging ideas and values of diverse individuals that represent different ethnic, racial, cultural and gender expressions. **Assessment testing supports this goal:** By serving as the gateway and introducing entering students to the institutional etiquette of a diverse community college. 5. Accept personal, civic, social and environmental responsibility in order to become a productive local and global community member. **Assessment testing supports this goal:** By establishing self-awareness in students through providing self-knowledge of areas where skill level is high and areas where skill level needs work. This self-knowledge, when communicated in a constructive manner, can nourish students' visions for their future, and empower them to take on broader roles in their communities.

II. EVALUATION AND PLANNING

Quantitative Assessments	Narrative

| Include service area data such as number of students served by program. Include data and recommendations from program review. | All matriculating students are required to take an assessment test. |

Students test in our assessment "seasons" for each approaching semester.

Our assessment seasons last from November-January/February and from April –August each year. Students who assess between November 2009-Feburary 2010, for example, can be considered entering students for Spring 2010 (for the most part). Students testing between April 2010-August 2010 can be considered entering students for Fall 2010. The students we assess attend the four colleges of the Peralta District. Many of them (though not all) have COA as their home campus.

Total students assessed in English and Math per season/semester:

Assessment Season	Total Begun (Complete+Incomplete assessments)	Total Complete
Spring 2010 (11/01/09 – 2/30/10)	514	498
Fall 2010 (4/01/10 – 8/31/10)	1088	1069
Spring 2011 (11/01/10 – 2/30/11)	464	453
Fall 2011 (4/01/11 – 8/31/11)	1143	1127
Spring 2012 (11/01/11 – 2/30/12)	416	407
Fall 2012 (4/01/12 – 8/31/12)	886	880
Spring 2013 (11/01/12 – 2/30/13)	344	332

Fall 2013 (4/01/13 – 8/31/13)	1037	1002
Spring 2014 (11/01/13 – 2/30/14)	86	76

*Note: There may be minor discrepancies in these numbers. These totals are not corrected for duplicates or re-tests. In addition, we schedule an average of 15-20 individual assessments between seasons as requested by counselors. This is the direct data from our COMPASS testing software.

ESL Assessment Seasons	Assessment Test Appt Totals
2/01/2011-8/30/2011	174
11/15/2012-1/24/2012	73
4/24/2012-8/28/2012	162
11/13/2012-1/24/2013	119
4/16/2013-8/29/2013	207
11/21/2013	18

*Note: These numbers are the appointment totals since 2011. We unfortunately do not have numbers available from before 2011, as our use of SARS began around that time.

As it stands, we can provide headcounts per semester as well as some initial analysis of placement patterns along lines of gender and ethnic background for the last three years. Placement patterns in regards to demographics become useful when compared overall with the demographics of COA's entering student population and with the demographics of Peralta's entering student population. However, given that the current District-level data is not complete, conducting this analysis in a sound manner poses a challenge. In general, the demographics of students assessing at our campus mirror the demographics of COA's entering population.

Findings from the data as it stands are as follows:
Gender:
    1)   Overall placement patterns hold. More students,

	regardless of gender, place in the lower domains in math and in the higher domains in reading and in writing.
	In order to ascertain why, we may wish to survey students in our upcoming Pre-assessment prep course and conduct further data analysis comparisons with like institutions. Considering ethnic background and gender as variables together may reveal more salient patterns. This has yet to be approached.
	Ethnic Background:
	1) The main patterns that hold *regardless* of reported ethnicity: --Math: A majority of students within all ethnic groups place in Pre-Algebra (basic math). --Reading: At least one-half to two-thirds of students across ethnic groups place in the higher reading domain. --Writing: Significantly more students place in the top two writing domains than in the bottom two, regardless of ethnic background.
	2) In terms of conclusive analysis or further comparison across lines of ethnicity, we are uncomfortable drawing conclusions with such a small sample size and without adequate District data that could provide context. *Attached are graphs that illustrate the demographics by gender and ethnic background of the student population who takes assessment tests (using data taken from our COMPASS testing software), as well as placement domain averages and percentages by reported gender and ethnic background from 2010-2013. In order to further analyze the implications of this, further data is needed regarding patterns in placement results and student success in regards to placement. This data would need to be collected in collaboration with the deans, faculty and counseling department. The graphs on the following pages will become especially useful when we can compare the relative effect of the new assessment test prep class by ethnic student population and by gender (starting with next year's APU). With this data, analysis of the above-stated trends and hunches about causes for them might be able to be tested more soundly.

Qualitative Assessments	Narrative
Community and college relevance Present evidence of community need based on Advisory Committee input, McIntyre Environmental Scan, Student surveys	**What do we do?** The Assessment department currently conducts assessment testing in two main seasons. For entering fall students, we test between April and August. For entering spring students, we test

between November and January/February.

We make assessment appointments over the phone and in person between 9am-5pm M-Th, and 9am-2pm Fridays. We give students an appointment reminder slip, write their name down in the appointment book, check their Student ID # in PeopleSoft, and create a list of all students for each assessment appointment in SARS to print out.

We institute checks and balances by asking students if they have previously tested, if they have previously been enrolled in this college, if they have previously been enrolled in any college. If they have a Student ID #, we give them an appointment. When we check them in PeopleSoft, if we discover they in fact have taken an assessment previously, we contact them and refer them to the counseling department before re-scheduling them. Our policy is to keep students from attempting to rely on assessment as a revolving door they can use to qualify for higher level courses and jump ahead. This rarely works the way they envision it will, and it exhausts the Assessment department's limited resources.

In what ways is it effective (what do we accomplish)?
    Best Practices:
1) We meet community need in that we offer early morning, late morning, and late afternoon testing appointments to accommodate schedules.
2) We keep the front desk of the Assessment department staffed continuously between 9-5 so that the phone rarely goes unanswered.
3) We respond within one business day to voicemail messages.
4) We have a supervisor or manager available at all times during business hours (8am-5pm) to address any issues that may arise.
5) We print out assessment results immediately upon completion of the exam and hand them to the students.

6) We coordinate our assessment "seasons" as closely as possible with entering student need, given budget and staffing constraints.

7) We are able to honor our scheduling by never cancelling an exam, and we can respond to specific requests from the counseling department to accommodate students at non-appointment times up to six at a time when necessary.

How does Assessment prep students for assessment?

Currently we share with students the math and English assessment prep links on the COMPASS/ACT website so they can practice if they choose to on their own. We do not facilitate assessment preparation or practice.

In what ways could it be more effective/is it currently ineffective (what do we not accomplish)?

1) We do not currently have a system for reminding students about their scheduled assessment.

2) We do not offer set appointments in the "off" seasons. This may contribute to preventing some students from assessing in time for their enrollment appointments.

3) We do not have as much control as is ideal over setting the Assessment schedule, as we do not have a dedicated testing lab.

How does Assessment connect students to the next step of their college enrollment?

The most immediate way in which we connect students to other areas of the campus is through sending them directly to the Counseling department upon completion of their assessment. The location of the Assessment department also plays an important role in connecting students to the library resources and the tutoring services, as the LRC/Tutorial Center is run through the same desk as Assessment, and housed in the L

	Building with the library.
	In addition, students read through their online orientation before they complete their assessment test and complete a quiz which they then submit to the Counseling department along with the print-out of their assessment scores. This orientation contains information about recommended unit load, work/life balance, registering for classes, and campus and student life activities.
	Finally, when new college students sign up for their assessment appointment, we automatically sign them up to attend Fab Friday. Fab Friday is a campus-wide event hosted by administrators, counselors, and faculty who can smooth students' transitions into college life. Imparting the value of general counseling and also of Fab Friday falls to our department as we are often the first faces students see after enrolling on CCC Apply.
	Notes for the Future:
	Assessment is only one measure that the college can use to maximize student success. Counselors should always use multiple measures in a holistic fashion to determine appropriate placement. Assessment evaluations should be conducted in accordance with the mission of the State Chancellor's California Community Colleges office and best practices in the field. Testing is only one means of collecting this information. According to Section 55502© of the Title 5 Regulations, assessment instruments, methods and procedures "include, but are not limited to, interviews, standardized tests, holistic scoring processes, attitude surveys, vocational or career aptitude and interest inventories, high school or college transcripts, specialized certificates or licenses, educational histories and other measures of performance".
	These aspects of Assessment relate to our mission, but remain the purview of the counseling department.

Identify Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Limitations (from the Action Plans):

Strengths:
--Stability and accountability of program staff to administer scheduled assessment tests. Zero cancellation rate for scheduled assessments.
--Flexibility in adding test dates as needed, broad menu of assessment test dates and times on the calendar.
--High responsivity to COA environment, strategic plan developments (i.e. Student Success Initiatives).

Weaknesses/Limitations:
--Due to the high turnover of adjunct counseling staff, it is challenging for the college to provide adequate training in the area of the interpretation of assessment scores. As a result, the quality of the assessment evaluations varies and this may affect the appropriate placement of students.
--Ready access to pre-assessment prep materials is not thus far institutionalized.
--Continuous cuts in funding (addressed below) create a strain on classified staff, faculty, and student workers, which the student population then feels as well.
--Assessment testing is conducted through COMPASS software. The COA servers are in need of replacement. Should the servers crash, the entire testing system would be lost.
-- Non-matriculating students are also encouraged to utilize matriculation services. The measure utilized for assessment effectiveness is placement recommendations as they relate to actual grades received per recommended courses. The District-wide matriculation committee is examining other methods to determine program effectiveness, such as faculty surveys, student surveys, and regular annual assessment instrument cut-score reviews.   End-of-term grades do not give an accurate picture of student success due to a number of variables. Consistent multiple measures screening by counselors, need to be instituted, i.e. general student background information pertinent to college success. In addition, a unit value for placement scoring should be attached to each multiple measure question, in order to benefit from any type of quantitative data.

Opportunities:
--With the advent of new faculty in the Math and English departments, there is an opportunity to solicit new ideas into the overall mission of the assessment program.
--With the addition of one more classified permanent employee, there is increased flexibility in scheduling.
--Assessment Prep course developed by a committee headed by Trish Nelson will unroll spring 2014. This institutionalizes ready access to pre-assessment prep materials.
--COMPASS testing is available online, and this is likely to become institutionalized on a statewide level.

College Strategic Plan Relevance	Assessment is a critical element in COA's strategic direction, directly supporting

	the college's goal to "Improve student persistence, retention, and completion rates to increase student success, particularly for educationally and economically at-risk students." In addition, Anna O'Neal serves on the Budget Committee, as a senator on the College Council, on the Matriculation Committee, and on the Student Success Task Force. Each semester, she coordinates assessment schedules with the particular needs of the college, the semester, and the affected departments. Caitlin Fischer serves on the Technology Committee, the Student Success Task Force, and as an alternate senator on the District Education Committee. The presence of the supervisory staff on this diversity of committees ensures that the assessment department will stay closely in sync with the development of the Student Success initiatives (the Alameda Promise, all the bridge programs) and that its functions will stay closely aligned with COA's strategic plan. The Assessment department is critical to COA's Student Success Initiative. Assessment is one of the four categories in the statewide Student Success mandate: (1) Assessment, (2) Orientation (COUN 200A), (3) Counseling (SEP), (4) Intervention for at-risk students. Ensuring that the Assessment department has adequate funding to support an expansion of services is an essential move to make in order to keep COA in line with the Student Success Initiative.

Action Plan Steps

Please describe your plan for responding to the above data.

1. Work closely with the Peralta Matriculation Committee to establish consistent annual timelines to reassess test instrument cut score validity.
2. Develop faculty surveys as a measure to indicate whether placement recommendations based upon assessment were indeed appropriate.
3. Coordinate measures (must involve counseling and faculty heavily) for assessing how student success and retention rates by gender, ethnic background, and age compare with placement.
4. Continue to facilitate training for counseling and instructional faculty in the areas of assessment result interpretation, multiple measures screening, and overall mission of the matriculation program.
5. Continue to work closely with the counseling and instructional faculty in developing

curriculum for a 1-unit assessment prep class, pilot to be administered by Trish Nelson, spring 2014) and embedding assessment testing in "Student Steps for Success."

6. Explore possibility of offering assessment testing year-round instead of seasonally (additional staffing, as described below, necessary to deliver on this option).

Additional Planned Educational Activities

Increase Student Success:	Pre-assessment course (developed by Trish Nelson from the English department in collaboration with Math faculty, and with input from the counseling department) to be offered beginning Spring 2014. This course is designed to provide entering students with more of a sense of the bodies of knowledge they may need to master in order to enter school with a solid footing and SEP.
Increase Persistence: *Percentage of degree and/or transfer seeking students who enroll in the first three consecutive terms. This metric is considered a milestone or momentum point, research shows that students with sustained enrollment are more likely to succeed.*	The Pre-assessment prep course, as well as the integration of assessment testing into the Steps for Student Success, institutionalizes and encourages a streamlined approach to pursuit of education while still allowing students to maintain a sense of empowerment and individual direction. This should support both persistence and college completion.
Increase College Completion: *Percentage of degree and/or transfer-seeking students who complete a degree, certificate, or transfer related outcomes.*	See above.
Other:	N/A.

III. RESOURCE NEEDS

Human Resource/Personnel Needs

Current Staffing Level:		**Headcount**	**FTE Equiv.**
	Faculty (Permanent)	**0**	**0**
	Faculty (PT/Adjunct)	**0**	**0**
	Classified Staff (Permanent)	**2**	**.7 - .8**
	Classified Staff (Hourly)	**0**	**0**
	Students	**4**	**0**
	ICC/Consultant/Other	**0**	**0**
PT/FT	**Current**	**If filled**	**If not**	**# FTE faculty assigned**

Personnel Ratio:			filled		
	2 full-time permanent classified (with load split between Assessment and LRC)				
Narrative/Human Resource Requests: *Are PT faculty or staff available? Can FT faculty or staff be reassigned to this program? Implications if not filled*	The Assessment department has a new permanent classified employee this year, which has relieved some of the strain on personnel. However, the department will be required to accommodate two major changes this year: 1) year-round, consistent Math and English testing, and 2) computerized ESL testing. If the assessment schedule is required to expand to accommodate the increasing numbers of entering students and the tenets of the Student Success Initiative, and if the Assessment department will be required to in addition manage and administer the computer aspect of the ESL testing as well as the Math and English appointments they already manage, the department will require: 1) another FT classified clerical employee to administer the expanded test schedule (this person's time would be set at 100% assessment work), and 2) a dedicated budget for two additional student clerks per scheduled test (this would amount to between two-four new student workers depending upon test schedule frequency/overlap; each of these student clerks in addition to the classified clerical would dedicate 100% of their time to assessment work). Without these additions, we will not be able to meet the demands of an expanded schedule. 3) This would amount to: .7 - .8 FTE (from above) + 1.0 FTE + 2-4 student workers. Approximately 1.7-1.8 FTE total for assessment is needed, which amounts to an additional 1.0 FTE request to meet assessment demands.				

Equipment/Material/Supply/Classified/Student Assistant Needs:

Narrative:
Due to extreme statewide college budget cuts during '09/'10, matriculation funds were cut by 50%. Additionally, the 2013-2014 budget proposal shows another 30% cut. This will become a

major concern regarding assessment as the computerized ACT test instrument costs far exceed what the current budget allows. Supply, material, and student assistant resources are all severely cut due to this budget decrease. The services we offer are not readily accessible to the entering student population. The personnel of this department (both classified and student workers) form the essential bridge that connects unfamiliar students to this environment and institution. The more adequately staffed, and the more opportunities for training and staff development we can offer beyond the day-to-day functioning, the more we will contribute to student success at COA.

Equipment/Material/Student Assistant <u>Requests:</u>
A re-instatement of the budget as it was previous to 2012-2013 (2011-2012 numbers) would ensure a sustained functioning of the assessment services by providing the department the necessary discretion in purchasing supplies and scheduling student assistants according to need. This budget comes entirely from the Department of Instruction since LRC and Assessment have been combined, so any funding from Student Services would be a bonus.

Facilities/Infrastructure/Technology Needs (Items that should be included in our Facilities Master Plan) for Measure A funding:

Narrative:
L202E is routinely reserved by library faculty and instructors. In addition, an administrative decision was made to allow the assessment testing to be conducted in the Open Lab, during peak enrollment/test periods. At the same time, the Open Lab (shared with the LRC) has extended its hours to 8am-4:50pm M-Th and 8am-1:50pm Fridays.This means that a dedicated testing lab whose use the Assessment department determines will become necessary to accommodate the future Assessment needs.

Facilities/Infrastructure/Technology <u>Requests:</u>
1) A dedicated, non-shared testing lab specifically for COMPASS/ESL Assessment testing (*essential*).

Although the administrative decision to allow some assessment testing to be conducted in the Open Lab has greatly enhanced our efforts to provide additional seating for assessment, a dedicated assessment testing lab (which we do not currently have) is needed to support our ever increasing student demands.

*The 53 computers in L202D and L202E together are currently slated to begin being replaced November 2013. However, it is being noted in this report as well in order to emphasize the dual function of the 53 machines in L202D and L202E and the resulting load they carry.
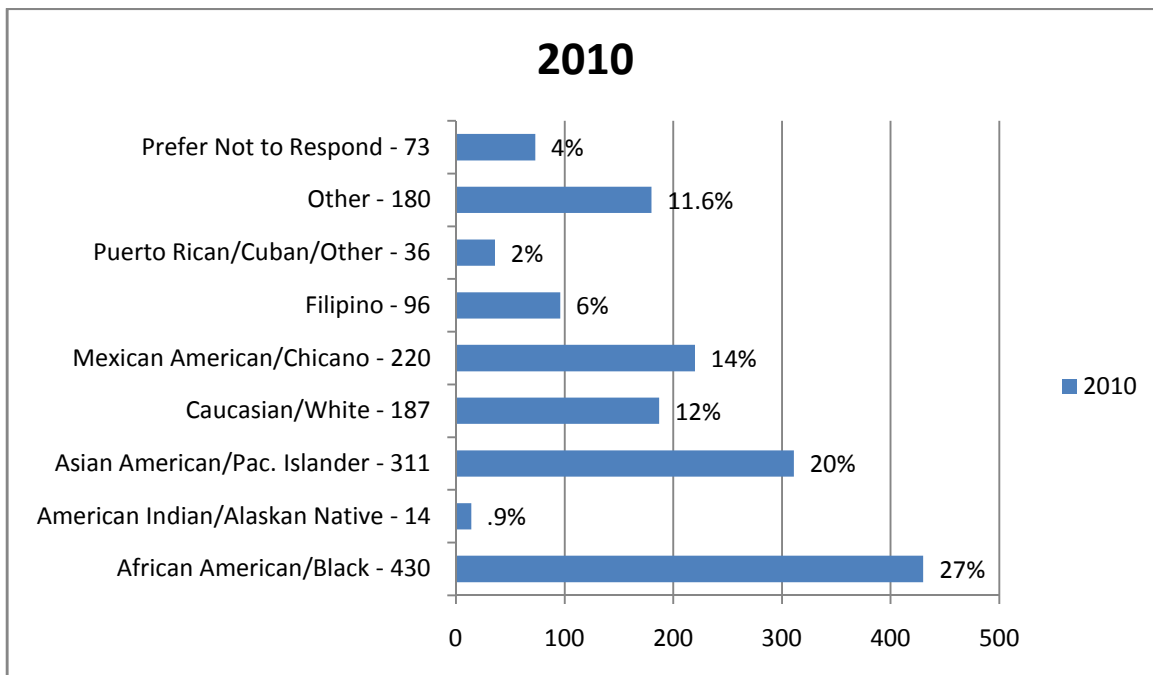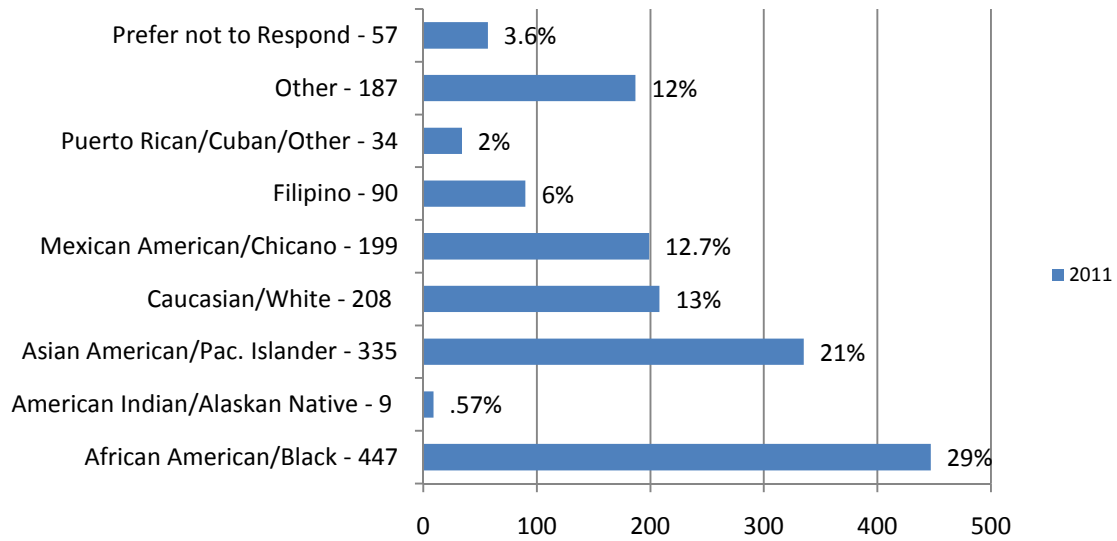
11/21/2013

Other:

Graphic Representation of Data

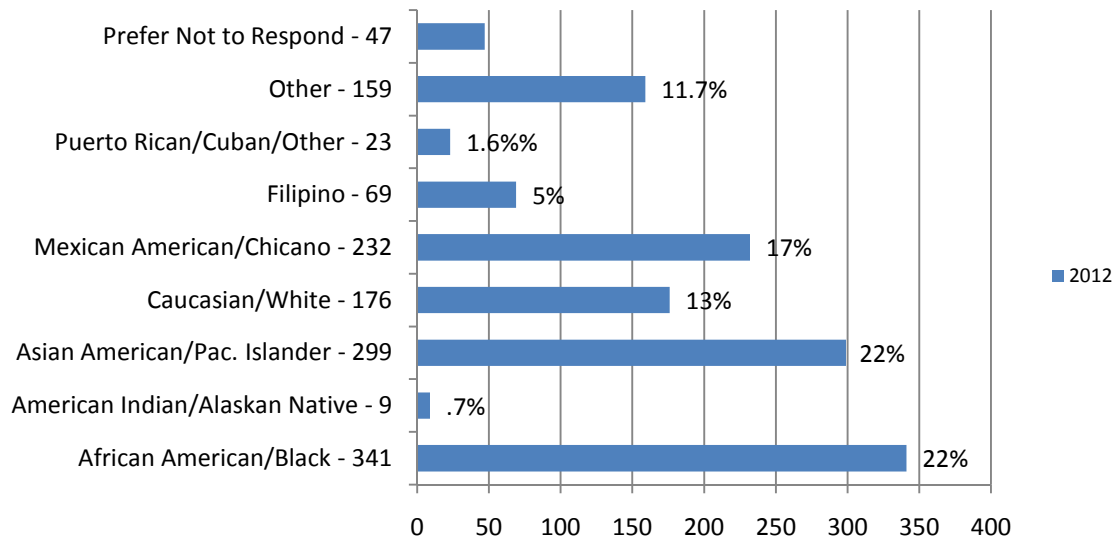### Ethnic Background: 2010-2013

The following graphs show the raw numbers of students who completed assessment exams at COA in the calendar years 2010-2013. The relative percentage of total students assessed each calendar year by reported Ethnic Background remains constant. While the exact numbers of total students assessed have risen or fallen by small amounts, the demographic breakdown within the entering population has remained almost exactly the same. This fact correlates with District-wide data about the demographics of the overall entering student population. This tells us that the ethnic breakdown of our entering students and also the ethnic breakdown of the entering students who elect to take assessment tests has stayed relatively constant over the course of the last three years.
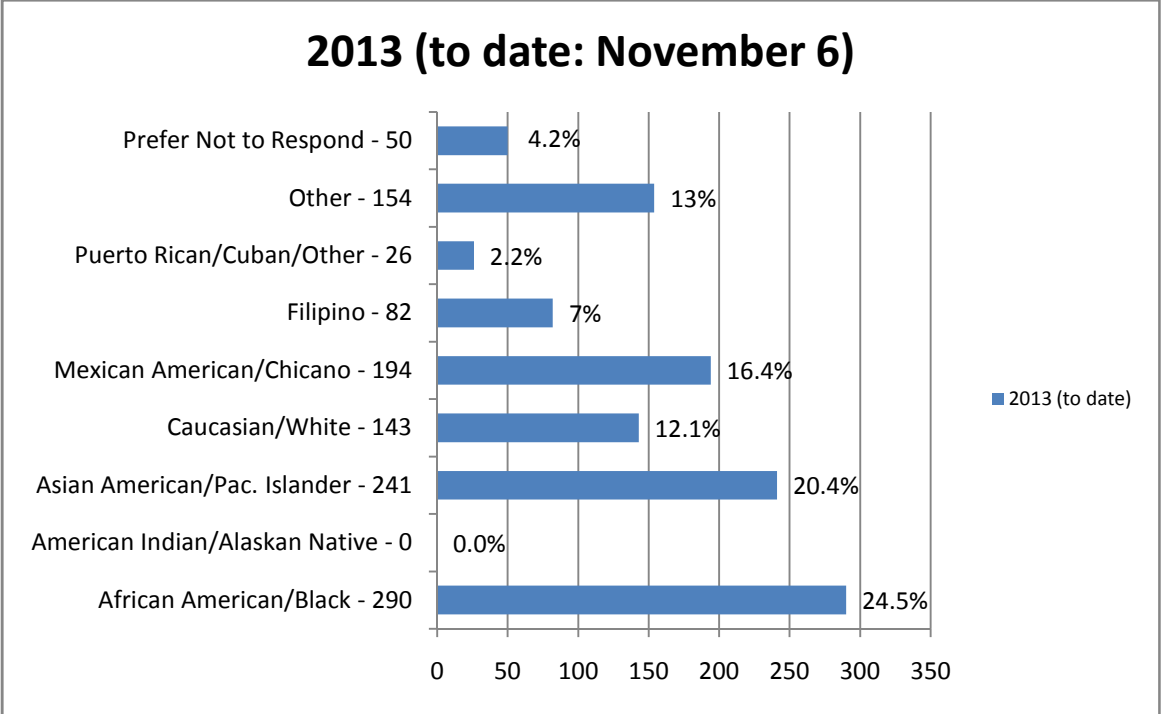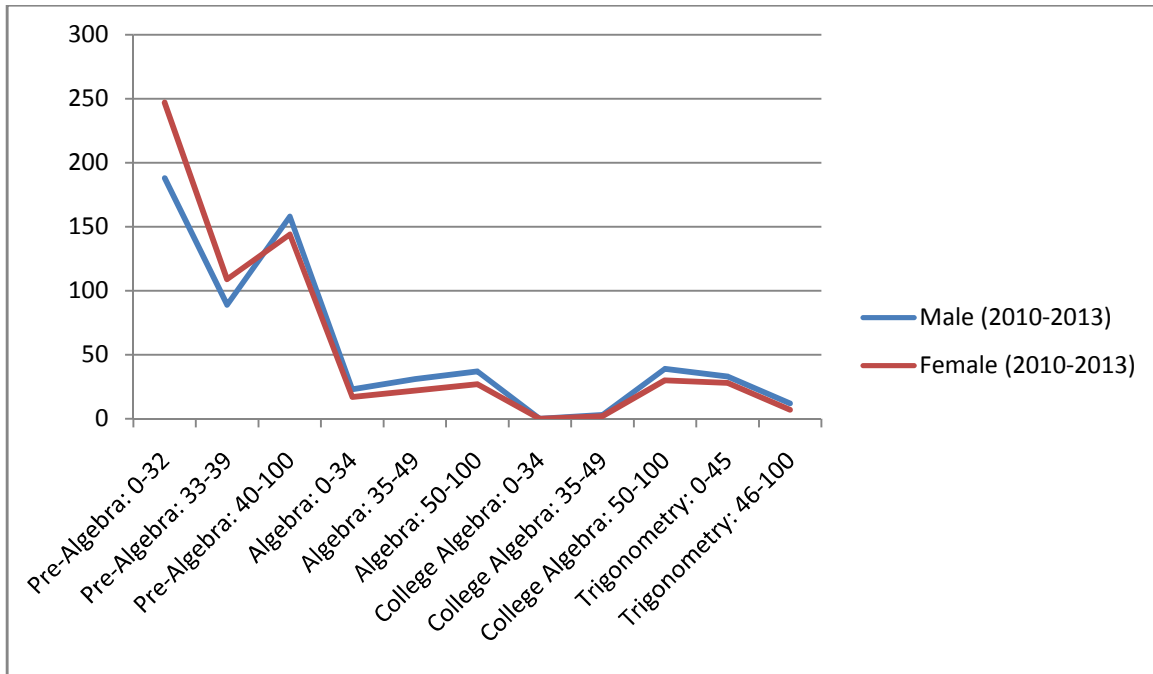
2011

Category	Value	Percentage
Prefer not to Respond - 57		3.6%
Other - 187		12%
Puerto Rican/Cuban/Other - 34		2%
Filipino - 90		6%
Mexican American/Chicano - 199		12.7%
Caucasian/White - 208		13%
Asian American/Pac. Islander - 335		21%
American Indian/Alaskan Native - 9		.57%
African American/Black - 447		29%

Legend: ■ 2011

X-axis: 0, 100, 200, 300, 400, 500

2012

Category	Value	Percentage
Prefer Not to Respond - 47		
Other - 159		11.7%
Puerto Rican/Cuban/Other - 23		1.6%%
Filipino - 69		5%
Mexican American/Chicano - 232		17%
Caucasian/White - 176		13%
Asian American/Pac. Islander - 299		22%
American Indian/Alaskan Native - 9		.7%
African American/Black - 341		22%

Legend: ■ 2012

X-axis: 0, 50, 100, 150, 200, 250, 300, 350, 400

2013 (to date: November 6)

Category	Value
Prefer Not to Respond - 50	4.2%
Other - 154	13%
Puerto Rican/Cuban/Other - 26	2.2%
Filipino - 82	7%
Mexican American/Chicano - 194	16.4%
Caucasian/White - 143	12.1%
Asian American/Pac. Islander - 241	20.4%
American Indian/Alaskan Native - 0	0.0%
African American/Black - 290	24.5%

■ 2013 (to date)

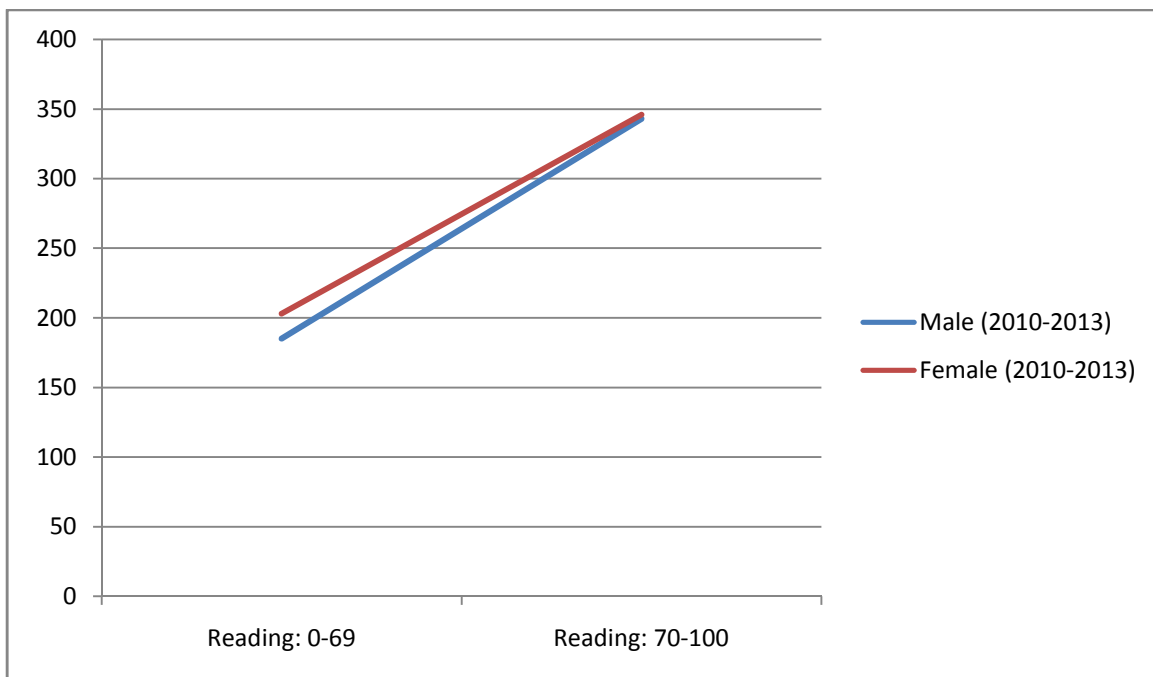## Gender: Averages in Placement Domains, 2010-2013

Findings:
The graphs below chart the average numbers of students who placed in each domain between the years 2010-2013, divided by reported gender.

Overall, these representations show that there is no significant difference according to overall gender performance. Most students, regardless of gender, score at basic levels in math and higher levels in reading and writing.
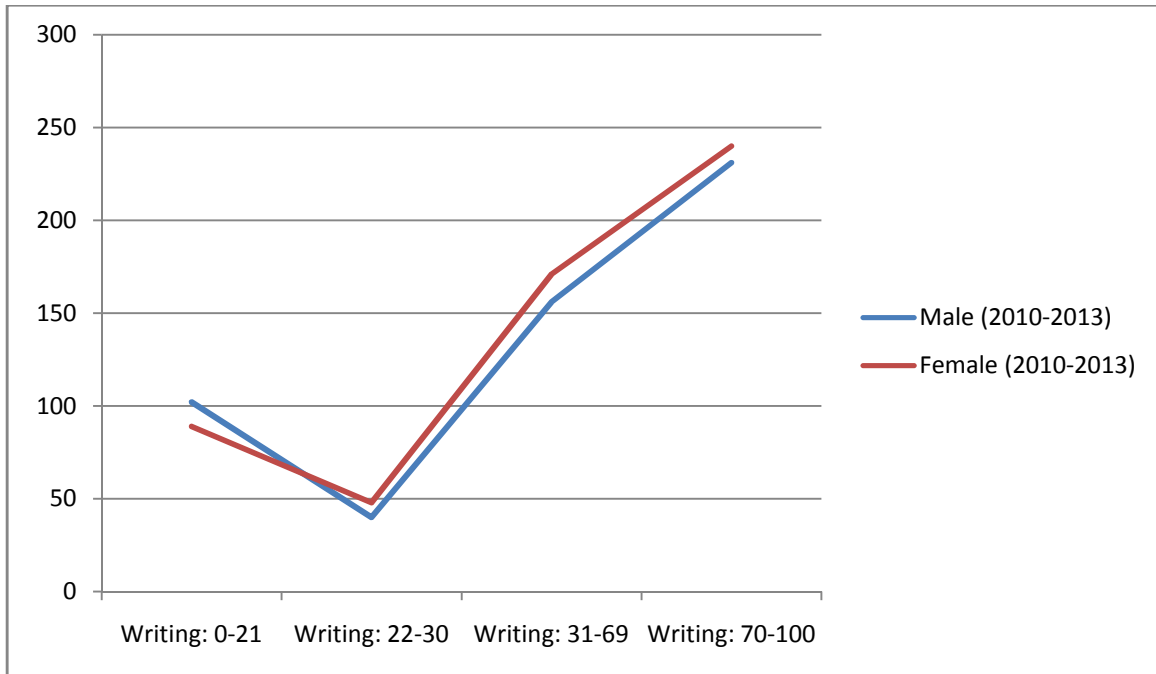
Comparison: Male and Female Average Math Placement Domains, 2010-2013

Comparison: Male and Female Average Reading Placement Domains, 2010-2013

Comparison: Male and Female Average Writing Placement Domains, 2010-2013