To: Placement Advisory Work Group

From: Vice Chancellors for Academic Affairs  
Joni Onishi, Hawai‘i Community College  
Katy Ho, Honolulu Community College  
Louise Pagotto, Kapi‘olani Community College  
James Dire, Kaua‘i Community College  
Mike Pecsok, Leeward Community College  
John McKee, Maui College  
Ardis Eschenberg, Windward Community College

RE: System-wide project to pilot revised ACT Placement/Cut off Score for English 100/ESL 100 and other equivalent courses

The purpose of this memo is to establish a system-wide pilot project using the ACT writing placement/cut off score of 18 in the ACT English subject area for placement into English 100/ESL 100 and other equivalent courses for all seven University of Hawaii community colleges.

By policy, the UH Community Colleges have utilized a score of 22 in the English subject area or in both English and reading for placement at the college level. [Link to placement clarification document]

The principle guiding placement score selection for the purposes of this memo is alignment with national benchmarking and best practice for student success in college English.

According to ACT College Readiness Benchmarks, a score of 18 on the ACT English subject area test represents the level of achievement required for students to have a 50% chance of obtaining a B or higher or about a 75% chance of obtaining a C or higher in corresponding credit-bearing first-year college courses. [Link to ACT benchmarks]

ACT-researched national benchmarks data suggests that a placement/cut-off score of 18 on the ACT English subject area is valid for placement into English 100/ESL 100 and other equivalent courses.
equivalent courses at UH Community Colleges. Accordingly, the UH Community Colleges system wide pilot project will commence effective January 1, 2015 for placement for Summer 2015 and Fall 2015 and run for a period of three years. The Vice Chancellor Academic Affairs at each college is responsible for establish college-level procedures and processes for record-keeping and implementation. The project will be re-evaluated in Fall 2019. The Office of the Vice President for Community Colleges will work with ACT Research Division to validate the placement/cut off scores during the pilot project period. If data indicate success rates equal to or greater than the ACT national data, placement using current Compass writing scores, or success rates of students entering from courses one level below, the score of 18 on the ACT English Subject area test will be accepted as a placement measure for the UH Community College system.

Revised November 18, 2014