



REINFORCED INSTRUCTION FOR STUDENT EXCELLENCE (RISE)

Mid-Year Implementation Report

Submitted By:
Sarah Deal
and
Lauren Bryant

FIDELITY OF IMPLEMENTATION FINDINGS	2
Timeline of Implementation	3
FIGURE 1. Timeline Requirements	3
FIGURE 2. Timeline Best Practices	4
Student Placement	5
FIGURE 3. Student Placement Requirements	5
FIGURE 4. Student Placement Best Practices	7
Course Registration	9
FIGURE 5. Course Registration Requirements	9
FIGURE 6. Course Registration Best Practices	10
Course Structure	12
FIGURE 7. Course Structure Requirements	12
TABLE 1. Course Structure by College	13
FIGURE 8. Course Structure Best Practices	15
CONCLUSIONS AND NEXT STEPS	17

FIDELITY OF IMPLEMENTATION FINDINGS

The purpose of this report is to summarize how Spring 2019 RISE pilot colleges are implementing [program requirements and best practices](#). Learning lessons from previous developmental education redesign in North Carolina, the RISE team seeks to gather near-time information that can be systematically collected to understand what is happening on the ground with colleges. The [fidelity checklist](#) and how we collected the data. Evaluators seek to understand what success, challenges, and solutions to challenges colleges are facing. This report is a culmination of the findings collected Oct 2018-Dec 2018 and are meant to assist North Carolina Community Colleges in policy and practice as they embark upon RISE implementation.

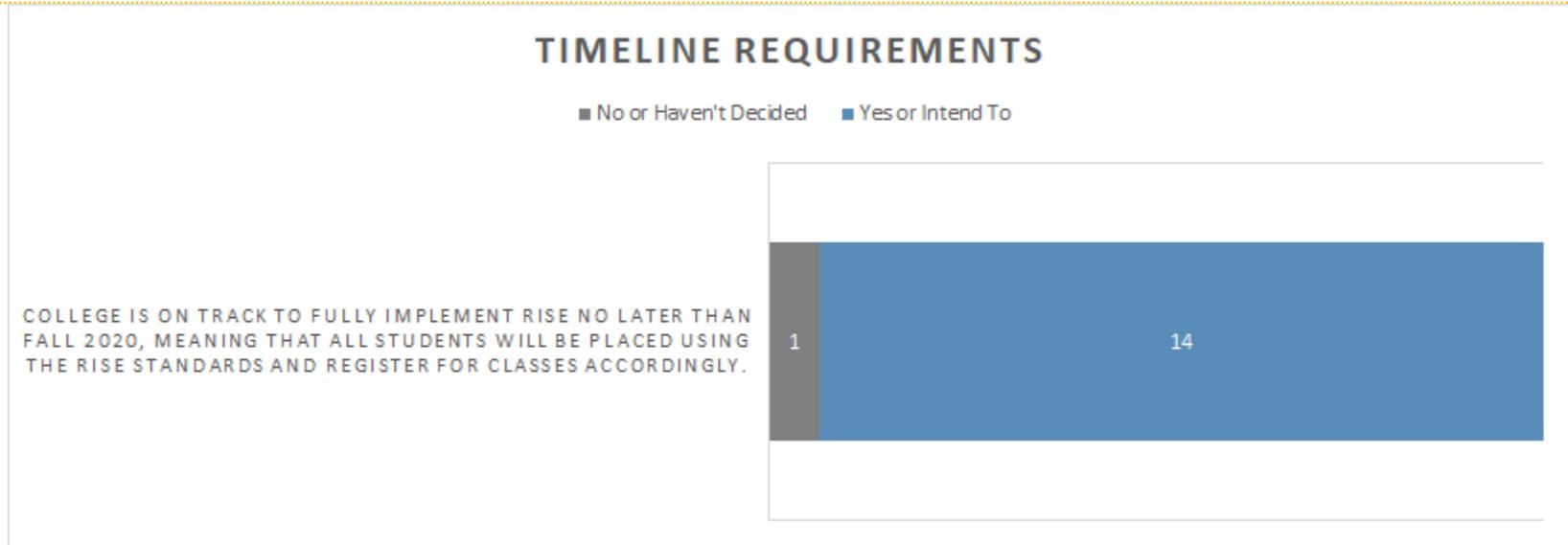
Please note that evaluators interviewed colleges during implementation therefore, information was accurate at the time of collect but may have since changed. For example, the RISE placement test was released in early November. During interviews, evaluators gave credit for colleges who spoke to their plans to do something.

Each of the sections (timeline of implementation, student placement, course registration, and course structure) represent the main themes of program implementation. There are a set of requirements and best practices associated with each of these themes that colleges have created, disseminated, and/or learned about through structured professional development. Since RISE is in the pilot phase, these requirements have not yet been solidified into policy which allows the findings of this report to inform RISE policy and practice.

In each section, exemplar colleges are highlighted so practitioners can consult with these colleges for further information. The evaluators found all pilot colleges to be extremely committed to their students through the RISE project and thoughtful in their decision making about implementation.

For an overview of RISE, please visit [here](#).

FIGURE 1. Timeline Requirements



- Thirteen of the fifteen colleges reported they were on track for full RISE implementation by Fall 2020. One college expressed a strong concern about continuing with RISE without the technology being automated. They were currently having to do a lot of processes by hand - registration, etc. - and this is an unsustainable burden. They need the technology to catch up.

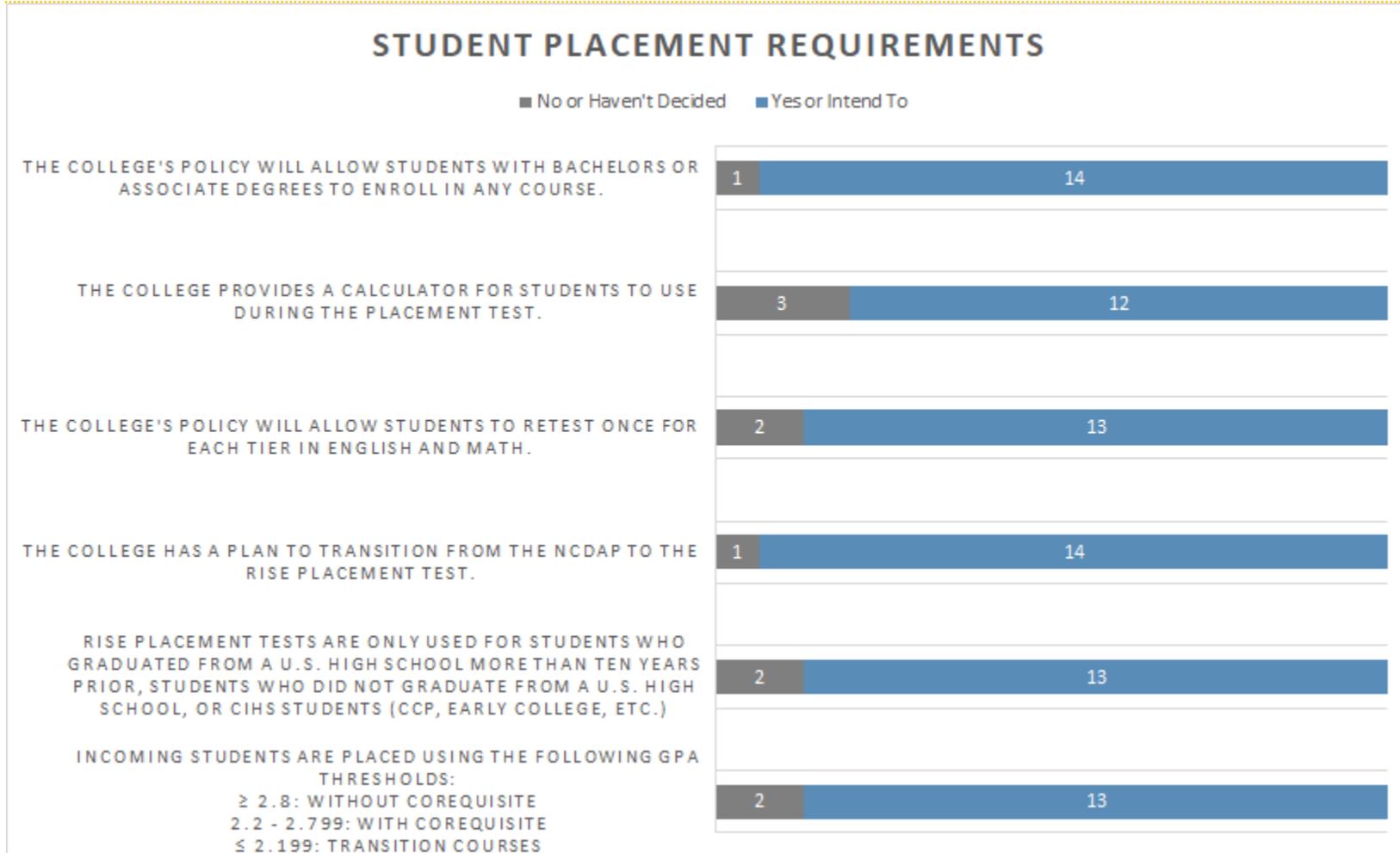
FIGURE 2. Timeline Best Practices



- All colleges reported engaging in training to prepare staff members for RISE. This included in-house trainings for advisors, faculty, and staff, as well as sending advisors, faculty and staff to trainings held by the system office. Many also discussed training for their IT staff, and sending IT staff to system office trainings. Many started training during Summer 2018 (Ex: **Caldwell Community College**), and have continued training during Fall 2018.

Student Placement

FIGURE 3. Student Placement Requirements

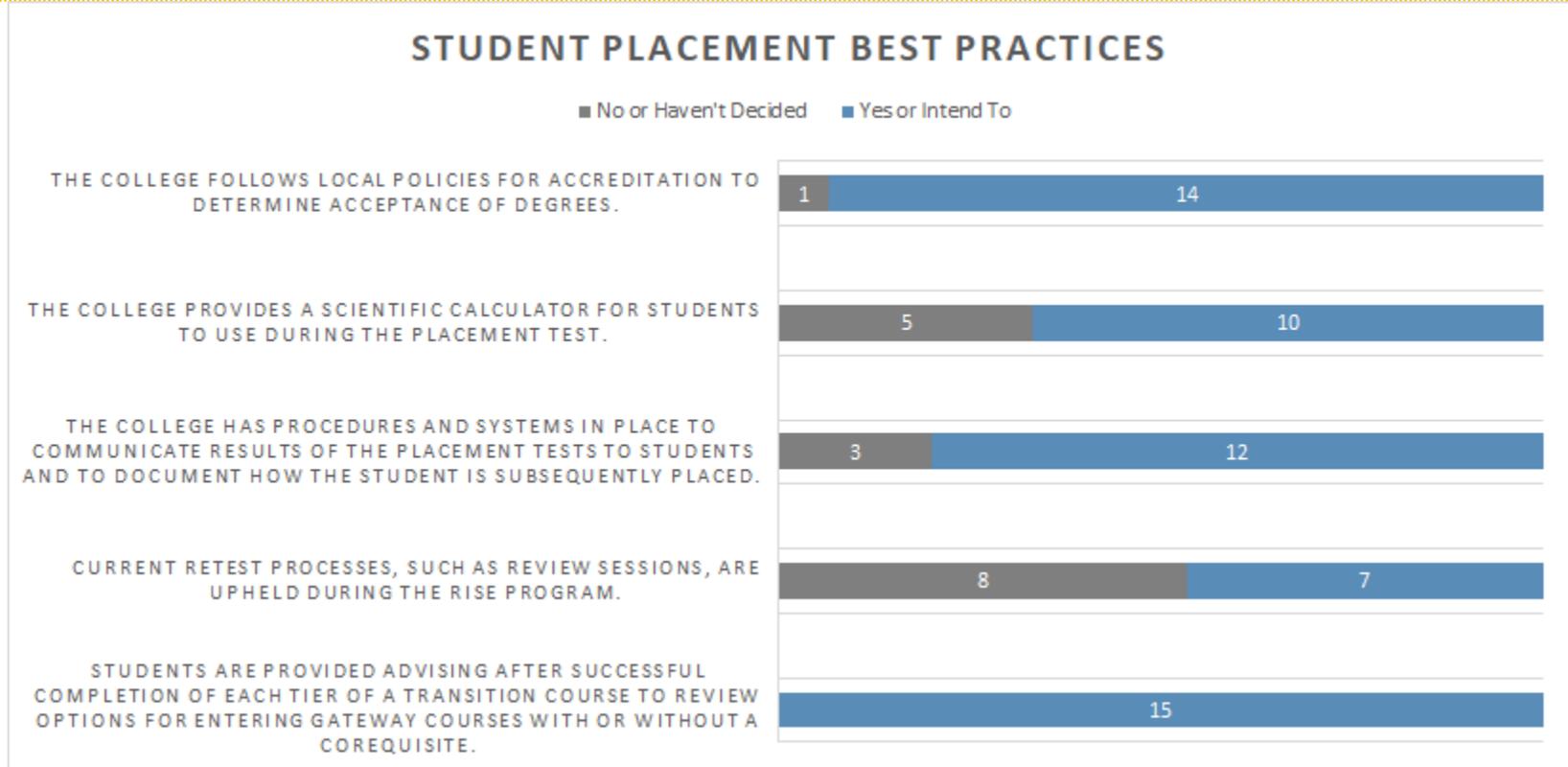


- Most of the colleges report implementing the GPA thresholds as is for the Spring 2019 Semester, with some notable exceptions. One college, **Rowan-Cabarrus Community College** is implementing the GPA thresholds as written for English, but have adjusted the thresholds for math in a way that they feel better serves their students. Using a 2.6 cutoff for math instead of 2.8. One school is waiting to

implement the GPA thresholds until they feel more concrete decisions have been made about RISE. They worry about implementing RISE as it currently stands and then having to make changes to the program later. One college, [Brunswick Community College](#), is piloting RISE in English only for the spring, and so they are only applying the GPA thresholds in English right now. Plans to implement in math in the fall, but wanted to take things slow and do things right.

- Most of the colleges were waiting for the updated version of the RISE placement test. They had intentions to implement the test as soon as possible for Spring placement, and intended to follow the RISE guidelines in applying the test. One college was waiting to implement the test until they felt things were more set in stone. They held off on training proctors, and were still using NCDAP. They were concerned about going all in on RISE only to have components and requirements change on them mid stream. This had happened to them in the past, and resulted in a large increase in work for them. Another college, [Brunswick Community College](#), is only implementing RISE in English for Spring 2019, so they can ease into RISE and learn as they go. For this reason, they haven't had as many Spring 2019 students who needed a placement test. They plan to have the RISE placement test fully operational by June 2019, in preparation for Fall 2019, when they would launch RISE in math.
- Almost every college has a transition plan to move from the NCDAP to the RISE placement test, and a few have already made this transition. **It is important to note that the RISE placement test was released for use after approximately half of the interviews were completed. For this reason, colleges reported their intentions to use the RISE placement tests, once it was released, in many of the interviews.** One college currently using the RISE placement test, [Lenoir Community College](#), expressed that using the new test for testing incoming students at a distance was a challenge. With NCDAP, they had a voucher system, which made it easier. However, the RISE placement test currently has no voucher system.
- We found a range of policies when it came to retesting on the RISE placement test. Some colleges were following the guidelines exactly, allowing students to retest once for each tier in math and English (Ex: [Guilford Community College](#)). Others were allowing students to retest once in math and English per year. Others still were allowing one retest, period. Some colleges were allowing retests, but required wait periods and test preparation/remediation in between attempts (Ex: [Robeson Community College](#), [Southwestern Community College](#)). And finally, a small number had decided not to allow retests at all. They had found retesting to be a time and effort burden with little payoff. Students often used their first attempt as a practice if they knew they could retest. They also felt they served their students better if they simply got them into and moving through the transition center.
- Most colleges planned to offer calculators for the placement test, while some were still in the process of making this decision. Many were planning to offer scientific calculators.
- While most of the colleges were allowing students with a Bachelors or Associates degree to take any entry level course, some expressed concerns. For some, they were already allowing students with a Bachelors to enroll in any entry level course, so they only had to update their policy to include Associates (Ex: [Forsyth Community College](#)). For others, they had already made this policy change and so no change was required for them. A couple of colleges expressed concern about incoming students with degrees and their subsequent performance in math. They were having some students with degrees come in with little or no math, and were concerned about the students jumping right into math 171 (Ex: [Central Carolina Community College](#), [Guilford Technical Community College](#)).

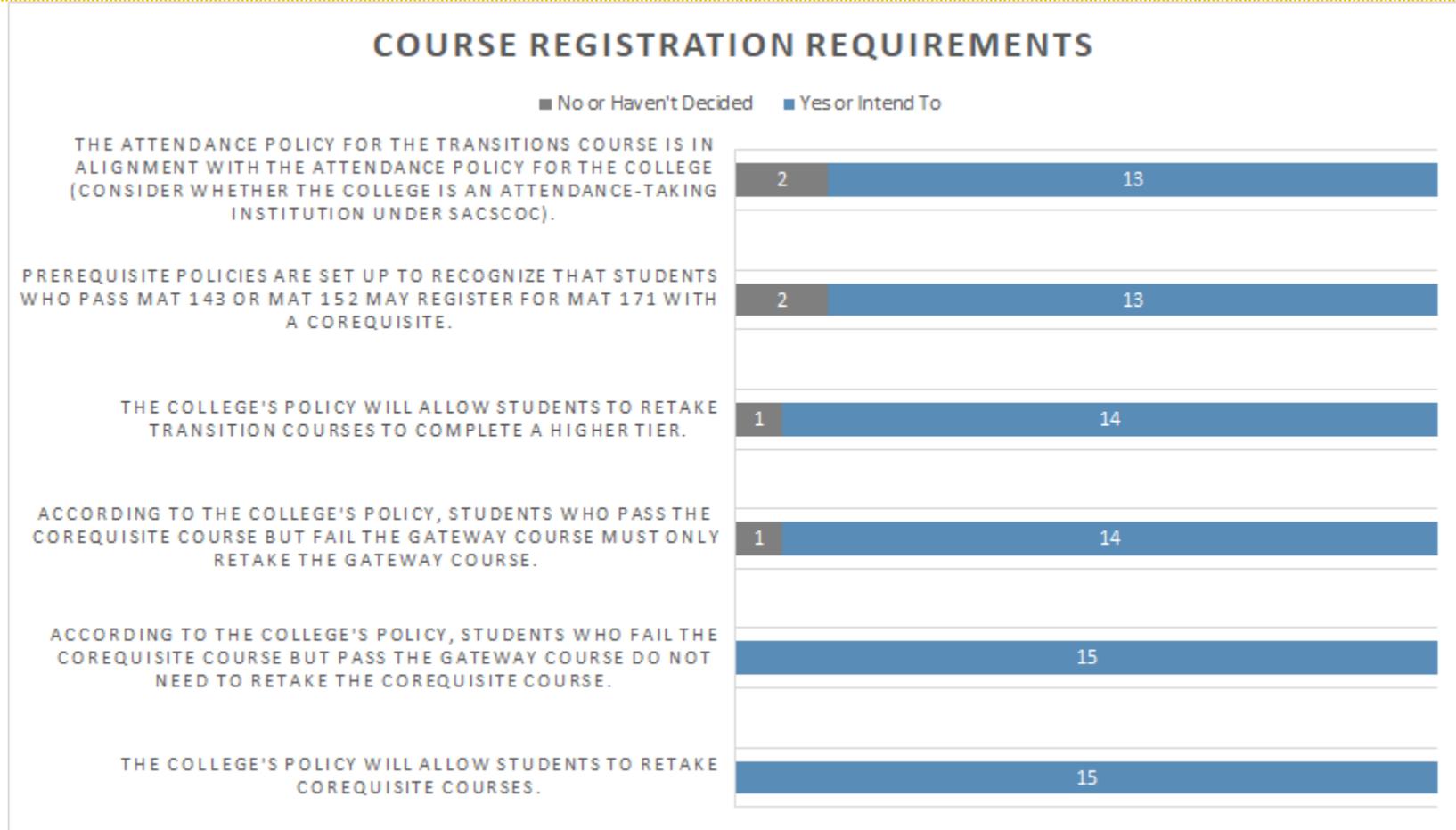
FIGURE 4. Student Placement Best Practices



- All the colleges had plans in place for how they would advise students after completing a tier in a transitions course. Some had more detailed plans completed than others. Most expressed that they would encourage students to stay on after completing a tier to complete a higher tier before the end of the semester. They felt this would better prepare the student, especially if the student changed majors and found themselves needed a higher level of math to move on. Many colleges were having transitions instructors also function in and advisory capacity, who would have conversations with students throughout the semester, not just when they completed a tier. Other colleges were using success coaches, who worked with transition instructors to advise students.
- Generally speaking, colleges planned to stick with their current processes for retesting once they launch the RISE placement test. Some colleges did not plan to allow any retesting. Others allowed retesting and had required remediation in between attempts. And still others were offering materials and resources to students to prepare for their next attempt, but use of these materials was not required. A few colleges asked if the system office would be providing any remediation materials or guidance to the colleges, and expressed that this would be a very useful thing for them to have.
- To communicate results of the placement tests to students, many colleges:

- (Ex: **Stanly, Durham Tech, Central Carolina**) created handouts, forms, or cards to give to student that included information on their program of study, their performance on the test, and what this meant for their registration. One college set up customized messaging on EdReady to communicate to the student where they placed and what they are eligible to register for.
- (Ex: **Lenoir**) also set up their system for testing so that students will meet with an advisor immediately after the test to discuss their results and their subsequent registration. At some colleges this will be the same person who has proctored the test, while at others this will be an academic advisor or success coach.
- (Ex: **Caldwell Community College and Technical Institute**) are using some combination of these two approaches .
- At one college (**Sandhills Community College**), discussions about the placement test and registration are integrated into the mandatory orientation that all students attend.
- A small number of colleges reported not yet having a system in place.
- Ten out of the fifteen colleges plan to provide a scientific calculator during the RISE placement test.
- Most of the colleges planned to follow local policies for accreditation to determine acceptance of degrees. One college noted that this will be the first semester that they look at specific degrees from schools to determine what degrees to accept, and that they were feeling positive about this change.

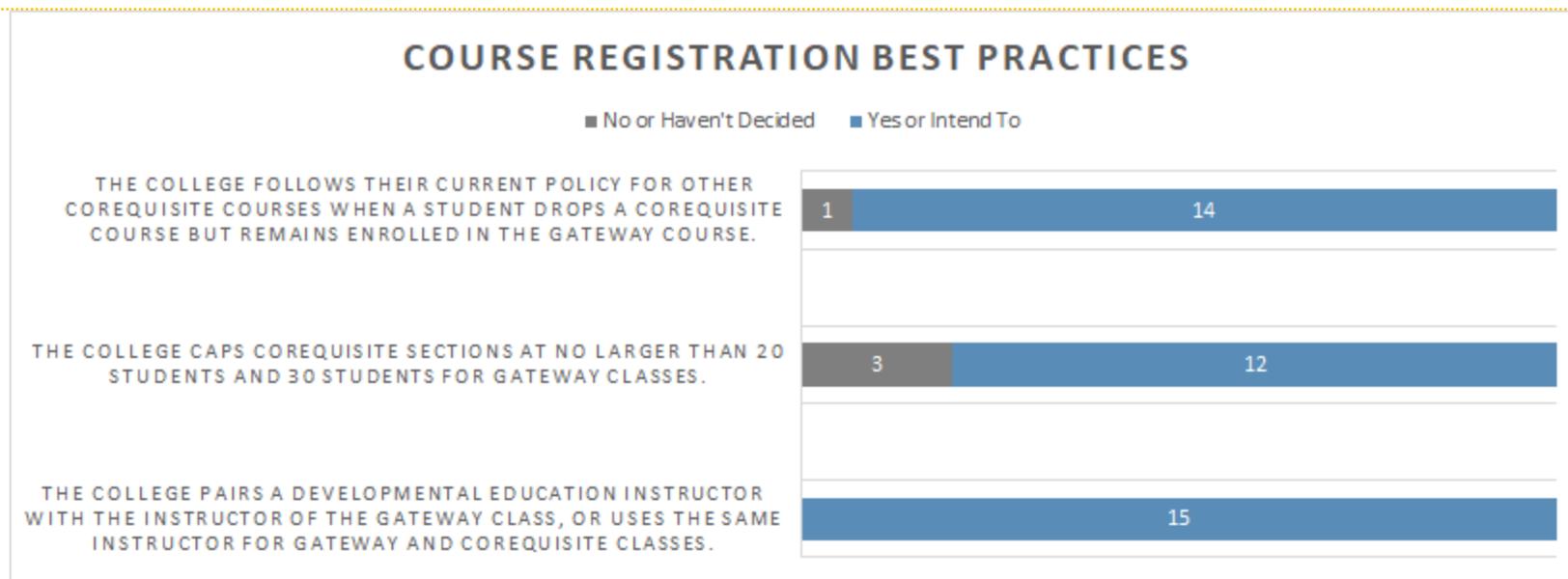
FIGURE 5. Course Registration Requirements



- All of the colleges planned to allow students to retake the corequisite courses. At one college, there is no limit on how many times a student may take a developmental education course, so they have extended this policy to the corequisite courses. At a few colleges, students would be allowed to retake the corequisite courses three times, and then they would need permission from an administrator. One college planned to allow students to retake the corequisite courses once.

- All colleges planned to follow a policy where students who pass the gateway course but fail the corequisite do not need to retake the corequisite course. Of all the colleges, one stated that they would require a student to retake both the corequisite and the gateway. All others followed the requirement.
- Fourteen of the 15 colleges plan to allow students to retake transitions courses to complete a higher tier. Some will allow this with no restrictions, others will only allow a certain number of retakes. One college is allowing one retake, but students receive advising before they can register. Another college will allow three retakes before the student will require advising and permission from an administrator.
- The vast majority of colleges plan to allow students who pass math 143 or math 152 to register for math 171 with a corequisite. One college expressed that they had thought about this requirement, but decided they did not agree with it, and so at this time did not plan to enact it. They expressed that math 143 does not prepare a student for 171.
- Generally speaking, the colleges were set up so that their attendance policy for the transitions courses would align with their college attendance policy. Two colleges were still making a decision about this requirement, as they did not have a college-wide attendance policy, or their college-wide policy was currently being revisited.

FIGURE 6. Course Registration Best Practices



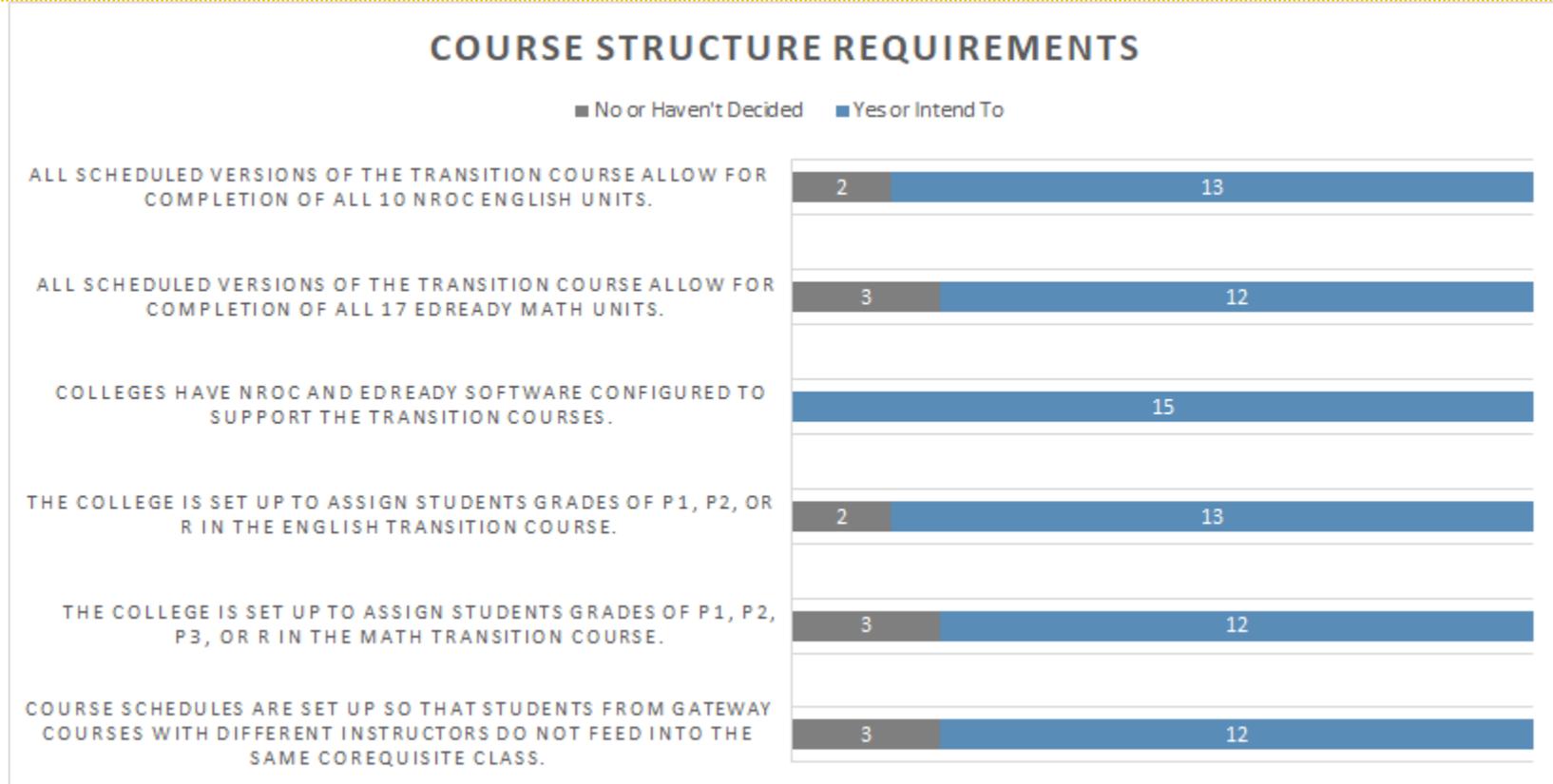
- Most of the colleges expressed that if a student dropped the corequisite course, then they would also be dropped from the gateway course, and that this aligned with their current policies on dropping corequisites. In many cases, this process will be manual. At one college, **Catawba Valley Community College**, students must go to the advising center and speak with someone in order to drop a course, so they'll be made aware that they'll be pulled from the gateway and the advisor can undertake this action themselves. In other instances, when a

student drops a corequisite, it will trigger an alert to the registrar, who can then drop them from the gateway course (Ex: [Robeson Community College](#)). In some cases, this process is set up to be automatic, where if the student drops the corequisite the system will automatically drop them from the gateway course.

- Many schools were successfully meeting the best practice of capping the corequisite courses at 20 students, capping the gateway courses at 30 students, and ensuring a 2/3 ratio of corequisite to non-corequisite students in the gateway courses. However, many other colleges expressed a great deal of difficulty in trying to meet this best practice. Generally, colleges discussed three approaches to satisfying this best practice.
 - At a couple of smaller colleges, they expressed that they ran their numbers from previous semesters, and it appeared that they would not need to worry about capping classrooms or manipulating ratios. So, they decided to see how things played out, and then build a system to do this if necessary (Ex: [Southwestern Community College](#)).
 - A few colleges approached this issue by having two separate gateway sections with the same instructor. The only difference was that corequisite students could register for one section, while non-corequisite students could register for the other. Right before the semester starts, the plan is to merge these two course sections to achieve the 2/3 and 1/3 ratio (Ex: [Sandhills Community College](#)).
 - For the third approach, it was expressed that this was not an effective way to achieve the 2/3 and 1/3 ratio. This approach was to have corequisite and non-corequisite students sign up for the same section, and put caps on the section that administrators could override to register students. This was not working, as every time they would override the cap and force-register a student, they were taking a spot away from the other group of students.
- In some cases, colleges had already merged their developmental education and curriculum departments, so the same faculty will be teaching the corequisite and gateway courses. In other cases, developmental education instructors will teach the corequisites while the curriculum faculty will teach the gateway courses. A number of colleges took this approach, and offered their corequisite courses through CCR and developmental education. In some colleges, this decision was made on a department by department basis, where developmental education instructors taught the corequisite courses in English, but curriculum instructors taught the corequisites in math. In one college, corequisites were being taught by both developmental education and curriculum faculty, to provide a continuing education for basic skills students where it would be a better fit for them.

Course Structure

FIGURE 7. Course Structure Requirements



- All colleges but one had set up their transitions courses to allow students to complete all 17 units in one semester. The one college was still making a final decision on this point. Most colleges were offering the transition math courses in curriculum (vs. continuing education), with three colleges offering these courses in College and Career Readiness/Continuing Education and two colleges offering the courses in both curriculum and College and Career Readiness/Continuing Education (Please see Table 1 below).
- Findings for English are the same as math - one college still making a final decision on how many units to offer in one semester, and most offering the English transition courses in curriculum with three offering them in College and Career Readiness/Continuing Education , and two colleges offering the English transition courses in both curriculum and College and Career Readiness/Continuing Education.

TABLE 1. Course Structure by College

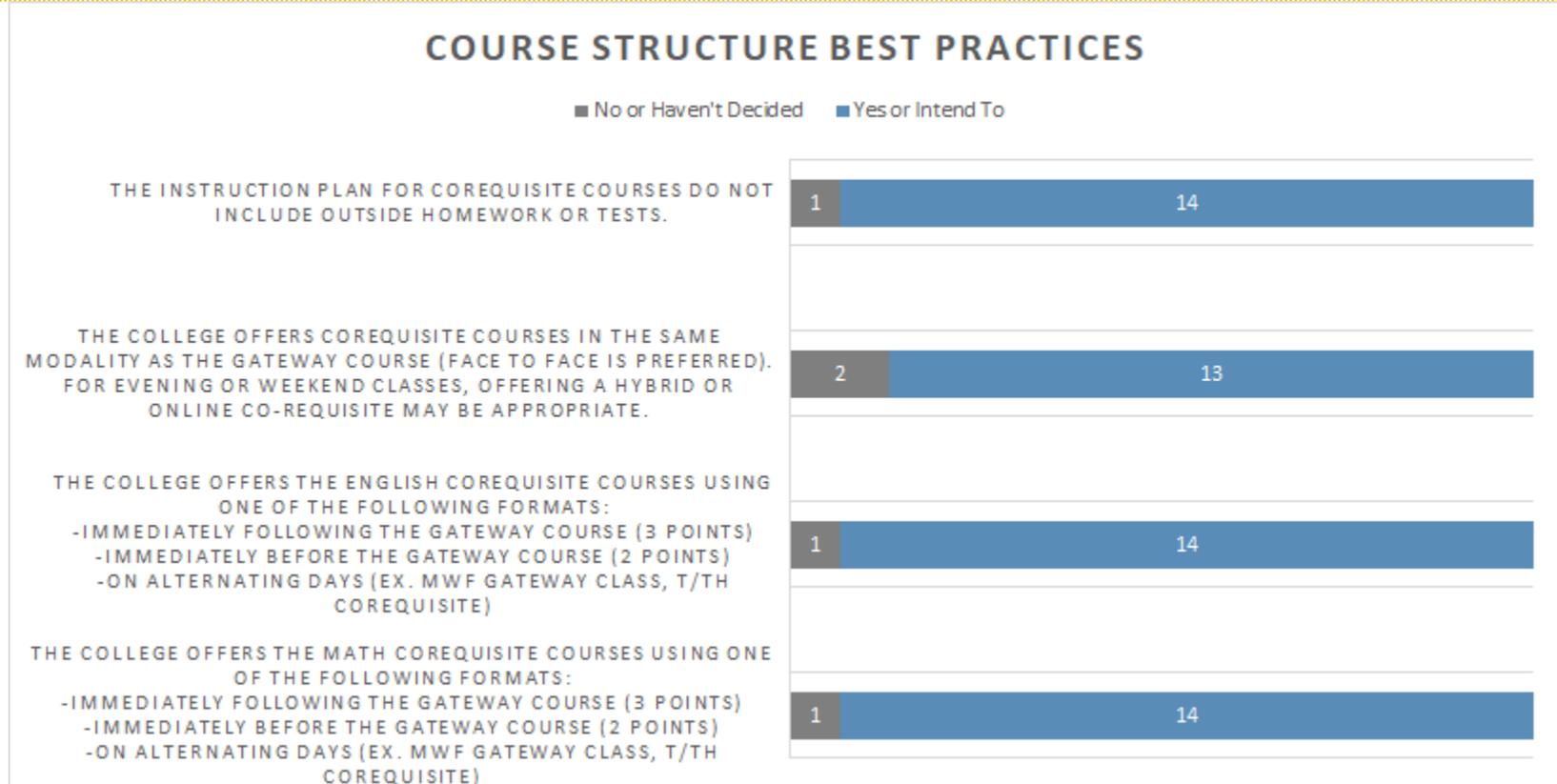
	Teaching Transition in CU	Teaching Transition in CCR	Teaching in Both
Brunswick	X		
Caldwell	X		
Catawba Valley	X		
Central Carolina	X		
Davidson		X	
Durham	X		
Guilford	X		
Forsyth	X		
Guilford	X		
Lenoir		X	
Robeson	X		
Rowan-Cabarrus	X		
Sandhills			X
Stanly	X		
Southwestern			X
Western Piedmont		X	

- All colleges were on track to have their software configured for the Spring 2019 semester.
- Twelve of the 15 colleges were set up with the new grading system. One college stated they wanted to wait for official guidance from the system office on how to make the changes. They worried about just figuring out how to make it work on their own - that they would end up doing something different from everyone else and would just have to change it later. Another college had submitted a help desk ticket to set up their new grading scheme but was told their ticket wouldn't get addressed until February. They expressed that their professors

were ready for the new grading scheme, but Colleague/Datatel was not. For one college this question was not applicable, as they were waiting until Fall 2019 to launch math.

- Findings for English are the same as math - except that 13 of the 15 colleges are set up for the new grading scheme. This includes the college that is waiting until Fall 2019 to launch math but is currently launching English.
- We found a range of policies across the colleges with regard to ensuring that students from different gateway instructors do not feed into the same corequisite course. Some colleges were following the guideline exactly. Others were following the guideline with some exceptions for specific programs, such as health tech, where the students had other constraints on their schedules as a result of their program and needed accommodation. Other colleges were more flexible, where they made efforts to ensure that gateway courses with different instructors did not feed into the same coreq, but expressed that, because of scheduling, this would not always be possible. One college followed this requirement for math but not for English, citing that all of their English courses are homogenized, and followed a strict pacing guide. Another college expressed disagreement with this requirement, stating that if the corequisite is a corequisite and not an extension of the gateway course, then this requirement is unnecessary. They also had scheduling and staffing issues in math that prevented them from enacting this requirement. On the English side, academic leadership expressed that the corequisite was negatively impacting their retention of students within English 111.

FIGURE 8. Course Structure Best Practices



- In general, the colleges were making use of all 3 formats for scheduling the corequisites around the gateway math courses. It was often expressed that using all three formats, not just the preferred format of immediately following the gateway, allowed them to serve the most students and work within their scheduling constraints. At one college, gateway courses were offered before and after the corequisite, with the gateway feeding to the corequisite in the middle.
- In English, colleges also generally made use of all three scheduling formats to give students more options and work around scheduling constraints. In some cases, specific formats, such as alternating days, were used for specific populations, so the college could get as many students as possible into the preferred formats of immediately before or after the gateway.
- Many of the colleges will offer the corequisite courses in the same modality as the gateway course, and many even stated they were offering all of their gateway and corequisite courses in a face-to-face format. However, because of scheduling and staffing concerns, many other colleges reported a need to offer hybrid courses, where the corequisite and the gateway courses would be offered in different formats. Some colleges offered a hybrid, online, and face-to-face courses intentionally as they felt this was the best way to serve their students. With regard to mapping local prerequisites onto the new RISE requirements, the colleges were addressing this issue in a number

of ways. Some colleges reported they were actively reducing the number of prerequisites across the college, to give students greater access to courses (Ex: **Brunswick Community College**). As a result, some colleges did not have many local prerequisites to integrate into the RISE program. Other colleges were actively mapping their existing prerequisites onto the new RISE courses and testing by crosswalking the old DMA (developmental math) and DRE (developmental reading and English) courses onto the new transition tiers (Ex: **Sandhills Community College, Durham Technical Community College**). One college, **Rowan Cabarrus Community College**, reported that it was in conversations to add some prerequisites back to courses/programs, after initially reducing them, after students were not prepared.

- Many of the colleges were still nailing down their instructional plans for the corequisite courses. All but one college had determined that there would be no outside homework or tests in the corequisite courses.

CONCLUSIONS AND NEXT STEPS

Overall, it was clear that most colleges were implementing RISE according to the recommended requirements and best practices. Where colleges differed from these requirements, thoughtful consideration had been given. This information is useful as new colleges pilot the program. The area where colleges were most unsure was in consideration of RISE placement retesting policies and may be an area for further exploration.

The next phase of the RISE evaluation will focus on the experiences of transition, corequisite, and gateway faculty teaching math and English courses. Additionally, we will interview students to understand their experiences in this learning new learning environment. The goal of this stage will be again to identify areas of success and areas of challenge as well as creative solutions to addressing these challenges. This qualitative information will be gathered alongside the quantitative data to understand student success under the new RISE model.