Sacramento State creates pathways to statistics

Sacramento State is among several California institutions of higher learning that are helping remedial math students complete the math they need in a single yearlong course and at the same time complete a GE statistics course for college credit.

Statway (short for Statistics Pathway) is designed for students who need remedial courses to do college-level math – without requiring them to take the usual sequence of courses that can take years to complete.

Three California State University campuses – Sacramento State, San Jose State and California State University, Northridge – are participating in this national initiative, which is being developed by the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching. Statway combines a sequence of elementary and intermediate algebra into a yearlong statistics course. It’s part of a $13 million initiative supported by several philanthropic organizations, including the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation and the William and Flora Hewlett Foundation.

Sacramento State math Professor Coksun Cetin, an enthusiastic teacher of the Statway course, says, “We offered one section of the yearlong Statway course this year as a pilot program and will continue piloting it with two sections next year. Our course (STAT 96A/B) has three hours of lecture time per week. This is a bit ambitious, but we had careful planning in the beginning of the semester to screen the students based on their algebra/math background.”

Math Professor Doraiswamy Ramachandran, faculty lead for the Statway project at Sacramento State, says, “Our campus has a carefully planned approach in implementing the pilot project; successful completion of it will benefit a sizable number of remedial math students in the future and improve their confidence in the pursuit of their degree. We are also partnering with the region’s community colleges as they plan the Statway course on their campuses.”

Community college students who are majoring in the humanities or social sciences and looking to transfer credit to a CSU must pass intermediate algebra to earn an associate degree. They also need a college-level math course, typically statistics.
The Statway course satisfies both requirements. For many CSU students, this will be the sole math course they will need to earn a bachelor’s degree.

EdSource asserts that “the new course could remove a major obstacle for many students: getting stuck in the standard course progression from elementary algebra to intermediate algebra to a college-level course, such as statistics.”

For more background on the Statway program, visit the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching website at www.carnegiefoundation.org. For media assistance, contact Sacramento State’s Public Affairs office at (916) 278-6156.

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