

**CLASP/CLAST Evaluation Report**  
**Articulation Coordinating Committee**  
*Task Force on Transition Assessments*

Florida is fortunate to have a strong "2+2" articulation policy that guarantees community college Associate in Arts (AA) degree graduates access to upper-division in the state university system. This policy has been in law since 1979 (s. 1007.23, Florida Statutes). With this guaranteed transfer came concern over the quality of lower division instruction. In response, the Florida Legislature adopted the College Level Academic Skills Program (CLASP) as a mechanism to measure student preparedness for upper-division instruction.

Since its inception, the program, and the exam created as a component of the program (i.e., the College Level Academic Skills Test, a.k.a., the "CLAST") has been challenged and modified to provide alternatives. Over recent years, use of the alternatives to meet CLASP requirements has actually surpassed use of the exam, generating questions about the viability of the exam.

The State Board of Education (formerly the Florida Board of Education) adopted "Setting and Aligning Academic Standards" as one of its eight strategic imperatives. Project 5.2.2 was adopted as a feasibility study of the CLASP/CLAST and its alternatives as measures of postsecondary level general knowledge proficiency. Project 2.2.1 Enforcement of Postsecondary Student Achievement and Accountability, related to strategic imperative two, "Applying Existing Standards Consistently At All Levels", was adopted as a subsequent activity to uniformly apply recommendations adopted from the feasibility study. This paper outlines the findings and results of the feasibility study.

## BACKGROUND

### Creation of the CLASP/CLAST Program

#### *CLASP/CLAST developed to ensure quality of rising juniors*

The CLASP was begun as a response to a feeling that there was considerable variation in the preparation of community college transfer students and their ability to perform at the upper division level in the state university system. The program was established by the Legislative to ensure that students entering the upper division had mastered a set of skills that faculty deemed important for success in communications and computations. The program was begun in the early 1980's and the first test was administered in October 1982.

By 1984 cut scores has been established and students were required to pass the test as a pre-requisite to earning the Associate in Arts and/or admission to the upper division at a state university. The original intent was to develop cut scores that would indicate mastery of the skills that formed the basis for the test. However, that did not occur. Over time, the scores needed to pass the College Level Academic Skills Test (CLAST) were raised, but the final scores were not based upon faculty determination of what constituted mastery.

#### *CLAST became a "high-stakes" test*

A second component of the original intent was to have students take the test as they neared the 60-semester hour mark in their academic career. However, once the test became "high-stakes," the court ruled that students must be given multiple chances to pass. The result was to allow students to take the CLAST once they had earned 18 semester hours of college credit. This ability to take the test more than



