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Povincial Forum Update

## Follow-up on CMP 2010 Report

Recommendations arising from CMP deliberations will never be implemented merely because they are stated in a report. The CMP team spends significant amounts of time advocating for the recommendations in its reports and this year we have received additional endorsement of one of its major recommendations. The most recent report (published in March 2011 and available for free download from the CMP web site) featured a discussion of “articulation issues” and recommended that the Government of Ontario establish a Roundtable on Secondary/Postsecondary Educational Transitions to address policy issues related to student success through this important transition. This recommendation has since been endorsed by both Colleges Ontario and the Council of Ontario Universities, through letters from the Presidents of each organisation to the Ministers of Education and Training, Colleges and Universities. We appreciate this support and continue to discuss with all the parties involved how such a Roundtable can be established.

Another major topic of continuing interest to CMP has been the importance of learning skills. Mentioned first in its 2008 report, it is featured again in this year’s discussion of “integration issues”. The challenge here is not lack of support – both Ministries have policies in place that give strong support to the importance of these skills in students learning and future employment. Rather, the problem is one of implementation: how to integrate these critical skills into curriculum and instruction – both at the secondary school and college levels – and also how to assess students’ development of these skills. Accordingly, CMP team members have begun discussions with colleagues at Seneca College about the need for an exploratory research project that might identify “promising practices” in this area at the postsecondary level. A parallel project at secondary school level would also be helpful in sharing ideas and practices and in providing the basis for further professional development. Comments and suggestions about these proposed research projects would be most welcome.

## CMP Forums 2011

A vital aspect of the College Mathematics Project (CMP) has always been the forums, which bring together members of the secondary school and college communities, to help us interpret the research findings, to share experiences and promising practices, and to deliberate ways of increasing student success. In the past several years, forums have been held throughout the province and issues of local and regional importance have been discussed. This year, three such forums have already taken place at Collège Boréal in Sudbury, Fanshawe College in London, and Algonquin College in Ottawa and more regional forums are being planned for the Fall.

In addition, as a special event this year, CMP is hosting a Provincial Forum on October 28<sup>th</sup> at the Markham campus of Seneca College. This forum will involve delegations from provincial organisations with a stake in College Mathematics and will address policy issues of province-wide rather than just local significance. CMP also hopes to welcome visitors from the US and other provinces to learn how the challenge of student success at the college level has been faced elsewhere. The forum will also build on the CMP research and reports of previous years and the results of its deliberations will be reported in the final report of CMP 2011, to be released early in 2012. (Note that reports of all forums are posted on the CMP web site).

## Les forums PMC de 2011

Un élément crucial du PMC (Projet portant sur les mathématiques au niveau collégial) reste comme toujours les forums qui réunissent des intervenants des milieux des écoles secondaires et des collèges de la province dans le but de nous aider tous à interpréter les conclusions des recherches menées dans le cadre du Projet, ainsi que de nous permettre de partager nos expériences, d'échanger sur les pratiques prometteuses et de nous pencher sur différents moyens d'améliorer le degré de réussite des étudiantes et étudiants. Au cours des dernières années des forums ont été organisés dans toutes les régions de la province pour donner aux intéressés l'occasion de discuter des préoccupations d'importance locale et régionale. Cette année on a déjà tenu trois forums, notamment au collège Boréal à Sudbury, au collège Fanshawe à London et au collège Algonquin à Ottawa. D'autres sont prévus à l'automne.

De plus, le PMC monte un événement inédit, un forum provincial qui se tiendra le 28 octobre au campus Markham du collège Seneca. Il sera organisé à l'intention de représentants et délégués des organismes provinciaux qui sont impliqués dans le dossier des mathématiques au niveau collégial; il permettra aux intéressés d'aborder des questions de politique d'ordre provincial plutôt que local. Les responsables du PMC comptent y accueillir également des invités des États-Unis et des autres provinces canadiennes afin qu'on puisse étudier comment ceux-ci ont relevé le défi de la réussite des étudiantes et étudiants du niveau collégial. On profitera aussi de ce forum pour faire le point sur les recherches et rapports antérieurs du PMC. Le compte-rendu de ce forum paraîtra dans le rapport final du PMC 2011 qui sera publié au début de 2012. (Nous vous signalons que les rapports de tous les forums sont disponibles pour le téléchargement au site web PMC.)

## CMP Research 2011

The CMP is continuing to track college students' achievement in first semester mathematics and this year we expect to be analysing the records of nearly 100,000 students. In addition, this year, we are conducting a special qualitative analysis of first year college mathematics courses. We believe that as many as 25% of all first-year students take a foundational program or preparatory mathematics course, rather than the standard first-year mathematics course of their intended vocational program. The use of these programs and courses reflect the colleges' commitment to student success and their recognition that too many incoming students have not been adequately successful at the regular first year courses. It will be of interest to members of the mathematics teaching community to see which specific topics and emphases are included in these foundational or preparatory courses, since the topics are often those that have been taught – but not always fully understood - in elementary and secondary education. The analyses will also go some way to responding to the many queries colleges receive concerning what specific mathematics skills are expected of incoming students.

## Les recherches du PMC 2011

Les chercheurs du PMC continuent de suivre de près le rendement en mathématiques des étudiantes et étudiants ayant suivi des cours de mathématiques à leur premier semestre au niveau collégial; cette année on prévoit analyser les dossiers d'environ 100 000 étudiantes et étudiants. De plus, nous entreprenons cette année une analyse qualitative des cours de mathématiques de première année collégiale. Nous avons des raisons de croire que jusqu'à 25 % des étudiantes et étudiants de première année suivent un programme de formation de base ou un cours préparatoire en mathématiques plutôt que de s'inscrire au cours de mathématiques normalement prévu dans la première année du programme de formation professionnelle qu'ils ont entrepris. Le recours à ce genre de cours indique à quel point les responsables des collèges tiennent à voir réussir leurs étudiantes et étudiants; ils reconnaissent que jusqu'ici trop de nouveaux étudiantes et étudiants n'ont pas connu un rendement adéquat dans les cours réguliers de première année. Il sera évidemment très intéressant pour celles et ceux qui sont impliqués dans l'enseignement des mathématiques d'apprendre quelles sont les compétences et priorités auxquelles on accorde le plus d'importance dans les cours de formation de base ou les cours préparatoires en mathématiques. Il semblerait que ces mêmes compétences sont souvent parmi celles qui sont enseignées – mais pas toujours assez maîtrisées – aux niveaux élémentaire et secondaire. Cette étude analytique devrait aussi permettre de répondre dans une certaine mesure aux nombreuses demandes que reçoivent les responsables des collèges quant aux compétences en mathématiques que doivent posséder les nouvelles étudiantes et nouveaux étudiants.

## Have you used the CMP database yet?

Just a reminder that all the data collected by CMP is accessible through the CMP web site to users authorised by their college or school board, in accordance with CMP fair use and privacy policies. The web site also contains a webinar demonstrating how to access the database and “guiding questions” to support people wishing to research aspects of their college or board's students' mathematics achievement (<http://collegemathproject.senecac.on.ca/cmp/en/research.php>). We would welcome information about how the database has been useful to you or your colleagues.