

**From:** DeRionne P. Pollard, President, Montgomery College <[President@montgomerycollege.edu](mailto:President@montgomerycollege.edu)>  
**Sent:** Friday, May 1, 2020 5:23 PM  
**To:** Smith-Bryant, Tracey <[Tracey.Smith-Bryant@montgomerycollege.edu](mailto:Tracey.Smith-Bryant@montgomerycollege.edu)>  
**Cc:** Ridguard, Clevette M <[clevette.ridguard@montgomerycollege.edu](mailto:clevette.ridguard@montgomerycollege.edu)>; Bland, Sharon R <[Sharon.Bland@montgomerycollege.edu](mailto:Sharon.Bland@montgomerycollege.edu)>; Brown, Monica R <[monica.brown@montgomerycollege.edu](mailto:monica.brown@montgomerycollege.edu)>; Cain, Stephen D <[stephen.cain@montgomerycollege.edu](mailto:stephen.cain@montgomerycollege.edu)>; Pollard, DeRionne P <[derionne.pollard@montgomerycollege.edu](mailto:derionne.pollard@montgomerycollege.edu)>; Duggan, Victoria A <[Vicki.Duggan@montgomerycollege.edu](mailto:Vicki.Duggan@montgomerycollege.edu)>; Gilmer, Raymond E <[Raymond.Gilmer@montgomerycollege.edu](mailto:Raymond.Gilmer@montgomerycollege.edu)>; Madden, Susan C <[susan.madden@montgomerycollege.edu](mailto:susan.madden@montgomerycollege.edu)>; Rai, Sanjay K <[sanjay.rai@montgomerycollege.edu](mailto:sanjay.rai@montgomerycollege.edu)>; Schena, Donna L <[donna.schena@montgomerycollege.edu](mailto:donna.schena@montgomerycollege.edu)>; Scott, Michelle T <[Michelle.Scott@montgomerycollege.edu](mailto:Michelle.Scott@montgomerycollege.edu)>; Sears, David M <[david.sears@montgomerycollege.edu](mailto:david.sears@montgomerycollege.edu)>  
**Subject:** College Council Recommendation 20-01: Assessment Center Review



Memorandum

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**To:** Dr. Tracey Smith-Bryant, College Council Chair  
**From:** Dr. DeRionne P. Pollard, President  
**Subject:** College Council Recommendation 20-01: Assessment Center Review  
**Date:** May 1, 2020

Thank you and all the members of the College's participatory governance system for your leadership in considering issues of importance to the Montgomery College community. I have reviewed the College Council's recommendation 20-01: Assessment Center Review that the College Council voted to move forward to the president on February 11, 2020. The document presented to me by the College Council is attached.

This action recommends the creation of a task group to review the assessment center's current practices and existing resources, identify evidence-based best practices, and provide recommendations to meet any perceived gaps. Thank you for presenting a thoughtful recommendation for my consideration.

It is helpful to keep in mind the context of why assessment centers were created and how they have operated. with decreased budget constraints. The nature of the assessment center functions have changed and evolved over time. In addition, decisions that affect the centers' staffing levels have been affected by budgetary challenges.

Based on my review and discussion with members of the Senior Administrative Leadership Team, I am endorsing this recommendation as a project to be addressed by the Student Success Network (SSN) in the broader context of all student support services. As you may know, the SSN is a group of College faculty, staff, and administrators who are focused on the operations and functions of the College that affect student success. Appropriate and adequate student support

services are fundamental and vital to student success. In light of the progress of the SSN, this is an opportune time to review all student success support services, including the assessment centers.

I am assigning this recommendation to Senior Vice Presidents Monica Brown and Sanjay Rai and charging them to use the Student Success Network to:

- 1) conduct a comprehensive review of all academic support services in order to provide equitable and responsive student support to all students,
- 2) consider the appropriate naming of the assessment center, considering the functions they serve now and will serve in the future, and
- 3) empower a workgroup to develop recommendations that will provide solutions, including support services for evening and weekend students.

Thank you for your dedicated service to Montgomery College's governance system and all of the work you do to support Montgomery College's mission and vision. Please do not hesitate to contact me if you have further questions or concerns.

Attachment

cc: Senior Administrative Leadership Team  
Governance Director



## Governance Recommendation

Council Name: Academic Services Council  
Council Chair: Colleen Dolak

Date: 12/18/19

Recommendation Author: Samantha Veneruso

***Recommendation Issue or Concern:***

The Academic Services Council advises Montgomery College to seek additional ways to support our students on the path to graduation, given the implications of demonstrated demographic changes. As the percentage of students with “nontraditional” backgrounds increases, traditional support structures, such as daytime-only office hours for academic support services, are struggling to meet the need. ASC believes it is essential for the institution to develop a holistic, student-centered strategy across all dimensions of the student experience. From the classroom to support services, campus operations, and relationships with the broader community, all aspects of the student experience should be tailored to foster measurable improvements in persistence rates, time to graduation, and completion rates.

The Assessment Centers on each campus serve a vital function for both new and current students. They provide services to facilitate initial placement testing and retesting, as well as test proctoring services throughout the semester. They also serve students who need additional time for testing due to Disability Support Services (DSS) accommodations in compliance with their learning needs. The Assessment Center has done excellent work using the available resources to meet the needs of students. Operating hours are offered until 7 p.m. twice a week, with occasional Saturday hours at peak times in the semester. Rotating staff cover essential functions, and remote proctoring opportunities are available without cost to students.

However, students and faculty have raised concerns about the availability of the Assessment Centers, indicating that the hours of availability do not always allow working students and students with testing accommodations to complete their tests (see attached comments from students, faculty and collected from a survey by the DSS department). Students have noted that even with operating hours extended until 7 p.m., a later work schedule combined with commute times hampers their ability to get to campus with sufficient time remaining to complete an assessment. This combination can particularly affect students with documented accommodations, such as extended testing time. Those who are not able to come earlier in the day may not be able to take full advantage the time allotted by their accommodations for testing. Students have also remarked on long lines and extended wait times in the Assessment Centers during busy times of the semester. Lastly, faculty have mentioned that the weekly closing of the centers on Thursday afternoons has had a critical impact on the number of available hours each week.

The Academic Services Council wishes to acknowledge that the Assessment Centers have audited the usage of the Centers and have posted a schedule designed to meet the needs of as many students as possible with the current resources. However, with the College’s evolving expansion of evening and weekend programs, it merits review of the resources allocated for the Assessment Centers to determine ways to meet the needs of students during busy times of the semester, evenings, and weekends.

**Resolution:**

The Academic Services Council proposes the creation of a collaborative task group including representatives from the Student Affairs, Academic Affairs, Administrative and Fiscal Services, the Assessment Centers, Disability Support Services, Information Technology staff, faculty, and students. The goal of this team will be to review the current practices and existing resources of the Assessment Centers, identify evidence-based practices from other similar institutions, and provide recommendations to meet any perceived gap.

**Student Impact:**

A review of the current best practices in testing, assessment, and effectively implemented measures at Montgomery College will improve access to test proctoring services. As testing and assessment are integral to the academic model used at Montgomery College, these services link to student success.

**Economic Impact:**

Although the recommendations may include allocating more human, capital and financial resources for testing services, especially with the intended expansion of weekend and evening programs, recommendations could include alternative models with shared services and resources in or across areas of the College.

**Final Disposition/Recommendation:** *(Complete once decision is made by College Council)*

*College Council voted to move the recommendation forward for Dr. Pollard's consideration.*

## Case 1 – Availability for testing

*The following is a series of emails to Prof. Talbot about the hours of operation.*

Previous message and examples from DL students

Hi Samantha and Colleen,

Thank you for taking the time to address this critical issue as there are a number of faculty and student concerns associated with the allocation of resources at the assessment centers at Rockville, Germantown and Takoma Park.

The availability of testing for our evening class students, working students and our DSS students is insufficient, inconsistent, and unreliable. With the assessment center closing at 6:45 and 4:45 on most evenings there is no time for a student that has evening classes or has working hours during the day to take the exams without inconveniencing themselves with their boss at their job. Many times their bosses give students a choice, your job or your college class. Students rely on the posted schedules and yet, on random days, the centers close early or open late. This is unacceptable.

An example of a recent no-notice change;

The assessment center closed during the day, April 8, and did not open until 2 PM. A DSS student in my accounting class was entitled by law, double time to take a test, which for this course entitles the student to 4 hours. The center would have closed prior to the student's allotted time.

Given that the Rockville Campus serves more students than Germantown and Takoma Park- Silver Spring, it would seem reasonable to allocate resources proportionally to best serve our student population. Far more students are testing at Rockville and resources should be allocated to meet this need. I am attaching some recent emails from students that had to take a test during the week of April 8th. Students indicated that there were almost 30 students in line at the Rockville Center waiting to test when the assessment center reopened at 2 PM. In order to make their way to the front of the line, students waited almost an hour in order to take their test. This is unacceptable in terms of student success and maintaining academic standards through proctored tests. As mentioned above, assessment centers close for meetings with no warning to faculty or students. This is not a new problem, I have brought this to the attention of my chair and Dean for the better part of the last six years.

A lack of resources is always the response. The college does though, seem to find resources for programs such as multiple versions of academic coaches that have yet to be proven to impact student success.

Senior administration can impact student success by allocating more resources for the assessment centers, a request which has been turned down for the last six years.

Thank you for your time and I wish you the best of luck in resolving this problem that in packs student success in my accounting classes Below is a string of four emails from students that were sent to me on the day that there were 30 students in line to take the test.

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Zolan, Carrie <czolan@wusa9.com>

Tue 4/9/2019 5:02 PM

- Talbot, Bill L

It's been quite a day. I rushed from my office at 3:30 (this after coming into work 3 hours late due to the closure of the assessment center) to come to this campus to take the exam only find out that they're closing at 4:30. You've got to be kidding. I have wasted time driving back and forth (where am I journaling this transaction for lost income and time.) As well as possibly angering my employer.

When a grown-up decides to go back to school, we have to arrange multiple details to be successful...there are numerous pieces that need to be juggled, so this is not just an inconvenience to a regular 20 year old student, this genuinely caused me problems. How am I, as a student, supposed to succeed in this environment when I keep getting a run around for exams. I'm working my butt off studying non-stop, not watching TV or movies, not exercising when I want to, not relaxing after a full day working, telling my kids that I need couple hours a day to take care of homework and yet the school throws up barriers. I know this is not your fault, I do understand that. I am just absolutely livid right now. I have to go home to study chapter 9 and yet I need to take a test for chapter 5 to 8 tomorrow. My head is spinning.

I will be emailing the director of the student assessment dept as well as the dean tomorrow when I'm calm and not in the car. (Yes, unfortunately I'm venting at you.)

So I will be at the school tomorrow at 8:30 to take this exam, hopefully 3rd time is a charm. I just hope my employers don't give me hassles for this and/or tell me that my class is interfering with work.

Carrie

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Torrelino Rollano, Emma S

Tue 4/9/2019 10:06 PM

- Talbot, Bill L;
- susanatorrelino@gmail.com

Good evening Professor Talbot,

I wanted to let you know that I took the exam this afternoon. Unfortunately, not having another alternative and after waiting my turn(big line of people waiting to take different exams), I started my exam after 3:15. Today the assessment center closed at 4:45, so we had until 4:30 to finish. I tried to do my best but restricted time and pressure don't go well together.

I just wanted to inform you that I was able to take the exam. I will try to do it better next time, and I hope under better circumstances.

Kind regards,

Emma Susana

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平良明美 <akno.121814@gmail.com>

Tue 4/9/2019 9:30 PM

- Talbot, Bill L

Good afternoon, Professor Talbot, this is Akemi Vasquez, I am in your Mon 11:00 to 12:40pm class.

I would like to let you know that i went to the assessment center at 1pm today, but they said that they won't be opening until 2:30pm, so i went there at 2:40pm.

Unfortunately, when i got there, there was already a huge line. I waited until 3:10pm and i was not even on the half way.

However, i saw a couple of my class mates and your students but from different classes.

One of them told us that she already talked to you about the situation and you said that we will be able to take it tomorrow.

I would like to make sure if there won't be any problem if i take them tomorrow?

Kouyate, Mariame D

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Tue 4/9/2019 9:28 PM

- Talbot, Bill L

Hello professor Talbot,

I just wanted to confirm with you because a bunch us who tried to take the Exam today got mixed up. The testing center was closed until 2:30, because of a department meeting and opened at 2:30 and closed at 4:45 pm. we were told by other students in your class that you Extended the exam until tomorrow because we wouldn't have time to actually complete the exam.

Sincerely,  
Mariame D. Kouyate

Bill Talbot, Professor, CPA  
Montgomery College Rockville  
240.567.5014  
bill.talbot@montgomerycollege.edu  
Office HU 248

Fall Office Hours:

Monday 920 to 950 & 1150 to 1220  
Tuesday 1050 to 1220  
Wednesday 920 to 950 & 1150 to 1220  
Thursday 1050 to 1220

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From: Talbot, Bill L <Bill.Talbot@montgomerycollege.edu>  
Sent: Monday, November 18, 2019 11:34 AM  
To: Dolak, Colleen N <colleen.dolak@montgomerycollege.edu>; Alavi, Ali <Ali.Alavi@montgomerycollege.edu>; Veneruso, Samantha S <samantha.veneruso@montgomerycollege.edu>; Talbot, Bill L <Bill.Talbot@montgomerycollege.edu>  
Subject: Re: Meeting request

Hi

Main problem with the assessment center is scheduling more time so the students have access to taking exams in the evening and that the assessment center doesn't close for meetings in the middle of the day. The problem with closing in the middle of the day is there are not blocks of time long enough for the DSS students to take exams with double time; in accounting that is a four hour exam.

Rockville bears the brunt of testing and more resources and testing times, should be allocated vs GT or TPSS.

There were some other problems but the new staff at the assessment center has been very cooperative to work out those issues.

Bottom line is the administration has to dedicate more resources and time for the assessment center to be open to fully support our online students. The administration is not willing to spend more money to make these changes.

Thanks,

Bill

Bill Talbot, Professor, CPA  
Montgomery College Rockville  
240.567.5014  
bill.talbot@montgomerycollege.edu  
Office HU 248

Fall Office Hours:

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*The following is a summary from the DSS survey conducted in 2018/2019 and perspective from the director of DSS.*

-the need for extended and weekend hours at the Assessment Center

Here are a few comments related to the above concern:

“Assessment center should be easy and when they change people they don't explain the time and I was kicked out early. Also my professor had to go back and forth to get my grade and everytime she went the assessment center was closed. “

“I wish the assessment center was able to extend their hours, however, an employee there told me some of their faculty would complain about being open later. This is an extreme inconvenience for those who require later testing hours or attend evening classes. I have had to miss classes for having multiple exams in one day and requiring double time in my exams.”

“Have the assessment center extended hours if possible.”

“I’m part-time student taking evening classes. I had to miss work so I can take my exams during the day. This was a huge challenge for me.”

“Assessment Center should be easier to access.”

“I take class on Saturdays which means at the latest I can take the test on Friday. Some times due to testing time and scheduling I would have to take exam 3 days early which affected my study time.”

“The line takes hours, the assessment center needs to be more organized. They need more employees, working there or I suggest you have an appointment for when you can test. No Walk-ins.”

“I'm a part-time student taking evening classes and I feel some of the accommodations for DSS students is geared more to the full-time day students. For example, because I have a Monday night class, I have to take my exam during the day because the testing center closes at 5. This has caused me to miss work on 3 separate occasions so I could take my exams.”

I think it is important for the College to offer testing hours for evening and weekend students. Even for those students who take day classes, the hours may still not meet their needs. Often times, students take more than one class and scheduling double time, while attending other day classes in the 8:30am -5:00pm window can be a challenge. I think the Assessment Center is doing the best that they can with the resources that they have. If we can advocate for additional resources, I’m definitely on board with that!

Let me know if I can be of further assistance.

Best,  
Sue

Sue Haddad, LCPC, NCC  
College-Wide Chair, Disability Support Services  
900 Hungerford Drive, Mannakee Building, Room 283  
Rockville, MD 20850  
(240)-567-5087 (office)  
(240)-567-5097 (fax)

*The following is a summary from Prof. van den Berg provided from discussion at a unit meeting.*

Dear Colleen,

Thanks for reaching out to me. Yesterday at our Academic Unit meeting, I brought up the fact that I think we do not serve our evening population well. Although the attached notes only focus on the opening hours of registration, I completely agree with you that the Assessment Centers have the same issue.

How can working adults come and take evening classes here when we only offer the classes, but not the support services that they pay fees for? I am very glad to see that the WRL-Centers and the libraries have extended hours now, which truly helps my (non-native) evening students.

I am also going to talk to Elizabeth Schlackman (who is on the Facilities Council) later face-to-face about this (and other) issues. Brad Steward recommended that we keep bringing this issue up in meetings so that we can find solutions.

Please feel free to use/refer to the attached notes when discussing the matter with others.

Best. Jorinde

Jorinde van den Berg, Ph.D.  
Chair of Communication Studies, Linguistics, & ELAP  
(English for Academic Purposes / formerly AELP)  
ENGL / ELAP professor  
HS141, Germantown campus  
240-567-6900

#### Opening Hours Registration & Lack of Services for Evening Students:

- There did not seem to be any extended hours the week before classes started or during the first week of classes, which is odd given the fact enrollment is low.
- Students who do everything the right way are often affected by the limited opening hours: ELAP students with fulltime day jobs in D.C. can just make it to the GT campus by class time, which is 7 PM (ELAR classes are on MW & ELAW/ELAI990 classes are on TR). If these students test up or out via the First Day Diagnostic (and consequently have to register for another class, they can often not do so because registration closes at 5 on Tuesday and at noon on Thursday. First, they need to get the Override and OTR form from the Chair and then they have to physically take it to Registration. The Chairs and Office Staff often stay late especially for those students, but if Registration is not open, they will still have to take part of the day off the next day or so to make the switch.

Day	Germantown	Rockville	Takoma Park /
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			Silver Spring
Monday	8:30 AM – 7 PM	8:30 AM – 5 PM	8:30 AM – 5 PM
Tuesday	8:30 AM – 5 PM	8:30 AM – 7 PM	8:30 AM – 7 PM
Wednesday	8:30 AM – 7 PM	8:30 AM – 5 PM	8:30 AM – 7 PM
Thursday	8:30 AM – noon	8:30 AM – noon & 5 - 7 PM	8:30 AM – noon
Friday	8:30 AM – 5 PM	8:30 AM – 5 PM	8:30 AM – 5 PM

*The following are two perspectives from Student Life about the Rockville campus wait times.*

From: Rashaw, Benita <benita.rashaw@montgomerycollege.edu>  
Sent: Thursday, December 12, 2019 9:43 PM  
To: Sushka, Nik <Nik.Sushka@montgomerycollege.edu>  
Cc: Cartledge, Ernest <ernest.cartledge@montgomerycollege.edu>  
Subject: Re: Support request for governance recommendation

Hi Ernest,

Yes, I agree with Nik. The line at the assessment center is quite long at the beginning and end of the semester. I know I've tried to encourage students to get a snack from Student Life while they wait but most refuse with the nonverbal sense of frustration as they wait. Yesterday, an older prospective student was waiting in the line just to ask a question. I love Nik's recommendation which are very similar to DMV wait protocol but I would also suggest having staff (perhaps a student employee) going through the line to triage student needs.

Benita  
Dr. Benita Rashaw  
Interim Collegewide Director of Student Life  
Montgomery College  
(240) 567-5092

On Dec 12, 2019, at 1:54 PM, Sushka, Nik <Nik.Sushka@montgomerycollege.edu> wrote:

Hi Ernest,

Given our shared location with the Assessment Center hallway, I can verify that we frequently have lengthy lines of students out the door.

A few additional thoughts:

The students have to stand while waiting. There isn't a system where they can check in and sit while waiting for their turn. I think it would be great if we could utilize a texting or buzzer system similar to restaurants. We could also put a "wait time" counter on the TV outside the Assessment Centers so students could plan better. But at the very least, a student could enter the queue to take their test, know they have 30 minutes to get lunch or even just sit and study more, rather than waste that valuable time just standing in line.

The line isn't at all friendly for students who might use assistive devices like canes or wheelchairs.

Best!  
Nik

From: Cartledge, Ernest <ernest.cartledge@montgomerycollege.edu>  
Sent: Thursday, December 12, 2019 1:04 PM  
To: Rashaw, Benita <benita.rashaw@montgomerycollege.edu>; Sushka, Nik <Nik.Sushka@montgomerycollege.edu>  
Subject: FW: Support request for governance recommendation

Hello Benita and Nik,

Please see below. I don't have any written or anecdotal statements around this issue. Have either of you heard anything in Student Life?

Ernest  
Ernest Cartledge  
Director of Enrollment Services and College Registrar  
Montgomery College  
9221 Corporate Boulevard  
Rockville, MD 20850  
Phone: 240-567-7991  
Fax: 240-567-5104  
ernest.cartledge@montgomerycollege.edu

From: Dolak, Colleen N <colleen.dolak@montgomerycollege.edu>  
Sent: Wednesday, December 11, 2019 2:01 PM  
To: Tracey, Christine K <christine.tracey@montgomerycollege.edu>; Kirkner, Tim E <Tim.Kirkner@montgomerycollege.edu>; LeBlanc, Michael E <michael.leblanc@montgomerycollege.edu>; Cartledge, Ernest <ernest.cartledge@montgomerycollege.edu>  
Cc: Flanary, Robin N <robin.flanary@montgomerycollege.edu>; Murphy, Kimberly L <kimberly.murphy@montgomerycollege.edu>; Academic Services Council <academicservicescouncil@montgomerycollege.edu>; Talbot, Bill L <Bill.Talbot@montgomerycollege.edu>; Alavi, Ali <Ali.Alavi@montgomerycollege.edu>; Veneruso, Samantha S <samantha.veneruso@montgomerycollege.edu>  
Subject: Support request for governance recommendation

Hi Christine, Tim, Michael & Earnest

I realize this is a very hectic time of the year. I hope you are all well.

I've mentioned this to each of you separately, but we have come to a time when we will move forward with this recommendation to the College Council and Dr. Pollard.

I would really like to provide supporting documentation. We've drafted the attached recommendation with Samantha leading the charge, gained support from DSS and even met with Jamin and Guillermo to garner support. Additional cases of issues will bolster our appeal to the Council and the President. Do you have any other case studies of students to share?

ASC meets tomorrow, but we won't present until the College Council meets again in February. I would like to gather the information by Opening Meeting on January 21st.

Thank you!  
Colleen

Colleen Dolak  
Alumni Relations Manager  
Chair, Academic Services Council  
Member, MCRPA  
Montgomery College  
Advancement and Community Engagement

Supporting documentation for Assessment Center Resolution  
Assessment Center data collection FY19

*The following is a set of data collected by the Assessment Centers. This highlights a few issues raised in verbal conversations with faculty including issues around parity in resources by location, SmartProctoring costs, and peak times.*

Assessment Centers administered 17,627 academic tests (61%) and 11, 203 placement tests (39%)

Academic Tests by Campus:

RV: 9,446

TPSS: 4,019

GT: 4,162

Distance Learning and Blended Tests by Campus totaled 1,479:

RV: 738

TPSS: 315

GT: 426

Test appointments processed through SmarterProctoring totaled 4,993:

Completed appointments – 3,757

Cancelled/No show/Deleted – 1,236

Remote/Online Proctoring appointments completed: 123

Note: In FY19, students paid the online proctoring fees out of packet. We received feedback from faculty that some students might not be able to cover the fees for this service, particularly DSS students. Starting FY20, Assessment Centers will absorb the fees. This is the first year when the service is available to students for free.

Here is an example to illustrate how much testing volume Assessment Centers handle during a peak period (7 weeks)

Fall 2018 – December 1 through January 18, 2019

Number of test processed and administered during Final Exams Week (Dec. 8-15, 2018) and Spring 2019 registration (Dec. 1, 2018 through Jan. 18, 2019)

	Academic Testing Final Exam Week Only	Placement Testing Dec. 1, 2018 through Jan. 18, 2019
Rockville	975	824
Germantown	659	240
Takoma Park/Silver Spring	423	678

Notice that in seven weeks, Assessment Centers processed and administered 3,799 tests for current and new students.