

Minutes of Math Issues Committee
Friday, February 23, 2007
Naugatuck Valley Community College, Room E602b

The meeting convened at 11:15 a.m.

Present — Alice Burstein (Middlesex), Jean-Marc Cenet (Tunxis), Elaine Dinto (Naugatuck Valley), Andre Freeman (Capital), Pat Hirschy (Asnuntuck), Barbara Paskov (Manchester)

Minutes from December 8, 2006 meeting were approved with one revision.

Math Discipline Reviews —

Pat announced that Asnuntuck is conducting a math discipline review this year, and that they "would appreciate perspective from a visiting review team. The team would be responsible for reading the review document, spending Friday April 13 at Asnuntuck to meet folk, and writing an evaluation report." Please let her know if you wish to serve (a good opportunity to add to your resume and tenure or promotion package!); also please spread the word.

A discipline review is a self-study of a discipline's strengths and weaknesses. The model that the system is currently using is based upon the Houston model and is not a perfect match for our system. A revised program review has been created and is currently being piloted at NVCC; a revision of the discipline review will soon follow. Completed reviews are on file in the Academic Dean's offices, and at some other locations on campuses. The group discussed whether it might be a good idea to generate a resource area for math discipline reviews, perhaps have a "keeper of the (hardcopy) documents" to assist other colleges with their reviews. Perhaps at least a list of colleges having recently completed reviews could be posted on the MATYCONN website.

Concept of Developmental Departments —

Benefits of having developmental math courses taught within the Math Departments rather than in separate Developmental Departments were discussed. As an alternative, Capital CC has a Division of General Education and Developmental Education that houses the Humanities Department and well as Math and Science Departments, Academic Advising, and the Learning Center; they are looking at LaGuardia CC (NY) as a model. Middlesex has Learning Communities where the same group of students takes the same courses (a developmental course, Freshman seminar); one problem with this model is that students in this group have no other behavior, except for that of students in their group, to model.

Course Change Proposal —

Discussion again took place about the system-wide proposal for course changes. The proposal would require that a system-wide Curriculum Committee consider courses for all colleges, which would mean that there would not necessarily be people in attendance at the meeting who were knowledgeable about the discipline and could answer questions. The idea of system disciplined based committees to convene each semester was discussed. The Dean's Council has, or is in the process of, establishing a task force to look at alternatives. Jean Marc asked the group if it would be helpful to have Andre Blaszczyński, who was the author of the proposal, present at the March 30 meeting at Tunxis, where Professor Blaszczyński works; the consensus was that this is an excellent idea. Jean Marc will invite him to the meeting; Pat suggested that the group generate a list of questions/concerns.

ANNOUNCEMENTS —

New Course at Manchester CC —

Barbara briefed the group on a new course at MCC, similar to their MAT 096, Alg Concepts Nbr Sns/Geom, where students complete MAT* 075 and MAT* 095 in one semester (5 contact hours, cost is 3 credits plus a lab fee; students use the MAT* 095 textbook plus a packet of geometry supplements. MAT* 139 will allow students to complete MAT* 095 and MAT* 138 in one semester. The group was interested in the course syllabi, and Barbara agreed to send them to group members.

New Course at Middlesex CC —

Alice announced a new course at Middlesex, based upon Central Connecticut's MATH 123, Applied Business Mathematics. The course, which covers linear, quadratic, exponential, and logarithmic functions, matrices, linear programming, and polynomial calculus, has emphasis on applications to problems arising in business, and sounds similar to Manchester's MAT* 158, Functions, Graphs, and Matrices. Alice will bring a course outline to Math Issues.

MATYCONN —

The MATYCONN annual spring meeting will be held at Manchester on Friday, April 27. Theme for the presentations is best practices in use of technology for computer enhanced and distance learning classes.

Grades/Transfer Issues —

A question arose regarding grades the colleges accept for student transfer. Internal policies for many schools require a C or better as a prerequisite for the next level course, but Board Policy seems to indicate that C- is passing. We may want to check with our Departments how this is handled.

Tech Prep —

As of June 2007, Tech Prep and Perkins grant opportunities will be restructured, and Tech Prep will become known as Pathways to College; there remains much confusion. Discussion included the following:

Transfer issue — Math colleagues at CSU and UConn are philosophically opposed to giving college credit for math courses taken by high school students while in high school. Note: AP calculus and AP statistics are exceptions. In order to treat all students entering CSU fairly, "Tech Prep" credit would have to be noted on CC transcripts, as failure to do so results in CSU giving preferential treatment to tech prep students. E.g., if two students take the same high school course in the same room with the same teacher, one receives tech prep credit and the other does not, once entering CSU the one with the tech prep credit takes a higher level course, as he has received prior "college" math credit, while the other has to take Accuplacer.

Residency issue — At least in the case of NVCC, most students who receive tech prep credits do not actually attend the CC. The community college simply passes papers along to 4-year institutions without ever seeing the students.

Much labor is required to ensure "equivalent" courses — To ensure equality with NVCC or any CC courses, material would need to be completed in the same time frame, with a common final, and be taught by CC adjuncts (or CC certified instructors).

System-wide issues — There are many variations within the CC system; some colleges appear to be out of the tech prep business as far as math is concerned, others are told that they cannot opt out. Some are told that a "college level math course" must be part of the package, others are told that MAT* 095 is acceptable. While the state folks, at a "get acquainted" meeting on January 31 at NVCC, indicated that grant money will not pay for students to take Accuplacer, or for anything that benefits individuals, in some colleges students are required to take Accuplacer as a part of the process of earning college credit. CCs are being required to pass paper along to our CSU colleagues who, for valid reasons, do not want this, and although we have common numbering, there is no consistency. Moreover, what is the point of having course-by-course agreements without a pathway?

College experience— A "college experience" does not result when a student takes a course in high school. Expectations are very different, including the time frame and amount of work expected outside of class. Would it not be better to get students onto the college campuses so that they become "hooked on college"?

Possible options — (1) Students can take CLEP exams to ensure that they know course material, or they can come to CC campuses to take a "credit by exam." (2) Form a "Pathways" program where students take courses at the community college and receive both CC and high school credit.

Recommendation — Having individual tech prep agreements causes transfer problems; with system-wide common numbering, a system-wide approach makes much more sense. The other option is for CC transcripts to state that credit received is tech prep credit.

Statistics articulation questions —

Will the designation MAT*16_ cover transfer of CC MAT* 165, 167, 168 to 4-year institutions? Will all of these satisfy the prerequisite for MAT* 222 at Tunxis and Manchester?

The meeting adjourned at 12:50 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Elaine Dinto