

**Minutes of Math Issues Committee**  
**Friday, October 12, 2007**  
**Gateway Community College**  
**North Haven Campus, Room 113**

**Present** — Larisa Alikhanova (Three Rivers), Kathy Bavelas (Gateway), Jean-Marc Genet (Tunxis), Elaine Dinto (Naugatuck Valley), Paul Edelen (Manchester), Andre Freeman (Capital), Miguel Garcia (Gateway), Pat Hirschy (Asnuntuck), Joy Mark (Quinebaug Valley), Linda Musco (Middlesex), Rachael Schettenhelm (Gateway), Special Guest: Dean Mary Ann Affleck (Capital).

The meeting was called to order at 10:44 by Miguel.

**Minutes** from the April 20, 2007 and the September 14, 2007 meetings were approved.

**Update on the Common Course Number System Maintenance Task Force (CCNSMTF)** — Due to concerns expressed about the make-up of the committee by Manchester faculty, no new meeting dates are currently scheduled. The Academic Deans recommended that the Task Force be split into two committees (or processes): one to maintain the database and one to determine (by faculty) the relevancy of the databases (to determine whether courses are indeed common). The Deans believe that the faculty need to regularly meet, discuss, and decide, much like ECE and Math do now.

**Special Act 07-7, concerning public institution of higher education system transfer and articulation agreements** — Pat attended a meeting of the Standing Advisory Committee to the Board of Governors for Higher Ed on October 11. While many math faculty do not interpret the language in SA 07-7 to imply that public colleges should have one specific Accuplacer score for entrance into college level courses, the language at that meeting did make clear that this is the interpretation of the Board of Governors. Math Issues members expressed concern that a common score would take away from the individuality of the colleges, and would not be in the best interests of our students. If a concern of the Legislature is transfer, common scores will not address the problem.

**Miguel welcomed and introduced our guest, Dr. Mary Ann Affleck, Academic Dean at Capital CC**, at 11:15; likewise Math Issues members introduced themselves. In answer to her questions, he explained that (1) Math Issues Committee is a representative body of the system's math faculty, with a focus on all levels of math issues; MATYCONN is a voluntary professional mathematics (membership) organization, an affiliate of the American Mathematical Association of Two-Year Colleges; Math Basic Skills Committee of CT (MBSCC) is a statewide committee, with representatives from UConn, CSU, and many CCs, whose focus is on developmental mathematics issues. He invited Dr. Affleck to attend the 1:30 meeting of MBSCC to address that group, if she cared to do so, then asked how we can be of help to her.

**Our charge** —

Dr. Affleck explained that the Legislature is interested in a level of standardization across higher education. Specifically, the Chancellor wants a recommendation from CC math faculty for a common Accuplacer cut score "indicating when students are ready to go into collegiate work," i.e. for students entering credit level math. She explained that this score should be determined by first identifying common measurable outcomes for the preceding course. When asked, Dr. Affleck told committee members that she was not familiar with the factors leading to the State mandate.

Points of discussion —

- Currently the CCs have agreed to common topics/content for courses, using the 80% commonality rule; we do not have agreed upon written outcomes.
- There was a question of what is considered college level math; the CSUs give general elective credit for Intermediate Algebra (it does not satisfy a math requirement in any program); some of the CCs

do the same, while at other CCs Intermediate Algebra satisfies the math requirement in some programs.

- If MAT\* 137/138 is considered the first college level course, Dr. Affleck stated that we will need to identify learning outcomes for Elementary Algebra and then to determine an appropriate Accuplacer cut score for placement into Intermediate Algebra; ultimately we will need common learning outcomes for Intermediate Algebra.
- One concern Committee members expressed is that the Elementary Algebra Test in Accuplacer is not an exit test of competencies for Elementary Algebra, rather is intended as a predictor for success in Intermediate Algebra.
- Dr. Affleck will send to Miguel, for distribution to the Committee, uniform validated placements (for Accuplacer, Compass) used in the North Carolina system.

Our job is to construct a platform for moving forward, but a number of other questions and concerns were expressed by Committee members. Dr. Affleck assured the group that she would pose the following questions/concerns to the Council of Deans and the Chief Academic Officer:

- What specifically is our charge? Do we need common cut scores by 01/01/2008, or a plan for determining the appropriate score(s)? A January deadline is not reasonable if it is the former.
- Do we need one common Accuplacer score for entrance into college level math, or is a band of scores appropriate? A band allows colleges to focus on individual populations who enter a variety of programs.
- Consistent use of the Accuplacer is needs to be discussed; currently some colleges begin with the Elementary Algebra portion of the test, and others with the Arithmetic part.
- Additional resources may be necessary for the determination of the common cut score and for subsequent implementation. At some colleges the implementation may initially require more developmental sections than currently exist.
- A continuous assessment piece for the process is essential. There must be a plan to determine if a cut score is working, and a plan to revise it if not. The Legislature must realize that this is not a one-time issue, but will require a continuous time commitment.
- Placement is an art, and a cut score should be only one aspect. Other assessment tools in addition to Accuplacer need to be part of the placement process (SATs, CAPT scores, grades, level and number of math courses taken in high school). Students must become advocates for themselves.
- A way to have students refresh their algebra skills prior to taking Accuplacer, without teaching to that test, is needed. Often students do not study or take the test seriously; can we identify a process for high school students that would make Accuplacer more effective?
- "Combination courses" are another issue; campuses now offer a variety of courses that combine two developmental courses for qualified students, in order to shorten the time for students to get through the developmental sequence. These work in specific situations and should be part of the implementation plan.

Dr. Affleck also recommended "**oversight of developmental programs**," that would "strengthen the developmental sequence," provide academic and non-academic support, including learning communities.

The meeting concluded with a brief **discussion of "success"** for the community college student. Is a successful student only one who graduates, transfers, or continues to take classes after three years? Or might a successful student be defined differently, as one who takes a class or two simply for personal knowledge, enjoyment, or other reasons?

**Revised 2007-2008 meeting schedule:** 11/09 at WCSU, 12/14 at GWCC, 02/08 at MCC, 03/14 at NVCC, 04/18 at UConn, 05/09 if pending business, CCSU.

**The meeting adjourned** for lunch (provided by the Center for Teaching - thanks, Rachael!) at 12:40 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,  
Elaine Dinto