

Minutes of Math Issues Committee
Friday, February 8, 2008
Manchester Community College
AST Building, Room D229

Present — Larisa Alikhanova (Three Rivers), Jean-Marc Cenet (Tunxis), Elaine Dinto (Naugatuck Valley), Paul Edelen (Manchester), Miguel Garcia (Gateway), Pat Hirschy (Asnuntuck), Mark Leach (Housatonic), Slav Sharapov (Quinebaug Valley), Rachael Schettenhelm (Gateway), Pam Wahl (Middlesex), Jill Zimmerman (Manchester)

The **meeting convened** at 11:15.

A lively discussion took place regarding the following —

- Pros and cons of **calculator use** in MAT* 075 and 095.
- The necessity to find a satisfactory **system solution to the problem of students' registering for courses for which they are not prepared**. Because students may register for a course prior to completing the prerequisite course, when they do not pass the prerequisite, they take up seats in a course for which they are not prepared and cause prepared students not to be able to register. At MCC, the institutional research person performs a Banner query which identifies such students; Committee members expressed interest in using this solution at their campuses, but all must be attentive to privacy (FERPA) laws.
- **Transfer of C- grade:** Board policy is to accept C- grades, but many colleges have a requirement of C or better in the prerequisite course to move on. A possible solution is to transfer math courses with a C- grade as math electives.

The following **CSU System documents** related to Accuplacer scores and their common course numbering project can be found online, thanks to David Gross (UConn) —

- Accuplacer Cut-off scores, revised December 10, 2007
<http://www.math.uconn.edu/~dgross/MBSCC/ACCUPLACERCutoffs2007-12-10.pdf>
- Common Course Numbering Plan, Connecticut State University System, December 12, 2007
<http://www.math.uconn.edu/~dgross/MBSCC/CCN-CSUS.pdf>
- Connecticut State University System Report on Proficiency for College Level Courses, December 12, 2007
<http://www.math.uconn.edu/~dgross/MBSCC/CSUS-ProficiencyRept.pdf>

Committee members discussed which points of the **Math Issues Committee plan regarding placement and common course outcomes** with which to begin. The plan, included in the December 14, 2007 Minutes, is repeated below, for convenience:

1. We will bring feedback / concerns from our colleges to the next Math Issues Meeting regarding the four proposals presented above.
2. With assistance from campus Institutional Research, we propose that colleges that are affected by the proposed changes in the placement testing procedure

do a simulation in the spring to test the impact of the changes, i.e., determine the number of students who would be placed higher or lower if EA is used first and our proposed band is implemented. This data will impact directly on college scheduling and staffing needs.

3. We will identify common student learning outcomes for Elementary Algebra and Intermediate Algebra.
4. With facilitation from the System, Math Issues will initiate a dialogue with College Board in order to assess alignment between the Accuplacer and our student learning outcomes.
5. We will investigate alternative assessment tools in addition to Accuplacer results and SAT mathematics scores to use in the placement process, such as CAPT scores, Credit by Exam scores, high school grades, and high school math courses successfully completed.
6. We will continue communication with MATYCONN, CSU and UConn math faculty. (Note: MATYCONN is the Connecticut chapter of the American Mathematical Association of Two-Year Colleges, AMATYC.)
7. We will identify approaches to make placement testing more effective. This will include investigating ways to refresh student algebra skills prior to taking Accuplacer, considering programs such as Accuplacer A+ and Western CT State University's Bridges Program and the work of the MAT Council, and implementing AMATYC's position statement regarding mathematics placement in order to provide a more holistic approach to placement.
8. We will explore ways to disseminate information about "combination courses" and other innovations developed at sister colleges.

Regarding item #3, identifying common student learning outcomes, the group agreed to the following—

- Mark will create an Excel spreadsheet and head the MAT* 095 group.
- Pam will create an Excel spreadsheet and head the MAT* 137 group.
- Elaine will send Tim Craine's 2004 list of objectives for elementary and intermediate algebra (presented to Math Basic Skills of CT Committee) to the group.
- We will begin with the objectives, then form common outcomes by "unit."
- Committee members are to bring their current course outcomes to the March 14 meeting.
- Committee members will draft a list of common outcomes at the March meeting. (The meeting will take place at NVCC; Elaine will reserve a room with a computer and ceiling projector or a COW.)
- A draft list of common outcomes will be sent to campuses, through the Math Issues representatives, for discussion.
- Feedback will be discussed at the April 18 meeting.
- Goal is to have 100% match of core material that constitutes a minimum of 80% of each course by the end of the semester.

Regarding item #2, Math Issues Committee members from campuses affected by the proposed common Accuplacer testing procedure should contact their Placement Testing Coordinator and Institutional Research person—

- If possible, Northwestern and Gateway should try to determine the impact (on number of sections, cost of tests, etc.) offered on their campuses by beginning with the EA test rather than the AR test.
- Gateway, Housatonic, and Tunxis should try to determine how the proposed change in the cut-off score will affect their campuses, i.e. number of sections, staffing, etc.
- MCC already did a simulation and determined that the one-point change for them in cut-off score would have affected only 20 students, thus one section.
- Note: **All representatives from campuses who currently begin with the EA test should check with their Placement Testing Coordinators to determine when students are bumped down from the EA subtest to the AR subtest, i.e., what number of questions are missed before students are moved into AR.**

Research into alternative assessment tools (item #5) and approaches to make placement testing more effective (item #7) will be ongoing. Committee members were asked to begin thinking about these. Miguel will contact Terri Clark, from the CT Academy for Education, regarding how CAPT is used in different school districts and by institutions of higher education. He will report back to the Committee.

Regarding approaches to make placement testing more effective (item #7) and exploring ways to disseminate information about "combination courses" and other innovations developed at sister colleges (item #8), it was suggested that perhaps information about best practices could be included in the MATYCONN Newsletter. Mark agreed to ask Andre Freeman, Newsletter Editor, to send an email to the MATYCONN membership asking them to share information regarding review for Accuplacer, combination math courses, or other innovations in developmental math or intermediate algebra. It was also suggested that the MATYCONN website be used as a repository for this material.

The **next meeting** will be held at Naugatuck Valley CC on March 14, 2008, 11:00 a.m.

The meeting adjourned at 12:45 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Elaine Dinto