

**Minutes of Math Issues Committee**  
**Friday, November 14, 2008**  
**Central Connecticut State University, Memorial Hall, Nutmeg Room**

**Present** — Larisa Alikhanova (Three Rivers), Elaine Dinto (Naugatuck Valley), Paul Edelen (Manchester), Lori Fuller (Tunxis), Miguel Garcia (Gateway), Pat Hirschy (Asnuntuck), Steve Krevisky (Middlesex), Rachael Schettenhelm (Gateway)

**The meeting convened** at 11:05 a.m.

**Minutes from the October 17, 2008** meeting were approved.

**Ability to benefit vs. open door policy** — Discussion took place concerning Accuplacer scores of 34 or below on the AR subtest, students' ability to benefit (ATB), whether the community colleges offer courses appropriate for these students, and whether financial aid is available. Denying these students entrance into prealgebra contradicts the open door policy of community colleges, but allowing students to register for courses for which they have no ability to benefit not only impacts graduation rates, but is not helpful to students, who may be better served by adult education courses.

**Announcements** —

**High School Reform Plan** — On November 10, Paul attended a High School Reform Plan meeting which took place at MCC and included members of the State Department of Education, CC representatives, high school administrators and instructors. The focus of this initiative is student success; the plan (for 2009-2017) has been approved by the State Board of Education (SBE) and will be formally presented to the General Assembly in January 2009. The plan calls for engaging students, culminating in a capstone project tailored to the student's special interest, and includes establishment of clear cut guidelines for skill acquisition in high school (e.g., students must pass a state proficiency algebra 1 test). The initiative also incorporates support services such as an individualized plan for each student. For success of the plan, there must be expanded partnerships from K-16; an overriding theme was the elimination of paying double, i.e., sending a high school student to college and then paying for what the student should already have learned in high school. There will be a pilot phase-in in several school districts, to keep costs down during the first four years of implementation.

**Transfer and articulation meeting** — On November 13, Pat attended a Transfer and Articulation Subcommittee meeting with the State of Connecticut Commissioner of Higher Education. The purpose of the meeting was to share with Commissioner Meotti the subcommittee's work on transfer and articulation. The subcommittee was very complimentary regarding the work of Math Issues and Math Basic Skills and suggested that other disciplines consider a similar model to encourage discussion of shared issues.

**Memorial for Jill Zimmerman** — A memorial reception in Jill's memory was held on November 5 at MCC. Attended by family, friends, faculty, Manchester's President and former President, several faculty gave eulogies; Jill was recognized with emeritus status. Jill is and will continue to be missed by colleagues from across the system; her vitality, humor, kindness, warmth, and compassion will always be remembered.

**Draft of intermediate algebra outcomes response to the Legislature** — Elaine has received responses from representatives of the three colleges (Norwalk, Northwestern, Three Rivers) with no representation at the October 17 Math Issues meeting; all stated that their colleges voted "yes" to the draft outcomes document, thus giving the document unanimous approval system-wide. Pat will now revise the first page and will send the document to a subcommittee (Teresa, Lori, Miguel, Elaine) prior to the next meeting. Once reviewed, Miguel will send the document, with a cover letter, to Dr. Susen on behalf of the Committee. A discussion of specific details, to include calculator/technology use, integration of the concept of functions, and modeling will take place later.

**Accuplacer placement study** — The System Office charge to the Math Issues Committee includes a follow-up assessment of Accuplacer. Gateway was one of the colleges affected by the mandate to begin Accuplacer testing with the EA test; Gateway's process has been to begin with the AR test, from which many students would not be moved to the EA test because their AR test scores were too low. While implementing the new Accuplacer cut scores, Gateway has requested and received permission to give both tests to each student, but to begin with the AR test and then move to the EA test regardless of the score on the AR test. Since the majority of their students would have to take the AR test anyway, giving the AR test first not only places students into the appropriate prealgebra course offering, but also prevents students from being discouraged up front by facing the EA test first. While they believe that giving the EA test may be counter-productive for  $\frac{3}{4}$  of their students, GWCC will now be able to collect a substantial sample of actual data; they will track a large number of students who would not have seen the EA test under the old rules, study the data, and share the results. Gateway's plan goes along with the spirit of our discussion with Dr. Susen, that we need more Accuplacer research.

At Asnuntuck, Pat has seen an overall positive change with the process of giving the EA test first. Previously, some students placed into MAT\*075 or MAT\*095 when they seemed to have skills at a higher level. Once they registered for classes, it was difficult to encourage them to move to a higher level course. Now more students who are placing into MAT\*095 and MAT\*137 seem to have been placed consistently with their skills.

Further Accuplacer discussion included the meaning of *adaptive* as it relates to the exam. Adaptive does not mean that if a student gets the first few questions on the EA test wrong, that he will be moved to the AR test; rather, it means that if a student starts in EA, and answers questions correctly, the questions become more difficult; an adaptive Accuplacer test provides harder questions, but the exam does not stop until a student gets through the pool of questions. Scores are weighted on the level of the questions.

**Further discussion of Accuplacer** — Discussion then moved to whether, and if so, how campuses provide a review of elementary algebra for students prior to their taking Accuplacer. Committee members decided to devote next meeting to Accuplacer.

- **Homework for next meeting:** Bring in any information we can gather about campus practices surrounding the Accuplacer exam, including whatever your campus does to help students review, also any Accuplacer rules that we can find that are in print.

**College Career Pathways (CCP)** —

- Lori and Elaine were thanked for sharing their current CCP guidelines/policy, which were helpful to other colleges.
- Concerns of Math Issues representatives have been brought back to Manchester math faculty and discussed; Manchester is currently in the process of resolving their CCP agreement.
- We should keep track of CCP students, and whether or not they come to our campuses.
- At Three Rivers, the CCP program involves about 800 students from 21 schools. In the past, about 15% of CCP/tech prep students actually attended classes at a TRCC campus. Accuplacer is supposed to be a part of the TRCC articulation agreement; the question arose as to who pays for it (the grant will pay for bussing, but not for tests or administration).
- Larisa will send the Three Rivers CCP agreement to MI representatives.

The **meeting adjourned** at 12:35.

**Next meeting** will be held at 11:00 on December 12, 2008 at Middlesex CC. Center for Teaching funds will pay for lunch of attendees, thanks to Alice Burstein; contact Alice ([ABurstein@mxcc.comnet.edu](mailto:ABurstein@mxcc.comnet.edu)) if you are interested in joining colleagues for lunch.

Respectfully submitted,



Elaine Dinto