

**Minutes of Math Issues Committee**  
**Friday, February 13, 2009**  
**Tunxis Community College, Room 6-201**

Kathy Bavelas (Gateway), Alice Burstein (Middlesex), June Decker (Three Rivers), Elaine Dinto (Naugatuck Valley), Paul Edelen (Manchester), Teresa Foley (Asnuntuck), Andre Freeman (Capital), Lori Fuller (Tunxis), Miguel Garcia (Gateway), Pat Hirschy (Asnuntuck), Sal Maimone (Northwestern), Joy Mark (Quinebaug Valley), Cora Preibis (Middlesex)

**The meeting convened** at 11:13 a.m.

Committee members welcomed and introduced themselves to our **new member, Sal Maimone**, who is replacing Greg Banks, retired in December, as Northwestern's MI representative.

**Minutes of December 12, 2008** were approved.

**Math Issues plan for 2009 and intermediate algebra outcomes response to the Legislature** — In accordance with the Committee's agreement at the December 2008 meeting, Pat created a draft cover letter to be sent to the System Office and then sent it to Miguel, Teresa, Lori and Elaine for review. Miguel will email the letter to Dr. Susen next week, along with the Committee's intermediate algebra outcomes statement and the revised plan for 2009, which will be included as attachments. (Note: Faculty discussion of specific details, to include calculator/technology use, integration of the concept of functions, and modeling will take place at a future date.)

**New Accuplacer platform** — Elaine shared information from Charlotte, Naugatuck Valley's Placement Testing Coordinator, who attended the Coordinators' meeting on February 10 with Carol, CollegeBoard regional manager, regarding the new Accuplacer platform. Handouts from CollegeBoard concerning ACCUPLACER® i3™ (3<sup>rd</sup> internet version), provided by Charlotte, were distributed. There is a larger pool of questions in this new platform, and test questions have been rewritten to be more in line with how mathematics is currently taught. In addition, CollegeBoard provided new proficiency statements for arithmetic, elementary algebra, and college level math, which were distributed. It appears that since Accuplacer is used nationwide, CollegeBoard is not interested in customizing it for any one system. **Homework:** Representatives should compare Accuplacer's new proficiency statements with those from the previous platform.

Cora, who teaches mathematics and is the Placement Testing Coordinator at Middlesex, attended the February 10 meeting; she reported that all colleges are expected to be up and running with the new platform for the fall semester, beginning with April testing. Revisions to the front page, as well as to other screens, make them more user friendly than former versions. Cora also stated that the new platform would have diagnostic capabilities, which she will further investigate.

**Discussion of campus practices surrounding Accuplacer** — Pat suggested that we organize our Accuplacer practices discussion into the following categories:

- What happens before the test;
- Testing;
- What happens after the test;
- Assessing placement policies/procedures.

Miguel and Pat led a discussion in these areas; Pat summarized main ideas on the board as follows.

## 1. What happens before the test?

Naugatuck Valley — Elaine distributed a copy of Charlotte's "Accuplacer Assessment Test" brochure which is sent to students who apply to the college; it includes information on the purpose of the test, adaptive testing, what students need to bring, testing regulations, the types of questions addressed in each subtest, how to schedule a test, websites to visit in order to prepare, etc. Also distributed was an April 2009 calendar with additional testing info.

Middlesex — Cora distributed a copy of her "Basic Skills Assessment" brochure used at Middlesex CC; it includes information on the purpose of the test, who must take it, test administration and reporting, testing location/dates, preparation, adaptive testing, sample questions, etc. She also distributed information on two websites she suggests students visit in order to prepare for Accuplacer: <http://math.com>; <http://www.purplemath.com/modules/index.htm>. The college website also has testing information and suggests additional sites to visit for review including [www.testpreview.com](http://www.testpreview.com) and [www.algebrahelp.com](http://www.algebrahelp.com).

Capital — Andre reported that their placement testing webpage contains math review questions and provides the addresses of other sites with review questions. Also, their brochure contains practice questions and website addresses; Andre will scan and email to Elaine. In addition, Capital has created in-house practice tests.

Quinebaug Valley — Joy reported that they have a practice test created by faculty, and that they refer students to the CollegeBoard website for review.

Gateway — Miguel noted that students are referred to sites that have practice questions, including one that Middlesex suggests, <http://www.testpreview.com/>.

Issues —

- Time crunch for late registrants; students take the test when they walk in to apply.
- There is a lack of understanding of the importance of the test. How do we reverse this?
- Advising with college personnel versus self-advising.
- Is there a follow-up to see if students actually review? Should there be some sort of sign-off, or waiver, if students do not take advantage of the review?

Note: Capital had a pilot where students were tested, participated in placement test workshops, and were tested again. Follow-up showed that students did well in the next course; faculty will continue looking at placement test workshops.

## 2. Testing

It appears that some colleges allow the calculator functions to be turned on for some questions (where allowed by Accuplacer), and some do not. **Homework:** Bring back information as to whether or not your college allows the calculator to be accessed. Seek information regarding whether the calculator is available on all subtests, and on what types of questions it is available.

## 3. What happens after the test: retaking tests, alternative assessments

A student who challenges the placement test results may be able to retake the assessment test or take some other form of assessment.

Capital — For some courses, Capital has an in-house, final-like exam, called a "credit by exam."

Naugatuck — Under certain circumstances, students may take a "credit by exam" or retake Accuplacer one time; a "challenge to the placement test" form must first be completed and signed by the appropriate parties.

Gateway — A "pretest challenge" to the placement test, or preliminary screening, is given first; if students do well on this, then they are eligible to take a challenge exam.

Housatonic — Students take a 10 question pre-test on the first day of class; those who score high enough have the opportunity to move up to the next level.

Quinebaug — Students can complete a waiver form and take an Accuplacer retest.

Manchester — For MAT\*075, students can take a test of adult basic skills, which provides diagnostic information.

Issues —

- There is a problem moving students to another level after classes start, as classes are full.
- If retesting is to be done, it must be done in timely manner; are there deadlines in place?
- Should there be a sunset clause for Accuplacer scores, i.e., an expiration date for a placement result? Should a score be valid after 2 or 3 years?
- The self-paced design of some courses eases a change of courses; do any colleges offer new courses?
- If huge numbers of students place differently on Accuplacer than on a retest, maybe we need to adjust cut-offs for Accuplacer scores.
- Can students take Accuplacer more than twice? Some colleges have a policy that limits the number of retests to one.
- If students are unhappy with their Accuplacer placement at one college, do they retake Accuplacer at another college? Currently students at every college do not need a Banner ID in order to take the placement test; Testing Coordinators have proposed that students have Banner IDs and a photo ID to take Accuplacer.

#### 4. **Assessing placement policies/procedures** —

Assessment is a part of the Math Issues Committee plan for this year.

- Should we plan assessment in a consistent manner?
- Assistance from Institutional Research is required.
- Lori will give us an update of her study at the next meeting. Are there other studies being done in the system?
- How might our policies support the AMATYC position paper on placement?
- Are cut scores we have in place working? How do we know?

Further discussion of Accuplacer will continue at the next meeting.

#### **Recap of HOMEWORK** —

- Compare Accuplacer's new proficiency statements with those from the previous platform.
- Gather information as to whether or not your college allows the calculator to be accessed, on what subtests it is available, and on what types of questions.
- If you have not already done so, gather information about campus practices surrounding Accuplacer; be prepared for further discussion concerning before, during, and after test practices and assessment of policies/procedures.
- Email Elaine with the URLs for any websites that you believe to be particularly useful for Accuplacer review; the combined list will be made available to interested parties.
- Bring information from your campus on any new courses being developed.

#### **Professional Development Day on April 24** —

Miguel reported that Gateway's Dean is seeking input for the professional development day scheduled on April 24. The meeting will be held at a centralized location, and the Dean is looking for ideas for faculty run sessions. Miguel invited Committee members to brainstorm, so that he could bring a proposal, for math people system-wide, to the Dean. Rather than sending suggestions to Miguel, it was decided that Committee members would have a working lunch to discuss ideas for a proposal.

The **next MI meeting** at will be held at Naugatuck Valley on March 13, in Technology Hall, T531.

The **meeting adjourned** at 12:33 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,



Elaine Dinto