

# Minutes of Math Issues Committee

Friday, May 8, 2009

Gateway Community College, North Haven campus, Room 113A

Present — Larisa Alikhanova (Three Rivers), Martin Brock (Norwalk), Elaine Dinto (Naugatuck Valley), Lori Fuller (Tunxis), Miguel Garcia (Gateway), Mark Leach (Housatonic), Linda Musco (Middlesex), Barbara Paskov (Manchester), Rachael Schettenhelm (Gateway)

The meeting was called to order at 11:20 a.m.

Minutes of the March 13, 2009 meeting were approved.

**Accuplacer, SATs, and Banner** — Math Issues members were asked to learn whether Accuplacer information now imports directly into Banner, whether Banner yet has the capability of holding SAT scores, and if so, who will record them. What is the process for letting students know that an appropriate SAT score means that they do not need to take Accuplacer? Naugatuck will be doing a study in the fall to determine whether placement into college level math by Accuplacer testing and SAT scores imply similar success rates.

At Gateway, with the new Accuplacer cut scores more students are placing into MAT\*137 than before; students placed by Accuplacer are struggling significantly in MAT\*137 compared to those coming from MAT\*095. Rachael will do a follow-up study.

Naugatuck math faculty will voluntarily take Accuplacer this summer to determine if they think that intermediate algebra and college level math cut scores are still appropriate. The Testing Center Coordinator will set up a special profile for math faculty so that they can take the test in their offices or at home. Faculty at other campuses may want to schedule themselves to take Accuplacer as well.

**Model Curriculum for Algebra 1** — A discussion took place regarding the statewide Algebra 1 Model Curriculum project. There was general support for the fundamental approach and direction of the proposed curriculum: it promotes conceptual understanding by focusing on fewer topics and treating them in greater depth, makes algebra 1 more relevant to students' lives, and incorporates active learning. Potential problems that were discussed: (1) sufficient work with exponents and factoring may be missing; (2) certain areas of the curriculum are technology based, and some schools don't have the technology; (3) small group work cannot be done due to the size of some high school classes; (4) the curriculum does not address the problem of students not attending; (5) professional training is absolutely necessary; (6) the high schools must buy in. The press release by the Connecticut Coalition 4 World Class Math was very negative but not specific. The Math Basic Skills Committee of CT is drafting a letter of support to the CT Academy for Education in Mathematics, Science & Technology; Math Issues will do the same – watch your email for details.

**Differences among our three varieties of intermediate algebra, i.e., MAT\* 136, 137, 138** —

- Does the course number depend upon whether the college offers precalculus as opposed to college algebra and trigonometric functions?
- Is MAT\*136 the same as MAT\* 137 except that it is 4 credits rather than 3?
- What specific objectives must be met in intermediate algebra for students to enroll in precalculus versus statistics or math for the liberal arts? Certainly students who go on to precalculus need more fluency with symbolic manipulation than do students going into other courses.
- Some "college algebra" courses nationally are used as a stepping stone for precalculus while others are used as a terminal course (e.g., Don Small's *Contemporary College Algebra: Data*,

*Functions, Modeling*, described as focused on "meeting the quantitative needs of students for academic, workplace, and society). Are our intermediate algebra courses similar to "college algebra" courses nationally? Are they terminal courses (for pre-nursing and other areas for the masses of students) consisting of a number of tools/skills taught in isolation with which nothing is ever done? If so, would it not be better to have a terminal course that makes use of real data and demonstrates how mathematics is used in the world?

- Is Manchester's MAT\* 138 similar to any of the system's MAT\* 137 courses? Their current course is activity driven and has a functions approach (linear, quadratic, rational, radical, exponential); it includes modeling, incorporates skills within applications, and infuses technology.
- Are all sections of intermediate algebra courses at our colleges covering the same material?
- Do course descriptions and intent/outcomes drive the curriculum or does the textbook do so?
- What philosophies do we have concerning use of calculators in MAT\* 075, 095, 136/137/138?

**Other —**

In the fall, Rachael will be piloting two sections of a course using MyMathLab (MML) as a supplement; it will appear on students' Blackboard Vista screen, to encourage use of Vista and save login time.

Thanks to Lori for an excellent job on the minutes of the [system-wide Accuplacer session](#) on the April 27 Professional Day; the session had a large number of attendees, who enjoyed Suzanne Murphy's informative presentation.

**Tabled agenda items —**

- Update on the April 22 meeting of the Transfer and Articulation Subcommittee to the Standing Advisory Committee of the State Board of Governors (Pat)
- Items of interest to the math community that we did in our classes or on our campuses this year

**Other homework/agenda items for the first fall meeting —**

- Consider Accuplacer issues discussed this spring and where we go from here
- Generate a list of prerequisite concepts for intermediate algebra
- Be prepared to discuss the outcomes and specific objectives for your MAT\* 136, 137, or 138 intermediate algebra course (see above)
- Be prepared to discuss specific objectives that must be met for students to enroll in precalculus/college algebra versus statistics or math for the liberal arts

The first fall meeting will be held on September 11, 2009 at Tunxis.

The meeting adjourned at 12:32 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,



Elaine Dinto