Academic Foundations Committee
Minutes

October 3, 2006

Present: Oliver Chen   Dan Gretch
            Mark Hardt   Connie Landis
            Abbas Heiat   James Ellis (student)
            Sarah McIntyre (student)   Tasneem Khaleel – ex-officio

Absent: Russ Lord
            Barb Pedula – *excused*
            David Garloff – ex-officio   Mary McNally – ex-officio
            John Cech – ex-officio   Mary Susan Fishbaugh – ex-officio
            Bob Carr – ex-officio   George White – ex-officio
            Stacy Klippenstein – ex-officio

Guest: Jane Howell for Brent Roberts

Presiding: Mark Hardt, Chair

Mark Hardt called the meeting to order at 3:45 p.m. in the Bridger room of the SUB.

The minutes of September 19 and 26 were accepted as presented.

I.   DISCUSSION/ACTION ITEMS

A. Assessment Capability Requirements (Michael Barber handout from last week)

It was observed that if the assessment software capability list in the handout doesn't have something we will need, we have to add it.

It was noted that the concern that transfer students still have to meet the objectives of our Academic Foundations assessment may be settled by the third level of the embedded assessment in the later years of a student's college career. It was noted the later assessment component needs to be part of the software Dr. Barber is researching.

Dr. Heiat stated that he and his student worker can begin immediately on building a program to make sure that no matter which combination of courses a student takes, they will cover all the objectives in the matrix. The Committee should have one meeting to decide what the program should do.

Dean Khaleel cited that the recording of the assessment data will be electronic, but the testing does not have to be. An instructor can choose essays or short answer questions, and

then the instructor would enter a grade for those questions into the assessment software. This information is currently being collected by eCollege for all our online courses; we just haven't used the data yet.

Connie Landis and Mark Hardt volunteered to read the Assessment Capability Requirements carefully to make sure all our needed components are covered.

Ms. Howell and Dean Khaleel noted that we hope to have the assessment software up and running by Spring 2007, so we have time to fix problems.

B. Montana University System General Education Changes

Dean Khaleel noted that the Board of Regents has added oral communication as a statewide requirement: six credits in a Communication category, three of which are English composition and three are oral communication. Currently a decision has not been made on whether an Indian Education for All category will be added. Right now, the Indian Ed for All requirement is being covered by K-12. The BOR will vote on the core in November.

It was noted that the Information Literacy courses could be oral communication courses as well. However, those courses will have to be revised and resubmitted.

C. Pilot Assessment in Spring

It was cited that it is imperative that we begin assessing courses next spring, even though the new Academic Foundations program will not be in place until fall. Dean Khaleel suggested that, to begin, just assess a few courses from each category. In one category, assess three types of courses: (1) a course that is offered on the east campus and at the COT, (2) a course that is offered in-class and online, and (3) two other courses with different rubrics from the first two. That will cover all the variables. If you do a few courses every semester including summer, you will have assessed all the courses by Spring 2008.

It was noted that the AFC had not said that every course in a category would have to use the same assessment tool. As long as all the courses in a subcategory are using the same objectives, they can assess them however they like. Even different sections of the same course may need to use different methods of assessment if one section is much larger than another. It was noted that this would help ensure that there is similarity among sections taught by part-time faculty. It was cited that the instructor does not report what kind of assessment tool is being used, just the results.

Mark Hardt stated that he would draft a letter to the workshop/anti-retreat participants reminding them of the timeline and the criteria of the assessment tools they are to design.

Since Dr. Hardt and Dr. Landis will be unable to attend next week's meeting, Dr. Gretch agreed to run the meeting.

The meeting adjourned at 4:50 p.m.

Respectfully submitted, Rita J. Rabe Meduna.