

**Academic Foundations Committee
Minutes**

April 8, 2008

Present:	Oliver Chen Dan Lennon Jane Howell	Mark Hardt Lea Zoltowski Shelley Tanksanen (student)
Absent:	Jay Shaw Abbas Heiat David Garloff – ex-officio Gary Young – ex-officio Karen Heikel – ex-officio George White – ex-officio	Kathy Kelker Tasneem Khaleel – ex-officio Mary Susan Fishbaugh – ex-officio John Cech – ex-officio Stacy Klippenstein – ex-officio
Presiding:	Mark Hardt, Chairperson	

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

The minutes of February 12 and March 19 were accepted as presented.

Dan Lennon and Shelley Tanksanen were introduced as new members of the Committee.

I. DISCUSSION/ACTION ITEMS

A. VSA Endorsed Assessment Instruments: Additional Study, Discussion, or Task Force

Dr. Hardt noted that at first he had thought this instrument would work as a second level of assessment for Academic Foundations. However, it only covers part of Academic Foundations, so the Committee elected to send the idea up to Academic Senate. The Senate sent it right back.

The whole idea behind these tests is to avoid a higher education version of No Child Left Behind. If faculty volunteer to have their class tested, it's not a valid sample, it's a sample of convenience.

The question was raised as to whether this is really a voluntary process or will it be mandated. It was noted that AASCU has agreed to use this voluntary system to avoid a NCLB situation in higher education. Bozeman and Missoula have both signed up for this program and they have said they will get the rest of the University System on board, so it's not really voluntary anymore. Missoula has already done some work with their data, though they are being very selective, for obvious reasons, about what data they share with the public.

It was noted that the College Board has agreed that there isn't a significant point difference between the SAT and the GRE. We may be setting ourselves up by using these VSA assessments. Also, most Universities across the country seem to be taking a "wait and see" approach for the new administration in 2009. They are also coming up with their own assessments rather than choosing a ready-made one. The issue of academic freedom will very shortly come into play with these assessments.

It was cited that success after graduation, such as job or graduate school admission rates, are an excellent measure of our success, but the data may be difficult to obtain.

B. Removing a Course from Academic Foundations: Review of Policy

Current policy:

3. Action on Low Quality Courses

The learning outcomes (requested by NWCCU) are stated in the Academic Foundations Proposal (specifically, page 12). Those outcomes will be assessed using the matrix through a faculty self-assessment and student evaluations for use in the quality control of Academic Foundations courses. Courses that fail to meet their stated objectives will be given a warning, and then put on probation for one to two years before action is taken (depending on the catalog schedule). It is the department's responsibility to remeliorate the course, and that department has the right to defend the course to the Academic Foundations Committee.

Approved by the Committee 8/30/04

It was noted that when people submitted their Academic Foundations courses, they were advised that the courses had to be assessed. If a course has significant problems, it will be first put on probation and then removed.

C. Second/Upper Level Academic Foundations Program Assessment

It was suggested that once a student finishes Academic Foundations, they have fulfilled every item on the matrix—is that not a program assessment?

When this Committee was first formed, we had talked about a program assessment as part of a major capstone. This course would test how well the students had integrated not only their major's components, but also Academic Foundations. What we want to know is, does Academic Foundations actually provide a foundation? It was cited that making the Academic Foundations program assessment part of their major capstone shows that it could be handled by campus, rather than using an outside vendor. This approach also gives faculty ownership of the assessment.

Jane Howell noted that it would be a good idea to at least have a plan for an upper level assessment that can be presented as an exhibit for our NWCCU accreditation visit in October.

For homework, the group was asked to think about other paradigms, besides the capstone course, which could be used as an upper level Academic Foundations assessment.

D. Assessment Tool Designed by Information Technology

Dr. Hardt noted that he elected not to include the Academic Foundations Category Objectives in the new assessment tool. However, that appears to be appropriate, as policy three above states “Those outcomes will be assessed using the matrix through...”

At this time it is not known if the assessment tool is up and running.

The meeting adjourned at 4:18 p.m.

Respectfully submitted, Rita J. Rabe Meduna.