Academic Standards Committee

Minutes of meeting held Wednesday 12 November 2003
4-4:45 pm, 261 Gardner Hall

Present: (Members) Rosalyn Broussard, Christina Curras, Beth Frieders, Julie McDonald, Brian Peckham, Machelle Schroeder, Tim Zauche
(Ex Officio) David VanBuren

Absent: Steve Kleisath, Kathleen Tigerman, Angela Udelhofen

NOTE: As part of an assignment for a COMM 3010 Business Communication class, two students sat in on the meeting to observe a university committee meeting in action.

1. Approval of minutes of 24 September 2003 meeting OK as distributed

2. Approval of minutes of 29 October 03 meeting OK as distributed

3. Agenda – additions, changes, approval OK as distributed

4. Old Business
   a. Status of portfolios received, those still due – Christina
      Chris has a “good chunk” of portfolios submitted. She will distribute more by campus mail. The next round of portfolios is due December 8.

   b. Admissions assessment: Tim Zauche agree to work with John Simonson to come up with a detailed plan for data acquisition
      Tim has already met with John Simonson. A multiple regression study can be done to look at the main concerns of 1st and 2nd year retention separated into the three admission categories. (Via e-mail, Steve felt ASC should not further discuss John’s request until we look at the research in the literature. The ASC members present wanted some clarification of Steve’s concerns.)

   c. New webpage – feedback Seems to be OK.

   d. semester goals, what we need to accomplish
      i. finalize post-review letters to faculty
         Two letters need to be drafted that could be sent to the faculty following the review of their portfolios. When appropriate, one will say that everything looks OK. Alternatively, the other letter will say that while some standards have been met, there are some standards that have not been met. The faculty member will then be given the option to re-submit material that may clarify the standards. **Beth will send us the drafts via e-mail. Feel free to edit and re-send. We should get final approval on the letters at the December 10 meeting.
Dave noted that in response to the April 2003 ASC report, UUCC had created a sub-committee to look at the General Education standards. The sub-committee is contacting all departments with a stake in each of the categories of general education. He expects a reply back to UUCC by December 1 and possible discussion at a UUCC meeting in February.

ii. identify programs up for review next year, get letters drafted and sent

The following people volunteered to generate the list of courses to be reviewed in the categories indicated:

- Rosalyn Political Science (sources in Social Science area only)
- Tim Natural Sciences
- Machelle International Education, Ethnic or Gender Studies courses NOT cross-listed under any other area

** The lists should be put on the S-drive by Thanksgiving. Julie will then draft the appropriate letters that will be sent to each department chair, dean or program director. The letters should get final approval at the December 10 meeting.

iii. proposals to UUCC: separation of ES from GS, critical thinking and information literacy standards need to be merged somehow (Sept 24 agenda)

** Discussion tabled. We will wait to see what UUCC does in response to the work of their sub-committee.

5. New Business

a. Discuss UWP adoption of ACT writing test

Email from Dave Van Buren, 4 Nov03:
We've talked about the ACT Writing sample before, and I know Angela will be discussing it with Admission directors very soon as the Academic Standards Committee also considers this matter. Carol Sue would like your thoughts and recommendations regarding whether we should require the ACT Writing sample. This is a major topic at the next Provosts' meeting so she would like your input by November 12th.

I have attached a letter from Larry Rubin at UW System. UW-Madison has decided to require the writing test. One item we are still unclear on is whether the ACT writing test could be used to replace the UW English Placement test. Of course, that depends on the sort of information provided through the ACT writing test.

- See attached document
- Additional document will be provided at the meeting (This turned out to be the memo that Dave had already sent to us following his October 9 e-mail.)

The English Program feels strongly about keeping the System Placement Exam since it provides appropriate information for placement. The ACT writing test
will probably not determine admission to UWP but will be an extra fee that an applicant must pay. Campuses pay the costs of the Placement Exams but the students would pay the ACT exam fee. UW-Madison intends to use the ACT writing test as a screen for admissions.

**The consensus of the ASC is that we take a “wait and see” attitude. We will take no action until further data is available.**

b. Subcommittees meet, evaluation of math portfolios

Team A had already met and completed their review of the first packet of portfolios. Team B met when the ASC meeting adjourned.

The November 26 meeting was cancelled. The evaluation teams should arrange to meet to discuss the latest portfolios prior to the December 10 meeting. Beth will probably not get the feedback letters out, though, until early February.

The next meeting of the ASC is Wednesday, December 10.
October 27, 2003

TO: Provosts and Vice Chancellors  
FROM: Larry Rubin, Assistant Vice President for Academic Affairs  
RE: Placement Testing and ACT Writing Test

Last spring we began a discussion of a couple of issues that we decided to revisit this fall. Let me summarize where I think we are and what action, if any, we need to take.

Placement Testing

The discussion of placement testing centered around two issues. The first was whether UW institutions planned to continue using the regional placement tests or adopt some other placement alternative such as the ACT Assessment. The second issue involved cost and, specifically, whether institutions that decided not to use the tests should be required to pay their share of the systemwide consortium costs. We conducted a survey to help answer the first question, and asked the Testing Office to run some simulations to help address the cost issues.

The results of the survey indicated that every UW institution (except UW-Extension) planned to use one or more of the tests for the foreseeable future. Most institutions will continue to use all of the tests. The cost simulations revealed that if one or two smaller institutions discontinued using the tests and contributing toward the cost, the overall impact on the remaining institutions would not be significant. However, if UW-Madison or Milwaukee dropped out, the cost for the remaining campuses would rise significantly.

Based upon these results, it appears that no adjustments to the status quo are necessary at the present time. We certainly can revisit this issue again if the situation changes. I would be happy to share the complete survey information and cost simulations if any of you are interested.

ACT Writing Sample

Beginning in 2004-05, both the SAT and the ACT will include a new writing sample component. This new test component will impact students beginning in Fall, 2006. The SAT will require that students take this portion of the test, but the ACT will make it optional. Our discussion centered around whether UW institutions will require the ACT from its applicants and how this information might be used to add value (e.g. admission, placement). UW-Madison has already decided to require the writing test. We would like to come to a decision soon on whether we will make taking the ACT writing test a systemwide requirement or go on an institution-by-institution basis. I would ask that you consult with your appropriate campus groups and come prepared to discuss this issue at the November Provost meeting.

We want to come to a final decision fairly soon so we can provide early notice to the ACT folks, high school counselors and prospective students. Additional information about the ACT Writing Test is available on the ACT website at www.act.org.

Please contact me if you have any questions about either of these issues.

Thanks.

cc: CSAO's  
Admission Directors  
UW-Testing and Evaluation Services