

General Education Assessment Committee
Meeting #7, Thursday, June 12, 2003
Room 5302 - Friedman Hall

Present: Raja Aravamuthan (Paper Science and Printing), Mike Clark (Speech Pathology and Audiology), Jennifer Daniels (Mathematics), Linda Delene (Provost's Office), Margaret Dupuis (English), Bassam Harik (Economics), Elaine Anderson Jayne (University Libraries), Matthew Steel (Music), and Craig Tollini (GSAC). Absent: Noel Allende-Goita, Lisa Paulius, Robert Reck, and, Fred Sitkins.

The seventh meeting of the General Education Assessment Committee began at 9:00 AM with approval of the summary note for its meeting of 5/13/03. The committee began its meeting with deliberations about the *CBASE* instrument – a criterion-referenced test which has the basic purpose of assessing mental achievement in four curricular areas – English, mathematics, science, and social studies and nine content-related clusters of skills that are logically subsumed in the four general curricular areas. It was noted that the test has shortcomings – it does not contain material on the visual, fine, or performing arts, and the writing test does not reflect the aims of some WMU introductory writing courses. However, since the next two years are exploratory research about how to assess WMU's general education program, use of this instrument during the 2003-2004 year will provide some insight, even if only used experimentally. It was suggested that a comparison group would also help evaluate the instrument's utility.

The group next considered the sampling subcommittee's (Aravamuthan, Delene, Harik, Tollini) report. The test is available in three forms: a long form (180 items and a writing test), a short form, and an institutional matrix form and the subcommittee recommended the institutional matrix form that yields only aggregate data about an institution and does not provide information about individual examinees. The matrix form is divided by a sampling scheme into 12 shorter tests, 10 of which contain 36 multiple choice test items, and two of which contain the writing exercise. These 12 shorter tests are labeled matrix-form one through matrix-form 12, and every one of the 180 items from the long form appears two times in one complete matrix, as does the writing exercise. The 12-matrix form books collectively comprise two long forms. In order to collect useful information about a population of examinees, many more than 12 are needed to constitute an appropriate population sample. The institutional matrix form can be administered in about 50 minutes, or one standard class period.

The committee agreed to use the institutional matrix form, seeking its administration in introductory writing classes this fall for freshmen, and in upper-division senior majors' classes this spring semester. The approach will approximate a pre- and post-test in these areas for our freshman and senior students. Each sample will contain at least 600 people, and a sample of this size will provide results that can be inferred to the general population with a 95% confidence interval. Given the small size of the target populations (about 4,000 freshman and 2,800 seniors) it would be appropriate to use even smaller samples of 347 and 331 respectively. These numbers were calculated using the finite population correction factor. The senior sample will be proportionate to the number of graduating seniors per academic colleges over the past five years. It was noted that it will be important and useful to sort the senior sample between students who have matriculated for all their undergraduate education at WMU from those who transferred into WMU with most of their general education course work taken elsewhere. Delene was asked to meet with the coordinators of ENG 105, IME 102, and BIS 142 as soon as possible to discuss the use of a class period for administration of *CBASE* quickly after commencement of the fall semester. The issue of motivation for senior student participation and professors remains to be addressed by the committee.

Daniels is leaving WMU for a position at CMU and was thanked for her service to the committee. Fall meeting dates were set for Sept. 19, Oct. 17, and Nov. 21, 2003. There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 10:45AM.

NEXT MEETING: 1:30 – 3:00 PM, Friday, September 19, 2003