

**Academic Foundations Committee  
Minutes**

November 4, 2009

<b>Present:</b>	George Czyz	Bernie Quetchenbach
	Melinda Tilton	Kurt Toenjes
	Neil Suits	Mike Havens
	Matt Redinger	Tom Regele
	Mark Fenderson	Neil Jussila
	Kathe Gable	Ken Miller
	Richard Pierce	Brent Roberts
	Cheri Johannes (ex-officio)	

**Absent:** Lorrie Steerey – *excused*

**Presiding:** Matt Redinger, Chairperson

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Matt Redinger called the meeting to order at 3:00 p.m. in the Missouri room.

The minutes of October 21 were accepted as presented.

I. OLD BUSINESS

**A. Update on Reform of Academic Foundations Course Outcomes**

Most outcomes have been decided, they only need to be forwarded to Dr. Redinger.

II. DISCUSSION/ACTION ITEMS (NEW BUSINESS)

**A. Return to old “General Education” title OR Add Statement to Syllabus**

It was noted that it would probably be difficult to get all faculty to include a line on their syllabus. The problem is, no one knows what “Academic Foundations” means.

- Motion by Neil Jussila, seconded by Bernie Quetchenbach **to change the name from “Academic Foundations” back to “General Education.”**

- There being no objections, motion carried by general consent.

It was cited that this change will go to the Academic Senate for approval.

**B. Protocol for Vetting Courses**

It was stated that the Committee needs some sort of mechanism to periodically review courses in the general education core. As courses migrate to new faculty, they may lose sight

of the things the course is supposed to do for general education. It was noted that several departments already combat this problem by meeting regularly to discuss the content of the course, or by having a faculty mentor for each course.

It was noted that even though departments may be maintaining the course content, the Committee should still review the courses, perhaps every three or five years. We could start with the outcomes we currently have. However, we want to stay away from the implication that the Committee will pull courses out of the core. This approach is simply too blunt.

It was cited that to properly review every course, we would need outcomes or criteria for every course. It was countered that we really do not need an additional layer of assessment.

The question was raised as to what happens when the outcomes in the current database are not being met. What is the Committee going to do? It was noted that the whole idea of assessment is to figure out what needs to be changed to improve student learning.

### **C. Perception of “Empty Credits” for Remedial/Developmental Courses**

The Committee asked Cheri Johannes, Registrar and Director of Admissions, about this perception. She responded that Advising and Admissions explain to students every day that they came to MSUB without the requisite skills and now they must pay to learn them. Many students know they need additional help and are willing and ready to take the developmental courses, but often the parents are angry about having to pay for those courses. It was noted that these developmental courses are setting students up to succeed

It was cited that the students don't even have to take the remedial courses at MSUB; they can take them through Adult Education, often for free. It was noted that the University System put the math and English burden on high schools by increasing college entrance scores. Whether the high schools will step up and meet this problem is still unknown.

It was stated that the Committee doesn't really need to do anything about this issue, but it's great that faculty members have been informed of the whole COMPASS and remediation process.

### **D. Prerequisites/Guidelines for Academic Foundations Courses**

It was noted that when courses were being resubmitted for the last round of general education course review, the Committee at that time held that no general education course would have a prerequisite. This led to departments stripping prerequisites from several courses, although for some reason all the math prerequisites were retained.

It was cited that the Committee could create a set of guidelines for the Advising Center, thereby avoiding the curriculum process to add a prerequisite. However, then there is no provision in the catalog to back up the claim.

It was stated that courses that do not have a guideline or prerequisite would be good first semester classes.

It was agreed that the Committee members will gather expected competencies via email for individual courses in general education. A list will be generated and reviewed by the Committee before being forwarded to the Advising Center.

**E. Provost Request: Review of Assessment Data**

Currently, reports and charts are being created from the assessment data. The Committee will see both the charts and the raw data. The Provost would like the Committee to do something about the low scores on oral skills.

It was noted that ultimately, this is completely against the spirit of our assessment system. We were told that the results of the assessment would not come back to individual faculty members. Here, they are, because “oral skills” is not an Academic Foundations category.

It was stated that because of the unwieldy nature of the assessment system, we don’t really know what this low score means. It could be that faculty did not know they were supposed to be assessing that outcome and so they didn’t know what to do with that outcome.

It was stated that we acted in NWCCU’s recommendation that we simplify the assessment database.

The meeting adjourned at 3:55 p.m.

Respectfully submitted, Rita J. Rabe Meduna.