

University of Arkansas - Fort Smith  
Committee on Assessment of Learning Outcomes  
Meeting of September 20, 2007  
Minutes

A meeting of the Committee on Assessment of Learning Outcomes was held at 3:30 p.m. on Thursday, September 20, 2007, in Room 114 of the Flanders Building at the University of Arkansas - Fort Smith. Members in attendance were:

Cathy Bain	Janet Renwick
Jan Dickinson	Henry Rinne
Genice Dooly	Bob Sell
David Dubriske	Matthew Utz
M. Suzanne Horne	Margaret Tanner, Co-chair
Brenda Mitchell	L. VanOsdol, Co-chair
Lori Norin	B. J. McKim, secretary

L. VanOsdol called the meeting to order. The minutes of the August 23 committee meeting were distributed and reviewed. Lori Norin made a motion that the minutes be approved, and the motion was seconded. The minutes were approved as disseminated.

A packet of the following documents was distributed:

- Agenda for today's meeting
- Minutes of the August 23 meeting
- Analytical Skills Rubric
- Ethics Rubric
- Quantitative Reasoning Rubric
- Technology Literacy Rubric

CLA – Results from Fall 2006-Spring 2007: L. started the discussion with a power point presentation explaining the previous year's results. This assessment is given to Freshmen in the Fall and Seniors in the Spring to measure critical thinking and reasoning skills. There are three sections offered on the test: Make-An-Argument which asked the student to agree or disagree with a provided statement and justify their position; Critique-An-Argument which asked the student to discuss how well a view is presented and how well-reasoned you find the argument; and, Performance Task which places the student in real-life scenarios and with the use of a provided document library, stimulates the student's ability to make a reflective argument.

Scores are reported as a mean score for the University to be used in comparison with other Universities/Colleges, our classification being cross-sectional because we sample both Freshmen and Seniors. Scores are reached by calculating a combination of the student's SAT/ACT scores and the score from the CLA testing.

There were a total of 115 institutions in the group; 17% were Doctorate offering, 43% were Master's offering, and 39% were Baccalaureate offering. UA Fort Smith scored at average with 51 Freshmen completing the testing. The average SAT for our group was 1126, the expected score for us was 1122, and we scored 1125.

Unfortunately, the Seniors were unable to be rated due to lack of student participation with only 21 student completing, we needed a minimum of 25. A major contributing factor to the low

completion was if a student did not have a SAT/ACT score they could not be included in the calculation.

CLA – Fall 2007: We are moving ahead with this semester's testing, scheduled for October 1, 2, and 4<sup>th</sup>. A Proctor sign-up sheet was passed around for volunteers from the committee to sign. L. gave a brief explanation of the proctor's duties and informed those participating that there will be two online training sessions. The first session is Monday, September 24<sup>th</sup> at 2 pm, lasting approximately 30 minutes and the second session is Thursday, September 27<sup>th</sup> at 2 pm.

There will be no monetary incentives or rewards for participating this time; however, the Freshmen participating will be able to register early for the Spring semester. Due to the low participation last year and that some of the students tested did not meet the criteria, we are making sure that those invited to participate meet all criteria and we are taking English 1203 Comp classes into the lab.

Matthew Utz asked why we do this. L. and Margaret Tanner explained that we participate in national testing so we can compare UA Fort Smith with other universities/colleges of our size across the country. This also affords us to look at our strengths/weaknesses and how we can improve as a whole. It was also pointed out that this testing only relates to two of our competencies; communication and critical thinking.

Seniors will take the CLA in the Spring 2008 semester; it was briefly discussed to include this in the capstone class. If the faculty receives enough advance notice, they can build it into their syllabus for the class.

Henry Rinne made the observation that this testing does not reach the developmental education students at either point when it is given.

ULO – Update: Margaret opened discussion on the rubrics by asking the committee for comments concerning the following statement found in the Ethics rubric: All students will be required to accept responsibility for following the Standards of Conduct and the Academic Honesty Policies as evidenced by signing a statement to that effect. The question was raised who would follow up on the signing issue? It was pointed out that this statement does appear in the catalog, so with that knowledge the committee decided to remove the statement.

This led to a question from Brenda Mitchell, is there an overall format that the rubrics should be following? Do we want to add a column with the heading "Does Not Meet" or "Not Reached"? Margaret reminded everyone that the rubrics will eventually be housed in Live Text.

Also, concerning the Ethics rubric, Suzanne Horne was concerned about the usage of the word "all" under the Analysis heading. She suggested that for better clarification the word be removed. Janet Renwick had concerns with two statements appearing in the first column. Those statements being: 1) Identify and discuss viable alternate courses of action; 2) Recommend preferred alternative and justify position. In regard to the first statement, Janet suggested that the wording be changed to "Identify all" instead of "Identify and discuss" and in the second statement, instead of "Recommend preferred" choose one or the other not have both.

The next rubric addressed was the Quantitative Reasoning rubric. Matthew made the comment that his group had problems with the column headings; however, they were able to resolve them.

Next was the Technology Literacy rubric, Margaret asked Lori to look over this rubric and see where overlapping is occurring with the Communications rubric. How much redundancy is occurring among all the rubrics needs to be addressed. Bob Sell asked for clarification concerning the Equipment Utilization part of this rubric. Janet told the committee that was put in to identify the tools and different technologies used in each field.

Margaret reminded the committee that each rubric needs to be reviewed by at least two members. With having said that, she assigned two members to each rubric with a list of those assigned to follow from her after the meeting. When asked how to review the rubric, Bob suggested that you get a sense of the faculty member that will apply it in the classroom. Margaret stressed that “new eyes” or people from different disciplines looking at the rubrics can catch any awkward or confusing statements. If the rubric does not work, then re-write and send the changes suggested to the liaison. Genice Dooly suggested fewer words making it simpler to follow. Feedback needs to be to the liaisons before October 1<sup>st</sup>, then, the Friday before the October meeting be sure and go back thru the rubric for a report to the committee.

Margaret told the new members of the committee who needed Live Text training, please talk to Jan Dickinson.

With no further business to discuss, a motion was made by Cathy Bain for the meeting to be adjourned. Having being seconded, the meeting was adjourned at 4:40.

B. J. McKim  
Recording Secretary