MINUTES

DEPARTMENT OF MATHEMATICAL SCIENCES

MEETING OF MAY 1, 2006

Present: Cary, Spranger, Williamson, Wentworth, Vogl, and Fickel
Meeting convened at 9:00 in Conference Room.
Meeting adjourned at 12:30.

I. Announcements
   a. Orientations – dates and names were in an email from Dean’s office.
      There is supposed to be a training meeting next week, so please watch
      your email and attend. I will attend all the orientations, and we have been
      asked to have a table with brochures on it, for parents and undecided
      students to pick up. If we can, one of us will be at the table some of the
      time.
   b. Conference Reports – I have Mr. Cary’s, need these from Stack,
      Williamson, and Wentworth, to compile and forward to Dr. Roweton.
   c. Availability during summer – VP asked for availability dates of faculty, in
      the event questions regarding accreditation, etc arise. Cary, Spranger, and
      Fickel are available for May, Stack and Williamson for June, Wentworth
      for July. Fickel will also come in weekly to clean up odds and ends, will
      probably work some other days, but not on regular schedule, during June
      and July.
   d. GE courses – All syllabi for general studies courses must be updated to
      include the new outcomes for general studies. See handout (HO)
   e. Revised teaching assignments for AY 06-07 were distributed, and
      discussion followed. We will set initial limits on MATH 142 sections at
      20, then increase them, in order to get even enrollment distributions. Ms.
      Wentworth requested Room 227 for MATH 137 classes. Mr. Cary would
      like 227 for MATH 239 in Spring 07. Dr. Fickel will check room skeds
      and make these changes if possible. Will forward revised skeds to Dean’s
      office and Registrar. HO

II. Teacher Education
   a. All syllabi changes as a result of the state accreditation team’s comments
      must be completed and submitted this week. I have to forward to VP by
      Friday. MATH 135, 237, 335. I need electronic versions. Ms. Wentworth
      will follow up on this so we can provide to Dr. King and VP. Thanks

III. Assessment
   a. Data Collection – I need all the “embedded items” reports by 5/10, the day
      after grades are submitted.
   b. Items selected for the Fall courses (embedded) must be selected and
      turned in to Chair by the first day of Fall classes.
c. Course Reflections documents are due with final grades or week of 5/8. Please write them while they are fresh, and include details before we forget them.

d. GE – How will we assess it? It was agreed that this would be “test run” by doing it on the final exam in College Algebra this semester. Scores will be submitted by item, with items labeled as to which category of general studies they apply to. Scores to be submitted as average grade for the item divided by possible points for the item.

e. Second way to Assess – Dr. Stack will be teaching the seminar course in Fall 06, and we should add it as a way to assess Math Learning Outcomes 1.4, 2.1, 2.2, 2.3, 3.3, and perhaps others, depending on the papers and presentations submitted.

f. IST Learning Outcomes on communication and others may be assessed in IST 410, but are planned for IST 110. Others may be assessed in the appropriate seminar/course papers.

g. Discussion of Course Reflections from Fall semester was not completed due to time constraints.

h. Discussion of accreditation visits, results. Expectations as a result of Chair’s attendance at assessment meetings and info from them, etc followed. We discussed our current method and its possible flaws, other potential methods, etc from 9:40 to 11:20. If nothing else, we are all involved and seeking to develop a better plan. Concern regarding use of the results and if they will lead us to effective changes was discussed at length. We discussed broad field exams, whether test banks were in existence (no one has found one), portfolios (no one wanted that), seminar, our own version of a comprehensive exam (validity and reliability concerns), and the MAA literature and SAUM project. If we are evaluated on involvement and concerns, as well as trying to find effective ways to use the results, we should score well.

IV. Algebra Project

a. Should we conduct a dept. project, surveying other disciplines for needs in a capstone QL (quantitative literacy) course, then construct the course? We may be able to conduct the survey, then construct a 3-hour course (maybe with a 4th hour for SI or as 2 hours lecture, 1 hour lab credit, 3 credits total) as a revision of College Algebra. Some schools have done this, and the new course serves as the last math course taken by majors in other disciplines. We are changing to an applications-oriented algebra course this Fall. The project could open communications with other departments, serve as a basis for faculty presentations and papers (scholarly work), help young faculty with promotion and tenure, and most importantly, serve students better than a course designed for majors. Math majors do not take College Algebra, but many of the current topics are more suited to them than non-majors.

b. Such a course, at 3 hours, would cut our algebra load from 16 hours per semester to 12. This saving would allow staffing of one section of a developmental course in the Fall of 07 and MATH 401, which we must begin
offering in Spring 08. We are fully loaded, and this move is the only way in
sight to add those two courses, short of additional staffing, and we agreed that
is not likely to happen. Physics course staffing assistance from math was then
discussed.
c. Dr. Fickel pointed out that if we cut College Algebra to a 3-hour course, and
offer 3 sections vice 4, we can staff the Developmental Course in Fall 07, as
requested by VP, staff the MATH 401 course we must begin offering in
Spring 07, as well as a physics course each semester. This would be a shift of
load (3 hours) being covered by Mr. Williamson from math to physics. If we
shift more load (two physics courses), we will not offer trigonometry in Fall,
and MATH 232-89 in Spring to handle the load with current staffing.
d. Current loading for 06-07 is 171 hours plus student teachers, at least 24.7
hours per year per math faculty member on average. Projected loading for
AY 07-08 is 93-96 hours in Fall, 90-93 in Spring, including 6 student
teachers. This makes the algebra project, with its cut of 7 hours per semester,
necessary in terms of load. Even with the algebra project, 7 math faculty will
be covering 175 hours of load, including physics and 6 student teachers.
e. Projecting to AY 08-09, those 7 faculty will be covering 175 hours, plus 6 or
more student teachers, as a second section of developmental math can be
expected.
f. The consensus of the department was that we should proceed with the algebra
project, as the right thing to do for students in terms of course suitability. This
decision is based on poor performance in the current algebra courses. The
poor performance is partially due to the courses not being suited to the
preparation of the students taking them and to the fact that this is the last math
course most of the students in other disciplines will take.
V. Migration of Online Courses
a. If a platform other than Blackboard is installed this Summer, we will lose
the images in our courses. Mr. Spranger and Mr. Cary discussed the files
and directories Blackboard uses in a HTML-based course. The
department has fought this problem for several years, and by showing that
copying courses causes the links to image files to be broken, have averted
the problem in AY 05-06, as Dr. Smith ceased copying courses in math.
Other platforms will have the same problem, unless all math courses are
saved in different file format, a major undertaking we need to complete.
b. Has anyone making the decision considered the ramifications? We have
10 math and 2 IST courses online or hybrid this Fall, and if those courses
lose their images over the summer, there is no way they can be re-inserted
in time to teach the courses. A five hour course, in which significant
copying and re-arangement occurred, took at least 60 hours to fix last
year. Copying to a new platform will mean re-creation of thousands of
images, equations, figures, drawings, etc.
c. Unlike other disciplines, the courses in mathematics are not copied from a
publisher, or text-based. They are highly symbolic, with course
documents (summaries of content for each lesson) created by faculty.
Other colleges have few, if any, math courses online due to the difficulty of including symbols.  
d. The conversion of all existing courses to a different format to facilitate changing vendors will be significant. Tests will not migrate to a different platform unless Dr. Smith makes special efforts, and even then, may not be attached to a particular course. We need a shortcut. Mr. Cary and Mr. Spranger will contact Dr. Smith, Dr. Fickel to report problem to VP and ask Dr. Smith for Cary/Spranger access.  
e. Proctoring problem – Do other departments use proctors? Faculty in math spend inordinate amounts of time on this, and not always with satisfactory results. It is recommended that CSC establish a testing center, so students can take exams when professors are absent, or students miss the scheduled exam but deserve a make-up opportunity. We could charge students from non-CSC courses for this, as other college testing centers charge our distant students for proctoring in our online courses. It is further recommended that Extended Campus assume responsibility for arranging proctors.  
VI. Outsourcing 
   a. Regarding the outsourcing of mathematics courses, several concerns were raised. First, “control” implies “responsibility”. The two are inexorably linked. That means on-campus faculty will be responsible for courses taught by adjuncts, courses the on-campus faculty may not be teaching, if the hybrid model is not used. 
   b. Secondly, faculty have invested heavily in terms of time, creating and maintaining courses, revising and updating. See para. V.c. above.  
   c. Since on-campus enrollments in math courses average 7-10, sometimes less than half of those enrolled in a course, why not capitalize on the unused capacity by having math faculty teach hybrids, thereby serving off-campus students as well as on-campus, at least to the class limit of 25-28? To date, annual offerings have met the need, with unused capacity. Improved recruiting to the program may push enrollments closer to the limits, but up to the limits, math faculty prefer to handle the load via the hybrid model, rather than teaching the on-campus students and out-sourcing the off-campus students. If on-campus faculty are teaching hybrids, their updates would also be reflected in the adjuncted sections. This position was discussed as the last item on the agenda, but not the least important. Recent discussions of outsourcing as a way to handle increased load requirements or hiring difficulties have heightened awareness of the temptation to out-source, an easy fix for any load problem.