

Minutes

Committee:	Continuous Improvement
Attendees:	Mina Balamoune-Lutz, Jay Coleman, Bruce Fortado, Cheryl Frohlich (members not in attendance: Adel El-Ansary Tom Barton, Lynn Jones)
Date:	January 14, 2013
Approval of prior minutes:	October 1, 2012, and November 5, 2012

The minutes from the committee meetings of October 1, 2012, and November 5, 2012, were approved by unanimous vote.

The committee reviewed the six in-course assessment results that were submitted immediately after Fall term, 2012. Those included results from FIN 3403 (Principles of Finance), FIN 4604 (International Finance), MAN 4301 (Human Resource Management), TRA 4210 (Logistics Subsystems Analysis), TRA 3035 (Foundations of Transportation), and ECP 6705 (Economics of Business Decisions).

The initial committee concern was whether the above were the only assessments coming out of the Fall term that the committee was to receive. Jay Coleman will follow up with Lynn Jones about whether further assessments will be forthcoming from other sources. **[Addendum to the minutes:** Based on conversations between Jay Coleman and Lynn Jones later in the day, the committee can expect the submission of further in-course assessment results prior to the deadline for doing so, which is January 31, 2013.]

After reviewing the assessment results from each of the six courses listed above, the committee generated the following recommendations / concerns regarding the general assessment process and the standard reporting form itself:

- Going forward, and as much as is possible, assessment should take place at the end of each course (it is not known at what point in each of these courses that the assessment took place).
- Going forward, and as much as is possible, assessment should take place only for those students who receive a course grade that allows them to graduate without re-taking the course. For example, for a course in which a student must receive a C or better to graduate, assessment should be done only for those students who receive a final course grade of C or better. Alternatively for a course in which a student must receive a D or better to graduate, assessment should be done only for those students who receive a final course grade of D or better.
- The sample size over which each assessment is computed should be included in the “Mean Scores” grid on the standard reporting form.
- In order to be consistent with typical ways in which grades are presented, the standard reporting form should have “% Students Above Satisfactory” as the top category in the results grid, “% Students Satisfactory” should be the second category, and “% Students Below

Satisfactory” should be the bottom category. (The current reversal of this order can lead to confusion in reading results.)

The committee further noted that in multiple cases, it appears that there may have been errors in how the reported results were calculated. Specifically, and even if for no reason other than randomness, one would typically expect a distribution of results dispersed across “Above Satisfactory,” “Satisfactory,” and “Below Satisfactory,” – or at least across two of these categories. This is particularly true given some of the mean values reported, and particularly true for courses with sample sizes above at least 10 or so. A few examples of results that seem possibly to be in error include the following:

- A mean score of 66% was reported, with 100% of the students scoring in the “Above Satisfactory” category (i.e., requiring a grade of at least 80%). Obviously, this is a mathematical impossibility. (However, this reported result could have been a function of the aforementioned confusion associated with the order of the categories on the form.)
- With a reported mean score of 67%, the percentage reported as “Satisfactory” was 100%. Given a mean value of 67%, it seems highly probable that at least some students scored below the minimum 60% threshold necessary to be deemed “Satisfactory.”
- If a mean score of 47% is reported, it seems implausible that 100% of the students were “Below Satisfactory.” While with that mean it’s certainly possible that all students were below the 60% threshold to receive a “Satisfactory” assessment, it seems likely that at least some of the best students in the class scored at least 60%, given typical distributions of student performance.
- Some scores were reported with a mean in excess of 90%, with 100% of the students scoring “Above Satisfactory.” Again, while this is certainly possible, it would seem more plausible that given a relatively large course (i.e., a large sample size), that typical dispersions of student performance would result in at least some scoring below 80% (i.e., “Satisfactory” or “Below Satisfactory”).

Finally, the committee agreed that there needs to be some mechanism in place to encourage faculty to interface with each other regarding the topics they cover in their respective courses. This is particularly true of any topic specifically identified as a learning objective. Also, for topics identified specifically as learning objectives, there likely should be at least a minimal level of mention in a broad range of courses, including even those outside the normal coverage of the topic in question.

The committee’s next meeting is scheduled for **February 18, 2013 (Monday)**, at **noon – 1:00 p.m.**

The meeting adjourned at 12:55 p.m.