

**Academic Policies and Standards Committee**

Raymond Higbea, Chair 2021-2022

Agenda

October 7, 2021, 9 AM – 11 AM EDT

Online: <https://gvsu-edu.zoom.us/j/95251621137?pwd=dC9raGpWVUF3NjVET2YrN1FnSEdLQT09>

Present:

College of Liberal Arts and Sciences

* Carlson, Todd
* Losey, Kay
* Shapiro-Shapin, Carolyn (recording)
* Wildey, Mikhila

Seidman College of Business

College of Community and Public Service

* Higbea, Raymond

College of Education

* Diarrassouba, Nagnon

Padnos College of Engineering and Computing

* Corneal, Lindsay

College of Health Professions

* Kelly Machnick

Brooks College of Interdisciplinary Studies

* Darien Ripple

Kirkhof College of Nursing

* Slager, Dianne

University Libraries

At Large - Elected by and from UAS

Student Representatives

Provost Designee

* Benet, Suzeanne (ex officio)
* Welcome
* Review and approval of minutes from September meeting
	+ Fixes:
		- Rescheduling Exams = Darrian, Dianne, Raymond
	+ Shapiro-Shapin: Move to approve minutes; Corneal: Second; Motion Carried
* Old Business
	+ Prior Learning Charge – report from ECS – additional review
		- Benet:
			* There is a limit to the number of CR/NC credits one can have.
			* We send forward the memo as is or add a statement that one cannot exceed CR/NC cap with prior learning credit (10 hour of major/minor/cognate courses and 25% of overall coursework)
			* ECS did not have any other challenges
		- Carlson noted that we can add in that Prior Learning will be subjected to CR/NC limits.
		- Corneal noted that some programs have different limits.
		- Language to add: Prior learning credit will apply toward the Credit / No Credit limit provided in the General Academic Policies of the catalog. https://www.gvsu.edu/catalog/navigation/academic-policies-and-regulations.htm#anchor-9
		- Agreed to by consensus
	+ Also, students cannot take earlier courses once they have placed out of higher-level courses. CLEP language might be used in this context.
		- Carlson suggested language: Prior Learning Credit may not be applied toward a course that is a prerequisite for a course they already have credit for.
		- Losey asked whether MTH 110 and WRT 150 were university requirements have been moved to Gen Ed.
		- Benet:
			* Students may not earn credit for CLEP subject examinations if the student has credit in the course, was previously or currently enrolled in the course, or has credit in a higher-level course. (This language is from Northern MI)
			* You must not previously have taken more advanced work in the field of the examination. (This language is from Oakland)
		- By consensus – language was added as suggested by Carlson.
	+ Syllabi repository – Mikala & Kay
		- Wildey -Our goal as a committee is at the policy level is to decide whether we should have a repository – This would be a big IT undertaking. Before deciding upon feasibility, we should decide whether it was valuable
		- Losey – asked whether it is was reasonable to have syllabi uploaded before the term and we should make a recommendation on how current a syllabus must be.
		- Wildey – syllabi in PSY is submitted in 1st week of classes and there are older syllabi available. https://www.gvsu.edu/psychology/syllabus-archive-244.htm
		- Carlson – was there language in Student Senate charge noting when syllabi needed to be available.
		- Wildey – students wanted to have documents available before start of term and noted that there is a great deal of work involved
		- Benet – students register in March and so they would have older syllabi
		- Shapiro-Shapin – some departments do not post professor listing
		- Ripple – thought about writing a note to the Chronicle concerning shifts in syllabus. Many faculty have online syllabi
		- Losey – students will get syllabus first day of class and have access to Blackboard.
		- Ripple – earlier posting of syllabi might help
		- Wildey – many universities do have syllabus repositories
		- Machnik – this could help students
		- Corneal – this will put a burden on staff
		- Wildey noted that for this to work, faculty would need to upload syllabi themselves
		- Higbea – IT is developing a data warehouse that will be available within a few years
		- Wildey seconded the idea that this cannot burden overburdened staff
		- Carlson – we need to include syllabi for a historical repository rather than having it reflect the new semester
		- Higbea – there seems to be a consensus with the idea
		- Wildey and Losey will craft language for a vote on universal syllabus repository (note the responsibility of departments, colleges or programs). This could be done via the Library.
		- Wildey: Example from <https://www.ttu.edu/courseinfo/> - focus is on transparency
	+ In-person exams on election day – Nagnon & Dianne
		- Diarrassouba
			* Survey of 20 universities in MI and out of state – MI Tech had a resolution that failed on the university senate. In AZ, ASU does have a policy asking faculty to avoid planning major assignments on election day.
			* Recommendations – Do not recommend giving a holiday but recommends that the university avoid planning papers, tests, presentations and any other graded academic or field related task. Alternatively, we can mention the Higher Education Act as does Central Michigan
		- Slager
			* Only UNC and Tennessee encouraged sports team to allow students to vote
		- Machnik – did this come from students? Higbea confirmed that it is.
		- Carlson – university administration is not recommending a holiday but we could make a recommendation concerning assignments on national election days, which would a be a reasonable thing to do.
		- Machnik – could Fall Break move to election day
		- Slager – clinical students to not get Fall Break
		- Diarrassouba – we can make recommendations so that there are no penalties for the students
		- Wildey – this is akin to discussions to Fall Breather
		- Slager -- getting into clinical sites is difficult and Fall Breather was not followed
		- Corneal – coop semesters did not connect with Fall Break and students did not expect light days at work
		- Carlson – If we just propose that the University recommends that professors avoid placing major assignments on National Election Days, then programs that cannot accommodate adjusting their schedules (clinical, labs, etc...) will not be adversely affected.
		- Machnik: Perhaps with this recommendation, or wherever it gets published for students, we could provide information about absentee voting
		- Benet noted that students may not be satisfied with recommendation.
		- Wildey noted it could be an excused
		- Benet – we can make a commitment to getting a voting station on each campus. Slager will contact Melissa Baker-Boosamra who is in charge of civic engagement
		- Corneal -- non-traditional students that don't live on campus would not necessarily be able to vote on campus if they are in a different town/county
		- Wildey – out of town students can get an excused absence
		- Machnik supports idea of excused absence
		- Carlson noted challenge of rescheduling labs
		- Wildey – what about making a statement concerning our commitment to voting and encourage students to make arrangement
		- Diarrassouba – for courses that meet 1x/week or clinicals, this is a complex issue. We need to leave flexibility but we do need to engage with the issue because it is important to students. Lines can be long at voting booth. Here, policy of excused absence comes into play.
		- Diarrassouba and Slager will bring suggested language next time.
	+ Rescheduling exams during exam week – Darien & Ellen
		- We will come back to this
	+ 58-credit rule – Kelly, Kay, & Carolyn
		- Losey: 58-credits as a 4-year institution; this was looked at in W’2016. Group looked at their Google Sheet and got background from Benet
		- Benet explained that this is linked to Adult learners – students who have more credits from 2-year institutions would like more credits. Also, we have more students with AP credits (those are 2 different groups). There has been much discussion with Schaub and Van Dam. There are a few programs in Health Science (e.g. Respiratory Therapy) that use 2-year schools for certification. For those programs the number is 40 credits.
		- Losey – Group recommends researching anew. And each of us has 2-3 schools to update with current policies. Document contains former policies.
		- Ripple - Issue is for LEADS students and this touches on accreditation
		- Losey – is 58 a random number? Benet noted that this was approximately 2 years.
		- There were some questions concerning missing members. Higbea will follow up.
		- Deadline: In time for next meeting.
	+ Test-optional admissions. – Carolyn, Lindsey, & Nagnon
		- Shapiro-Shapin: See report at bottom of minutes
		- Corneal: This placed a burden on professional advisors for which they were not compensated. There are strong opinions on both sided
		- Diarrassouba: Urge of caution when discussing Diversity and Low Income students
		- Benet: We might
		- Higbea: a placement is needed whether internal or ACT/SAT. The implementers can come up with program.
		- Losey: Has worked on WRT self-placement. Noted the tension between admissions and academic departments. Admissions has much power. We can make a statement in support of academic departments. We should put our feet down about to support voices. Additional information rather than no information might be a better solution.
		- Carson: Admissions vs Placement –
		- Discussion will continue – Tabled until next meeting.
	+ Leadership and succession – Raymond, Todd, & Darien
* New Business
	+ GVSU Graduate Honors Policy
* Adjourn – 11 a.m.

**Review of Effects of Test-Optional Admissions**

**Challenges in MTH and/or WRT Placement posed by lack of SAT/ACT Data**

**MTH Placement**

**Placement Challenges for Sciences:** Advisors and the FYAR leadership noted clear challenges in scheduling science major courses in BIO, CHM, CIS, CMB, ECO 210/211 and EGR without placement data as major specific courses have MTH prerequisites. Historically, a combination of SAT/ACT scores and high school GPA has been used to determine a student’s science sequence entry point and the number of science courses recommended each term in the first year.

* Yes, we rely on the sub scores often to give us a full picture of a students bandwidth when it comes to science and math placement.  So for instance can a student take 2 sciences or a math and science together etc.  We use placement grids for accurate advising based on historical data linked to GPA and matriculation.  We need this!
* Engineering advising is very difficult without accurate math placement. The change of math course by one level can change the entire schedule.
* With the ripple effect of any science, business, computing, etc. course that requires a math placement, it was difficult to create a schedule and as course sections continued to fill each day, schedules would need to be completely rescheduled which was often met with a level of frustration for students and supporters (even if it was clear that the student should have completed math placement prior to their orientation date).
* science as we rely on their overall score and with ACT, science subscore for placement into difficult lab science courses like CHM 109, CHM 115, BIO 120, etc.
* Some accreditation standards require ACT/SAT data.

**Delay of Major Completion**

* Enormous challenge and hurt incoming students because many found themselves in courses that were too easy.
* Difficult to make informed and accurate decisions based on historical data for placement. Student lack of confidence led to lower placements than needed and delay degree completion.

**FYAR/ Professional Advisor Time and Administrative Challenges**: A burden was placed on the advising team (esp. FYAR leadership and the professional advisors) to rework schedules.

* That makes it really difficult to schedule students a complete schedule. When that happens, we leave gaps in their schedules with the hopes of filling them when we know the math placement. This responsibility falls squarely on the shoulders of professional advisors. We are already asked to carry a larger portion of the workload with incoming student advising and registration and unlike our faculty counterparts we aren't compensated any extra for that work. Obviously, that's not the fault of this committee but this extra work hurts morale of our understaffed and under-resourced community. I don't think the writing was negatively impacted.
* Without scores, and without mandatory tests, Student did not want to take the math placement exam. So when they started scheduling for classes, they realized that they couldn't take a lot of their STEM major coursework, then they opted to take the exam AFTER their appointment. Thus needed another advising appointment. Then current students were complaining about not enough open advising appointments for them because we had to dedicate so much time to students who didn't do the work they were suppose to. Some students were coming in the first and second week of classes complaining about being in the wrong math class. Student also naturally placed themselves into the "easier" writing class, which GVSU doesn't have enough sections for.
* This was very challenging because we had to rely on the math placement test. There wasn't a way to force students to do this, so we in advising had to exert a lot of time and energy to ensure students took the placement test. Students wouldn't take action prior to FYAR appointments, so FYARs either had to be cancelled or a follow up appointment made, to ensure students were in the correct math course. All of our program plans vary depending on math start, so students either couldn't schedule for anything besides gen eds or their schedules had to be redone once/if math placement was taken. There seemed to be a lot more traffic from students during add/drop week who felt like they weren't in the appropriate courses and were last minute taking the placement tests and getting new schedules. Essentially It was kind of a mess. registration could not be completed until the math placement test was taken - as late as the first week of class in some situations.
* With STEM based programs (specifically) this often made for some very challenging/difficult conversations.  From an administration standpoint, it also created many inefficiencies in not being able to fully schedule students for classes on their registration date, having to schedule follow-up appointments, and rescheduling appointments in addition to email correspondence that was significantly greater than with students who completed placement tests.

**Placement Tests:**

During the summer of 2021, admissions and the FYAR team requested that students take MTH placement exams.

While some students took placement exams before their registration appointments, many did not respond to repeated attempts to take the placement exams.

* There were responses that the placement tests are more accurate than SAT/ACT but there were challenges in getting students to take the exams

Students encountered difficulties with placement exams either failing to allot sufficient time and/or not realizing that there was a second page to the exam and therefore got a failing score.

* II would put the "blame" of incorrect placements on the math proficiency exam rather than the test-optional policy. Because, in most of my scenarios, math was the biggest question mark for these students. Having a proficiency exam solved the fact that I wasn't aware of their math level. However, many students took the proficiency exam incorrectly (only completed page one) or did not plan far enough in advance to take it prior to the meeting.
* Test-optional alone is not the issue, it is test-optional students who we can't get a hold of to take the proficiency exams that makes it an issue. I see providing the proficiency exam in-person, on the day of FYAR, as a way to combat the main issue at hand.

A few reported no challenges with placements as they relied on placement tests and self-selection.

**Against SAT/ACT Placements**

* "incorrect placements" I've also thought of as a loaded term.  There are so many factors that go into course placement that I don't really think standardized tests for everybody makes sense anymore.  It has always been a 'lazy' way to put students into courses generally based on limited information that is almost always over a year old before the time of placement.

**Suggestions to Manage Placements in absence of SAT/ACT Data:**

* Allowing Advisors Access to HS Transcripts
* Allowing Students to take MTH Placements day of registration
* Not allowing students to register for an FYAR appointment until placement tests have been taken.

**WRT: Self-Placed**

**Fewer challenges were found in writing placement but there were challenges as more students selected WRT 120/130 than we had allotted seats.**

* Writing was tricky because there weren't a ton of openings in 120/130, so we just had to encourage students to take 150 or have students quickly judge which section they belonged in, instead of having the opportunity to make a judgement call based on a score.
* Also, descriptors and information for selecting WRT 120/130 vs 150 is still not clear for students. The stretch version is important as an option, but since its introductions there are continually students who feel they should have been in a WRT 150 section or vice versa.  Just that one class (or two in the case of 120/130) can be incredibly disruptive to specific major progress and degree timelines.

**Lack of Scores Did not affect HNR**

* It changed the way we evaluate applications in the Honors College, but I would not say it presented any difficulties.

**Should SAT/ACT be used in Admissions, Placement, Both or Neither**

**Admissions Only 2**

**Placement Only 14 (w/ on indicating it should not be required)**

**Both 6**

**Neither 3**

**No Response 1**

**Scheduling Challenges for Departments**

**Yes 17**

**No 1**

**Unsure 6**

**Other\* 1**

**No Response 1**

**\*Other: Just because something maybe took "extra time" or more effort on our end to complete, to me, does not mean it should be considered a "challenge." It is our job as higher educational professionals to be student centered and our workload should not impact decision-making regarding policies and procedures. Eliminating standardized test scores eliminates a barrier for many students and should be considered a step in the right direction towards making higher education available for more students.**

**Strongly voiced critique of SAT/ACT use in Placement and/or Admissions**

I want to start by clarifying that I believe there are many good reasons to keep the test-optional policy. But for this summer, any student who was test-optional did need to take the math proficiency exam, and if they didn't, sometimes it would take multiple appointments in order to get the student registered. However, I don't see this being as big of an issue if we are back in-person for FYAR and students are able to take the math proficiency exam the day of. The lack of information from students in order to place into math and writing courses can be identified as a combination of both the test-optional policy and doing everything virtually. There were lots of students with test scores on file that I also struggled to reach in advance to gather the information I needed to help register them for classes.

**Other Questions Raised**

1. **Advisor Workload**
* If the university chooses not to require the ACT/SAT, how will it enforce having students take  the MTH proficiency tests to determine initial placement?  If the university chooses not to require the ACT/SAT, where will additional administrative support come from to navigate all of the attending challenges of placement and more?
* I think the GVSU isn't consider how much time people spent telling students to take math placement tests. Advisor time was wasted this summer on students not taking ownership for their own educations, and now the university is coming back on academic advisors saying that we are not available enough for our current students. So it's advising that is being punished for students not being prepared. So i think you should be asking how much time advising spent following up with student outside our already busy caseloads
* FYAR is already time consuming as it is and even more so with the one-on-one appointments approach used for covid times. With some students needing double FYAR appointments, there was limited availability on our calendars for current student appointments, which is a complaint that's reached SLT and is now triggering advising units to offer late and potentially Saturday advising appointments. The question I would ask you to consider is, what burden is this placing on our advising units to ensure students are placed correctly?
1. **Diversity, Low Income Students, and Testing**
* This survey seemed very biased. Many questions were worded in a way that made me feel like the writer of this survey believes test-optional should go away because it is automatically identified as being a "challenge" to academic advising and "more work" on advisors.
	+ Because of this bias, I urge caution when reviewing survey results, as they may also be biased. I wish there were questions included that asked about the benefits of test-optional, not just the negatives Or simply asked how we felt about it - not to assume it was a challenge. I feel like this survey is fishing for certain answers based on how everything was worded and how all of the questions seemed to be written from one point of view. This only provides people an opportunity to think of the negatives, and not the positives, skewing survey results. I feel very passionately about this topic and would love a chance to be more included in these conversations. The bias of this survey causes me some concern.I just want to reiterate that while faculty/staff may argue that eliminating standardized test may cause more "challenges" for us, it, however, eliminates many real challenges for minority student groups who were never considered and are still unfavored in the writing of standardized tests. I believe that being "test-optional" eliminates.
* Are there connections between the rise in the number of first year students of color and the lack of test score requirement? Does not requiring ACT/SAT create a larger applicant/admitted/enrolled pool, and/or a more diverse pool? Are there effects on first year academic success and first to second year retention?
* My only concern with not using any test scores is that students from underserved districts (with little or no AP, or limited resources generally) and/or marginalized cultures (who may experience negative bias in admissions) would lose the opportunity to show their promise with excellent test scores. I like making the test scores optional for this reason.

1. **Alternate Ways of Placement**
* I would ask "What do you believe is the best model for getting students into the correct placement for writing, math, and science (also ENG 100)?"
* In my opinion, it would be helpful to consider creating a CHM/BIO placement exam...or at the very least, for FYAR advisors to have access to HS transcripts to see how students performed in HS science courses. We do have the CHM100 vs 115 self-quiz, which was very helpful!
* If students are not required to complete the SAT or ACT, there needs to be an alternative required test to assess their preparedness and placement prior to being assigned a registration day. Poor student communication over email was very problematic in using alternatives. If students fail to fill out the online FYAR form, we often lacked any information including what was provided to admission and contact information. Are there any ideas for fixing this issue?

1. **Seats in Remedial Courses**
* Remedial courses filled very quickly this summer when they shouldn’t have. Students who actually needed these courses had very limited, or no, options. Especially for WRT 120/130. These students are also students who prefer in person courses and there were very limited in person WRT 120/130 options as most were hybrid. I found that way too many students were self selecting into WRT 120/130 who would have been adequate in WRT 150.

1. **Scholarships**
* If we have an ACT/SAT optional model, will standardized tests be removed from scholarship criteria?

1. **Program Accreditation**
* What would the impact be for program accreditation?  Some accreditation standards require ACT/SAT data.