FS Working Group Meeting Minutes  
01/20/12

Attendees:
At UHM (Bachman 203): Ron Bontekoe (UHM), Dawne Bost (UHM - recorder), Shawn Ford (KCC - facilitator), Lisa Fujikawa (UHM - recorder), Erik Guentner (UHM), Joanne Itano (System), Ronald Lou (WCC), Julia Myers (UHWO), Jean Okumura (WCC), Dennis Perusse (KCC), Ron Pine (HCC), Andy Stroble (LCC)
At UHMC (Ka‘aike 103): Kate Acks (UHMC), Bud Clark (UHMC)
At KauCC (LRC 121): Ryan Girard (KauCC), Chris Tennberg (KauCC)
At LCC (AD 102): Jiajia Seffrood (LCC), Linda Furuto (UHWO)

Absent: Steve Mandracia (HCC), Sharon Rowe (KCC)

Overview
Shawn Ford, UH System Wide Foundations Board Chair, opened the meeting. He stated he was not a member of the working group, but was acting as facilitator for the meeting convened to “give every stakeholder opportunity to give opinions and state concerns” about the proposed addition of an explanatory note to the FS Hallmarks. He also stated that the purpose of today’s meeting was to determine if there is consensus among participants about the proposal. Finally, he outlined the tentative agendas for future meetings.

Shawn stated the February meeting will be a voting meeting. If the group decides to recommend the proposal for approval, then there will be no third meeting. If the proposal is rejected in February, then a third meeting will be required to either make changes to the existing proposal or to develop an alternative to the proposal.

Campus Views
Each participant then provided an approximately two-minute statement of his or her views of the proposal.

The discussion began with Andy Stroble (LCC) who asked for information about the impetus for the proposed change to the FS Hallmarks. Erik Guentner (UHM) stated the proposed change resulted in part from a UHM faculty discussion of the WASC requirement for college-level quantitative skills. Lisa Fujikawa added that at least one school had been “dinged” by WASC because quantitative skills hadn’t been adequately addressed. Fujikawa stated the proposal is a “proactive” effort by Manoa to prevent such an occurrence here. However, the quantitative skills issue was not raised by WASC during UHM’s recent reaccreditation. Given this, Andy didn’t see a need for the change.

Chris Tennberg (KauCC) opened a discussion of the definition of college level quantitative skills and the term significant found in the proposal’s consequences section. The discussion included questions of what constitutes college level quantitative skills and how much of this skill would be required in a course to be deemed a significant amount.

Ryan Girard (KauCC) concurred with Chris’ concerns and questioned how this explanatory note and statement of consequence would affect PHIL 110 and 111.

Jiajia Seffrood (LCC) also agreed that the terms used in the proposal were a concern. She suggested the group discuss the feasibility of adding an additional Foundations requirement rather than adopting the explanatory note, although she was open to adding the Explanatory Note.

Linda Furuto (UHWO) said she is “60% pro resolution”. She, like many others, was interested in getting a clearer definition of college-level quantitative skills. She also asked if there were plans to align with the statewide math summit, which includes the DOE, P-20, and UH System Office representatives.

Bud Clark (UHMC) agreed that the concerns and suggestions so far raised needed further discussion. He also provided information regarding Maui’s GenEd requirements, which include both FS and a numeracy requirement.
Kate Acks (UHMC) concurred with the concerns of fellow group members and added more information about the Maui numeracy requirement. She also introduced a discussion of student math skills by sharing that although 80-90% of UHMC students place into developmental math, they all graduate with some quantitative skills. The discussion then returned briefly to the ambiguity of the terms “college level quantitative skills” and “significant”.

Ron Bontekoe (UHM) entered the discussion with a statement of concern about student readiness for college level math. He suggested that UH Freshman admission requirements would need to be changed before this type of change to the FS Hallmarks could be effectively instituted. A group member stated the UH community colleges’ open admissions policy excluded this suggestion as a System solution to the issue. The group then discussed the matter of student quantitative reasoning and mathematical skill levels which included references to high failure rate classes, the relevance of the Hawaii DOE to the discussion, and WASC Junior and Senior requirements.

Jean Okumura (WCC) stated she generally supported the proposal, but would prefer to see clear definitions of the language used in the explanatory note and corresponding consequences section before approving it. Jean also stated she was against adding a new Foundations requirement and noted that the UH community colleges had not been approached by WASC about this issue.

Erik Guentner (UHM) stated in his two-minute presentation that despite understanding concerns expressed thus far, he had no fundamental problem with the proposal as it is written. He spoke to concerns about student academic proficiencies by pointing out the UHM Math Department provides tutoring and other forms of support to students in need of extra instruction to develop the skills needed for specific math courses.

Julia Myers (UHWO) also stated she had no “fundamental” opposition to the proposal; however, she reintroduced the concerns addressed earlier about the motivation for the proposed change. Julia proffered that the group should decide what the driving element behind the proposal was and act accordingly. She stated that if the proposal was WASC-inspired then the WASC definition of college level quantitative skills should be examined prior to drawing conclusions about the explanatory note. The discussion then turned to an examination of the possible benefits (e.g., higher degree of quantitative knowledge) and consequences (e.g., higher DFWI rate) for all UH students should the proposal be adopted.

Ron Pine (HCC), who was on the committee that wrote the existing FS Hallmarks, shared a brief history. He stated the FS Hallmarks were intended to broaden the focus on proofs to include courses from many disciplines. Math professors were initially challenged by the proof requirement but developed instruction units to meet this symbolic reasoning emphasis of an FS course. Ron stated repeatedly during the two-hour meeting that “other stakeholders” such as faculty from business and economics should be included in this discussion. He agreed with some other group members that the feasibility of a new requirement be explored.

Ronald Loo (WCC) stated he is against the proposal and that an FQ (Foundations-Quantitative Skills) requirement should be added along with the current FS requirement.

Conversely, Dennis Perusse (KapCC) stated he favored the proposal and thought there were many ways for diverse courses to meet the proposal’s requirement. Dennis also stated that UH needs to satisfy WASC and then look at student needs. He suggested that classes could be designed and evaluated to meet the requirements of WASC and the proposed explanatory note. He did not think it appropriate to speak for the second KapCC representative to the working group, Sharon Rowe, who wasn’t present.

Shawn then summarized the position of Sharon Rowe (KapCC) regarding the proposal. He stated that Sharon understood the need for quantitative skills, but she felt one class cannot fulfill the changes being proposed. According to Shawn, Sharon maintains that the most realistic possibility is to add a new requirement. Shawn also stated that Sharon believes the proposal will “seriously impact many students”, and there “may be negative repercussions in the short term on many students”. Ron Bontekoe responded that it may be possible for both proofs and quantitative skills to be covered in PHIL 110, but PHIL 111 does not lend itself to both since PHIL 111 is short on proofs.
**Discussion**

Upon conclusion of all the two-minute statements, Shawn stated there was no consensus and further discussion of the proposal was needed. He suggested that the terms “significant” and “college level quantitative skills” be defined and that it be clearly determined if the proposal was the result of accreditation pressure or of simply trying to avoid possible future problems. He also stated the need to find out what WASC meant by college level quantitative skills. It was suggested that probability could be added to a logic class to meet the quantitative requirement. The question then arose of who would determine how much use of probability in a logic class would be enough given the use of significant in the explanatory notes.

It was pointed out that the term “significant” is not in the actual explanatory note that is the focus of the proposal and is therefore a side issue to the actual proposal to add a new explanatory note. It was also noted that each campus would be able to determine how the Hallmark and new explanatory note would be applied, making the proposal itself not a particularly significant change.

A discussion about the significance of the explanatory note then followed. Questions were raised about the degree to which an additional requirement resulted from the explanatory note, the philosophical implications of the proposed explanatory note, and what governing entity should make final determinations about the proposal (GECs, Faculty Senates, and/or the System Foundation Board). The discussion next turned to the question of whether it is students or faculty who will be most affected by the proposal and if the proposal had significant system-wide implications.

It was pointed out that every department at UHWO already has a math requirement. This resulted in a discussion of the feasibility of responding to the WASC college level quantitative skills requirement at the program level rather than through General Education requirements. The UHMC representatives described the UHMC numeracy and logic requirements that could be fulfilled with one or two courses. Ron Pine stated HCC is also looking into a similar requirement.

The next discussion point centered again on incoming students’ degree of preparation for math classes at any of the schools, combined with the perception that some departments do not find math proficiency to be relevant to their programs. Theater, Dance and English Departments were named as examples of departments that would resist resolving the college level quantitative skills issue at the program level.

Shawn asked the group to consider the validity of changing a System Foundations requirement to manage a concern that some felt was “not immediately a WASC threat”. Lisa provided further clarification of the impetus for the explanatory note. She stated the proposal “was not primarily WASC driven”. WASC was initially a peripheral consideration of an examination of how to better serve students. Questions arose again about what is WASC’s exact statement of this requirement, and a request was made for a clear WASC definition of college level quantitative skills.

Dawne stated that the General Education Office (GEO) had reviewed all WASC junior and senior documents and did not find a specific statement of what constitutes college level quantitative skills. She stated that the WASC literature seems to indicate it is up to the individual schools to determine a definition of all WASC-mandated academic requirements. WASC requires only that the definitions of things such as college level quantitative skills remain consistent with the school’s institutional learning outcomes and overall mission statement. Julia felt that if WASC does not provide the definition, then the group should decide what it means to be college-level. Jean agreed, saying that all UH campuses are at the college level, and consequently should be able to make that decision. She did not believe WASC would dictate what the term means.

Dawne also stated that the term “college level quantitative skills” did not appear in any WASC junior documents reviewed by the GEO. She said a reference to “computational skills” and “quantitative skills” occurs in both WASC Junior and Senior documents, but “college level” is omitted in the WASC Junior literature.

It was then suggested that the main point of the working group was to make a recommendation that would make sure the “UHM and community colleges could blend” in resolving the issue at hand. It was generally agreed that the community colleges are “having no problem meeting WASC junior requirements” and that the issue was one that
existed at the Baccalaureate level, if the proposal was primarily designed to address WASC senior concerns. It was also agreed that the working group’s discussion should consider the proposal as an effort to better educate the students across campuses.

Ron Pine again stated that the discussion needed representation by “other stakeholders”. Lisa clarified with Ron that he wanted input from other departments that offer FS courses. (All members present were from either Math or Philosophy.) Ron reiterated that the original intent of the FS Hallmark in question was to “bring in other departments clamoring to get in on FS”.

A discussion followed addressing the impact of the proposal on PHIL 110. The question was whether or not PHIL 110’s status as an FS course would be “on the chopping block” upon acceptance of the explanatory note. The fate of Math classes currently holding an FS designation should the proposal be adopted was also introduced. Erik pointed out that current FS Math classes already meet all the FS Hallmarks including the element addressed by the proposed new explanatory note. He also stated he personally did not see why PHIL 110 would be threatened, but said that the final decision would be made by each Foundations Board.

Ron Pine provided more history of the original intent of the FS Hallmarks. A brief discussion addressing the relevance of the original intent of the Hallmark authors followed with no consensus. The discussion then turned again to the definition of the word “significant” found in the consequences section of the proposal.

Dennis asked if the proposal could be accepted without inclusion of the consequences section. The group generally agreed that the question of “how much college level quantitative skills is enough” would be an issue even if the consequences section was not officially adopted. The discussion then turned to the question of why the definition of “how much is enough” was being addressed as a problem hindering adoption of the proposal.

Jean stated that “an adequate amount of proofs” had been defined for the Math classes meeting the FS Hallmarks, so it was reasonable to think the same could be done in classes attempting to meet the significant college level quantitative skills” requirement.

It was again asked if the group could “get the WASC definition of ‘college level quantitative skills’”. Dawne reiterated that “there is not a specific definition from WASC”. The discussion again turned to an attempt to determine if UHM has a problem with WASC accreditation regarding this issue. Once again it was stated that currently there is no problem and that the proposal is a pro-active step given WASC criticism of other schools.

The next discussion topic centered on how to proceed after this meeting concluded. Whether or not the group members needed to go to faculty senates at each campus was debated. A few members stated that they believed the issue was too big to be determined outside of the faculty senate, while others said the working group was not responsible for reporting to the various Senates. Shawn stated the group’s charge was to look at possibilities and report to the Multi-Campus Foundations Board with the results of the groups deliberations. That entity would decide if the Senates needed to be apprised of the findings.

Ron Bontekoe stated that taking the matter to the Senates would likely lead to the issue being “out of our hands”. He further stated the Senates needed to be informed only if they recommended developing a new Foundations requirement, changing admissions requirements or similar large scale actions.

Shawn directed the attendees to examine the proposal and its relationship to WASC. He asked if this matter is a General Education or a Baccalaureate issue. He stated that if it is a Gen Ed issue, then the resolution may be different than if it is a Baccalaureate matter. Eric stated that “it’s very possible we’re reading this proposal more closely than it was intended to be read”. He also remarked that if the decision was made to maintain “a minimal FS requirement” then it was likely “almost all community college students coming to Manoa will need to take a new class at the program level” resulting in an ongoing “MATH 103 issue”.
Shawn then asked if there was an updated document listing what courses are acceptable FS courses on each campus. Dawne indicated she would look into this question and report back to him before the next meeting. Shawn also requested a definitive statement of what WASC wants. The group generally concurred these things would be helpful; however, a few members stated that perhaps WASC should not be a concern since the main charge of each school was to properly serve and educate the students, then meet WASC’s mandates. One group member stated “it is WASC [first], then the student needs”.

**Next Steps**

The meeting concluded with Shawn asking the group members to return to their home campuses to discuss the implications if the proposal 1) was accepted, 2) was amended, and 3) was rejected, with a new Foundations requirement instituted instead. The group agreed these were acceptable talking points for discussion with their individual campus committees.

The group adjourned with a reminder that each representative was entrusted to represent the interests of his or her home campus, so they would not be required to ask permission to give specific recommendations at the next meeting of the working group.

*Submitted by Dawne Bost, recorder.*