Task Force on Undergraduate Retention and Graduation: Meeting Documentation March 17, 2011

Part 1. Attendance

Committee Numbers:	Lisa Axe, John Bechtold, John Cays, Perry Deess, Norbert Elliot, Ian Gatley, Jack Gentul, Margo S. Gilchrist, Judith Redling, Cheickna Sylla
Meeting Aim:	"It is the purpose of the Task Force on Undergraduate Retention and Graduation to complete an analysis of undergraduate retention and graduation and to recommend tactics for implementation that will yield improvements on both areas." President Altenkirch Charge to the Committee, February 3, 2011
Meeting Date:	March 17, 2011; minutes revised on April 27 to add Norbert Elliot and John Bechtold's comments (note 5 and 6 in Part 3 added); figures removed.
Meeting Time:	3:00 pm
Meeting Location:	398 Fenster Hall
Chair:	Ian Gatley
Vice Chair:	Jack Gentul
Committee Guests:	Theodore Johnson
Meeting Purpose:	To design the first-year placement system; to review the ViSTA model for the task force.

Part 2: Agenda

Agenda Items	
1	Approval of minutes from March 3
2	Approval of ViSTA model distributed March 3
3	Review of the present (fall 2010) placement system
4	Analysis of student impact
5	Recommendations for fall 2011 placement system based on March 3 motion

Part 3: Discussion of Agenda

Discussion on Agenda Items	
1	Update minutes to include discussion of use of valid tests for placement of students into calculus courses; reservations regarding use of SAT Mathematics Section as part of calculus placement system.
2	Identification of April date as time to inform students about their fall placements in mathematics and science
3	Need to attend to students who are already in the system and who are taking courses under present (fall 2010, spring 2011) placement and course design structures
4	Need for sturdy, uniform thresholds for placement of admitted students
5	What precisely should be tested for success in Calculus, and does the current math placement exam test this material?
6	Most importantly we must test algebra skills, and some trigonometry. And, yes, this is what the current placement exam tests.
7	Need to consider three aspects of validation when placing students: construct validity (Does the test measure the concept of interest?); criterion validity (What external performance measure may the test used be compared to in order to establish validation claims?); and consequential validity (What are the intended and unintended impacts of test use?)
8	Identification of sources of information about previous student experiences: AP test scores; high school transcripts (understood as varying in terms of school and course identification); and SAT Mathematics Section
9	Note that AP courses may be used, even if student has not yet completed the course, through a "proxy" identification of course taken and intention to take College Board summative test in subject area.
10	Note that, although an AP score in mathematics may not earn course exemption, the scores could nevertheless be used for placement
11	Need to let students know during April their course placement; noted advantages—challenge, engagement, advisement
12	Noted importance of advisors; noted use of Learning Communities in this role
13	Noted critical importance of follow-up with students; placement must not be understood to be an isolated event; need for advisement system to follow students across years.

Part 4: Action Items from Agenda

Action on Agenda		Vote
1	Motion: "For both calculus-based and non-calculus based courses, there will be no more than one 3-credit intervention for underprepared students."	Unanimous
2	Motion: "Student will be placed through valid test scores or previous educational experience by mid-April (when such information is available)."	Unanimous

Part 5: Remaining Questions for Resolution at Next Meeting

Questions to be Answered		Individual Best Able to Provide Answers
1	What are the most valid sources of information that can be used to place students correctly in mathematics courses? While the SAT Mathematics Section (http://professionals.collegeboard.com/testing/sat-reasoning/about/sections/math) appears to hold potential as a valid source of information for correct placement in mathematics courses that are non-calculus-based, how do the sections of that test compare in their potential for correct placement with the Maplesoft tests (http://www.maplesoft.com/)?	
2	What is the role of the common examination in the mathematics testing, rapid assessment, and advisement process? http://math.njit.edu/students/mathexams.php	
3	What is the role of verbal ability in student advisement? How will the present use of the SAT Writing Section and Criterion as a valid placement tests be used in the testing, rapid assessment, and advisement process?	
4	Now that a process has been agreed upon to place admitted students in mid-April, how can that process now be implemented? For example, how can high school transcripts be used to create "sturdy, uniform thresholds" for placement?	
5	How can the ViSTA model be used so that the necessary vision,	

	strategies, tactics, and metrics are in place so that the March 3 and March 11 motions will be leveraged before the fall 2011 semester begins?	