

Academic Admissions Standards Committee (AASC)

Year End Report (May 2023)

Membership

Co-Chair(s):

- Rudy Molina (Vice Provost, Student Academic Success and Enrollment Management)
- Traci Zimmerman (Associate Dean, CAL)

Members:

- Audrey Burnett (Associate Dean, University Studies)
- Katherine Ott Walter (Faculty Senate representative)
- Melinda Wood (AVP, Access and Enrollment Management; Director of Admissions)
- Wren Stevens (Associate Dean, CVPA)
- Jeff Tang (Associate Dean, CISE)
- Molly Brown (Associate Dean, COB)
- Doug Hochstetler (Associate Dean, CHBS)
- Ravi Shankar (AUH, Math and Statistics)—new member beginning this term
- Katie Dredger (AUH, Middle, Secondary, and Mathematics Education)

Charge:

- The JMU Academic Admissions Standards Committee recommends initiatives to align admissions and execution of instruction with the strategic goals of the Academic Affairs division.
- Our core principle: Admission standards to academic programs, like the execution of instruction, should be determined by the Division of Academic Affairs.

Objectives:

The success of this committee's effort will be measured by the formulation of inclusive admissions criteria with periodic updates, the creation of an effective, transparent admissions decision process, and the analysis and documentation of the following objectives:

- Standards: Investigate individual program admissions, progression, and graduation standards
- Trends: Identify and recommend academic areas with the greatest potential for growth
- Resources: Identify the needs and considerations for resources such as space, funding, personnel, materials, technology requirements, and others to meet evolving enrollment demands
- Capacity: Examine university infrastructure and create a clear metric that ensures adequate capacity for academic programs

Summary of Current Semester Activity:

The AASC met five times in the spring semester. Brief summaries of these meetings are shared below.

January 27, 2023

At this initial meeting, we discussed the following research questions, and invited Ravi Shankar (AUH, Math and Stats) and D. Bryan Walton (Associate AUH, Math and Stats) to contribute to this conversation.

Research Questions

1. *What is the Math Placement profile for students who completed the ALEKS assessment in our most recent cohort?*
2. *To what degree of confidence do we have that the ALEKS placement assessment accurately places students into JMU math courses?*

The research questions grew out of our examination of our [current, published admissions standards](#) as we questioned why we require one additional class beyond Algebra II when that second math can't serve as a prereq for anything (since that course can be ANY course beyond Algebra II, so long as Algebra II is a prerequisite for it). We considered the option of indicating that the math beyond Algebra II is strongly preferred/strongly recommended (rather than required). We also considered indicating that waivers for the additional math beyond Algebra II may be granted, given appropriate evidence/circumstances.

February 17, 2023

Before we revisited the question of a math placement recommendation, we had a conversation about the current status of (and challenges to) our admissions and yield strategy. In it, we talked about how the changes to FAFSA; ideas for creating opportunities for a gap year (not only before coming to college, but during, such as having a gap year for substitute teaching); and possible summer programming to assist student who may need/want a longer runway to enter college. After this discussion, we decided that we had enough information to **recommend that we implement a math waiver** (when appropriate); we would like to use our next meeting to workshop how that could be operationalized. Melinda Wood will work with this group to workshop and then bring the ideas to her leadership team.

March 24, 2023

We tabled further discussions about the math waiver to allow Melinda time to work with her leadership team and gather feedback, and instead focused on data provided by Leslie Purtlebaugh on probation and suspension cases from spring 2019-spring 2022. AASC requested this data because we were noticing what appeared to be higher numbers of probation/suspension cases among first-year students and, as admissions and retention need to work together, we wanted to examine the data for trends. NB: We did so with an eye to the fact that COVID has certainly impacted the numbers, and we understood that it would be difficult to base any predictions on those years because of how COVID disrupted high school and early college life. Still, as we think about implementing a math waiver and bringing in new cohorts (and in light of the QEP), we wanted to see what kinds of data might assist us with retaining new admits.

April 28, 2023

This meeting focused on providing feedback on the Earned Admissions Pathway plan, and we were joined by Sarah MacDonald, Associate Dean, School of Professional and Continuing Education and Fletcher Linder, Dean of University Studies, and Associate Provost for Online Strategy, who provided context and rationale for the program.

May 17, 2023

At this final meeting of the spring term, Melinda Wood provided some feedback from her admissions team about the math waiver. At this time, there are still some issues with implementing and managing such a waiver, so the AASC talked through the feedback and offered possible alternative for addressing the issues with implementing a math waiver. Ultimately, the AASC would like to continue to investigate the current math requirement in the coming academic year, perhaps through data gathering (not only from incoming students who have received such exceptions for CVPA, but also from other Virginia schools who do not have a similar math requirement). The remainder of the meeting was focused on identifying goals for next year.

Future Work Planned:

At the May meeting, the committee talked through some goals for the next academic year. Rudy will review these goals and share them forward. We discussed the fact that the membership of the committee will be changing (Traci Zimmerman will be stepping off next year, as one example), but the group would like to revisit the membership question once the goals are set for the coming year.