

Academic Admissions Standards Committee (AASC)

Spring Report (May 2024)

Membership

Co-Chair(s):

- Rudy Molina (Vice Provost, Student Academic Success and Enrollment Management)
- Traci Zimmerman (Interim 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)/Karin Tollefson-Hall (alternate)
- Jeff Tang (Associate Dean, CISE)
- Molly Brown (Associate Dean, COB)/Sam Collier (alternate)
- Doug Hochstetler (Associate Dean, CHBS)
- Ravi Shankar (AUH, Mathematics and Statistics)
- Katie Dredger (AUH, Middle, Secondary, and Mathematics Education)

Charge:

- The JMU Academic Admissions Standards Committee will recommend 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 twice (in March and April) this semester. Representatives from AASC (the co-chairs and the AUH of Mathematics and Statistics) met with Cabinet in February to share out the work completed in the fall and to collect questions/feedback. In addition, the following meetings were held:

- Met with Communication and Marketing team (2/28) for introductory discussion RE: how to design a website using the Mathematics (Calc and Stats) table. In attendance: Andy Perrine, Traci Zimmerman, Rudy Molina, Ravi Shankar, Brian Walton, Melinda Wood. We have scheduled a follow-up meeting in June (6/18) to prototype.
- Met with Donna Harper (4/2) with Melinda Wood, Roger Burke, Ravi Shankar, Rudy Molina, and Traci Zimmerman; at this meeting, we achieved the following goals:
 - Discussed Questions (already shared with AASC; appended to this report)
 - Discussed and revised math requirement admission language (see below)

Revised Math Requirement Statement as of 4.2.24

JMU requires the successful completion of Algebra II to fulfill the mathematics requirement for admission. We recommend four years of high school mathematics. We highly recommend one year of mathematics for which Algebra II is a prerequisite for certain majors (*link to webpage that showcases math requirements for all majors*).

Suggested Change by AASC: For certain majors [insert link], we highly recommend one year of mathematics for which Algebra II is a prerequisite.

FINAL Revised Math Requirement Statement as of 4.23.24

JMU requires the successful completion of Algebra II to fulfill the mathematics requirement for admission. We recommend four years of high school mathematics. For certain majors [insert link], we highly recommend one year of mathematics for which Algebra II is a prerequisite.

Future Work Planned:

Action Items:

- Inquire about status of revised language with Cabinet.
- Design timeline and communication plan for sharing out new math requirement language.
- Design prototype website for Math requirements.

- Report back to AASC, AC, PLT, and Cabinet
- Remove older versions of the math placement handout sheets, currently hosted on the math department.
- Consider how best to provide preparatory course work using ALEKS modules

APPENDIX A: Follow up questions shared by Donna Harper via email (2/20/24) with AASC after presentation to Cabinet in February. (Excerpted)

Thank you for the committee's work over the past two years. The math criteria in the admissions process are important in preparing students for a variety of fields/careers as they consider their opportunities for their future. Below are considerations for the committee as we examine the math requirements for admission.

- The current description on the admissions website for mathematics outlines what is acceptable and what is not. There is concern about the "creativity" of high schools in the Commonwealth that add, revise, delete math courses where we have no input or influence. It is crucial we stay up to date on what is being offered and work with the guidance counselors so they understand what is needed for a student to be successful in any major at JMU. The Office of Admissions works with schools to understand the courses offered and adjusts as necessary for admission. Has the committee explored ways to stay current on high school curriculum requirements and adjust math readiness at JMU to ensure student success?
- The potential for students to stop taking math after their sophomore year may precipitate issues with their skill level/math retention when they enter the university. We are familiar with the loss of skill/information over the summer months. I am concerned about the difficulty students may have in the freshman math courses if there is a long gap with math. What support systems will be put in place to promote a student's success in math? Dr. Shankar indicated they already do not have enough math classes/professors. What would the plan look like for more students who may have to take the lower-level math classes to be successful? What impact will this have on their progression to graduation? How do we explain the purpose of the ALEKS assessment so that students understand that this is a tool to allow them to be successful in their math classes at JMU?
- I agree with my colleagues that the proposed statement is too vague and potentially confuses prospective students. I would ask the committee to review it again and I am happy to have my staff provide some direction if that would be helpful. In the current draft, I'm not sure prospective students will understand what we are actually looking for that will help them be successful at JMU. It is important to be clear.

- What steps would be put in place for students who change their major and then do not have the appropriate math? We know the statistics on students changing their major and Exploratory/Undeclared is the largest major coming into the university. How can we appropriately accommodate these student changes without extending the number of semesters for them to graduate?
- I would suggest we pilot any change in the math requirement for at least two years with critical assessment of the prospective student's math achievement/success as it prepares them for their major. What struggles are there if they have not had math for 2 years before coming to JMU? Are there enough classes for freshmen schedules to keep them on track for future courses/graduation? Are any changes needed to the general education requirements? What is the P/F rate for freshmen in math compared to previous years?
- It is acknowledged that there may be different math needed for different majors. This already takes place in the admissions process for those that have indicated a major. The chart that was shared showing the proposed math for specific majors would seem to be a valuable tool internally when advising students. However, we need to be aware of appearing to minimize math skills when there is current scrutiny about requirements for acceptance.

I would suggest we have the chairs of the Academic Admissions Standards Committee meet with representatives from Access and Enrollment Management to further discuss how we can work through what is best for our prospective students and the university.