MWC COC-SACS Alternative Self-Study

2000-2003

New Academic Programs Development Committee Report

New Academic Programs Development Committee Members:

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for the

SACS Re-Accreditation Self-Study

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Executive Summary

The New Programs Committee was given the charge of both recommending new undergraduate and graduate programs that were in keeping with the missions of the two campuses, and recommending the organizational entities (e.g., centers, schools, colleges) that would need to be created to deliver them. The committee began its work in September 2000, and over a two-year period it formulated research questions, determined the research model needed to answer these questions, and analyzed the data that was gathered. Areas of the research model that proved most informative to the committee included the study of analog schools, focus group sessions with business leaders, interviews with K-12 education leaders, a faculty survey, and a survey of prospective students. Information from these sources helped the committee develop a weighted matrix on programs for both campuses (attached) in such areas as student demand, faculty interest, need for additional faculty, and need for additional facilities and equipment; these weights helped prioritize recommended programs. The strongest response for new programs were additions recommended for the M.Ed. program. Most of the programs recommended by the committee are permanent concentrations/cores within existing degrees. Only one new degree program, a master's degree in Management Information Systems (MIS), is recommended without further study. All recommended programs are contingent upon funding.

The committee determined that some suggestions for programs were better additions to existing programs than new freestanding programs. These include comparative literature, creative writing, conservation of objects, historical archives, museum management, and statistics and applied mathematics. Courses in these areas should be considered as possible curriculum enrichment to the appropriate existing program, e.g., English, Historic Preservation, and Mathematics. The committee also determined that new graduate programs (e.g., MFA, MBA, master's programs in specific

academic disciplines) did not fit the mission of the Fredericksburg campus. Other suggested programs not recommended by the committee fall in the category of review at a later time. For example, the committee is aware of the aging population and suggests that programs in the future might respond to issues related to retirement and geriatrics.

Programs on both campuses will be delivered through multiple models, traditional and distance learning. Distance learning will play a significant role on the James Monroe campus, but there will also be increased interest and use of it on the Fredericksburg campus. Student surveys offer strong support for on-line courses on both campuses. The committee recommends a model for the delivery of courses through distance learning. The infrastructure to support learning technologies—chat rooms, threaded discussions, streaming video/audio, simulations, laboratories—must be planned and continually developed. The model provided by the committee defines levels of electronic distributed distance learning and the support needed to implement each level. The extent that distance learning is utilized should be determined by the nature of the specific program (e.g., information security courses are totally on-line.) A defining element of this institution is a rich interaction with students. This must be safeguarded with any use of distance learning.

The committee was also charged with recommending the organizational entities needed to deliver programs. For immediate implementation, the committee recommends that the chief information officer (CIO) administer distance-learning programs and courses with the assistance of a distance learning council comprised of representatives from both campuses. When the college becomes a university, the committee recommends a provost to oversee the programs of both campuses. The committee further recommends a university council, with membership from both campuses, to consult on strategic and planning issues. This council will not be a governance body. The committee strongly recommends that governance, including approving new programs and courses, remain autonomous on each campus. The committee recommends the creation of three schools, in business, education, and technology, to be located on the James Monroe campus. The department structure on the Fredericksburg campus remains an appropriate means of implementing academic programs on that campus.

New Programs for the Mary Washington College Campus

Recommendation: The committee recommends that a freestanding major (in place of the current "concentration") in Anthropology be established within the first five years.

Recommendation: The committee recommends that a faculty committee study the establishment of programs in Regional Studies (which may include African, Asian, Latin American, and Middle Eastern Studies) and Interdisciplinary Studies (which may include Women's, Gender, African-American, and Southern Studies) within the first five years. The faculty committee should decide which programs the Fredericksburg campus should devise based on existing faculty expertise and interest. These programs could be implemented as a department or an interdisciplinary program; the committee recommends the latter. The committee further recommends that the faculty committee, in the first five years, look into establishing a Center to coordinate these programs.

Recommendation: The committee recommends that mass communications (with an emphasis on journalism) **be studied** for addition as a major within the first five years.

Recommendation: The committee recommends that the **faculty study** the possibility of adding the Bachelor of Fine Arts degree. The BFA degree requires more courses in the major than are allowed under current guidelines.

New Programs for the James Monroe Center Campus

Undergraduate Programs

Recommendation: The committee recommends that e-commerce become a major in the Bachelor of Professional Studies within the first five years. (E-commerce will become a BPS major in fall of 2002.)

Recommendation: The committee recommends that a human resources management concentration be added to the BPS program within the first five years.

Recommendation: The committee recommends, in the first five years, that a travel and tourism special topics course be offered in the BPS program as one means to establish the demand for a program in travel and tourism.

Recommendation: Although interest was expressed in a baccalaureate-level health services management program, experience shows that this program is better served at the graduate level as a concentration within the MBA.

Recommendation: Nursing attracted interest on prospective student surveys, but such a program is not feasible within the first five years. The committee recommends that a study group, including representatives from Germanna Community College and Mary Washington Hospital, be convened to explore the possibility of partnerships and the feasibility of a nursing program.

Recommendation: Regional interest has been expressed in an engineering program. The committee recommends that any engineering program offered be through a partnership only. The committee recommends a brokered program.

Graduate Programs

Recommendation: The committee recommends that an instructional technology core be added to the M.Ed. program within the first five years.

Recommendation: The committee recommends that a library media core be added to the M.Ed. program within the first five years.

Recommendation: The committee recommends that accounting be a concentration in the MBA within the first five years. (Accounting is scheduled to become a concentration in the MBA in fall 2003.)

Recommendation: The committee recommends that a new degree in management information systems (MIS) be added to the JMC programs within the first five years. This new degree might share courses with the MBA program and proposed new instructional technology core of the M.Ed. program.

Recommendation: The committee recommends that an e-commerce concentration be added to the MBA or new MIS degree in the first five years.

Recommendation: The committee recommends that public administration be **studied** as an added track in the MBA program in the first five years, possibly as a partnership with Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University.

Recommendation: The committee recommends that health services management be **studied** as a concentration in the MBA in the first five years.

Recommendation: There is clearly a demand for an engineering program. The committee recommends that engineering and engineering management programs be pursued as partnership-only, brokered programs with universities that currently have such programs (Virginia Tech, Old Dominion University, the University of Virginia, Virginia Commonwealth University).

Recommendation: The committee recommends that a school counselor core be studied for addition to the M.Ed. program during the second five years.

Recommendation: The committee recommends that a reading specialist core be studied for addition to the M.Ed. program during the second five years.

Recommendation: The committee recommends further study of a psychological counseling program for possible implementation the second five years.

Recommendation: During the next period of self-study (2013), the feasibility of adding doctoral programs should be studied. This will require approval of the General Assembly, and the new university may not have the required resources in place. However, the suggestion that we add doctoral programs is frequently made, and it warrants study in the future. Perhaps brokered programs developed in partnership with other Virginia Institutions could offset this developing demand.

Certificate and Non-Degree Programs

Recommendation: The committee recommends that JMC continue what it is currently doing in the area of certificate programs: add them as needed, for credit or non-credit, and customize them to meet the needs of the area served.

Recommendation: The committee recommends a stand-alone certificate in Geographic Information Systems during the first five years.

Recommendation: The committee recommends that training programs for teachers in some areas of Vocational-Technical **education be studied** for possible addition the second five years. If such training is deemed feasible, it should be done utilizing a school system's Vo-tech center and as non-degree offerings.

Rationale for Recommended Programs: The committee formulated weighted matrices for suggested programs for both campuses (attached). Each potential program for the Fredericksburg campus was evaluated on the following criteria: student demand, faculty interest, complementary or new program, need for additional faculty, need for additional facilities and equipment, and analogs. Each potential program for the James Monroe campus was evaluated on the following criteria: economic development demand, student demand, faculty interest, business interest, complementary or new program, need for

additional faculty, need for additional facilities and equipment, competition in the region, and analogs. The committee rated each prospective program based on the findings and data from the following research sources: survey of faculty from both campuses, survey of students from both campuses, survey of prospective JMC students, business leaders focus groups, a study of analog schools, and interviews with K-12 school leaders. The committee assigned a rating to each category for each program, and a priority number was derived (the higher the number, the higher the priority). These priority numbers guided the committee's program recommendations.

Delivery of Programs through Distance Learning

Recommendation: The committee recommends the immediate adoption of the following distance learning model. Any program proposed by the New Programs Committee can use distance learning, as can existing programs. Some courses may have a distance-learning component, while others may lend themselves to being taught entirely by means of distance learning. The emerging paradigm points towards multiple models. Many courses will continue to be taught in a traditional setting, others will be taught with a mixture of traditional and distance learning, and some will be taught entirely using distance learning. The important point is not the paradigm selected, but the support needed for the level of distance learning used in any course. (See Best Educational E-Practices (BEEP), Quality Assurance and Evaluation in E-Learning, <www.spjc.edu/eagle/BEEP/BEEP3.htm>; Embry-Riddle, Distance Learning Policies & Guidelines, <www.edtech.erau.edu/references/refs/policies.html>.)

Table 1 defines the possible levels of distance learning that can be used in a course.
Table 2 defines the support needed for each level of distance learning outlined in Table 1.

Table 1- Levels of Distance Learning

Level I – Electronic Correspondence – used to provide course support and reference material through one or more of the following:
  1. Static online syllabus + email
  2. Dynamic online syllabus + links to online class materials, assignments, quizzes, tests
  3. Links to additional sites to
     ○ expand knowledge base,
     ○ access most recent publications and
     ○ increase use of web for research.

Level II – Electronic Collaboration (Level I + a subset of the following) -provide conversational collaborative learning for students through
  1. Online forums/discussion groups
  2. Chat
  3. Bulletin boards
  4. Listservs
  5. Instant messaging
  6. File transfers
  7. Newsgroups
  8. Provide audio collaboration through
     ○ Audio files (streaming/download) – 1 way communication
     ○ Real-time audio transfer – synchronous and two-way.
  9. Provide audio/video collaboration through
     ○ Video files (streaming/download) – 1 way communication
     ○ Real-time video transfer – synchronous, one or two-way.

Level III – Electronic Enhanced Interactive Learning = Level II +
  1. Provide interactive content delivered over an electronic medium such as the Web or CD-ROM, usually in asynchronous mode. Content should meet the following criteria.
     ○ Designed to meet specific course objectives and should contain performance assessment, immediate feedback mechanisms and subject reinforcement content.
     ○ Used to create hybrid or blended courses.
     ○ Created to enrich traditional classroom experience.

Level IV- Distributed Electronic Managed Learning = Level III +   1. Course uses some type of Learning Content Management System (LCMS) to build course content, tests, feedback forms and performance analysis tools to collect, analyze and report student results to central repositories.
Level V – Electronic Distributed Delivered Learning = Level IV +   1. Design and develop reusable learning objects with languages such as XML and Cold Fusion. Reusable learning objects store pieces of learning material in small blocks such that blocks can be linked together in a variety of ways and used in different courses to satisfy numerous audiences, learning objectives and performance levels.

Recommendation: The committee recommends that the institution be able to support Level 5 by the end of the first five years. Table 2 provides the support needed for each level defined in Table 1.

Table 2- Support for Levels of Distance Learning

Level I

1. Web server and email server,
2. Network and technical support to maintain both servers,
3. Help desk support to answers faculty and students' questions,
4. Training for faculty to develop web pages.

Level II (everything for Level I) +

1. The following capabilities can be supported with a product such as Blackboard:
   o online forums/discussion groups
   o chat
   o bulletin boards
   o listservs
   o instant messaging
   o file transfers
2. Audio and Video communication/collaboration could be provided by products such as:
   o NetMeeting
   o Horizon Live
3. Network support is needed to maintain hardware/software associated with a product such as Blackboard.
4. Technical support 24/7 is necessary at this point. Many of these capabilities are taking the place of contact time in the classroom. When this occurs, it is absolutely necessary that these components are available to the students and faculty. If not, accreditation contact time requirements are not being met.
5. Help desk support becomes critical at this level. Many of these capabilities are imperative for meeting course objectives. If faculty and students cannot participate due to computer problems, it inhibits the learning process, produces frustration for students and faculty, and creates accreditation issues. If students cannot access the distance learning components, the contact time requirements are not being met.
6. This is the level where the access times will deviate from traditional classroom because these capabilities lend themselves to asynchronous learning. Students will be accessing the server(s) at virtually all days and times. Therefore, the technical and help desk support becomes crucial in meeting accreditation requirements.

Level III (everything for Level II) +

1. To support performance assessment, immediate feedback mechanisms and subject reinforcement content, a course management tool is needed that supports each of these features and contains the security needed to protect the privacy of student grades.
2. To support interactive content delivered over an electronic medium such as the Web or CD-ROM, the College needs:
   o Software that can produce interactive content
   o Web server support that can deliver interactive content
   o Security checks in place to ensure the privacy of access to the content
3. Faculty support and training is needed to help produce all of the items mentioned in this level.
4. An instructional designer is needed to design interactive content. The design and delivery of this content is very different from traditional content delivery.
5. Faculty compensation and content ownership issues need to be addressed at this level

Level IV (everything for Level III) +

1. The purchase of a Learning Content Management System (LCMS) is needed to support the features at this level.
2. Network, technical, help desk and training support and upgrades as needed for faculty and staff to use an LCMS.
3. Further security features need to be addressed since this involves keeping data repositories of student information in a web environment.

Level V (everything for Level IV) +

1. Level V requires additional staff to produce and maintain reusable learning modules. The staff needs to be proficient in programming with Cold Fusion and database management.
2. The additional staff would work closely with faculty in the production of the learning modules.

The administration for distance learning curriculum needs to be separate from the administration of traditional classroom curriculum because of the technology issues involved in this area of academics. These issues include faculty training, faculty compensation, content ownership, delivery medium, and adequate support. In addition, the distance learning administration needs to address the policies and issues underscored in the following recommendations of the committee as soon as possible in the first five years:

Recommendation: The committee recommends that the institution provide a network infrastructure that allows all distance learning students and faculty access at any time (24/7) and to any server providing distance learning components. This is in addition to normal traffic such as WWW and email performed by the entire College community and visitors.

Recommendation: The committee recommends that the institution provide appropriate library resources to distance learning students and faculty in order to meet SACS requirements. (See Association of College and Research Libraries, Guidelines for Distance Learning Library Services, <www.ala.org/acrl/guides/distlrng.html>.)

Recommendation: The committee recommends that the institution provide appropriate student support resources to distance learning students in order to meet SACS requirements. (See Florida Gulf Coast University, <itech.fgcu.edu/distance/>.)

These distance-learning issues need to be addressed as soon as possible. This is a rapidly developing area, especially on the James Monroe campus. There is currently no clear policy on distance learning in place, nor is there coordination and knowledge of what support exists.

<u>Organizational Entities to Deliver Programs</u>

Recommendation: Because of the differences between traditional course delivery and distance learning, someone with technology and distance learning expertise needs to administer the distance learning programs and courses on both campuses. The committee recommends that the Chief Information Officer (CIO) be this administrator. The CIO should form a Distance Learning Council comprised of faculty and appropriate administrative support personnel from both campuses. This should be done as soon as possible.

Recommendation: The committee recommends that the Chief Information Officer and Distance Learning Council set policies and oversee issues associated with distance learning, e.g., accreditation, faculty compensation, ownership, and delivery medium.

Recommendation: The committee strongly recommends that governance remain autonomous on each campus. This includes the autonomous function of the two campuses in approving new programs/courses.

Recommendation: The committee recommends a chief academic officer, or provost, to oversee the programs of both campuses. The provost will coordinate the efforts of the deans on each campus.

Recommendation: The committee recommends a university council comprised of staff and faculty from both campuses. This council will consider strategic issues only and will provide "connective tissue" between the two campuses; it will not be a governance body. Staff and faculty from the two campuses will serve on the council either because of the nature of their job or because they were chosen by Faculty Senate or Academic Council.

Recommendation: The structure of two education programs and two business programs spanning both campuses requires a coordinating arm for these programs. We recommend establishing a school of business and a school of education, but autonomy of governance

for the programs on the two campuses must be maintained. We also recommend a school of technology. Because of the unrestricted mission of JMC to add graduate programs and programs that serve the locality, the deans of these three schools should be housed on the JMC campus.

Although the faculty survey and focus group sessions with administrators provided useful information on this matter, the committee was most persuaded by two analogs, Hameline University and Johns Hopkins University. Hameline has done almost exactly what MWC is trying to do. Historically it was an undergraduate liberal arts college; then they created a law school and a continuing studies program. When a graduate school was formally launched, the undergraduate and graduate entities became independent in all academic and policy matters. Now there are two graduate schools, the law school, and a MALS program. Hameline has a University Council that looks at strategic issues and is consulted about planning; it does not vote on policy or approve academic programs. The school deans all report to a provost. Johns Hopkins has a School of Professional Studies in Business and Education (among other schools) that was formerly the School of Continuing Studies. There is Council of Deans reporting to the Provost. Both universities offer a strong case for maintaining the autonomy of the separate entities.

Supporting Documentation

The research model used by the committee included: looking at existing models (institutions) and interviewing analog schools, focus group sessions with business leaders, interviews with K-12 education leaders, a survey of faculty on both campuses, a survey of students on both campuses, a survey of prospective students, and focus group sessions with administrators. The texts of these research instruments and the data collected by them can be found in Appendix 10.