

To: UAF Core Mathematics instructors

From: John Rhodes, Chair, DMS

Cc: Paul Layer, Dean, CNSM
Susan Henrichs, Provost
Pete Pinney, Vice Chancellor, CRCD

Date: July 15, 2014

Re: Mathematics Core Courses and Assessment procedures

As part of UAF's larger assessment process, all core mathematics courses (Math 103, 107, 161, 200, 201, 202, 262, 272; Stat 200) are required to be assessed regularly. This includes not only DMS offerings of these courses on the UAF campus, but also those given in cooperation with E-learning, and all units of CRCD.

While our past assessment procedures have been informative, they did not enable us to effectively communicate to instructors what changes are needed to strengthen student learning outcomes. Obtaining the course materials needed for assessment from instructors outside of DMS has also been a continuing difficulty.

To address these issues, the Mathematics Core Assessment Committee is changing its procedures, and has asked me to communicate them to all relevant instructors. Assessment is mandated by UAF, and we therefore need all instructors to assist us. DMS approval to teach these courses in the future will be contingent on your help.

Effective Fall 2014,

1. Core course syllabi must follow the requirements posted on the web at <http://www.uaf.edu/dms/core/>. In addition to topics to be taught, these now include other specific directions on how courses must be structured (e.g., ranges for weighting of exams, human-graded homework, and on-line homework; textbooks; etc.). Please read these carefully and modify your syllabi if necessary.

For some courses, annotated examples of final exam questions are given so that instructors can better understand what is needed to assess student learning outcomes.

2. Your core course syllabi must be sent to kagustafson@alaska.edu **no later than the student drop date of the current semester** (Sept. 19 for Fall 2014). For DMS faculty, this is in addition to the syllabus you give us for departmental files.
3. A blank copy of your final exam must be sent to kagustafson@alaska.edu **no later than the student drop date of the following regular semester**, i.e., for Fall courses, during Spring; for Spring and Summer courses, during Fall (Jan. 30,

2015 for Fall 2014). For DMS faculty, this is in addition to the copy submitted for departmental files.

4. All instructors outside of DMS, and all DMS adjuncts must send copies or originals of all graded final exams to DMS **no later than the student drop date of the following regular semester** (Jan. 30, 2015 for Fall 2014). Electronic copies can be sent to kagustafson@alaska.edu, or paper copies sent to the department office. Full-time DMS faculty must retain exams in their offices for at least 2 years, until the exams are requested by the Assessment Committee.

The new course syllabi at <http://www.uaf.edu/dms/core/> are based on the Assessment Committee's review of previous offerings, and will allow you some freedom in structuring your course. You should read them carefully, however, to be sure you are in compliance with them for Fall 2014 and beyond.

Your future syllabi and blank exams will be reviewed as the Assessment Committee receives them. We will communicate to you about any issues we see with them soon after. Obviously, syllabi cannot be changed while a course is underway, but problems we point out must be addressed by the next offering.

The department will archive your graded final exams for later use in a more detailed assessment. Information from that will be communicated back to you so that you may improve your courses, and will guide us in adjusting syllabi.

We appreciate your work in making these courses available to UAF students wherever they are. But since the geographic and departmental spread of those teaching these courses is wide, instructors do not all have the daily interactions that would promote a common understanding of what a course should accomplish. We hope you will view the new process as one that will promote the collaborative improvement of student outcomes, both in your courses and in subsequent ones.

If you have any questions, you may direct them to me (j.rhodes@alaska.edu), and I will pass them on to the Assessment Committee.