

## **Summary of the Actions of the Student Academic Development and Achievement Committee (SADA)**

For AY 15

The SADA Committee addressed the following items during the 2014-15 academic year:

### **Course approvals:**

We approved DEVM 069 and 109, Modular Mastery Math. These courses are taught in 1-credit modules and allow a student to enter at the module level that represents the level of knowledge a student has then progress through the modules throughout the semester. This course provides a more flexible model for students to develop mastery in math skills.

We anticipated doing course approvals for DEVM classes following statewide alignment of DEVM classes; however, these were minor course changes and did not need committee approval.

### **Learning Commons:**

While we had made some progress on this project last year and had a committee member interested in developing a virtual Learning Commons through a UAF-wide website, that committee member had to leave SADA when his job was transferred to another part of the university, so the website did not happen. The Learning Commons project has resulted in more study rooms in the 3rd floor of the Library and the establishment of a Developmental Reading and Writing Lab in 407 Rasmuson (next to the Kayak Room). We may pick up this project again as space becomes available in the library.

### **Follow-up on 2014 placement changes:**

Fall 2014 marked the first semester for placement changes in Math/DEVM and English/DEVE courses. We monitored how these changes were impacting students throughout the year with updates from Math/DEVM and English/DEVE faculty, advisors, and the registrar.

Math faculty reported that the switch to ALEKS placement was positive and they were working on improving the process, including when the test is administered to HS students. They note that, since UAF is the only university in the UA system to move to ALEKS for placement,

### **BOR request for statewide alignment:**

Several committee members were involved in work on the Math, English, and GER alignment process, and discussion of this, particularly as it impacted developmental, rural, and entering students took up much of our time this year. The committee gave feedback to those on the various alignment committees and proved a good sounding board for ideas coming from and going to the alignment committees.

### **Regional Educational Labs Northwest:**

In lieu of our November meeting, SADA members attended a meeting with researchers from REL Northwest, who were doing a statewide study on placement and developmental education UA-wide. While their data suggested that placement based on a combination of HS GPA and Accuplacer scores was the best predictor of student success, we noted several assumptions in their study and data that needed to be clarified. For example, the data only looks at recently graduated HS students; however, 70% of developmental students are not recent HS grads, so HS GPA may not be an effective placement tool for these students. We also noted that the study only included students intending to get a bachelor's degree; however, many students in developmental classes are AA, AAS, and certificate students, or are Non-degree-seeking. We also questioned why, with all the data gathering being done in our departments, outside researchers were hired to do this project.

**Student Persistence/Resilience Study:**

We took up a project that has long been on the back burner for this committee, a study that gets at what happens to students who stop coming to classes or who don't do well. We noted that, when students don't do well, it's often not about ability or preparation, but about external factors. We discussed a survey using Survey Monkey that targets students in academic difficulty, such as being on probation or disqualification. We agreed to ask Sine Anahita for help with this, remembering her work on the Work/Life survey for the CSW. Sine agreed to work with us on this and met with the committee in March to develop a plan. We agreed to see what data already exists on this topic and start with that. We also agreed that rural and distance students should be included. Sine noted that surveys often have a low response rate and suggested focus groups and face-to-face interviews. We established a subcommittee to work with Sine on developing a plan. This will be on our agenda for fall and we hope to conduct the "survey" during the Spring semester.

**Collaboration with CAC:**

Currently the chair of SADA sits as an ex-officio member of CAC, and brings items of overlapping interest to SADA, especially those that impact entering students and developmental students. During the year, we took up several issues from CAC, including giving input on statewide alignment and the GERC process. We discussed the motion to clarify the DF policy and heard from Jak Maier, chair of the CRCD Academic Council on the use of the DF grade by CRCD faculty. We gave CAC our input on the motion they brought forward.

We also took up the question of the minimum grade for Certificate and AAS degrees, which was not addressed in the motion that established C- as the minimum grade for core and major courses. After much discussion with both Jak Maier and Libby Eddy and Holly Sherouse (registrars), we concluded that the omission of the C- from this part of the catalog was an oversight and could be corrected in the catalog without a motion. Jak reported that CRCD faculty and advisors were operating under the assumption that the C- was in effect for their programs all along.

**Committee definition:**

We discussed this early in the Fall and then again when the motion to adopt all Senate committee definitions in the Handbook came to us. This gave us the opportunity to refine the definition of the work of the committee and its members and procedures.

**Items for Fall 2015:**

Continuing work on the Student Persistence/Resilience study.  
Developmental course approvals resulting from changes coming out of statewide alignment.  
Continued tracking of placement effectiveness.

**Ex-officio gratitude:**

We have benefitted greatly this year from our ex-officio members, Alex Fitts and Libby Eddy. Thank you!