AAC&U Quality Collaboratives Project
Project Proposal

Proposed Quality Collaborative

Blue Ridge Community College
Team Members:
Campus Leader: Bob Young, Vice President for Instruction and Student Services
Assessment Leader: Susan Crosby, Coordinator Institutional Research and Effectiveness
Faculty leader: Lynne Ryan, Coordinator Associate Degree Transfer Program, Assistant Professor, Mathematics;

James Madison University
Team members:
Campus Leader: Linda Cabe Halpern, Dean University Studies
Assessment Leader: Donna Sundre, Director Center for Assessment & Research Studies
Faculty Leader: Carol Hurney, Associate Professor of Biology, Director Center for Faculty Innovation (CFI)

Endorsement of the Academic Leadership at Both Institutions:

_____________________________
John Downey, Ed. D.
President, Blue Ridge Community College

_____________________________
A. Jerry Benson, Ph. D.
Interim Provost and Senior Vice President
Academic Affairs
James Madison University

Established and Effective Working Relationship between the Two Institutions:
Blue Ridge Community College (BRCC) and James Madison University (JMU) have a long standing partnership spanning many years and several established projects. For example, we have

- A long standing articulation agreement for acceptance of transfers and general education certificate holders.
- An established advising partnership: JMU advisor, Kate McDaniel, regularly travels to BRCC to advise students on JMU transfer. She has a dedicated office, with scheduled hours, at BRCC.
- In 2000 the Presidents of Blue Ridge Community College and James Madison University signed a Guaranteed Admissions Agreement (GAA) for Associate of Arts and Sciences for admissions to JMU. In 2010 this agreement was updated to include the Associate of Science degree.
• Existing NSF *Bridging the Valley* grant through which BRCC, JMU, Eastern Mennonite College, and Bridgewater College collaborate to increase the number of STEM graduates at each institution. Project is already producing higher STEM retention at JMU. This partnership is also improving upon existing infrastructure by which Degree Profiles can further be delineated, defined, and assessed to distinguish among post secondary stages of education—associate, bachelors, masters, etc.

• In 2003-2006, JMU and BRCC partnered on a Virginia Department of Education, American Association of Colleges for Teacher Education, and the Council for Basic Education collaborative Standards-based Teacher Education Project (STEP) grant to develop admissions requirements, subject matter preparation in general education and content majors, subject matter teaching methodology, and candidates’ ability to improve P-12 student learning. Dr. Linda Bradley led the project.

**Tentative Description of Likely DP/LEAP Outcomes to be Assessed and Methodologies Considered**

On a macro level JMU and Blue Ridge are interested in increasing the number and exploring more fully the success of BRCC students who transfer into two educational areas of need at JMU: teacher education/Interdisciplinary Liberal Studies (IDLS) and selected STEM majors. An important detail to this end is exploring how compatible the BRCC’s transfer students’ skills and knowledge are to their non-transfer JMU counterparts. The idea is that we (JMU and BRCC) want all students in these tracks to have the requisite knowledge and skills to be successful professionals in these fields. Given that both institutions use the same assessment instruments for assessing Quantitative (QR) and Scientific Reasoning (SR), we are in a unique position to explore this transfer of education from one institution to another.

In addition, JMU is quite familiar with the AAC&U Degree Qualifications Profile (DP). We are currently conducting an Academic Program Review of JMU’s General Education program, and as a part of this self-study, we mapped JMU’s general education goals to the AAC&U Associate of Arts DPs and to the LEAP Essential Learning Outcomes. We were pleased to see strong alignment across the matrix. We have attached this matrix as Appendix A.

We have selected a few professional programs of mutual interest to our institutions and society:

• Teacher Education is the most popular BRCC transfer major. This is an important area of study for BRCC, JMU and society. We hope to build on the JMU College of Education TK20 database to review student success after transfer. We may be able to employ methodologies currently in place across the many Teacher Education pathways through use of this customized technology. Dr. Amy Thelk, Director of Assessment and Accreditation for JMU’s College of Education, has offered her support for this project.

• An exciting opportunity afforded by this project is the notion of not only selecting our most popular transfer major, Teacher Education, but selecting an academic area that is also a target for growth in the Commonwealth and one where we have programs that could accommodate some growth, i.e., Integrated Science and Technology (ISAT), Computer Science (CS) and Engineering (ENGR). These are core targets for building our transfer numbers. We see great synergistic opportunities for both of our institutions to make great strides in these important areas. BRCC has just instituted an Associate of Science degree. They also have Mechanical Engineering Technology and Manufacturing Engineering degrees and graduates that valley employers are seeking. All of these majors are important for our society.
We believe that Quantitative Reasoning (QR) and Scientific Reasoning (SR) would be ideal competencies to assess toward fulfillment of transfer student success, particularly in the selected professional programs. We see these as integral to success in any career. This is an optimal choice, since the Virginia Community College System (VCCS) has already endorsed and uses JMU Madison Assessment QR and SR measures as their core competency assessment method. Since JMU also employs both the QR and SR instruments to assess entering first-year students and sophomore-junior level students, we have proof of concept in place and can build on existing partnerships and assessment practices on both campuses.

VCCS Representatives, including BRCC faculty, gathered on the JMU campus last spring and participated in a Scientific Reasoning standard setting activity. We now have a VCCS set expectation for community college student performance on the SR. This provides us with an existing benchmark by which to evaluate and interpret student performances.

JMU has also established a community expectation for JMU student performances on both the QR and the SR tests. We have used these benchmarks for our ongoing assessment results for several years. They will prove useful as we attempt to delineate differences in Degree Qualification Profiles for different academic levels—associate of arts, baccalaureate, etc.

Other Relevant Information about Proposed QC Partnership and Capacity to Fulfill Project Goals

- We plan to build upon the existing State Council of Higher Education for Virginia (SCHEV) Core Competency assessment model
  - BRCC gathers assessment data on an annual basis; JMU gathers assessment data twice each year: QR and SR data are systematically gathered. We hope to bolster QR and SR assessments on both campuses for this project.
- JMU has regularly observed student learning gains on both QR and SR over time and with increases in relevant course experiences; however, we have noted that credit hours emanating from transfer and dual enrollment do not contribute to gains. This is an important issue that this project can help us to investigate. We hope to show gains with our transfer students in both QR and SR.
- JMU’s Center for Assessment & Research Studies (CARS; see http://www.jmu.edu/assessment/) is nationally recognized for excellence in assessment practice in general education, academic majors, and student affairs.
- BRCC also has an articulation agreement with JMU for Engineering. Successful recruiting will require broader outreach. We believe there is considerable potential, but a more systematic approach will be required. This project presents a welcome opportunity to propose a stronger and sustainable approach.
- We believe that the existing JMU-BRCC articulation and Guaranteed Admissions Agreements provide excellent policy review opportunities for both of our institutions and the Commonwealth of Virginia.
- JMU’s Center for Faculty Innovation (CFI; see http://www.jmu.edu/cfi/) has an excellent reputation for providing outstanding faculty development workshops and activities. Dr. Carol Hurney, CFI Director has agreed to serve as JMU’s faculty team leader. CFI’s involvement will bolster migration of DP and Lumina outcomes across these programs and beyond.
- BRCC and JMU enjoy strong success in graduation of transfers. We hope to expand the transfer numbers as well as their graduation success rates. Appendix B provides a brief history of BRCC transfer graduation rates across all majors.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>LEAP Essential Learning Outcomes</th>
<th>General Education: Description and/or Learning Objective</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Knowledge of Human Cultures and the Physical and Natural World</td>
<td>To introduce students to cultural, historical, aesthetic, and theoretical expressions of and questions about human experience (C2).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To develop responsible and enlightened global citizenship by examining a wide variety of the processes that shape the human experience (C4).</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intellectual and Practical Skills</td>
<td>Demonstrate the ability to identify, analyze and generate claims, arguments, and positions (C1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personal and Social Responsibility</td>
<td>Understand the relationship between personal behaviors and lifelong health and wellness (C5).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Integrative Learning</td>
<td>Use theories and models as unifying principles that help us understand natural phenomena and make predictions (C3).</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Lumina Areas of Learning

| Specialized Knowledge | Develop and support a relevant and informed thesis, or point of view, that is appropriate for its audience, purpose, and occasion (C1). |
| Broad Integrative Knowledge | Articulate a variety of examples of the ways in which literature gives us access to the human experience that reveals what differentiates it from, and connects it to, the other disciplines that make up the arc of human learning (C2). |
| Intellectual Skills | Identify, conceptualize and evaluate different theoretical models used in studying global problems (C4). |
| Applied Learning | Formulate hypotheses, identify relevant variables, and design experiments to test hypotheses (C3). |
| Civic Learning | Identify factors that lead an individual or group to adopt a particular position on social and behavioral issues (C5). |
Appendix B. BRCC Transfer Graduation Rates*

THE ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE OF BRCC TRANSFERS, 2006-07, 2007-08 STUDY

In many ways the ultimate measure of transfer success is graduation from the four-year institutions. Table 11 shows the number and percentage of BRCC transfers from 2000-01 to 2005-06 who graduated from James Madison University by August 2009. Only JMU provides data that can be used to determine whether the transfers graduated. Seventy-six percent of BRCC transfers who took 30 or more credits at BRCC graduated from JMU within four years. Eighty-four percent of the transfers who took less than 30 credits at BRCC graduated within four years. More than 90 percent of JMU native students who reach their junior year graduate within six years of matriculating at JMU. Approximately 85 percent of JMU native students who reach their sophomore year graduate within six years of matriculating.

Graduation Rates, BRCC Transfers To JMU, 2000-01 to 2005-06

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Credit Hours Transferred &gt;=30</th>
<th>Credit Hours Transferred &lt;30</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Headcount</td>
<td>Graduated</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2000-01</td>
<td>77</td>
<td>55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2001-02</td>
<td>109</td>
<td>86</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2002-03</td>
<td>112</td>
<td>83</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2003-04</td>
<td>97</td>
<td>77</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2004-05</td>
<td>128</td>
<td>95</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2005-06</td>
<td>132</td>
<td>99</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>655</td>
<td>495</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* The Academic Performance of Transfers From Blue Ridge Community College at James Madison University 1992-93 to 2007-08; Conducted by: Frank J. Doherty, Ph.D., February 2010