



College of Letters and Science
Office of the Dean

MEMORANDUM

TO: Dev Venugopalan, Associate Vice Chancellor

FROM: Charles Schuster, Chair, VSA subcommittee
Cindy Walker, Tom Walker, Gesele Durham, Committee Members

Date: August 15, 2008

Re: Recommendation to adopt one-year trial of CAP

As you know, in November 2007 UW System decided to participate in the Voluntary System of Accountability (VSA), which is a national program that is intended to provide an analysis of student learning by comparing the academic skills and knowledge of freshman and of seniors at institutions of higher education. Our subcommittee (Cindy Walker, Tom Walker, Gesele Durham, and me) examined the three assessment tools from which we have to choose: the Collegiate Assessment of Academic Proficiency (CAAP), the Collegiate Learning Assessment (CLA), and the Measure of Academic Proficiency and Progress (MAPP). After considerable discussion and research into the efficacy, advantages, and disadvantages of these three assessment products, our recommendation is that UWM proceed with a one-year trial of the CAAP. We think the CAAP makes sense for several reasons. It is administered by ACT, and that means we can compare the scores of seniors who take the CAAP with freshman who have already reported their ACT scores. This obviates the need to assess the freshmen separately and will thus make it both easier and more economical to report on student learning. We also think the CAAP test will provide useful information concerning UWM student learning especially as such learning relates to our General Education requirements, since the CAAP tests general academic skills that might be expected of a typical college graduate.

We are aware that two major challenges we face are finding similar freshman/senior cohorts so that a meaningful comparison of data can be achieved, and motivating seniors to perform at peak levels on the CAAP. We will continue discussions about both those challenges.

Please let our faculty and staff know that for further information about the CAAP, they can go to the ACT website: <http://www.act.org/caap/>.