

# Academic Admissions Standards Committee (AASC) Midyear Report (December 2022)

## Membership

### Co-Chair(s):

Rudy Molina (Vice Provost, Student Academic Success and Enrollment Management)  
Traci Zimmerman (Associate Dean, CAL)

### Members:

Audrey Burnett (Associate Dean, University Studies)  
Katherine Ott Walter (Faculty Senate representative for fall 2022); Dave McGraw will return as Faculty Senate Representative for spring 2023  
Melinda Wood (AVP, Access and Enrollment Management; Director of Admissions)  
Wren Stevens (Associate Dean, CVPA)  
Jeff Tang (Associate Dean, CISE)  
Molly Brown (Associate Dean, COB)  
Doug Hochstetler (Associate Dean, CHBS)  
Ravi Shankar (AUH, Math and Statistics) – *new member beginning this term*  
Katie Dredger (AUH, Middle, Secondary, and Mathematics Education)

## Charge:

- The JMU Academic Admissions Standards Committee will recommend initiatives to align admissions and execution of instruction with the strategic goals of the Academic Affairs division.
- Our core principle: Admission standards to academic programs, like the execution of instruction, should be determined by the Division of Academic Affairs.

## Objectives:

The success of this committee's effort will be measured by the formulation of inclusive admissions criteria with periodic updates, the creation of an effective, transparent admissions decision process, and the analysis and documentation of the following objectives:

- Standards: Investigate individual program admissions, progression and graduation standards
- Trends: Identify and recommend academic areas with the greatest potential for growth
- Resources: Identify the needs and considerations for resources such as space, funding, personnel, materials, technology requirements, and others to meet evolving enrollment demands
- Capacity: Examine university infrastructure and create a clear metric that ensures adequate capacity for academic programs

### Summary of Current Semester Activity:

- Met with Deans in small groups to talk about progress and created a report that essentialized those discussions (see Appendix I)
- Met with PLT and AC to discuss feedback from Deans and to greenlight the future work planned

### Future Work Planned:

- We will liaise with Libraries since this work has significant resource implications (support for new programs, support for academic infrastructure) so they need to be on the front-end of these conversations.
- We will also liaise with SPCE as they admit students through the Adult Degree Program.
- We will work with the Exploratory Pathways group to examine connections between their work and ours.
- We will examine data across several areas:
  - Who are our “new” applicants (with the common app) and how do they compare to past applicants?
  - How are we using the “optional” criteria in admissions decisions; that is, if an applicant does not submit any of the optional materials (test scores, letters of reference) how does that affect them?
  - How does the current math requirement – *one full year beyond Algebra II in a course for which Algebra II is a prerequisite* – currently affect admissions?
  - What are our math placement scores telling us about incoming math readiness? Specifically, we are looking at two, preliminary research questions:
    - What is the Math Placement profile for students who completed the ALEKS assessment in our most recent cohort?
    - To what degree of confidence do we have that the ALEKS placement assessment accurately places students into JMU math courses?

### Appendices

**Table of Appendices**

<b>Number or Title</b>	<b>Brief Description</b>
<b>I</b>	<b>Draft of AASC Deans’ Report</b>

## **APPENDIX I**

### **Academic Admissions Standards Committee (AASC)**

#### **Summary of Conversations with Deans**

#### ***Brief Summary of Process***

In the months of April and May 2022, the co-chairs of the AASC (Rudy Molina and Traci Zimmerman) met with small groups of 2-3 Deans to share information regarding the progress the Academic Admissions Standards Committee has made. In advance of these meetings, we shared [the purpose statement](#) and the Fall 2021 mid-year report, which included recommendations and next steps. These meetings were designed so that the Deans would have a chance to ask questions and provide feedback to help shape our work moving forward as well as to help us better understand important insights closer to the local level. We were especially interested in hearing from the Deans about the role that Academic Affairs and their college should play in admissions.

#### ***Key Points/Takeaways***

- There was wide agreement with the AASC affirmation that we support admitting to university rather than to individual colleges/programs (CVPA exception).
- There was a desire to better understand admissions strategies so that we don't work across purposes in AA and Admissions, and a suggestion to have meetings and/or updates from Melinda Wood on these. As an example, if a major has a clear plan for recruitment, does Admissions know about that? How can we help one another?
- There was wide agreement that the math requirement needed to be revisited, and that the AASC plan of reviewing all the Admissions requirements (to make recommendations about what needs to be "required" and what does not) was a good path forward. There was a clear sense that we need to be transparent and accurate about what standard(s) are necessary to be successful at JMU –perhaps moving to a competencies model rather than "requirements" model? We really need to think about what elements need to be required (based on data that shows some correlation with success) and what elements can be redefined. This is not a "lesser than" access model, this is an inclusive and intentional one.
- There was a desire to have clear communication regarding our admissions standards (websites, major pages, advising, high school and transfer communications).
- There was wide agreement that we need to make sure that we have strong supports in place for students who may be coming in with more limited skills (given the challenges of COVID and distance learning as well as some of the severe resource limitations in some of the public schools).

## Questions Raised

- **Is the current math requirement – one full year beyond Algebra II in a course for which Algebra II is a prerequisite – a necessary requirement?**

In our conversations there were many examples provided of how this requirement has kept otherwise qualified students out of JMU; in addition, there were questions about whether this could be a “sliding scale” rather than a “fixed standard” requirement. AASC has queried data from the incoming ALEKS math placement exams and plans to review this requirement with an eye to the recent General Education APR recommendations as well as in conversation with CSM and those majors who require higher-level math. There was a sense in our conversations that, if we do recalibrate the math requirement, that there be supports in place to assist students who want to be able to pursue majors with higher math (even if they do not come in with that higher math placement). The math question is an important one because a lack of access to these courses does not equate to a lack of aptitude in that area, and we want to make sure we are not limiting access to JMU because we have not taken time to examine whether the requirement is still needed.

- **What is/should be the scope of the committee? How should it function in the coming academic year(s)?**

This question was prompted by one of the guiding questions in our initial charge: *Which academic programs should be further invested, maintain current investment, and reduced or eliminated and why?* The general sense from our conversations is that the AASC should work with colleges to set up the Deans and Senior Leadership to have those larger enrollment management conversations.

- **How will decisions about admissions standards ultimately be made? Who will make them?**

The AASC envisions this process as one where the AASC would make recommendations based on their research that would then go forward, likely to Academic Council and the Provost’s Leadership Team. Perhaps it could also be shared with the A-Dean Working Group (ADWG) and/or the ADWG sub-group that is working with Melinda Wood as well as those faculty in units/colleges who are working on admissions and retention work.