

**Dean's Response to the Program Review  
of the Developmental Mathematics Program**

June, 2018

At the outset, I want to acknowledge and thank everyone who contributed to this excellent review. The Evaluation Team recommended by Program Director Dr. Van Wagoner completed a thorough review and analysis, and made many valuable recommendations to the Developmental Mathematics Program (DMP). Likewise, Dr. Van Wagoner and the Developmental Mathematics faculty and staff compiled an informative self-study and also presented pertinent responses to the Evaluation Team Report.

I have reviewed all documents related to this Program Review, and in general, I agree with the Evaluation Team assessment of the Strengths of and Challenges facing the DMP. Moreover, I found the majority of Recommendations made by the Evaluation Team to be thoughtful, well conceived, and of significant potential benefit to the DMP. Likewise, I appreciated the thoughtful consideration of these recommendations and the responses provided by the DMP.

Having said this, I fundamentally agree with most recommendations and responses except below, where I express concerns or comments that may be pertinent:

Standard B – Curriculum:

- 1) The Evaluation Team recommended that the Program “Make evidence-based decisions by utilizing data prior to making revisions in courses.” The program response acknowledges that it used “research based principles for effective mathematics teaching” but it’s not clear that all necessary data exists or is being used to help inform curricular improvements. A more inclusive plan to gather and utilize relevant data, possibly including surveys of students to determine what they think “works best” to help them learn should be considered. Likewise, important information will come from longitudinal studies of student success in QL and other mathematics classes, and could be especially helpful to determine what pedagogies are most successful.

Standard C - I agree fully with the recommendation, but think the program response could be stronger. For example, more in-class assessments can reduce the test anxiety that many students have. Likewise, there are published strategies that, for example, can help ensure that all students in groups participate, so I also strongly encourage the DMP instructors to explore, find, or develop innovative ways to better address the Evaluation Team recommendation.

Standard E – I agree with all recommendations made by the Evaluation Team and was pleased with the program response. I encourage incoming COS Dean Easter-Pilcher to consider a tiered appointment model for the future. Moreover, I encourage the Faculty Senate Executive Committee to consider devising even a longer-term (3-year?) employment model for contract faculty who demonstrate great proficiency in enhancing student mastery of developmental mathematics.

Standard F – I agree with all recommendations made by the Evaluation Team. As noted in the Program Response, the DMP does not have the authority to enact recommendations 1,2, &3, however, I note that these concerns have been persistent and continue to be discussed. I remain hopeful that the QL Task Force will be helpful in moving this ongoing challenge to a successful resolution.

Standard G – Relationships with External Communities:

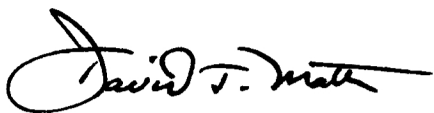
- 1) Fundamentally, I agree that forging stronger relationships is important and that importance will continue to grow as more and more students who learned math via the “Utah Core” enroll at WSU. In this regard, our ability to adapt our pedagogies and curricula to the abilities and learning styles of future students may hinge, in part, on what we can learn from regional K-12 teachers.
- 2) The Evaluation Team noted an “Apparent lack of camaraderie between the Math Department and the DMP” and I agree fully with their recommendation to build a working relationship between the departments. Please also see related comments below.

Standard H – The four recommendations made by the Evaluation Team seem reasonable, as are the program responses. I note that most focus on tutoring, which as noted above (Standard F), has been an ongoing, and at times, a contentious issue that I hope will be improved via the QL Task Force.

Missing from the discussion of Standard H are recommendations made during the last program review and steps taken to address these by the DMP. Several of the recommendations made herein echo the sentiment and intent of those made previously. However, I believe that several key recommendations made previously, and noted in the self-study, were omitted from the Evaluation Team report and need to be identified here. Specifically, the self-study identifies Issue 4 and Issue 10 to essentially recommend “Defining QL and Backwards Map the curriculum.” Related to these, Issue 6 recommends “developing measurable expected learning outcomes for each level of the developmental math program.” While the DMP is to be commended for making vast improvements in their curricula and pedagogies, their self-study responses reveal that they haven’t made much progress towards addressing the Issues noted above. These are critical topics that must be addressed if student success in Math at WSU is to improve. Yet, progress seems unlikely without first addressing the current recommendations of Standard G.2: *Build a working relationship with the Math Department that will support the goals of both the DMP and the Math Department.* This is perhaps the most critical recommendation made by the Evaluation Team in this program review. Without shared respect and collaboration, backwards curricular design, shared agreement and understanding of stepwise student learning expectations, and well defined curricular pathways and pedagogies used by all faculty (including adjuncts) will not be attainable. I am hopeful, with the help of the QL Task Force and its members from the DMP and the Math Department, that improvements in all of these areas will occur, and as such, will help address many of the other challenges noted in this program review.

Having said this, it seems that mathematics at Weber State is turning a corner, and I again wish to congratulate and thank the DMP for taking the initiative to be bold and innovative in their approach to helping students succeed in pre-QL mathematics. They are a great group of dedicated people and deserve our admiration, respect, and appreciation. I wish them only the best as they move into the future.

With kindest regards,



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