

3-25-2015

## Scholastic minutes 03/25/2015

Scholastic Committee

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### Recommended Citation

Scholastic Committee, "Scholastic minutes 03/25/2015" (2015). *Scholastic Committee*. 73.  
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**Scholastic Committee  
2014-15 Academic Year  
March 25, 2015  
Meeting Fourteen Minutes Approved**

Present: Judy Korn, Jess Larson, Roland Guyotte, Brenda Boever, Megan Jacobson, Leslie Meek, Merc Chasman, Hilda Ladner, Tisha Turk, guest: Jennifer Zych Herrmann, member of the International Student Academics SC subcommittee

Absent: Steve Gross, Yee Thao, Laddie Arnold, Chad Braegelmann, Jennifer Rothchild, Marcy Prince

1. Agenda review. Roland Guyotte, chair, conducted the meeting.
2. March 18, 2015, minutes approved.
3. No Chair's Report
4. No SCEP Report
5. Presentation by Scholastic Committee on international student academics and discussion

Members: Hilda Ladner, Jennifer Herrmann, Leslie Meek, Peh Ng, and Saesun Kim

Ladner presented international student academic recommendations and led a discussion. (See addendum one.)

Recommendations:

- Raise the IELTS score required for admission from 5.5 to 6.0.
- Require that all new international students take LANG 1063: American Culture and Oral Skills in the American University.
- Require that international students take an English language placement exam upon arrival.

SC discussed the contract between Shanghai University of Finance and Economics and Morris. The contract will be negotiated this year for implementation in the following year. This would be a good time to begin a discussion of raising admissions criteria for SUFE students.

SC has discussed the IELTS test scores in the context of being lower than other University of Minnesota campuses and other colleges, but the campus has not discussed this issue.

The subcommittee was asked why the recommendation is only 6.0 instead of 6.5 at the TC campus. Ladner responded that there is no evidence that the score made a significant difference in success at Morris. The numbers are very small.

The implications on how resources would be impacted were discussed by SC. The general consensus was that there would be a need for an increase in resources. However, if students were required to earn a higher IELTS score then students might not need as much help. Ladner believes requiring a higher score would not necessarily mean the students would meet proficiency. The students would work to get a higher score, but not enough to become proficient.

Requiring international students to take LANG 1063 which focuses on the cultural expectation in the classroom would reinforce participation in classroom discussions. Requiring LANG 1063 also sets the bar above requiring the bare minimum.

Some members worry about the fairness of using the English language placement exam to satisfy the foreign language requirement. All other students have multiple language options to satisfy this requirement; international student would only have English as an option.

It was recommended that LANG 1061 and 1062 become prerequisites for ENGL 1601.

There is concern over the ESL sections of ENGL 1601 not covering the same material as the other sections. It is thought that the work done and the standards for these sections are different.

Can domestic students with English as their second language take the ESL sections of ENGL 1601? Students with English as their second language are asked to prove their first language. These students are graduating from American high schools which means they have had to prove English proficiency.

Can a mechanism be implemented to ensure all international students complete LANG 1063? Some suggestions for implementation included creating a student group similar to the Math placement group or requiring LANG 1063 as a prerequisite for ENGL 1601.

SC discussed the logistics on taking LANG 1061, 1062, 1063. Students would take those courses in the fall and ENGL 1601 in the spring. The courses would total seven credits and therefore not considered a major loss in electives.

The motion to approve the subcommittee's proposal as written was approved without dissent.

Guyotte requested the subcommittee include more supporting data in their report. Ladner will add addendums with data and charts.

Brenda Boever requested SC further discuss implementation of the proposal at a future meeting.

Respectfully submitted

Angie Senger  
Office of the Registrar

## **Addendum One**

### **Recommendations for Scholastic Committee for International Student Language Proficiency Requirements**

The Scholastic Subcommittee on International Students was charged with reviewing the recommendations made by the International Student Programs (ISP) Office (spring 2014) and other pertinent information in order to provide the Scholastic Committee with a recommendation about the admission and English language course requirements for incoming international students at UMM. The subcommittee included Jennifer Herrmann, Sae Sun Kim, Hilda Ladner, Leslie Meek, and Peh Ng. The subcommittee met four times during the 2014-15 academic year and reviewed the recommendation provided by ISP last year along with other reports about international student admission, retention, and probation. Based on review of the data provided and discussion with ISP personnel, the subcommittee presents the following three recommendations.

#### **1. Raise the IELTS score required for admission from 5.5 to 6.0**

Our current requirement of 5.5 on IELTS does not reflect the English language proficiency needed for success in the rigorous academic environment of UMM. We currently accept an IELTS score that is significantly lower than our required 79 TOEFL score (see comparison table below). The Twin Cities and Duluth both require a minimum 6.5 IELTS score for admission. The subcommittee recommends that in next catalog and SUFE agreement UMM raise the IELTS score required for admission to at least 6.0.

## Comparison Charts

Based on the research reports that link TOEFL iBT scores to IELTS, ETS developed these comparison charts to help make informed admissions decisions.

TOEFL Score	IELTS Band
0–31	0–4
32–34	4.5
35–45	5
46–59*	5.5
60–78*	6
79–93*	6.5
94–101*	7
102–109*	7.5
110–114	8
115–117	8.5
118–120	9

\* Indicates score comparison ranges with the highest degree of confidence

### **2. Require that all new international students take LANG 1063: American Culture and Oral Skills in the American University.**

LANG 1063 will provide international students with a semester-long navigational course that will orient them to UMM and the resources available. Requiring LANG 1063 for ALL international students will provide a better opportunity for students to learn about American academic culture, especially concepts like academic integrity, plagiarism and other issues. Students that have studied in US high schools or are transferring from another university could be exempt from this requirement.

### **3. Require that international students take an English language placement exam upon arrival at UMM.**

Require that international students take an English language placement test upon arrival at UMM. Based on placement test, students would be required to take one or more ESL courses as prerequisites to ENGL 1601 or become eligible to take ENGL 1601 in their first semester. The LANG instructors have researched possible placement exams and can make recommendations on what would work best for UMM. Scholastic should also explore the possibility of using LANG (ESL) to fulfill the General Education Foreign Language requirement that is

frequently waived (met) for international students because they are already fluent in a language other than English.

All of the above recommendations likely mean additional resources will be needed. Requiring a placement exam adds the work of administering and interpreting the exam, placing and releasing holds on records, and advising students. We already offer one section of each of the three LANG courses (LANG 1061, 1062, 1063) each semester, but making them required for some/many students may require more sections of of these ESL support courses. Although the committee did not find overwhelming evidence of a specific score making a difference in student retention and success, it does appear that stronger (higher level) students are transferring at higher rates and more of the lower scoring students struggle. The above recommendations will support the academic success and retention of international students at UMM.