

QL Forum 10/07/09 Summary

Approximately 15 faculty members (count includes QL committee members) gathered in Courtney for 1+ hour discussion of quantitative literacy at SJC. The Committee thanks those who took time from very busy schedules to come. We list some of the points discussed (in no particular order) below. Most are posed as questions since in general we came to no conclusions in this discussion.

General QL Issues

- What QL is (not math) – topic list as distributed. Is it too much to actually incorporate in one course? Should there be such a course? Is the end of the sophomore year the appropriate time -- should it be sooner? Should the alternate course list be allowed and are the courses on it appropriate?
- Concerns about a QL requirement: How do current and incoming students feel about a QL requirement – would it negatively impact recruitment and retention?
- Why should there be a QL requirement for all students when students in humanities for example, do not use QL in their major? Is QL important as a life skill? Are we supposed to be developing life skills? Does not QL fit into the stated mission of the College?
- How would this QL course work for certain majors? It was felt that its content would benefit the Elementary Education major – currently there is no mathematics content course for the El. Ed major (only math methods). In some ways it would benefit the mathematics major since they would a different less formal approach to solving problems and applications of quantitative thinking.

Quantitative Literacy within Core

- Should the approach to QL be entirely within Core without a separate course? Is this feasible? Or should rather there be a combination -- a separate course to ready students along with integration into Core?
- Should there be regular and consistent development and application of QL within Core through well-chosen and well prepared assignments?
- If we are to be doing QL within Core, how do we prepare faculty? How do we “sell” to the students? What types of assignments would fit with QL?

Mathematics Proficiency of Incoming Students

A separate issue from the QL graduation requirement but strongly related is the mathematics proficiency (or lack thereof) of our incoming students and current students. Discussion on this topic included:

- The possible need for revision of current M017 Basic Algebra course which serves as a remedial course for the approximately 30-40 incoming freshmen who do not meet our “low bar” of entering math proficiency.
- The large number of students who are not placed into the Algebra course, but who are not Precalculus, Biology,, or Chemistry ready. Where do they belong? How do we identify these students and then through what course do we get them to where they need to be? Do we need a placement exam to correctly identify and place these students into the appropriate mathematics course to get them where they need to be?
- Just what is the proficiency of our current students? Should we administer a trial QL exam to a representative sample (or all) of our students to see what we really have.