A General Guide to Classroom Policy
For Developmental Mathematics and Mathematics Instructors

MASTER SYLLABUS (effective Spring 2003)

1. To comply with this new college-wide policy, check your first day handouts to ensure that they include all items required by the Master Syllabus.

COURSE OBJECTIVES, ATTENDANCE, AND ATTRITION

2. You are expected to finish the schedule of material that is proposed for the course you are teaching. The schedule for the course, included in the "First Day Handout for Students" in the course section of the manual, is designed to cover the objectives for the course and should not be truncated in order to accommodate less than adequately prepared students.

3. Most of our schedules provide little time for review. Some brief review is necessary and helpful during a course; however, it is recommended that you review necessary material as it becomes appropriate in the context of a course.

4. Attendance is expected in all classes. Instructors should be reluctant to give students permission not to attend class since it is unusual for students to perform adequately who are frequently absent from class. One option is to require that a student attend class regularly and successfully pass the first test before you will consider special attendance arrangements.

5. You are required to keep a record of attendance until the official record date (ORD) in all courses. This is the twelfth class day for 16-week sessions. In MATD courses, you must keep a record of attendance throughout the semester. A TASP-mandated student who is not attending class on a regular basis should be referred to the Campus NCBR (non-course-based remediation) coordinator.

6. On average, attrition (final grades other than A, B, or C) in mathematics runs between 45% and 50%. We would like to do everything that we possibly can to reduce the attrition rate. Attrition is influenced by many factors over which you have little control. The most important way to reduce attrition is to make sure that all students meet the prerequisites for the course. In the MATD courses, you will spend about an hour of class time during the first week of classes determining whether students are in the correct course. In the MATH courses, you will spend no more than 10 minutes or so of class time during the first week.

TESTING, HOMEWORK, AND GRADING

7. Your grading-testing schedule should be consistent with the following guidelines. Part of your evaluation is based on how you handle this issue.

   a. Generally, have between 4 and 6 major tests in a semester.
b. While printed test banks and computerized test generating software are often available with our texts, use of these items is not a guarantee of good or even acceptable tests. It is the instructor's responsibility to ensure that tests provide an appropriate variety and level of questions for the course.

c. While some multiple-choice questions can be quite useful, a majority of the grade in the course should be based on tests with free-response questions, where students write out solutions.

d. While alternative forms of assessment such as take-home tests can be used, the department discourages instructors from using these as the primary means of assessment for a course.

e. Instructors should incorporate into the course some procedure for dealing with homework. Students need to do more problems than you can grade, and most students will not do more than are assigned.

A variety of homework procedures are possible. Here are some ideas:

- assign homework problems in each class and pick them up next class for "spot" checking
- ask students to keep a systematic homework notebook with the solutions of homework problems, then occasionally check (perhaps during a major in-class test) and award credit for the homework notebook
- once a week (or more often) give brief homework quizzes in class (perhaps allowing the use of the homework notebooks)
- have the sum total of the homework grades count for a major test

f. Some instructors allow re-testing on some or all tests. This is an acceptable, but not required, procedure.

One possible re-testing procedure is as follows:

- allow only students who score below 70 on the initial test to re-test with no re-tests on the last test
- allow only one re-test during the semester
- allow the maximum possible grade one can earn on the re-test to be 70. Some instructors average the two test grades or weight the grades so that the final grade is the weighted average of the two test grades or 70, whichever is less; this encourages good performance on the first test and keeps 70 as a cap.

This suggestion for re-testing is based on the philosophy that a re-test exists for students who did not earn a minimum C on the first testing and therefore need one additional chance to earn a minimum C. But this philosophy also proposes that re-testing should not allow any student to earn a grade higher than that achieved by students who were not allowed to retest (assuming not all students are allowed to retest.)

8. Students should expect at the end of the semester to receive a final grade of A, B, C, D, or F. A grade of I (Incomplete) should be rarely given. Generally, a grade of I only should be assigned to students who are otherwise passing a course, have done all required
work until a personal tragedy or accident occurs that prevents them from taking the last examination and completing the course. Very few students should fall into this category. In addition, the IP (In Progress) grade may be used in all developmental math courses. In order to give a student an IP grade for the course, the student must remain in the course, be making progress in the material, and not meet the standard set to earn a grade of C or better in the course. However, students may not receive an IP grade more than twice in a particular course. They must re-enroll in and pay for the course again to earn a grade and may not advance to the next course until they have made a C or better in the course.

9. Your grading and testing procedures should include a timetable for testing and should be clearly explained in your first day handout. It is important that you stand by this grading and testing procedure that you announce and hand out on the first class day. If disputes about such matters come to the Department Chair or the Dean, among the first questions to be resolved will be whether the instructor was acting in accordance with the policy announced and handed out for the class. Any changes from the initially announced policy that might negatively affect a student's grade are not allowed. Changes that might improve a student's grade (e.g., add a special project, drop more homework grades) are permitted. However, any such changes must be announced to the class and applied to all students. Special arrangements in grading that benefit some students but not others are to be avoided. (Special arrangements on testing are permitted for handicapped students who are physically unable to manage the regular tests.) So, be sure to consider the grading policy carefully to state it clearly, and then to maintain it.

WITHDRAWALS

10. Make it clear to students in your first-day handouts that it is the student’s responsibility to submit the necessary paperwork by the required date in order to withdraw from class and receive a grade of W (withdrawal.) The back of a withdrawal form lists allowed reasons (except that "failure to meet course objectives" is not allowed for MATD courses). You should not use any of those reasons unless you explicitly told your students on your first day handout that you might use them. Even if you intend to withdraw students yourself, do not promise to assume this responsibility for students.

11. For MATD courses, the same guidelines as above apply to what you promise (or don’t promise) students. However, you are required to keep somewhat closer tabs on MATD students than MATH students. Some of the MATD students must participate in remediation in order to maintain their enrollment in college. Since instructors cannot easily determine which students are in mandatory remediation, you are required to submit copies of all withdrawal slips for MATD courses to the Campus-based Department Chair who handles NCBR. With this, you should also submit a copy of each student’s information form that you had them fill out at the beginning of the semester and any other contact information you have. Please do this as soon as possible after the official record date.

12. If you drop a student from class, be sure to keep your copy of the official drop form that should have been stamped and dated by the Admissions Office. When withdrawals are properly processed prior to the deadline date, the student will receive a pre-printed W on the final grade report and will not appear on the Faculty Online Grading page. If the student’s name appears on the Faculty Online page but you dropped the student properly
prior to the deadline, you must have a properly dated drop form in order to assign the W grade.

**MISCELLANEOUS**

13. Be sure to check your campus mailbox, your ACC email, and your ACC voice mail regularly. Also, be sure to keep your on-line office hours correct.

14. We provide tutoring help to students in MATD and MATH classes in two ways. The Learning Lab at each campus provides walk-in tutoring according to the posted schedule. Not all math tutors can tutor for all courses, so check to see when the tutors for your course are available. Some lab classes are available that go along with various courses. Check the schedule at your campus to see if these are available. If so, encourage students who want or need tutoring to enroll in them. For any questions, contact the Math-Science campus office.

15. It is expected that all classes will meet as scheduled. In short, the instructor does not have the authority to "give the students a walk." If you anticipate missing a class, it is your responsibility to obtain an appropriate substitute. Always report this to the Math-Science campus office. Payment of a substitute can be handled in two ways. There is a formal college procedure for deducting money from your paycheck and transferring it to a substitute. In many instances, it is easier for you and the substitute to work out a personal arrangement of payment or trading classes. Even if you choose the latter informal way of arranging payment, you must report that you are sending a substitute. Substitutions of this type should be relatively rare during the semester. If you have a last minute emergency that requires that you miss class, please call the Math-Science office or the Administrative Office at the campus where you are teaching so that the students can be told that you will be absent. One such canceled class in a semester will not affect your paycheck. Additional canceled classes will result in a paycheck deduction.

16. The Mathematics Department has responsibility for almost all matters affecting the mathematics/developmental mathematics department. Each year some adjunct faculty members serve as voting members of the Department. (Eligible adjunct faculty members are invited, by the Executive VP’s office, to sign up for these positions usually in the spring for the following academic year.) You may take concerns to any voting member of the Department. Departmental decisions and policies are posted on the departmental web pages.

17. All new students (who are not exempt) must take the T-COMPASS or another TASP-equivalent test before they enroll in college-credit courses. After students take this test, they are advised. The MATD/MATH Advising section of the Math Manual summarizes our advising information.

18. Students are required to attend the class section for which they are registered. Students may not change sections without approval. Students who are not officially enrolled in a class should not be allowed to attend the class. You may let them stay for one day, but before the next class meeting they must provide documentation of enrollment in the class. Do not promise to let a student remain in the class, regardless of how much space appears available in the classroom. Individual instructors do not have the authority to make this
decision. Such promises, no matter how well intentioned, only make it harder for everyone else to do their jobs.

19. No changes in class registration will be made by the Math-Science campus offices before the end of late registration. Up to that time, the student has direct control of his/her own registration through the normal registration process. For a time after the general adds and drops period, if space is available, we can arrange to change students who are in the wrong course (e.g., change from college algebra to intermediate algebra.) This process may not be used to change sections of the same course. With departmental approval, a student may change sections of a course because of extraordinary circumstances. This "Informal Class Transfer" may be handled by the Assistant Dean or the Campus-based Assistant Department Chair(s). Instructors may not implement such transfers on their own.

20. Occasionally, every instructor has a discipline problem in class dealing with cheating. When you have a case of scholastic dishonesty, you should obtain the appropriate form from the Student Services Office. Directions of how to proceed are included on that form. In short, you complete the form and impose the penalty that you think is reasonable. If the student signs the form accepting the penalty, the matter is completed. If the student challenges the penalty, a formal hearing committee is called into session to deal with the case. The latter process is complicated and is not used very often. Generally, an instructor can deal with such matters directly with the student. Penalties imposed by instructors range from 0 on the assignment or test to an F in the course, depending on the seriousness of the offense and other factors. Refer to the Master Syllabus for the statement on Scholastic Dishonesty and Student Discipline.

21. Austin Community College also has an active Faculty Development Office that can assist you. This office publishes an adjunct faculty manual with general information about the college and suggestions about teaching. You are required to earn some faculty development credit during the year in order to be eligible for a yearly salary increase. See the Math internal website for details.

22. The Mathematics department encourages the use of pedagogy that develops skills for mathematical communication, teamwork, critical thinking, and lifelong learning in each student.

23. You should schedule and clearly advertise at least one hour of office hours per week for each 3-credit course that you are teaching. For those who teach 4-credit courses, a proportionate increase should be made. Unless there are unusual circumstances, students should be able to see you more than once a week. In most cases, office hours should be scheduled over at least two days per week and be convenient for students in your classes. A common procedure among faculty is to schedule office hours 30-45 minutes each day that a class meets. If you teach more than one 3-credit course, you must schedule one hour of office hours for each course. Your office hours should be clearly indicated on your first-day handout and listed in the online office hours, the Campus Administrative Office, and in your Math-Science campus office.
TECHNOLOGY

24. A variety of computer tutorial and video material is available for student and instructor use. The computer tutorial material should be available in the Learning Lab at each campus. They also have other useful computer tutorial software. Videotapes are available for several of the courses. These are available for viewing in the LRS. Some mathematics supplemental material is broadcast on ACC’s cable TV channel. This includes algebra reviews for some of the MATD courses and also the entire videotape series for the statistics course.

25. Our courses are intended to be mathematics courses, not courses in how to use graphing technology. However, graphing technology has been incorporated into many mathematics classes. Our calculus textbook assumes such use and most of the algebra texts include material that encourages the use of graphing technology. Most of the campuses have TI-82 (some TI-83) calculators for you to borrow, some campuses have calculators with overhead screens (for class demonstrations) and sets of calculators for student use in class. These classroom sets have between 10 and 25 calculators. Most of the campuses have some graphing calculators (mostly TI-82/83’s) on reserve in the LRS for 2-hour checkout by students. Mathematica is available for instructors to use as well as students. We have "pooled" licenses, so you must be connected to a central server to use this software. Course specific information on the use of graphing technology can by found in the course section of the math manual.

END OF SEMESTER PROCESS

26. Final grades will only be submitted online through the Faculty Online Access system. Unless there is a problem, there will be no paper submissions. Before you submit your grades, print a copy of the computer screen that shows your grades. You must send a copy of this print-out with all of your grades to Gillian Waterston at Pinnacle campus.

27. If you do not have a login and password to access online grades, please get them as soon as possible. These are different from your e-mail login and password. To get them, you will need to fill out a request form at: http://www.austincc.edu/operations/forms/FOA.htm.

If you need a short training seminar on how to submit grades online, go to: http://www.austincc.edu/ITdocs/WebAdvWeb/Faculty/webadv1.html.

To enter grades online from on campus, go to: https://onlineserv.austincc.edu.

To enter grades online from off campus, go to: http://www.austincc.edu, then click on "Instructional Areas," and finally click on "Faculty Online Access."

28. Textbooks that you will not be using in the next semester should be returned to the math administrative assistant on your campus.