

1077-L1-560 **Reva Kasman*** (rkasman@salemstate.edu), 352 Lafayette Street, Salem, MA 01970. *Balancing structure and creativity in projects for liberal arts mathematics*. Preliminary report.

Liberal arts mathematics courses offer students the (often surprising) opportunity to apply mathematical topics to their own life experiences. For instance, every student can recall a dilemma in which voting could have been used to make a group decision, or a situation where scheduling conflicts needed to be avoided. But not every example that a student designs will lead to rich data for analysis or assessment. Ideally, assignments allow for creativity while still being sufficiently structured to ensure that students have a constructive learning experience and instructors can easily grade the finished products. This talk will describe several projects given at the end of units on voting theory and graph theory which have been created with these goals in mind. In each project, students are able to choose their own imaginative context, but a “skeleton” of data is provided, such as a preference schedule with unnamed candidates, which must be incorporated into the chosen thematic scenario. (Received September 07, 2011)