

General Education Program
Education for Participation in the Global Community
Assessment Report 2012-2013

General Education is the core of an undergraduate education. It is general in that it provides students with a comprehensive educational experience and prepares them for study within their major. General Education teaches students to think critically and communicate effectively. It provides an introduction to the methodologies and practices of the academic disciplines; it promotes intellectual curiosity and a love of learning. General Education is the heart of an EMU education and source of institutional pride.

This report will be comprised of two sections: (1) an overview of past Gen Ed assessment initiatives and (2) a plan for assessing student learning in the Gen Ed Program.

Overview of Gen Ed Assessment 2006 - 2012

Since its approval by the Board of Regents in 2005, the General Education Program has taken part in a number of assessment initiatives, including

- 2006: An AQIP General Education Team identified framing principles for assessing the General Education foundations courses; e.g., Written Composition (ENGL 121), Oral Communication (CTAC 124), and Quantitative Reasoning (MATH 110). Results from those assessment initiatives are detailed in the attached "Overview of Gen Ed Assessment" report
- 2008 - 2012: A seven person team (Chris Foreman (GenEd), Linda Adler-Kassner (ENGL), Michael Tew (CTAC), Diane Winder (then CAS associate dean), Shawn Quilter (COE associate dean), Steve Pernecky (CHEM), and Akosua Dow (Provost's office) attended HLC's Conference for the Assessment of Students and Programs and established goals for determining the degree to which students were achieving the outcomes in the Gen Ed Program. Four semesters of faculty focus groups were conducted in the following Gen Ed categories: Quantitative Reasoning, Global Awareness, U.S. Diversity, Arts, Humanities, Natural Sciences, and Social Sciences. The most fruitful conversations took place in the Global Awareness and U.S. Diversity categories, where it was determined that there was a consistent barrier to assessing student learning in categories where outcomes were being met by multiple courses and disciplines. As we proceeded towards collecting "evidence" (e.g., assignments, student artifacts, etc.), we learned that we could not do this because there was no common understanding of the outcomes and no shared sense of how the outcomes should/could be achieved.
- Further details of all past Gen Ed assessment initiatives can be found in the attached "Overview of Gen Ed Assessment."

Gen Ed Plan for Assessment of Student Learning 2013-14 [and beyond]

On June 18, 2013, an adhoc working group was formed, and met, to map out a plan for assessing student learning in the Gen Ed Program. This working group will act in an advisory capacity, providing input to the Director of the Gen Ed Program (Chris Foreman), who will in turn charge the Gen Ed Assessment subcommittee with facilitating the process for conducting direct assessment of student learning. Members of this adhoc advisory working group include: Chris Foreman (GenEd), Kate Mehuron (CAS), Doug Baker (CAS/Assessment), Jenny Kindred (CAS/Assessment), Ann Blakeslee (ENGL/WI), and Derek Mueller (ENGL).

Concurrent to the work completed by the adhoc Gen Ed Assessment Planning working group (GEAP) will be the formation of a Gen Ed Evaluation Committee, comprised of faculty appointments by Faculty Senate, additional appointments by the Provost, and an external reviewer selected by the Provost. Their charge will be focused on program review, evaluating overall program goals and determining how, and how well, it functions as a program. The Director of the General Education program (Chris Foreman) will act as communication liaison between these two groups.

The primary purpose of the June 18, 2013 meeting was to develop a plan for conducting assessment of student learning in the General Education Program. Learning outcomes already exist for all Gen Ed categories, leading to the primary dilemma with multi-course assessment; that is, how do we get disciplines to come to a shared understanding for each outcome. That conversation led the group to address an underlying question, which was, what was the original intent or goal of the learning outcomes and has that remained stable these past seven years. And the best way to get at that question is to go to the primary source; that is, instructors teaching Gen Ed courses and students taking Gen Ed courses.

The following plan - and timeline - resulted from the June 18, 2013 meeting:

Summer 2013 - Ann Blakeslee and Chris Foreman will draft a comprehensive communication plan, targeted at all stakeholders. The focus will be on gaining faculty commitment by asking them "what works" and "what doesn't work" with relation to meeting or addressing the outcomes. Let them tell us, rather than us telling them. This must be carefully framed in such a way as to "invite them in" as opposed to "scare them away". We must make it very clear why we are asking people to do what we will ask. Doug Baker will also assist with this project, helping to develop a set of principles of learning and assessment appropriate to the Gen Ed Program.

Fall 2013 - Launch the communication plan by having members of GEAP meet with departmental faculty responsible for teaching Gen Ed course. The group will start with the College of Arts and Science, and communicate with, and seek input and approval from CAC. NOTE: The GEAP group will remain in continuous communication with CASAC (College of Arts and Sciences Assessment Committee) to assure both processes co-exist with efficiency and effectiveness.

Fall 2013 - A faculty survey and student survey will be designed by GEAP, seeking to ask simple questions about how easy or difficult it is to meet or address outcomes (faculty) and the degree to which students understand the outcomes (students). NOTE: Derek Mueller and Jenny Kindred will take the lead on organizing the creation and distribution of surveys through Bin Ning's office.

Fall 2013 - Concurrent to the communicating the plan and designing surveys, Kate Mehuron and Chris Foreman will collaborate on tracking the Gen Ed curriculum in the College of Arts and Sciences - noting Gen Ed courses approved, changes made, etc.

Winter 2014 - Faculty and Student surveys will be distributed and data collected. The ensuing analysis will provide data to help identify specific areas to target for assessment.

Winter 2014 - At least three faculty members will be sent to AAC&U's Gen Ed Assessment Workshop (February).

Summer 2014 - Data will be analyzed and reports created. From the data, a three-year plan for conducting direct assessment of student learning will be created.

Summer 2014 - A General Education Assessment Workshop will be held, attended by faculty identified in each CAS department as key facilitators for assessing student learning in Gen Ed courses.

Fall 2014 - The General Education Assessment subcommittee will facilitate the process established by the adhoc Gen Ed Assessment Planning (GEAP) working group.

Prepared by Chris Foreman, Director of the General Education Program
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