

College or Unit Level Annual Assessment Report

College or Unit
General Education

Report Year
2013-14

Submitted
June 30, 2014

Descriptor/Scope of Assessment at EMU:

Assessment at EMU has a primary focus on student learning in academic programs but also includes the assessment of services provided by student support units.

1. Summary of overall achievements in assessment (500 words).

- *Summarize overall assessment goals and achievement in assessment*
- *Summarize the college or unit's goals and achievements in its on-going efforts of assessment*
- *Describe the role of faculty and staff in the assessment process and how analysis of data led to representative changes*

Goals and Achievements. The General Education program is in the process of designing a systematic approach to assessing student learning across the five categories of courses that constitute the program. Toward this overarching goal, we have accomplished three main objectives: (1) survey representative faculty on one learning outcome (from Global Diversity) to ascertain how prepared faculty are to collect and analyze potential assessment data on that outcome; (2) establish an assessment team; and (3) conceptualize a system that will grow over the next few years.

Survey. In Fall 2013, a faculty survey was designed by an adhoc Gen Ed Assessment Planning Group (Chris Foreman, Doug Baker, Ann Blakeslee, Jenny Kindred, Derek Mueller, and Kate Mehuron). The purpose of the survey was to begin the process of identifying any particular outcomes that might require some attention. The survey (see attached Global Awareness faculty survey PILOT) was submitted as a pilot to 40 faculty teaching Global Awareness courses, with a 50% return rate. Upon analysis of the survey results, it was determined that there were flaws in how the questions had been asked and that we were not acquiring the type of indirect evidence required to move forward. It is planned to continue this project in Fall 2014, by inviting faculty who participated in the pilot survey to meet and discuss better approaches for gathering specific data about the Gen Ed learning outcomes.

Assessment Team. In 2006, EMU initiated a revised General Education program, one that would be department based, meaning also that the departments would create assessments to evaluate how well students were meeting the learning outcomes for the category in which the course was listed.

Proposed Assessments. The General Education program initiated a proposed assessment system in 2007, which would be department based and supported in some ways by the GMAC project, a group that would provide suggested practices to departments. For various reasons, these initial efforts proved challenging to a large, complex institution. During the past year, the General Ed program has worked to create an assessment team and to seek council from faculty who have been integral to the program. Chris Foreman invited Doug Baker to help coordinate efforts to make links with past efforts and generate a system that builds on the past and encourages instructors across the program to engage in assessment of student learning. Part of the process included a meeting, convened by Chris, to consult with faculty and administrators who recognize the challenges of Gen Ed assessment and have a stake in its success. Doug was also elected by the Faculty Senate to the Gen Ed Assessment Committee (CASAC), chaired presently by Michael Tew. Jenny Kindred, a member of the CAS Assessment Committee, Kate Mehuron, Associate Dean of CAS, Doug and Chris have met, along with selected others, during the year to begin building the next steps.

Draft of Next Steps Toward an Assessment System

Because most of the credit hour production comes from CAS and there are three potential assessments that can begin during the next school year (see Section 2, below), we are proposing a three to four-stage approach to building the Gen Ed assessment system and grounding it in the first year in CAS. Here are the proposed stages:

- *Stage One – 2013-14*: Initial planning and preparation, especially in terms of Gen Ed articulating with CASAC
- *Stage Two – 2014-15*: Initiate four main assessment plans centered on three of the Gen Ed categories. Since all students must take, or meet the equivalent of, ENGL 121 and CTAC 124, which are both listed under Area I: Effective Communication, are two the proposed assessments; MATH 110, listed under Area II: Quantitative Reasoning, is another course that all students must take, or met the equivalency of, would be the third. Finally, we are proposing a small change to the Learning Beyond the Classroom (LBC), which constitutes Area V. In May/June 2015 Chris and Doug will organize a Gen Ed Assessment Institute for purposes of building assessments for Stage Three.
- *Stage Three – 2015-16*: Assessments will be in place to evaluate students on learning outcomes for Areas III or IV, or both. If needed, Stage Four would add the final category.

2. Examples of findings in assessment through using appropriate assessment methods (500 words)

- *Provide examples of assessment processes*
- *Provide 2-3 representative examples of how programs in the college or unit have created an assessment process that align student-learning and/or service outcomes with collection and analysis practices that provide evidence of student learning and/or service effectiveness.*

In consultation with Chris Foreman, Doug Baker and Jenny Kindred met with representatives of ENGL 121 (Derek Mueller and Kate Pantelides), CTAC 124 (Doris Fields), and MATH 110 (Chris Gardiner) to discuss the potential for assessments for each of these courses next year. All representatives described processes and actions that have already taken during the past years toward building vibrant evaluation systems. Therefore, it makes sense to build on what already has history of assessing students, and each of the representatives agreed to work toward the common goal of (re)creating or continuing the assessments.

See Appendix for a draft of the plans for the three courses, which represent the first two categories (i.e., Areas) of the General Education Program.

3. Examples of using assessment findings to make (1) decisions and (2) improvements to programs. (500 words)

- *Describe two to three examples of how programs used the information gathered from assessment process to make decisions that improve the effectiveness of programs and/or enhance opportunities for students to achieve expected learning outcomes.*
- *Describe whether your college/unit intends to revise/update your assessment plan for next year.*

Appendix: Role of Assessment of Student Learning in the Accreditation Process

- Stage One – 2014-15: ENGL 121
- Stage One – 2014-15: CTAC 124
- Stage One – 2014-15: MATH 110

In order for EMU to earn institutional accreditation, The Higher Learning Commission expects the university to meet five criteria (<http://policy.ncahlc.org/Policies/criteria-for-accreditation.html>), and one criterion focuses on assessment of student learning:

Criterion Four. Teaching and Learning: Evaluation and Improvement

The institution demonstrates responsibility for the quality of its educational programs, learning environments, and support services, and it evaluates their effectiveness for student learning through processes designed to promote continuous improvement.

The Higher Learning Commission describes the value of assessing student learning as including the following:

“For student learning, a commitment to assessment would mean assessment at the program level that proceeds from clear goals, involves faculty at all points in the process, and analyzes the assessment results; it would also mean that the institution improves its programs or ancillary services or other operations on the basis of those analyses. Institutions committed to improvement review their programs regularly and seek external judgment, advice, or benchmarks in their assessments.” (The Criteria for Accreditation: Guiding Values, <http://www.ncahlc.org/Information-for-Institutions/guiding-values-new-criteria-for-accreditation.html>)