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GENERAL EDUCATION COMMITTEE

February 12, 2019

8:30 a.m. – 9:30 a.m.

Champ Hall Conference Room – OM 136

Agenda

Call to Order – Lee Rickords

Approval of Minutes – [January 15, 2019](#)

Course Approvals/Removals/Syllabi Approvals

<https://usu.curriculog.com/>

APEC 1400 (BSS).....	Ryan Bosworth
ELED 4041 (CI).....	Robert Mueller

Business

Proposed plan for assessment of General Education – *Harrison Kleiner*

Curriculog shutdown beginning March 21st at 5:00 pm. Any requests received after the deadline will be deleted

Adjourn

Next meeting will be **Tuesday, March 19, 2019 at 8:30** am in Champ Hall conference room.
General Education requests for this meeting are due **March 9, 2019**.

USU GE Assessment Plan

Background

In response to pressing need and, more specifically, to a formal *Recommendation* in the most recent *Peer-Evaluation Report* provided in NWCCU's Spring 2018 Year Seven Evaluation, Utah State University convened a Special Task Force in Fall 2018 to address concerns regarding assessment of general education learning outcomes. Following receipt and review of the peer-evaluation report and the official notification letter from the Commissioners at NWCCU, general education assessment and responsibility were discussed at the President's Executive Council in early Fall 2018. Subsequently, in consultation with the University Assessment Coordinating Council and the Faculty Senate (including the General Education Subcommittee of the EPC), the University Provost convened a **Special Task Force on General Education** to develop a plan and recommendations that would address identified deficiencies and to tackle any additional matters regarding general education that might arise from those discussions.

The Special Task Force includes the following members:

- Janet Anderson: Vice Provost; Assoc. Vice President, Academic and Instructional Services
- David Brown: Faculty; Faculty Senate Executive; Assoc. Head; Member, Gen. Ed. Subcommittee
- Francis Galey: Executive Vice President and Provost
- Harrison Kleiner: Faculty; Member, General Education Subcommittee; Utah Board of Regents' Task Force on High Impact Practices
- Shelley Lindauer: Assoc. Dean; Assoc. Head; Member, General Education Subcommittee
- John Louviere: Assistant Vice President, Academic and Instructional Services
- Edward Reeve: Interim Vice Provost; Chair, Educational Policies Committee (EPC) of the Faculty Senate; Member, General Educational Subcommittee of the EPC
- Lee Rickords: Faculty; Chair, General Education Subcommittee of EPC (Faculty Senate); Member, Utah Board of Regents' Task Force on General Education
- Larry Smith: Interim Vice President for Research and Dean, School of Graduate Studies
- Matthew Sanders: Faculty; Assoc. Dean; Member, General Education Subcommittee of the EPC
- Michael Torrens: Director, Analysis, Assessment & Accreditation; Chair, UACC
- Robert Wagner: Vice President, Academic & Instructional Services; Member, Faculty Senate Executive Committee

The Special Task Force met twice in Fall 2018 for extended discussions on a path forward, and created a sub-committee to develop an initial action plan and implementation steps. The subcommittee consisted primarily of experienced faculty (Dr. Brown, Dr. Kleiner, Dr. Rickords, Dr. Sanders), and two experienced administrators who would be expected to facilitate implementation of any plans proposed by the task force and developed by faculty (Mr. Louviere and Mr. Torrens). Through the initial conversations in the special task force, a primary charge – a sort of “mission statement” – was developed for the work that would follow.

Mission Statement

Learning is a core theme of Utah State University and is at the heart of all faculty, staff, and student endeavors. The charge for the Special Task Force on General Education is to research and develop strategies that will improve student learning by encouraging and creating better

USU GE Assessment Plan

courses. Assessment of outcomes, in this light, is not an ‘end,’ but rather a ‘means’ to making all teaching in General Education classes meaningful. This is done by continually re-connecting faculty to the essential learning outcomes in the general education program as well as helping faculty develop more impactful teaching practices. It requires engaging students, from admission through graduation, to make sure they understand the purpose and value of every part of the degree.

This kind of work is central to the undergraduate teaching and learning mission of the university, as articulated in our Citizen Scholar degree profile. The first step to achieving our degree profile is a quality and meaningful general education experience that develops them intellectually, personally, and culturally. Developing proficiency in the General Education Program learning outcomes fits students for success in their personal, civic, and professional lives as well as ensuring they are prepared for success in their major. A solid general education foundation, combined with concentrated study in a major discipline and interdisciplinary studies, provides the breadth and depth of knowledge qualifying USU graduates as educated citizens prepared to engage and lead in local, national, and global communities. It is also important to engage students in an ongoing conversation about their learning, as making the learning outcomes of the whole degree explicit for them is essential for successfully achieving a degree where the various parts of the degree complement each other in a meaningful whole.

Initial Research and Discussion

Members of Special Task Force conducted research and brought background and materials to the initial conversations. There was a general acknowledgement that there were multiple potential “models” that could be used as a starting point for discussion. Several of the members of the Special Task Force are experienced with assessment (through DQP, NILOA, AACU, NWCCU, work with the State Board of Regents, etc.), and there was a general discussion of the range of potential measures and methods that could be used to assess program-level outcomes for USU’s general education. Several institutions within the State of Utah have elected to review their general education outcomes on a “rotating” basis (e.g., one, or a few, general education areas – *Breadth Social Science, etc.* – are assessed every X years). Task Force members expressed concern that implementing such a rotating system could either result in a long delay before assessment “got around” to all of the areas or, alternatively, could lead to an assessment cycle (1-2 years for each area) that was insufficient for true developmental improvements to take place and those outcomes to be assessed. An alternative model was floated that provides for data collection and assessment across all areas simultaneously, but equal concern was expressed that such a plan was not “serious,” because there are currently insufficient resources and faculty buy-in to assign student artifacts in every class for every outcome for even just the eight core lower-division general education areas (CL, QL, BAI, BCA, BHU, BLS, BPS, BSS). It was suggested that a plan be developed that would “build” out the assessment. Start by focusing on the most important rubric criteria for each area (simultaneously), and providing sufficient time for robust data collection, reflection, action/change, and post-change assessment before moving to the next criteria (with data collection building up until the full rubric for each area is covered) in all areas. This approach reflects identified best practices in assessment.¹

¹ Blaich, C., & Wise, K. (January 2011). From Gathering to Using Assessment Results: Lessons from the Wabash National Study. *National Institute for Learning Outcomes Assessment, Occasional Paper #8*. Retrieved from http://www.learningoutcomeassessment.org/documents/Wabash_001.pdf.

USU GE Assessment Plan

Outcome Selection and Faculty Canvas Work

(Assoc. Vice Provost for General Education will spearhead this, working with GE Area Sub-Committees, Department Heads, Associate Deans, and ETE)

- Every four years the Assoc. Vice Provost for General Education will work with the GE Area Sub-Committees to select one outcome for each GE area to assess and develop for the following four years. All general education areas will have at least one outcome assessed during the four-year period (i.e., all areas will be reviewed simultaneously). The General Education Sub-Committee of the EPC (Faculty Senate) will provide written criteria to the Area Sub-Committees for the selection of the learning outcome. Generally speaking, the first outcomes to be chosen should be the most “important,” the most “encompassing,” the “most difficult to achieve,” or the area(s) of “most concern.” The four-year period encompasses two years of data collection and reflection, intensive resource allocation for developmental improvements in course design and delivery (ETE, etc.), followed by post-change data collection and assessment.
- The Assoc. Vice Provost for General Education will work with Department Heads to remind faculty of the requirement that they must identify two assignments (one early in term, one late in term) that are suited to assess the selected general education program learning outcome, and to tie the selected outcome rubric to those assignments in Canvas. Data will be harvested from Canvas by AIS staff and reported out to the Assoc. Vice Provost for General Education and Special Task Force.

Information Collection

(Assoc. Vice Provost for General Education will spearhead this, working with GE Implementation Committee: AAA and AIS)

- AIS/AAA will aggregate individual student rubric scores from assignments collected in Canvas, and will provide analysis (e.g., overall, by GE area, by course, by instructor/section).
- AAA will collect IDEA student self-assessment of GE Outcomes and provide analysis (e.g., overall, by GE area, by course, by instructor/section).
- To provide for quality control and accountability, AIS will pull a representative sample (e.g. n=20) student artifacts per GE Area from Canvas. These artifacts will be assessed by the Area SubCommittees (see below: trained on the area rubric for interrater reliability) and those results analyzed and compared to the assessment made by course instructors.
- The GE Implementation Committee will produce a report on adoption rates of Canvas rubrics, reliability of instructors’ use of rubrics, etc. for Assoc. Vice Provost for General Education and Special Task Force.

Analyze and Interpret Information

(Assoc. Vice Provost for General Education will spearhead this, working with AAA, AIS, GE Committee, and GE Area Sub-Committees)

- Using the rubric for each area, a representative sample of de-identified student artifacts will be scored by each GE Area Sub-Committee for the selected outcome, each year.

USU GE Assessment Plan

Review Findings, Draw Conclusions, Articulate Action Plan, and Write Report

(Assoc. Vice Provost for General Education will spearhead this, working with GE Assessment Implementation Committee, GE Committee, GE Area Sub-Committees, and ETE)

- The GE Assessment Implementation Committee will assess and review the progress of implementation and will create a developmental action plan to address deficiencies. This report will be provided to the Provost and the Faculty Senate for discussion and dissemination.
- Outcomes Review: GE Area Sub-Committees will revisit their outcomes and revise as needed.
- Designation Review: GE Area Sub-Committees, working with the Assoc. Vice Provost for General Education, will review outcome results at the level of GE area, course, and section and will (a) identify any challenges or concerns with meeting the selected outcomes, (b) identify courses and instructors in need of additional support, and (c) ensure courses are appropriately designated.
- Faculty Development: Working from the GE Area Sub-Committees' findings, the Assoc. Vice Provost for General Education will work with ETE to (a) develop trainings for faculty on generalizable needs in GE overall or within a GE area, (b) provide training and resources for specific courses and instructors in need of support, and (c) help instructors use GE assessment information in their P&T materials.
- The Assoc. Vice Provost for General Education, working with the AAA and AIS offices, will write and disseminate Assessment Reports.

Tasks

- GE Area Sub-Committees will quickly review our Rubrics against latest R470 to make sure our outcomes have a close enough alignment.
- GE Area Sub-Committees will pick a most important outcome from their area rubric that will be assessed in the first 4-year cycle.
- Communications (CL/CI) and Quantitative (QL/QI) committees will take their outcomes language and publish, on the web, language in the table form (like other areas) on proficiency, approaching proficiency, and lacking proficiency.
- Student artifacts: Assoc. Vice Provost for General Education will work with ETE, department heads, and associate deans to get buy-in and training for linking assignments to outcomes rubric in Canvas.
- IDEA additional GE questions: AAA will turn each selected learning outcome into a question in IDEA student ratings of instruction, for courses that are tagged with a GE designation; this enables collection of students' self-reported progress on general education learning outcomes at the course level.
- GE Code changes: GE Committee should consider adding language to each Area Criteria that instructors must tie two assignments (one early in term, one late in term) to the selected outcome rubric in Canvas.

USU GE Assessment Plan

- GE Code changes: GE Committee should discuss adding a common outcome to all rubrics that codifies the expectation that GE instructors discuss the value and role of GE in the context of the whole degree.
- GE Code changes: GE Committee should discuss adding the requirement that outcome data review should be a part of any general education course designation “review” process or cycle.
- Form a GE Assessment Implementation Committee (Michael Torrens, John Louviere, Assoc. Vice Provost for General Education, +)
- GE Assessment Task Force should work on some narrative, mission statement language. Our focus is: What we are trying to achieve is to make all teaching in GE courses meaningful by continually connecting faculty to the GE program outcomes and the outcomes that are produced by excellent instruction. / Real goal is improving student learning by encouraging better courses. But along the way we can satisfy institutional accountability reporting requirements.