GENERAL EDUCATION ASSESSMENT COMMITTEE (GEAC) AY 2015 - 2016

FINAL REPORT ON GENERAL EDUCATION ASSESSMENT

Submitted to the Office of the Provost
by the General Education Assessment Committee
5/11/2016

General Education Assessment Committee

Officers:
Mary Eicholtz, Chair
Krista Prock, Vice Chair
Varsha Pandya, Secretary

College of Business	Stephen Hensler
College of Education	Georgeos Sirrakos
College of Liberal Arts & Sciences	Varsha Pandya, Secretary
College of Visual & Performing Arts	Valerie Trollinger (sabbatical Spring 2016)
At-large Teaching Faculty	Robert Folk
At-large Teaching Faculty	Mary Eicholtz, Chair
At-Large Teaching Faculty	Kim Shively
At-Large Non-Teaching Faculty	Krista Prock, Vice-Chair Strategic
Planning and Resources Committee	William Donner
Division of Administration and Finance	Matthew Delaney
Academic Dean	David Beougher
Office of Assessment	Gil Clary
Student Government Board	
General Education Committee	Patti Derr
Clerical Support	Kathi Malloy

Academic Year 2015-2016

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- The General Education Assessment Committee is charged with directly assessing student learning outcomes for the KU General Education Program. In this fifth year of its existence, the committee continues the assessment and renewal plan that was developed in accordance with its bylaws.

- This is the General Education Assessment Committee's fourth annual report, based on the approved assessment plan, which analyzes data from AY15-16 relevant to Goal 1 of the General Education Program:

  - To cultivate intellectual and practical skills that are practiced extensively, across the curriculum, in the context of progressively more challenging problems, projects, and standards.

- Data were derived from course-embedded instruments addressing learning outcomes in eight of ten domains of Goal 1: Inquiry and Analysis; Decision Making, Critical Thinking; Written Communication; Oral Communication; Quantitative Literacy; Information Literacy; and Team Building and Problem Solving. No data was submitted for Creative Thinking; or Wellness.

- A curriculum map, previously developed by asking department chairs to indicate which courses in their curriculum met each of the different domains for the three general education goals, was used for course selection. For this assessment, courses typically taken by beginning students were identified. GEAC recruited volunteer faculty to assess their course using the identified domain.

- A PowerPoint instructional module was created by the GEAC committee that highlighted the essence of assessment and how to complete the necessary reports for their domain. This module was used to support both the recruitment and training of volunteer faculty. Additionally GEAC members met with several departments and individuals one-on-one.

- Data were gathered using templates based on the VALUE (Valid Assessment of Undergraduate Education) rubrics created by the Association of American Colleges and Universities. The rubrics or reporting templates were adapted by GEAC to create a common rating scheme for use across disciplines.

- For the assessment of Goal 1 domains, data from 48 classes, totaling 1526 data points representing student academic performance, revealed some strengths and weaknesses in the assessment process.

- While an increase in the number of courses, sections and data points are reported in this assessment report, GEAC continues to be challenged with faculty compliance in reporting data with little consequence to not doing so. Data for two of the ten domains was not received.

- As many courses identified for meeting General Education goals are large lecture classes, obtaining data that is more reflective of the goals than final grades or questions on an exam is difficult.

- GEAC recommends a revision to the General Education Assessment Plan be developed and approved during the 2016-2017 AY so that more meaningful and normed data can be used for recommendations to the General Education Plan

- Faculty compliance in data collection and submission continues to be a challenge, which leads to insufficient data for analysis and recommendations.

I.   INTRODUCTION

The General Education Assessment Committee (GEAC) has been charged with collecting and analyzing assessment data on student learning outcomes emerging from Kutztown University's General Education Program. The General Education Program, in its fifth year of implementation, consists of three Learning Goals each containing a number of specific domains:

Goal 1 - To cultivate intellectual and practical skills that are practiced extensively, across the curriculum, in the context of progressively more challenging problems, projects, and standards for performance,
Goal 2 - To develop an understanding of human cultures and the physical and natural world that is focused by engagement with big questions, both contemporary and enduring, and,
Goal 3 - To inculcate a sense of personal and social responsibility that is anchored through active involvement with diverse communities and real world challenges.

The structural components that facilitate achieving the Learning Goals of this General Education Program include:
- The University Core Curriculum, containing 12 credits distributed across four areas: Oral Communication, Written Communication, Mathematics,and Wellness;
- University Distribution Requirements, containing 15 credits distributed across five areas: Natural Sciences, Humanities, Social Sciences, Arts, and Free Electives
- Competencies across the Curriculum, thematic courses containing 21 credits distributed across five themes (9 credits in Writing Intensive; 3 credits each in Quantitative Literacy or Computer Intensive; Visual Literacy or Communication Intensive; Cultural Diversity; and Critical Thinking.

Because the program consists of three goals, GEAC rotate through the goals in a three-year assessment cycle. In the first year, the GEAC evaluated learning outcome data relevant to Goal 1; in the second year, learning outcome data relevant to Goal 2 was evaluated; and in the third year, learning data relevant to Goal 3 was evaluated. Following the completion of the cycle, GEAC spent one academic year evaluating its process and results from the study. This report covers the fifth year of the second assessment cycle and addresses the assessment of student learning outcomes relevant to Goal 1 for the second time.

Each year GEAC is charged with submitting data-informed recommendations to the Division of Academic and Student Affairs. At the conclusion of each three-year cycle, GEAC submits an additional report to the Division of Academic and Student Affairs and the General Education Committee. The purpose of each annual report is to make recommendations on the allocation of resources to improve the student learning outcomes of the General Education Program, as well as the General Education Assessment process. The triennial report will also make recommendations on any potential structural changes required to improve the quality and effectiveness of the General Education Program.

II. METHODS

The General Education Assessment Plan, which was approved by APSCUF-KU Representative Council, University Senate, and the University Curriculum Committee, mandates that GEAC analyze data collected by departments

in which General Education courses are taught. To facilitate this effort, GEAC provided departments with standardized reporting templates that were adapted from the VALUE rubrics developed by the Association of American Colleges & Universities (AAC&U).

These templates ask departments to report raw numbers of students demonstrating suggested behavioral achievement and/or quality of work on a descending level of performance, with "4" being the highest performance level and "1" being the lowest level of performance. There is also a "0" category for those failing to achieve the minimum expected level of performance. The templates also ask departments to summarize information about the type of assignment or evaluation instrument used and a description of their criterion of success.

Additionally, a PowerPoint, self-guided instruction about general education assessment, using the reporting rubrics, and report writing was developed by the committee. Volunteers were also given the opportunity to attend an information session or receive individual instruction from a GEAC member to ask questions or for more information in order to facilitate the use of the reporting templates. Instructors were free to propose their own methods of examining student learning, but the results were to be submitted using the approved reporting templates.

Having collected the assessment data from these courses, GEAC analyzed the data, considered recommendations proposed by the assessing departments, and drafted this report to be submitted to the Division of Academic and Student Affairs.

The number of courses, not class sections available and the number that committed then completed data collection for each domain is summarized below.

Goal 1 Domains	Possible number of courses available*	Number of Courses Committing to Collect Data after Request	Number of Courses that Collected Data
1.1 Inquiry and analysis	8	2	1
1.2 Decision making	8	1	1
1.3a Critical thinking	9	5	3
1.3b Creative thinking	5	3	0
1.4a Written communication	6	5	4
1.4b Oral Communication	5	3	3
1.5 Quantitative literacy	6	1	1
1.6 Information literacy	5	2	1
1.7 Teamwork and problem solving	10	2	1
1.8 Wellness	1	2	0

*Courses identified from the curricular map or approved General Education Competencies

SUMMARY OF ASSESSMENT REPORTS

Core Requirement	N	Percent Reported at Level 4	Percent Reported at Level 3	Percent Reported at Level 2	Percent Reported at Level 1	Percent Reported at Level 0
Domain 1.1 Inquiry and Analysis	44	0%	7%	89%	2%	2%
Domain 1.2 Decision Making	264	31%	15%	11%	36%	8%
Domain 1.3a Critical Thinking	265	36%	46%	17%	4%	0%
Domain 1.4a Written Communication	118	33%	25%	19%	10%	13%
Domain 1.4b Oral Communication	698	11%	38%	35%	21%	1%
Domain 1.5 Quantitative Literacy	41	19%	5%	44%	22%	10%
Domain 1.6 Information Literacy	39	61%	18%	15%	5%	10%
Domain 1.7 Team Building & Problem Solving	57	9%	61%	13%	7%	0%

** No data was submitted for Domains 1.3b, and 1.8

III.   ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

The data presented to GEAC (obtained from a total of 1526 data points representing student academic performance distributed across 48 courses, and the analyses compiled by the individual departments reveal strengths, as well as areas in which student performance may need to improve. In the absence of benchmarks, it is difficult to make specific recommendations about improvement.

With this overview of the year 5 findings, we turn to the assessment of each individual domain.

Domain 1.1 Inquiry and Analysis

One course was used to assess student performance for Domain 1.1. Both were from a social science program and were from introductory level courses.

	Performance Levels				
Courses – Domain 1.1	**4**	**3**	**2**	**1**	**Below 1**
100 level (1 course)	0	7%	89%	2%	2%

This assessment used a three criteria rubric as a translation of the University GEAC rubric. This translation is relevant to the behavioral and course objectives in the discipline's Gen Ed courses, and will be useful for the department beyond this evaluation. The criteria evaluated the inquiry and analysis of perspectives found in

texts; moving from the freshman's self as center for analyzing experiences to an understanding of how others see and interpret their often very different experiences.

The assessment found the majority of (42 out 44) students in the two courses had, by the end, the ability to:
1) frame answers to assignments by connecting, at a minimum, a number of similar works (by theme, by genre, by sub- genre, by gender role)
2) explain those connections in ways that were clearly meaningful to the subject of the course
3) connect those explanations to worldviews beyond their personal perspectives, values, and experiences.

In conclusion, this 100 level course assessed students are satisfactorily and appropriately developing the inquiry and analysis skills to, at least, level 2 of the GEAC Rubric.

Domain 1.2: Decision Making

Four different entry level Math courses were assessed for this domain. Final exam questions and course grades were used to determine levels of competency.

Courses – Domain 1.2	n	Performance Levels				
		4	**3**	**2**	**1**	**Below 1**
	264	31%	15%	11%	36%	8%

Instructors admitted that students did poorly in this area and suggested that placement testing might be used as a benchmark. It was also suggested that more class time needed to be spent on decision making.

Domain 1.3a: Critical Thinking

Two instructors of Anthropology 010 assessed four classes of students with 10 embedded multiple choice questions that were oriented to issues of critical thinking. The students were sorted into four groups based on the number of correct answers. One of the professors also gave a short optional essay question to 48 students that were eligible based upon class attendance. It should be noted that the best students in this group did not take test because they did not need the extra credit. Additionally many of the weakest students did not take the test because they were ineligible for not coming to class.
One person from another department passed in a superficial and uninterpretable result.

Courses – Domain 1.3a	n	Performance Levels				
		4	**3**	**2**	**1**	**Below 1**
000 level	265	36%	46%	17%	4%	0%

Courses – Domain 1.3a	n	Performance Levels				
		4	**3**	**2**	**1**	**Below 1**
Group 1 – TRIO		52%	42%	4%	.8%	
Group 2		20%	49%	29%	2%	
Group 2 Essay		25%	25%	35%	15%	

Professor 1 taught a section made up of TRIO students and they did about as well as the other section.

Both professors found that the students did better on these questions than on the test in general. Both have reservations about whether these accurately measure student ability in critical thinking. Both suggest that essays are a better way to assess critical thinking and that critical thinking is better measured in upper division classes.

The other uninterpretable report indicates that there is some resistance and/or lack of interest in this type of assessment. Both anthropology professors are members of GEAC and have a more stake in the process.

Domain 1.4a: Written Communication

Student performance in three courses was assessed, in three separate departments. Using the AAC&U's VALUE rubric, they assessed a written artifact (three different artifacts from three different courses).

		Performance Levels				
Courses – Domain 1.4a	**n**	**4**	**3**	**2**	**1**	**Below 1**
	118	33%	25%	19%	10%	13%

As the artifacts straddled departments and courses, results were mixed. One faculty member judged the assessment results a success; another seemed to indicate assessment figures were lower than expected; and another instructor indicated their assessment results did not meet their initial goal (75% of students scoring a 2, 3, or 4 was expected, but only 64% did so). Taken together, 91 of 118 students (or 77%) scored a 2, 3, or 4 on the assessment. As an initial result, this figure is promising; however, it should be taken into account that the artifacts resulted from three different courses and instructors, each of whom provided different writing/genre instruction parameters that affected the production and interpretation of final artifacts being used for assessment. Overall, the assessment is an important first step in collecting data from a variety of writing-intensive general education courses. It should provide a helpful starting point (as well as discussion point) in examining written communication across the university moving forward.

Other Fall 2015 Written Communication-related Assessment Efforts

In Fall 2015, the English Department, as part of its ongoing efforts to assess ENG 023: College Composition, assessed instructor assignments. In attempting to reconcile the differences between student artifacts and instructor assignments in achieving course outcomes, the English Department adapted the student research project assessment rubric to accommodate the instructors' assignment handout for the same project. On question 10 of the assessment, "The assignment allows students the opportunity to demonstrate proficiency in all or most of the learning objectives for English 023," 75.8% of the assignments were judged to meet this standard. Because they feel this number should be as close to 100% as possible, the members of the English Department assessment group are currently investigating how to work with their fellow instructors to revise their assignments to be sure they allow all students taking ENG 023 the opportunity to score proficiently on subsequent assessment efforts.

Domain 1.4b: Oral Communication

Students in two sections of a foreign language department and 26 sections of Public Speaking were assessed For Domain 1.4b: oral Communication using the final presentation in their class. Seven hundred (700) students were assessed using classroom specific grading rubrics that were then translated onto the GEAC rubrics.

Courses – Domain 1.5	n	Performance Levels				
		4	3	2	1	Below 1
Foreign Language	43	0%	23%	63%	17%	0%
Public Speaking	655	12%	39%	28%	20%	1%
Total	698	11%	38%	35%	21%	1%

The levels of Quality of Work from these two sections of the Foreign Language class in line with the level of achievement expected from novice language learners. The majority of the learners are able to communicate in a second language adequately after much preparation and practice Performance Level 2. The outliers on the higher end of Performance Level 3 are either heritage learners; or students with more background than required for this level and/or highly motivated to learn a second language. Those at the lower end of the Performance Level 1 were very anxious in front of a group; underprepared; or were lacking speaking skills/presentational skills in general.

In the Public Speaking sections, the majority of students met the criteria for levels 2 and 3 (67%). This class is the first presentation class many students take at the college level.

Domain 1.5: Quantitative Literacy

Student performance in three separate courses was assessed, in two different departments participated in the assessment of Domain 1.5 (Quantitative Literacy) in the Fall 2015 semester.   The departments used different artifacts to assess this domain. One department used an analytical paper where students had to select a social outcome, identify variables they believe influence that outcome, and test their hypotheses using various statistical analysis methods. The other department used an objective final exam to assess Domain 1.5.

Courses – Domain 1.5	n	Performance Levels				
		4	3	2	1	Below 1
	41	19%	5%	44%	22%	10%

Overall, the assessments were carried out well. They provide a good starting point for assessing Domain 1.5. Faculty participants interpreted the results as reasonable. Taken together, 28 of 41 students (or 68%) performed on at least a Level 2 performance indicator. As an initial result, this figure is promising because these are students are enrolled in an introductory level course and it is likely their first university-level encounter with quantitative literacy.

It should be noted that two different types of assessments were evaluated, which could have resulted in a skewed evaluation of student performance. One artifact was an objective final exam and the other was an analytical paper. This is important because when the total sample was broken down into the respective courses, there was a discrepancy in the number of students able to perform at the highest performance indicator (Level 4). For example, 8 students reached a Level 4 when an objective final exam was used as the assessment but 0 students reached a Level 4 when the analytical paper was used as the assessment. Further, it appeared that the analytical paper more fully encompassed the descriptors associated with each performance indicator level whereas the objective final exam seemed to encompass only a few of the descriptors.

Domain 1.6: Information Literacy

Student performance in two courses was assessed. In Course 1, students were asked to create a PowerPoint presentation on a specific topic, and do research to find that content. In Course 2, students were asked to create promotional materials for a project, program, event, or service, and the assignment involved research.

		Performance Levels				
Courses – Domain 1.6	**n**	**4**	**3**	**2**	**1**	**Below 1**
	39	61%	18%	15%	5%	10%

It should be noted that in Course 2, all students performed at level 4.

The faculty interpreted the results to indicate that the course succeeded in reaching the objectives. Faculty specifically mentioned that students were able to organize and synthesize the information they found. No conclusions about these results can be drawn due to the low sample size.

Domain 1.7: Team Work and Problem Solving

Assessments of Domain 1.7 were made in three sections of a junior level class on a total of 57 students. For the assignment, students work in groups to develop innovative puppet performances, using theater, visual arts, language arts, and digital storytelling. The rating of each individual student was based on self and peer assessment of how each member contributed to the project and worked through conflicts and problems as they arose, professor's observations during group work time, and the final performance.

		Performance Levels				
Courses – Domain 1.7	**n**	**4**	**3**	**2**	**1**	**Below 1**
	57	9%	61%	13%	7%	0%

The faculty member interpreted the results to indicate that with respect to teamwork and problem solving, these junior-level students are "strong, developing and may continue to grow during the next year and a half." This interpretation was based on the finding that 84% achieved Levels 2 and 3 and with an assignment that was characterized as challenging, rigorous, and requires much planning and abstract thought.

The GEAC concurs that students are performing at an appropriate level and it appears that having 70% of students at a junior level working on an assignment in their major should be achieving a Level 3. Moreover, this finding, along with the faculty's discussion about those students who demonstrated a Level 1, provides some support that we can take these results seriously.   Overall, the assessment was carried out well and provides good information about advanced students' performance on this general education domain, albeit in two majors in the professional realm.

IV. RECOMMENDATIONS

GEAC has organized our recommendations under three headings, addressing proposed changes to the General Education Program, actions by which we can improve the process by which General Education is assessed at Kutztown University, and the allocation of resources for the continuous improvement of General Education.

Curricular Improvements to the General Education Program

The second page of the reporting template allows faculty members to share information about their assessment methods, results of the assessment, and recommendations. This opportunity for input in an open response format provides GEAC with the necessary information to evaluate the data and support recommendations for change. It is the desire of the GEAC Committee that the assessment methods will consist of something that measures specific learning objects and not simply the final grade for the course

As has been reported in the past, instructors doing the assessment cited time to assess students adequately, norming and or the appropriate assessment measures, and large class sizes as obstacle to obtaining data. It particularly was noted that large classes (+70 students) do not have the opportunity to assess students in ways other than objective exams. This method may not allow the most effective way to measure the student learning outcomes.

GEAC continues to be concerned with the broadness or ambiguity of the General Education program. While it is beneficial for students to be able to use almost any course to meet some general education goal, it is difficult to identify which courses are directly focusing on specific general education goals. Identifying courses that are addressing these goals, using a curricular map or some other process, is challenging.

GEAC also questions the number of General Education domains with each goal. A more focused approach to the General Education program would allow for more direct assessment of learning outcomes. The current program does not guarantee that a student will take a course that is identified as meeting the General Education domains.

Assessment Process

During this assessment period, all instructors contributing data used the GEAC rubrics for assessing student work and reporting data. This practice is an improvement over previous periods. Several faculty reported that the rubric reflected their learning outcomes and helped the refine their assessment methods in the classroom.

More courses and sections (48) were assessed during this period than any previous period. Additionally 1526 data points was a significant increase to previous reporting periods. However, GEAC continues to struggle with faculty reporting compliance and lack of consequence for non-compliance. Until participation in General Education assessment is compulsory and non-compliance yields consequences faculty and administration take seriously, it will be difficult to gather meaningful data. Without meaningful data, it is difficult make substantive recommendations for change. Although there are many faculty committed to assessment, time and energy to learn about what is necessary for adequate assessment or to complete assessment projects, continues to be a barrier for many others.

After much discussion, the GEAC has concluded that a different General Education Assessment Plan needs to be developed for approval by the University Curriculum Committee, Faculty Senate, and APSCUF. The current plan does not provide enough good data for recommendations or faculty development. Additionally, identifying, collecting and analyzing data for all 23 domains of the three goals is not practical in a three year period. The Committee will begin the process of an Assessment Plan revision during the 2016-2017 AY.

Resource Allocation to Improve General Education

GEAC recommends that a group of department liaisons be identified for the purpose of communication with important information to departments, thus improving communication with faculty about GEAC needs in terms of assessment.

GEAC commends the Division of Academic and Student Affairs for funding previous general education assessment efforts. We encourage them to continue supporting these endeavors, as we believe there is sufficient data to show the advance in the culture of assessment across campus is directly tied to this support.