GENERAL EDUCATION ASSESSMENT COMMITTEE (GEAC) AY 2017 - 2018

FINAL REPORT ON GENERAL EDUCATION ASSESSMENT

Submitted to the Office of the Provost
and General Education Committee

by the General Education Assessment Committee
8/16/2018

General Education Assessment Committee

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Academic Year 2017-2018

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- The General Education Assessment Committee is charged with directly assessing student learning outcomes for the KU General Education Program. In the seventh year of its existence, the committee continues the assessment and renewal plan that was developed in accordance with its bylaws with some modification to the original plan.
- This is the General Education Assessment Committee's sixth annual report, based on the approved assessment plan, which analyzed data from AY17-18 relevant to the Critical Thinking and Writing Intensive competencies of the General Education Program.
- Data were gathered using student work samples and evaluated using templates based on the VALUE (Valid Assessment of Undergraduate Education) rubrics created by the Association of American Colleges and Universities and modified by the General Education Assessment Committee. The rubrics or reporting templates were adapted by GEAC to create a common rating scheme for use across disciplines.
- For the assessment, a total of 212 student work samples representing the Critical Thinking competency and 256 student work samples representing the writing intensive competency were collected from students completing their last requirement in each of the competencies. The student samples revealed some strengths and weaknesses in the assessment process as well as the general education program.
- The methodology for the AY 17 – 18 used the same methodology piloted in AY 16 – 17. Students who were completing their first CT course and third WI course were identified by Institutional Research (IR). Instructors in these courses were notified to send a student work sample from these particular students who had completed their requirements for these competencies to the assessment committee. These work products were evaluated by 28 independent raters.
- Overall, of the 166 faculty who were asked to submit student work, 82 or 48% of the faculty complied and provided 468 pieces of student work between the two competencies. Approximately 37% of the student samples were reviewed and scored.
- Twenty-six faculty volunteers reviewed anonymous student samples against the VALUE rubric. Ten percent of the samples were scored by two raters to evaluate intercoder reliability. Overall, 42% of the two scores were within .5 of each other and 63% of them were within one performance level.
- The average score for the Critical Thinking competency was 2.13 on a scale of 4.0. For the Writing Intensive competency, the average performance level was 2.77.

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 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, Written Communication, 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 rotates 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. As part of the process evaluation, the committee determined that it would be more productive to evaluate two of the University competencies this year. The competencies selected for the 17 – 18 academic year were Critical Thinking and written communication effectiveness through the Writing Intensive competency.

Each year GEAC is charged with submitting data-informed recommendations to the Division of Academic and Student Affairs and the University Curriculum Committee. At the conclusion of each three-year cycle, GEAC also 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 for 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. This will be the last report under the general education assessment plan approved for the general education program implemented in 2011. A new assessment plan has been developed for the 2018 general education program.

II. METHODS

A. The Data

Last year, the committee shifted its focus from a course centered unit of analysis where data from all the students in a course identified as achieving a particular SLO were assessed to a student focused approach, where students' progress was assessed and the students were the analysis unit. We continued that focus this year and after some minor modifications to the methodology used in 17 – 18, we once again asked faculty to submit student work samples.

Two of the five competencies that are part of the general education program are Writing Intensive and Critical Thinking. GEAC wanted to know if students were achieving SLOs aligned with the competencies by the time they completed their required number of competency courses. Each student must complete one CT course and three WI courses. Institutional Research (IR) was asked to identify each student who was completing their required CT course requirement for general education in the Spring 2018 semester along with their instructor and course. Additionally, IR identified students in their third WI class during the spring 2018 semester. Their efforts produced two spreadsheets with a potential of 715 potential student work samples from 99 faculty members for the WI competency and 543 student samples from 62 faculty members for the Critical Thinking competency.

Each faculty on the list was sent a request (Appendix A) to submit a student work sample demonstrating the student learning outcome for the students in their classes who were in their final required CT or WI requirements. A copy of the description of the SLO and the VALUE rubric for Critical Thinking and written communication (Appendix B and C) used in the evaluation was included to help faculty select an appropriate assignment. Students from modern language who were completing assignments in a different language were eliminated because evaluators would not be able to process their assignments. Faculty submitted the student work samples to the assessment office in hard copy. Tables 1 and 2 describe the responses received from faculty. Faculty who contacted the committee with reasons as to why student work samples could not be submitted and faculty who submitted their samples after the deadline were counted as participating, however, the work samples were not included in those evaluated.

Department	# Fac req'ed	# Fac sub'ing	% Fac Comply	# stud samples sub'ed	# samples excused	#samples sub'ed but not used	Unsub'ed req'ed samples	Total number of samples
Anthro/Soc	2	0	0%	0	0	0	3	3
Art Education	1	1	100%	1	0	0	0	1
Art History	3	1	33%	15	5	0	6	26
Biology	1	0	0%	0	0	0	13	13
Business Administration	3	0	0%	0	0	0	18	18
Communication Design	3	0	0%	0	0	0	10	10
Communication Studies	5	3	60%	2	2	0	12	16
Computer Science	2	2	100%	11	0	18	0	29
Cinema, TV, Media	1	1	100%	11	4	0	0	15
Elementary Education	1	0	0%	0	0	0	2	2
English	15	6	40%	11	11	5	44	71
Geography	1	1	100%	1	0	0	0	1
History	3	1	33%	4	3	0	7	14
Music	2	1	50%	65	16	1	38	120
Philosophy	5	4	80%	43	20	6	10	79
Physical Science	2	1	50%	1	1	0	4	6
Political Science	2	1	50%	4	1	1	4	10
Psychology	5	3	60%	4	1	4	2	11
Secondary Education	1	0	0%	0	0	0	23	23
Social Work	7	2	29%	20	7	1	42	70
Special Education	1	1	100%	0	0	0	0	0
Sport Management	1	1	100%	4	0	1	0	5
TOTAL	67	30	45%	197	71	37	238	543

Table 1: Faculty Requests and Submissions for Critical Thinking – Part 1 Assessment Data

Department	# Fac req'ed	# Fac sub'ing	% Fac Comply	# stud samples sub'ed	# samples excused	#samples sub'ed but not used	Unsub'ed req'ed samples	Total number of samples
College of Business								
Business Administration	3	0	0%	0	0	0	18	18
Sport Management	1	1	100%	4	0	1	0	5
TOTAL	4	1	25%	4	0	1	18	23
College of Education								
Elementary Education	1	0	0%	0	0	0	2	2
Secondary Education	1	0	0%	0	0	0	23	23
Special Education	1	1	100%	0	0	0	0	0
TOTAL	3	1	33%	0	0	0	25	25
Liberal Arts & Sciences								
Anthro/Soc	2	0	0%	0	0	0	3	3
Biology	1	0	0%	0	0	0	13	13
Computer Science	2	2	100%	11	0	18	0	29
English	15	6	40%	11	11	5	44	71
Geography	1	1	100%	1	0	0	0	1
History	3	1	33%	4	3	0	7	14
Philosophy	5	4	80%	43	20	6	10	79
Physical Science	2	1	50%	1	1	0	4	6
Political Science	2	1	50%	4	1	1	4	10
Psychology	5	3	60%	4	1	4	2	11
Social Work	7	2	29%	20	7	1	42	70
TOTAL	45	21	47%	99	44	35	129	307
Visual & Performing Arts								
Art Education	1	1	100%	1	0	0	0	1
Art History	3	1	33%	15	5	0	6	26
Communication Design	3	0	0%	0	0	0	10	10
Communication Studies	5	3	60%	2	2	0	12	16
Cinema, TV, Media	1	1	100%	11	4	0	0	15
Music	2	1	50%	65	16	1	38	120
TOTAL	15	7	47%	94	27	1	66	188

Table 1: Faculty Requests and Submissions for Critical Thinking competency – Part 2 Assessment Data

	# Fac req'ed	# Fac sub'ing	% Fac Comply	# stud samples sub'ed	# samples excused	#samples sub'ed but not used	Unsubmitted requ'ed samples	Total number of samples
Anthro/Soc	7	2	29%	11	0	0	40	51
Art History	3	2	67%	8	2	0	9	19
Arts Education & Crafts	1	0	0%	0	0	0	15	15
Biology	1	0	0%	0	0	0	8	8
Business Administration	7	2	29%	18	5	0	88	111
Communication Studies	4	4	100%	20	2	0	0	22
Computer Science	3	1	33%	6	0	0	16	22
Cinema, TV, & Media	1	0	0%	0	0	0	1	1
Criminal Justice	5	3	60%	16	1	0	27	44
Elementary Education	5	2	40%	2	0	12	15	29
English	17	9	53%	62	11	8	52	133
Geography	2	2	100%	8	0	0	0	8
History	4	1	25%	1	2	0	4	7
Library & Learning Tech	1	1	100%	1	0	0	0	1
Mathematics	2	2	100%	2	1	0	0	3
Modern Languages	3	3	100%	0	15	0	0	15
Music	1	1	100%	11	14	0	0	25
Philosophy	5	4	80%	10	2	0	7	19
Physical Science	4	2	50%	13	3	0	12	28
Political Science	3	3	100%	19	3	0	0	22
Psychology	8	4	50%	16	1	2	25	44
Secondary Education	3	2	67%	5	3	0	3	11
Social Work	4	0	0%	0	0	0	24	24
Special Education	2	2	100%	6	5	0	0	11
Sport Management	3	0	0%	0	0	0	42	42
TOTAL	99	52	53%	235	70	22	388	715

Table 2: Faculty Requests and Submissions Writing Intensive competency – Part 1 Assessment Data

	# Fac req'ed	# Fac sub'ing	% Fac Comply	# stud samples sub'ed	# samples excused	#samples sub'ed but not used	Unsubmitted requ'ed samples	Total number of samples
College of Business								
Business Administration	7	2	29%	18	5	0	88	111
Sport Management	3	0	0%	0	0	0	42	42
TOTAL	10	2	20%	18	5	0	130	153
College of Education								
Elementary Education	5	2	40%	2	0	12	15	29
Library & Learning Tech	1	1	100%	1	0	0	0	1
Secondary Education	3	2	67%	5	3	0	3	11
Special Education	2	2	100%	6	5	0	0	11
TOTAL	11	7	64%	14	8	12	18	52
Liberal Arts & Sciences								
Anthro/Soc	7	2	29%	11	0	0	40	51
Biology	1	0	0%	0	0	0	8	8
Computer Science	3	1	33%	6	0	0	16	22
Criminal Justice	5	3	60%	16	1	0	27	44
English	17	9	53%	62	11	8	52	133
Geography	2	2	100%	8	0	0	0	8
History	4	1	25%	1	2	0	4	7
Mathematics	2	2	100%	2	1	0	0	3
Modern Languages	3	3	100%	0	15	0	0	15
Philosophy	5	4	80%	10	2	0	7	19
Physical Science	4	2	50%	13	3	0	12	28
Political Science	3	3	100%	19	3	0	0	22
Psychology	8	4	50%	16	1	2	25	44
Social Work	4	0	0%	0	0	0	24	24
Sport Management	3	0	0%	0	0	0	42	42
TOTAL	71	36	51%	164	39	10	257	470
Visual & Performing Arts								
Art History	3	2	67%	8	2	0	9	19
Arts Education & Crafts	1	0	0%	0	0	0	15	15
Communication Studies	4	4	100%	20	2	0	0	22
Cinema, TV, & Media	1	0	0%	0	0	0	1	1
Music	1	1	100%	11	14	0	0	25
TOTAL	10	7	70%	39	18	0	25	82

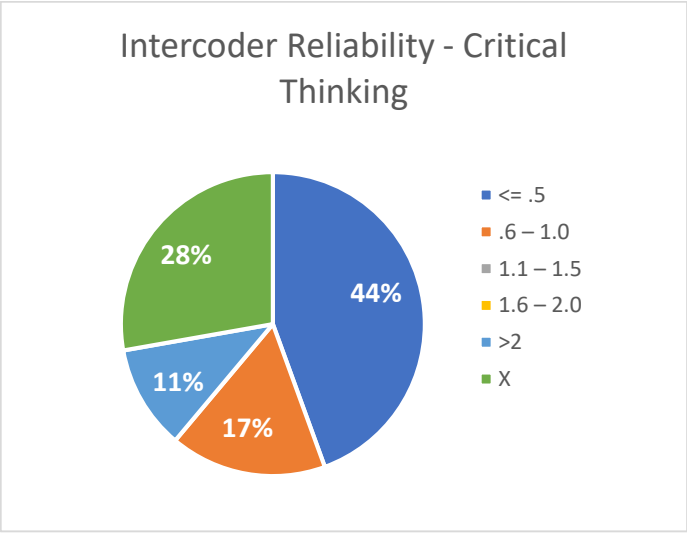
Table 2: Faculty Requests and Submissions for Writing Intensive competency – Part 2 Assessment Data

Some faculty did contact GEAC to say they would not be submitting data because their course did not have an appropriate assignment to measure the SLO. Some simply refused to comply. Some faculty contacted GEAC to report that some students were no longer in their classes.

All student work samples submitted were selected for assessment. The samples were coded for CT or WI, course level, course prefix, student credits earned, college, and degrees sought. They were randomly distributed to the raters.

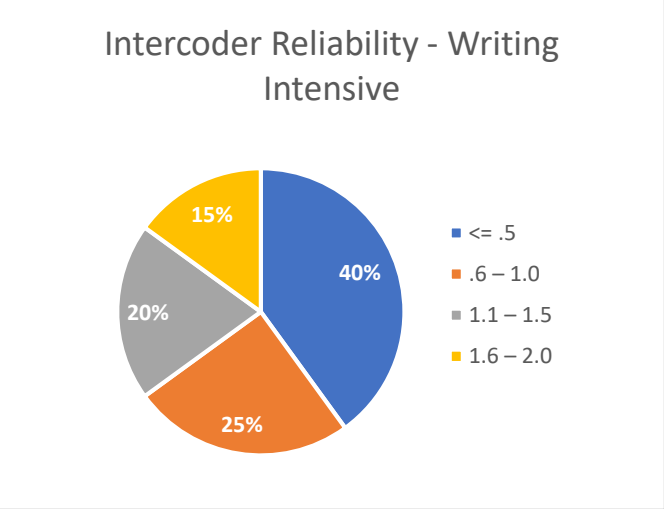
B. The Assessors and Process

GEAC asked for faculty volunteers to serve as raters. Twenty-six faculty from across the university volunteered to participate. Each faculty member attended one of four training and norming sessions where the process was explained. The assessors were divided into two groups (Critical Thinking and Writing Intensive) according to their area of study or comfort level in evaluating the student samples. Each group discussed the VALUE rubric in their area and evaluated three student samples as a group to norm or calibrate the rubric. Discussion about what constituted each performance level among the group assured that samples were being evaluated consistently. Following the group calibrations, each assessor was assigned 20-22 student samples to review and score. Ten percent of the student samples were assessed by two assessors. The samples selected to determine intercoder reliability were compared by the assessment coordinator. The consistency between raters is summarized in Chart 1 and Chart 2. Eighteen samples were evaluated twice by Critical Thinking raters. Sixty-one percent of the raters evaluated the same sample within one competency level. Eleven percent of the raters scored the same sample at more than two different competency levels while 28% of the raters had one sample indicated as not enough information or inappropriate information (X). Twenty samples in the writing intensive group were assessed by two raters and 65% of the samples were rated within one competency level.



	<= .5	.6 – 1.0	1.1 – 1.5	1.6 – 2.0	>2	X
N=18	8	3			2	5
	44%	17%			11%	28%

Chart 1: Summary of Inter-coder Reliability – Critical Thinking samples



	<= .5	.6 – 1.0	1.1 – 1.5	1.6 – 2.0
N=20	8	5	4	3
	40%	25%	20%	15%

Chart 2: Summary of Inter-coder Reliability – Writing Intensive samples

In a study reported by AAUP (Finley, 2011) on the reliability of the VALUE rubrics, the percentage of assessors scoring samples the same was 28-36% depending on the rubric. Our inter-rater reliability is greater at 40-44% of the samples given the same score. Additionally, 61% of the CT samples and 65% of the WRI samples were coded within one performance level.

III. ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

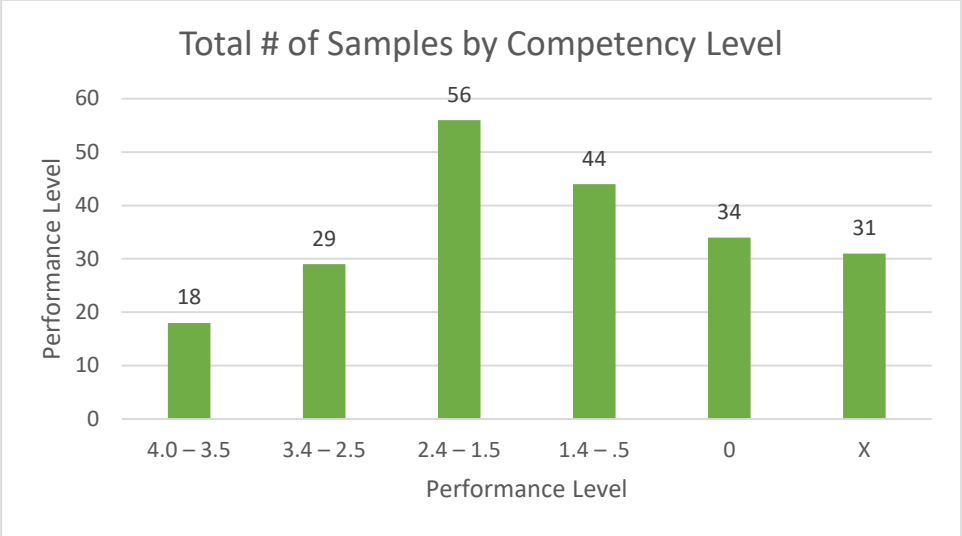
The data from 200 Critical Thinking student samples and 255 writing intensive student samples were assessed. The critical thinking samples included 16 different course prefixes and 23 different courses from across the University. The writing intensive samples included 23 different course prefixes and 43 different courses. The analysis reveals strengths, as well as areas in which student performance may need to improve. Additionally, concerns about the General Education program were revealed.

A. Critical Thinking Competency

The following results are based on the review of 200 pieces of student work samples submitted by instructors. Students were taking their first CT course in their General Education curriculum. Data were coded for course level, course prefix, college, credits earned, and degree sought. The rubric used for the assessment can be found in Appendix B. Specifically, critical thinking is defined as:

> Definition: Critical thinking is a habit of mind characterized by the exploration of issues, artifacts and events before accepting or formulating an opinion or conclusion.

On a scale of one to four, with four being capstone level and one being benchmark level; the overall average score for the Critical Thinking was 2.13. Fifty-nine samples did not have enough information or were inappropriate for evaluation.



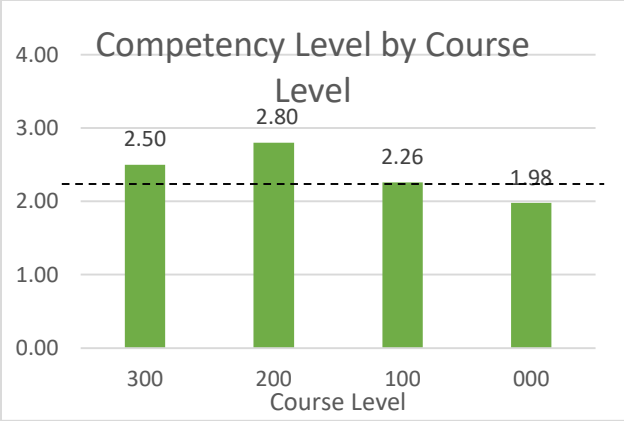
Key:

4-1 = Levels of performance
0 = Not enough information in the assignment to evaluate
X = Submitted assignment inappropriate for Student Learning Outcome

Comp. Level	4.0 – 3.5	3.4 – 2.5	2.4 – 1.5	1.4 – .5	0	X	2.13 Avg.
n	18	29	56	44	34	31	212

Chart/Table 3: Performance Level Frequency of Student Work Samples – Critical Thinking

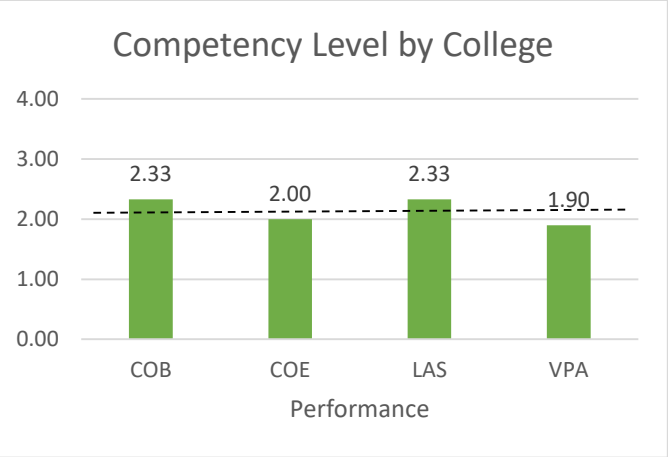
When samples were grouped by course level, as the course level increased, an increase in the performance level is evident except at 300 or highest level. Typical entry courses (000) received the lowest performance level scores (1.98) while 200 level courses scored the highest at 2.80. It should be noted that over half the samples (88) of the samples that could be assessed were at the 000 course level. This result is typical in that many entry level courses in the general education curriculum attached a CT requirement to them. Additionally, there were only 16 samples at the 300 level. Most students would not be taking their first CT course at the 300 level courses as part of their general education requirements.



	300	200	100	000	
AVG	2.50	2.80	2.26	1.98	2.13
N	16	5	32	88	141
0/X	4	2	21	32	59

Chart/Table 4: Performance Assessment Result by Course Level - Critical Thinking

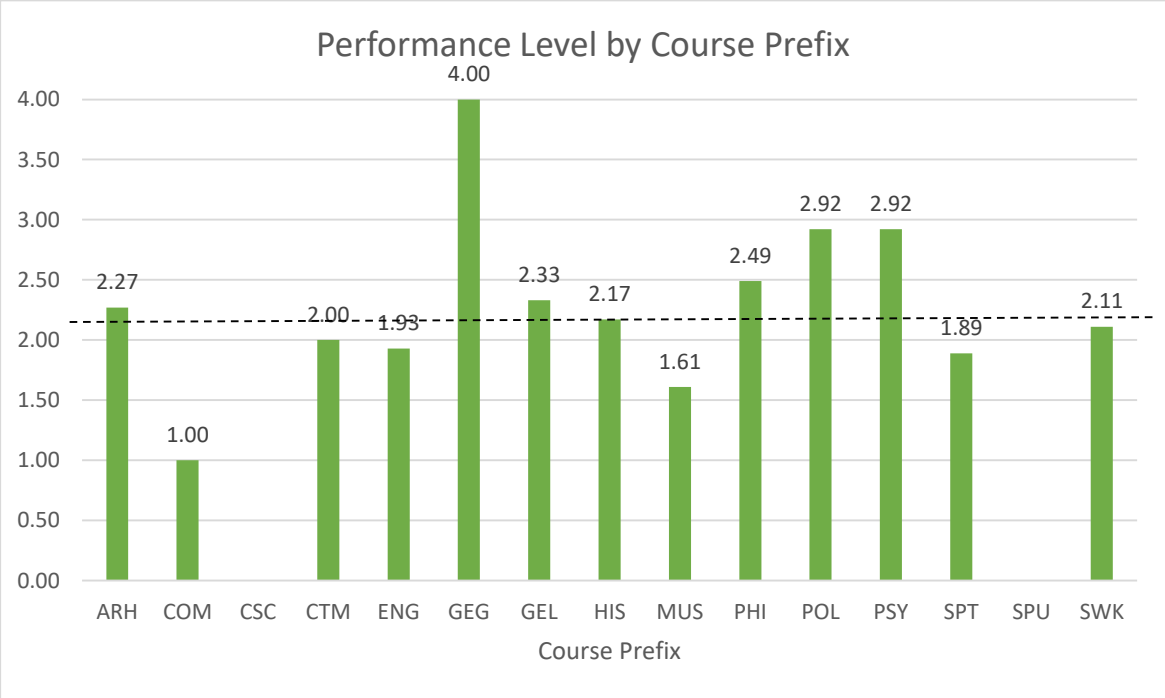
When student samples were analyzed by College, with regard to where the course the sample was taken from is located, there appeared to be no difference between the four colleges. The largest number samples came from the college of liberal arts and sciences and visual and performing arts. There was only one sample from the college of education and nine samples from the college of business.



	COB	COE	LAS	VPA	
AVG	2.33	2.00	2.33	1.90	2.13
N	9	1	67	64	141
0/X	1	3	26	29	59

Chart/Table 5: Performance Level by College – Critical Thinking

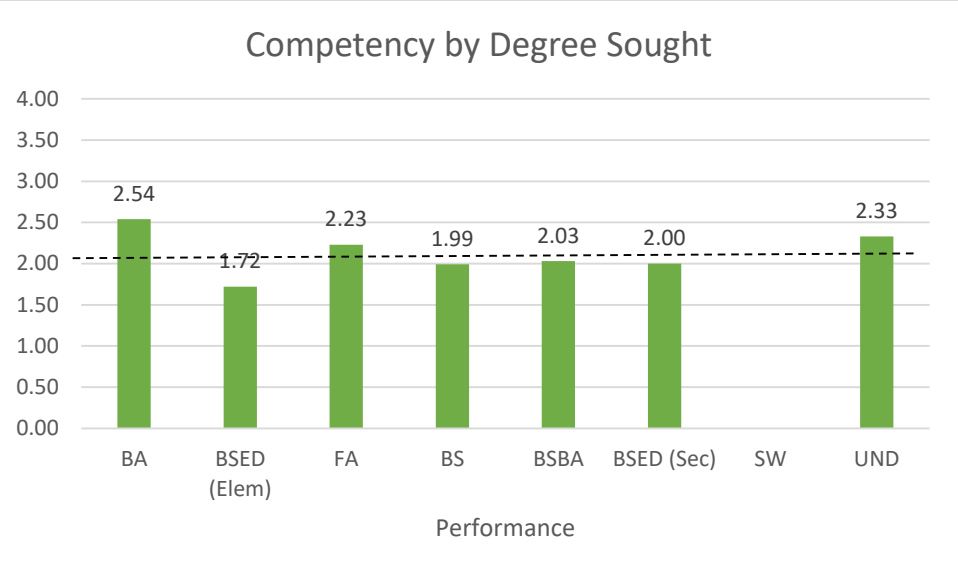
It was difficult to see a pattern or trend when the data was sorted by course prefix. This inability to make a conclusion may have been the result of a broad definition of critical thinking. Another function of the results may have been due to the number of samples for each of the prefixes.



	ARH	COM	CSC	CTM	ENG	GEG	GEL	HIS	MUS	PHI	POL	PSY	SPT	SPU	SWK	
AVG	2.27	1.00		2.00	1.93	4.00	2.33	2.17	1.61	2.49	2.92	2.92	1.89		2.11	2.13
N	12	1		4	10	1	1	4	41	44	4	4	3		12	141
0/X	5	1	12	4	1				20	9		1	1	3	2	59

Chart/Table 6: Performance Level by Course Prefix – Critical Thinking

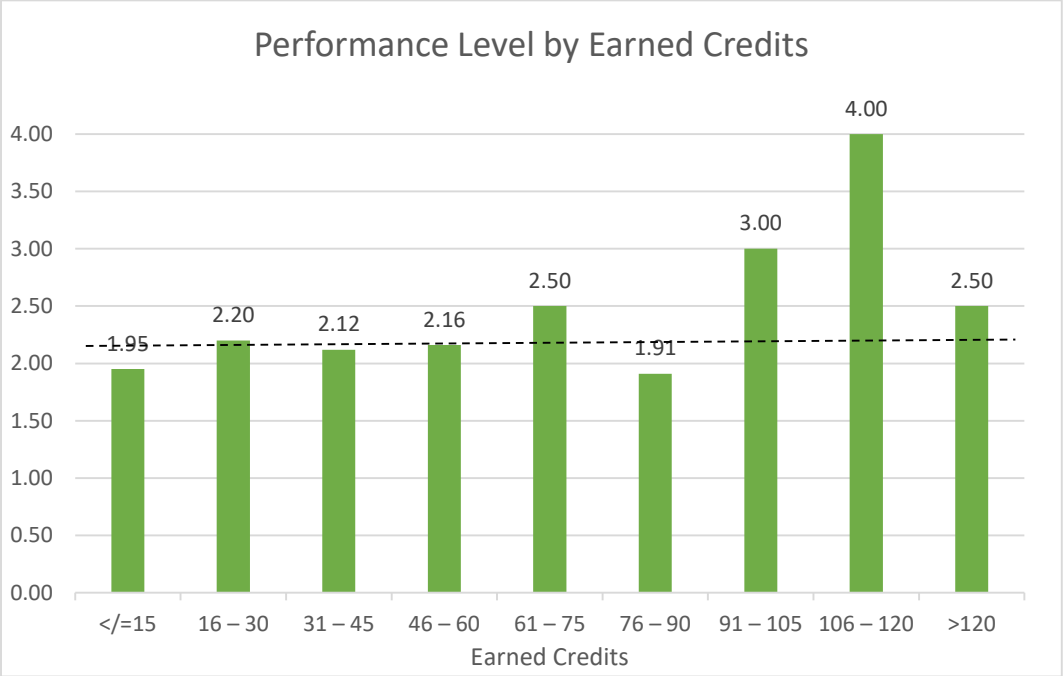
Data were also analyzed by the degree sought by the student. The low performance levels for the be BSED degrees are the result of low numbers of samples by those students. Bachelor of Arts degree students recorded the highest competency levels at 2.54. Bachelor of science degree students were a half a competency lower than the BA students, however there were twice as many samples in this group that were assessed.



	BA	BSED (Elem)	FA	BS	BSBA	BSED (Sec)	SW	UND	
AVG	2.54	1.72	2.23	1.99	2.03	2.00		2.33	2.13
N	23	6	11	48	39	1		13	141
0/X	2	3	4	31	12	1	1	5	59

Table/Chart 7: Average Performance Level by Degree Sought – Critical Thinking

Finally, the data was analyzed based on the number of credits earned by each student whose sample was submitted. Generally, Critical Thinking performance increased as students earned more college credits. There were few samples at the Senior level (4) and the second semester Junior year, 76 to 90 credits, was also lower than average.



	</=15	16 – 30	31 – 45	46 – 60	61 – 75	76 – 90	91 – 105	106 – 120	>120	
AVG	1.95	2.20	2.12	2.16	2.50	1.91	3.00	4.00	2.50	2.13
N	56	23	23	10	16	8	2	1	2	141
0/X	27	10	6	2	4	9		1		59

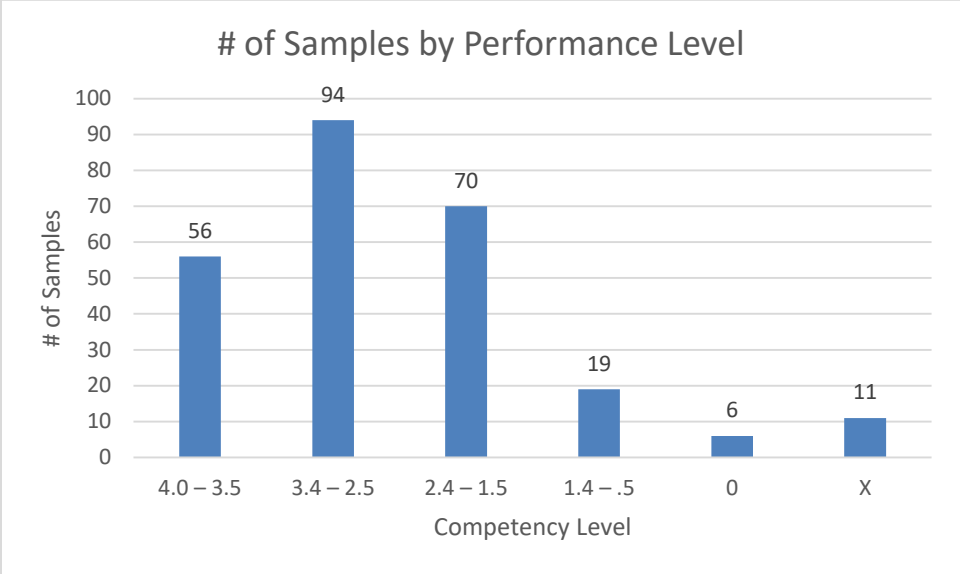
Table/Chart 8: Average Performance Level by Credits Earned – Critical Thinking

B. Written Communication Results

The following results are based on the review of 255 student work samples submitted by instructors. Students were taking their last required Writing Intensive course in their General Education curriculum. All students are required to take three writing intensive classes to meet their general education requirements. Data were coded for course level, college, course prefix, credits earned, and degree sought. The rubric used for assessment can be found in Appendix C. Specifically, the Written Communication Domain is defined as:

Definition: Written communication is the development and expression of ideas in writing. Written communication involves learning to work in many genres and styles. It can involve working with many different writing technologies, and mixing texts, data, and images. Written communication skills develop through iterative experiences.

On a scale of one to four, with four being capstone level and one being benchmark level, overall average score for the Written Communication was 2.77. Seventeen samples did not have enough information or were inappropriate for evaluation.



Key:

4-1 = Levels of performance

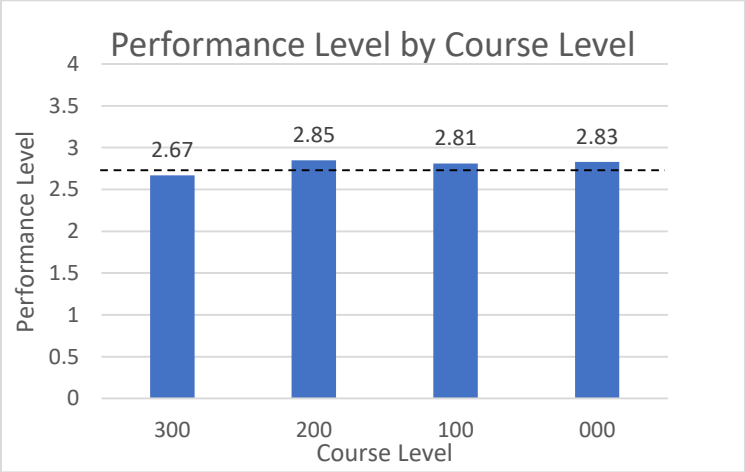
0 = Not enough information in the assignment to evaluate

X = Submitted assignment inappropriate for Student Learning Outcome

Comp level	4.0 – 3.5	3.4 – 2.5	2.4 – 1.5	1.4 – .5	0	X	2.77 Avg.
N	56	94	70	19	6	11	256

Chart/Table 9: Performance Level Frequency of Student Work Samples – Written Communication

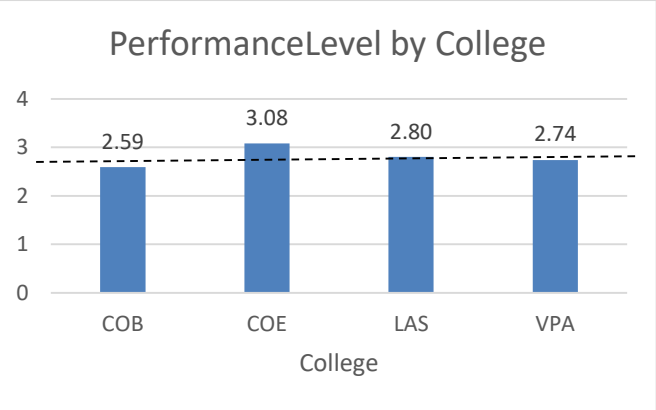
When samples were grouped by course level, performance level stayed the same. This result is a function of the fact that students were taking their third writing intensive class rather than at what level the class was being taught. The majority of samples were at the 300 and 200 level as would be expected.



Chart/Table 10: Written Communication Assessment Result by Course Level

	300	200	100	000	
AVG	2.67	2.85	2.81	2.83	2.77
N	98	88	37	15	238
0/X	3	12	2		17

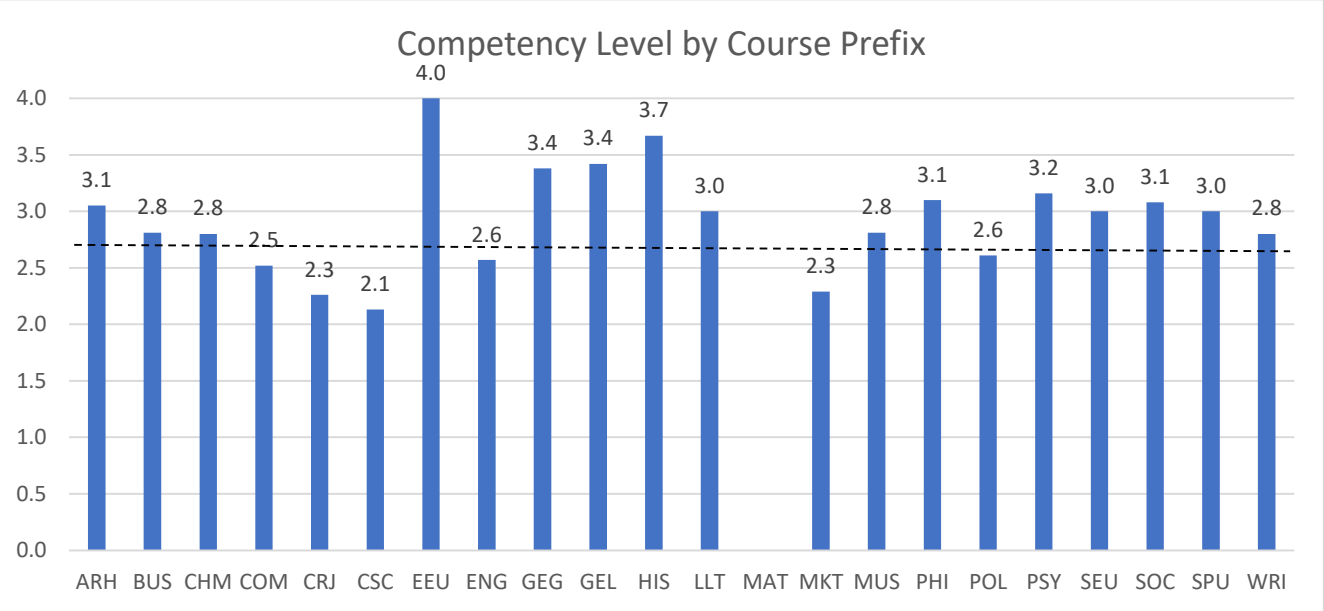
When the data for the writing intensive student work samples was evaluated by College, College of Education scored the highest at 3.08. College of Business was assessed at 2.59. The colleges of Liberal arts and sciences and visual and performing arts have the greatest number samples and scored at the overall average of 2.77.



	COB	COE	LAS	VPA	
AVG	2.59	3.08	2.80	2.74	2.77
N	31	13	132	62	238
0/X	2	2	10	3	17

Chart/Table 11: Performance Level by College – Written Communication

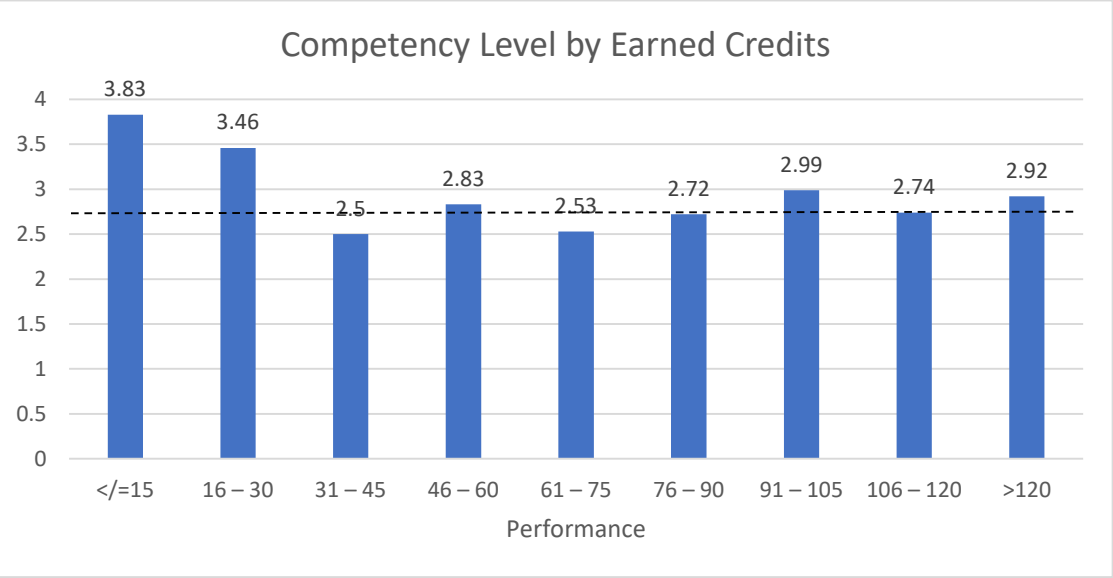
When data was analyzed by course prefix in the written communication competency there was no discernible pattern or trend. Again, the results seem to be tied more to the sample size than to the course material.



	ARH	COM	CSC	CTM	ENG	GEG	GEL	HIS	MUS	PHI	POL	PSY	SPT	SPU	SWK	
AVG	2.27	1.00		2.00	1.93	4.00	2.33	2.17	1.61	2.49	2.92	2.92	1.89		2.11	2.13
N	12	1		4	10	1	1	4	41	44	4	4	3		12	141
0/X	5	1	12	4	1				20	9		1	1	3	2	59

Chart/Table 12: Performance Level by Course Prefix – Written Communication

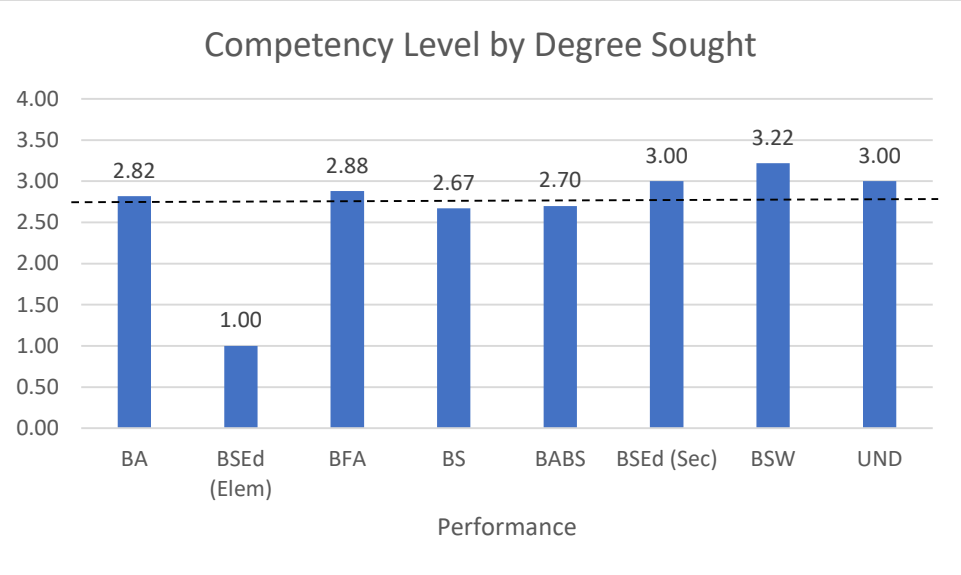
Analysis of the data for written communication competency by earned credits provide no real difference within the samples. Freshmen students with less than 30 credits in just 10 samples scored the highest at over 3.0. The probability of a freshman student completing his or her third writing intensive course is low. It might be concluded that the students are already very good writers. Expectations would be that as students progress through their junior and senior year, regardless of whether they are in a writing intensive course or not, their writing competency would improve. This data does not reflect that.



	</=15	16 – 30	31 – 45	46 – 60	61 – 75	76 – 90	91 – 105	106 – 12	>120	
AVG	3.83	3.46	2.5	2.83	2.53	2.72	2.99	2.74	2.92	2.77
N	2	8	17	14	53	50	50	36	8	238
0/X			1	2	2	5	5	2		17

Chart/Table 13: Average Performance by Earned Credits – Written Communication

When the data was analyzed by degree sought, there appeared to be no significant difference. The small sample sizes in the BSEDs, SWK degrees and undecided students account for the high and low exceptions. Most other students' samples were rated at or around the average of 2.77.



	BA	BSEd (Elem)	BFA	BS	BABS	BSEd (Sec)	BSW	UND	
AVG	2.82	1.00	2.88	2.67	2.70	3.00	3.22	3.00	2.77
N	85	1	11	96	28	12	3	2	238
0/X	3	2		9	2		1		17

Chart/Table 14: Average Performance by Degree Sought – Written Communication

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

As mentioned at the beginning of this report, this report is the last assessment of the 2011 general education program. However, both written communication and critical thinking will continue to be assessed in the new program that will be implemented in the fall of 2018. Therefore, some recommendations are relevant and should be considered moving forward.

With regard to content in these categories it appears that within the critical thinking SLO, there were many interpretations of how to meet that SLO and what is considered critical thinking. As the rubric for this SLO's assessment has not significantly changed under the new general education program, care should be given to explaining what is expected within the critical thinking SLO. As 59 samples

submitted either did not have enough information or the information was inappropriate, nearly 25% of the samples were unable to be assessed. It is evident that faculty have multiple definitions of what critical thinking is, and it does not always align with the general education definition.

The same cannot be said for written communication. There was greater intercoder reliability, and only 17 samples were either insufficient or inappropriate.

It can't be expected that students achieve a high level of critical thinking when only one CT course is required in the general education program. Most of these courses were taken at the freshman and sophomore level. The results of an average competency level of 2.13 is not surprising. The 2018 general education program will require up to six courses attached to the Critical Thinking SLO. This increase should allow us to see an increase in competency level when they have completed all six Critical Thinking courses.

More surprising is the written communication competency. Many of this students' samples came from their senior capstone experience course. Expectations would be that students would be a higher competency level than 2.77 after three writing intensive courses. The new general education program includes the addition of a second level composition course. This focus on writing will hopefully increase the competency level average to above 2.77.

Assessment Process

As suggested last AY, the GEAC continued the methodology used in AY 16 – 17 to collect data focusing on only two domains, 1.3a Critical Thinking and 1.4a Written Communication. Under the new General Education program, a new assessment plan was also written and approved. The new assessment plan evaluates all eight SLO's in a rotating fashion over three years.

The methodology for collecting student work samples and asking faculty volunteers to participate as objective reviewers and scorers was successful and will continue with the new assessment plan implementation with minor adjustments to the process.

We now have benchmarks for critical thinking and written communication and the new general education assessment of these two areas should be measured against them. Additional benchmarks for the other SLO's in the new assessment plan should also be established. Defining the criteria for success will allow for better program development. Identifying what percentage of students should be achieving at each performance level will assist in monitoring progress and maintaining excellence.

Benchmark performance levels of all new SLOs should be part of the new First Year Seminar course.

The committee recommends that a sample assignment, which would be used in the collection of assessment data, be included in the approval process to assure that faculty understand the SLO measure. This additional verification would assure that the number of unusable samples would decrease.

Resource Allocation to Improve General Education

To improve compliance by faculty, the committee recommends that a policy be created that outlines consequences for non-compliance which includes not being available to teach general education courses or removal of the course from the general education program.

Continued support by the administration in terms of faculty resources is beneficial to the timely completion of general education assessment. Additional resources may be needed as the new general education program is implemented.

Opportunities for debriefing and education of faculty and administration about the assessment process used and the resulting questions should be supported. Specifically, the General Education and GEAC committees, the assessors, and the faculty who submitted student work samples should be encouraged to participate in discussions that help understand the results and implement improvements. Additional opportunities should then be afforded to the entire faculty so there is an understanding as to how the data is used to make curricular decisions and improve the educational experience for students.

References

Finley, A. (2011). How reliable are the VALUE rubrics? *Peer Review (13/14)* 4. AACU. Available at: www.aacu.org/publications-research/periodicals/how-reliable-are-value-rubrics.