GENERAL EDUCATION ASSESSMENT COMMITTEE (GEAC) AY 2016 - 2017

FINAL REPORT ON GENERAL EDUCATION ASSESSMENT

Submitted to the Office of the Provost
and General Education Committee

by the General Education Assessment Committee
7/1/2017

General Education Assessment Committee

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Academic Year 2016-2017

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- The General Education Assessment Committee is charged with directly assessing student learning outcomes for the KU General Education Program. In this sixth 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 fifth annual report, based on the approved assessment plan, which analyzes data from AY16-17 relevant to Goal 2 of the General Education Program:
    - **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.**
    - **Specifically, Domain 2.3 – Social Sciences and 2.4—Humanities were assessed.**
- 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 2 domains, data from 65 classes, totaling 122 student work samples representing student academic performance, revealed some strengths and weaknesses in the assessment process.
- The methodology for the AY 16-17 was modified. Rather than having instructors assess student work selected from classes that had been identified by department chairs as meeting a specific domain, students who were completing their final required humanities or social science were selected by Institutional Research (IR). The names of those students were sent to the instructors and instructors were asked to submit student work products from those students in their course to be evaluated by independent raters.
- This significant change in methodology occurred as the committee moved from a course focused unit of analysis to a student progress centered analysis.
- Overall, of the 96 faculty who were asked to submit student work, 48% of the faculty complied and provided 235 pieces of student work. Approximately 50% of the student samples were reviewed and scored.
- Ten faculty volunteers reviewed anonymous student samples against the VALUE rubric, with each sample reviewed by two raters. Overall, 44% of the two scores were the same and 83% of them were within one performance level.

- The average score for the Social Science Domain (2.3) was 2.25 on a scale of 4.0. In the Humanities Domain (2.4) the average performance level was 2.2.
- Performance improved as course level increased with 000 level courses averaging 1.95 and 300 level courses averaging 3.25. Courses with competencies attached did not appear to influence student performance. Some course prefixes scored lower because they did not specifically address the student learning outcomes for the domain yet are included in the category because of the course prefix.

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 sixth 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 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 only two of the Domains (Student Learning Outcomes) to help improve the quantity and quality of data collected. There are seven Domains assigned to this goal and experience has found that data retrieved has been insufficient when so many different data sources are requested. Domain 2.3 – Social Sciences and 2.4 – Humanities were selected.

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

A. The Data

In past assessments, data collection was sporadic and faculty compliance was poor. To alleviate this problem, GEAC evaluated the data collection methodology and determined that a new procedure would be implemented for this year's general education assessment. 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.

GEAC wanted to know if students were achieving SLOs by the time they completed most of the General Education requirements. IR was asked to identify each student who was completing their required Humanities or Social Science requirement for general education in the Spring 2017 semester along with their instructor and course. As there are several different configurations of general education requirements depending on college and major, IR applied several parameters to the class schedule to identify these students. Once compiled, the data was converted to an Excel spreadsheet and reviewed for duplicates and idiosyncrasies.

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 General Education Humanities or Social Science. The number of students on a faculty request ranged from one to thirty, with an average of seven students per faculty member. A copy of the description of the SLO and the VALUE rubric (Appendix B and C) used in the evaluation was included to help faculty select an appropriate assignment. Students in classes with 100 + student enrollments were dropped from the data collection because it could be assumed there was not a significant number of individual work samples beyond objective tests. Seventy-three students were enrolled in a class with 100+ students for their final required Social Science or Humanities course. Faculty could submit the completed student assignment uploaded to the course management system, by email attachment, or copied and sent through campus

mail. Seven hundred and twenty-six (726) pieces of student work were requested from 102 faculty members. Table 1 summarizes the requests and submissions.

Department	Faculty	Student Samples	Avg.	Faculty	Percent Compliant	Student Samples	Percent Compliant	Faculty	Students
Social Science Targets	**Requested**			**Received**				**Contact/Refuse**	
History	12	101	8.4	4	33%	15	15%		
Criminal Justice	8	46	5.8	4	50%	26	57%		
Political Science	5	36	7.2	1	20%	2	6%	1	7
Geography	7	51	7.3	3	43%	14	27%	1	6
Sociology/Anthropology	13	71	5.5	9	69%	30	42%	1	12
Economics	5	55	11.0	2	40%	11	20%	1	12
International Studies	3	10	3.3	1	33%	2	20%		
Social Work	7	38	5.4	4	57%	13	34%		
SUB-TOTAL	**56**	**371**	6.6	**28**	50%	**113**	30%	**4**	**37**
Humanities Targets									
Philosophy	5	31	6.2	1	20%	3	10%	1	5
English	19	184	9.7	7	37%	68	37%	1	33
Writing	11	87	7.9	5	45%	37	43%		
Gender Studies	3	9	3.0	3	100%	8	89%		
Humanities	2	5	2.5	1	50%	5	100%		
PA German	2	2	1.0	1	50%	1	50%		
SUB-TOTAL	**40**	**280**	7.0	**18**	45%	**122**	44%	**2**	**38**
TOTAL	**96**	**651**	**6.8**	**46**	48%	**235**	36%	**6**	**75**

Table 1: Faculty Requests and Submissions for Goal 2 General Education Assessment Data

Some faculty did contact GEAC to say they would not be submitting data because their course did not meet the criteria for the domain, or they did not have an appropriate assignment to measure the SLO. Some simply refused to comply. These faculty and student samples were eliminated from the summary statistics. Some faculty contacted GEAC to report that some students were no longer in their classes. These students sample requests, which were minor, were not subtracted from the total requests.

Every other student work sample was selected for assessment, stratified by instructor. If an instructor submitted 10 student samples, five were systematically selected for assessment (every even submission). These samples were coded for Social Science or Humanities, course level, course prefix, and whether the course had an approved competency attached to the course. Fifty-seven Social Science student samples and 65 Humanities student samples were selected.

B. The Assessors and Process

GEAC asked for faculty volunteers to serve as raters. Ten faculty from across the university volunteered to participate. Each faculty member attended a training session where the process was explained. The

assessors were divided into two groups of five (Social Science and Humanities) 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 six 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. Each student sample was assessed by two assessors. Scores were submitted to the assessment coordinator who compared the two scores for each student sample and determined the composite score for each. The score (performance level) from each assessor was compared for consistency. If the scores from the two assessors was within one performance level, the scores were averaged. If the scores had a difference of more than one, a third evaluator reviewed the sample and assigned a score. Consistency of scores for each group is summarized in Table 2.

	Social Sciences	**Humanities**	**Total**
Assessors scored the sample the same	28 (49%)	26 (40%)	54 (44%)
Assessors scored the sample within one performance level	21 (37%)	27 (42%)	48 (39%)
Assessors scored the sample within two performance levels	8 (14%)	10 (15%)	18 (15%)
Assessors scored the sample more than two performance levels differently.	0	2 (3%)	2 (2%)
TOTAL	**57**	**65**	**122**

Table 2: Summary of Inter-coder Reliability

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 40-49% of the samples given the same score.

III. ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

The data from 65 Humanities and 57 Social Science submissions represented 6 Humanities and 10 Social Science subjects, and 23 Humanities and 42 Social Science 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.

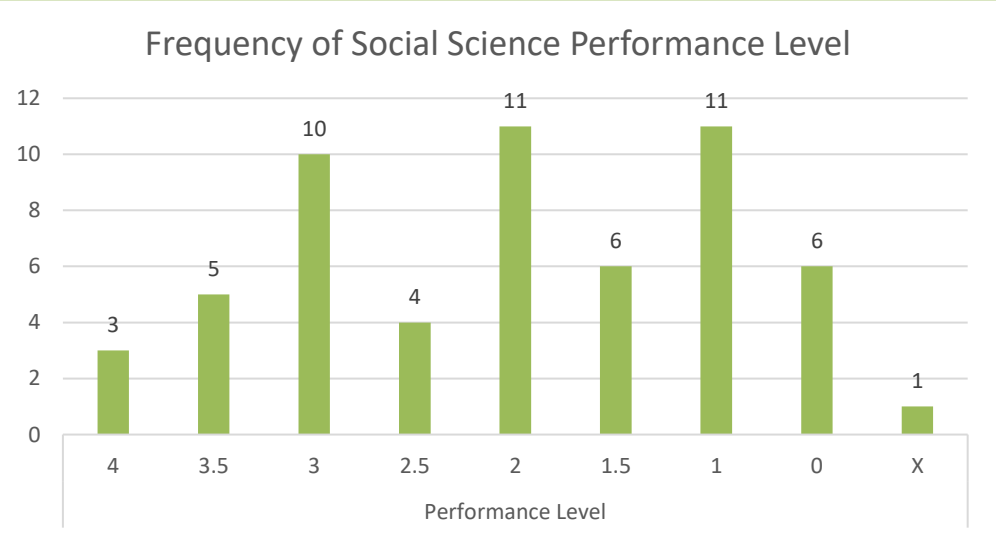
A. Social Science Results

The following results are based on the review of 57 pieces of student work sample submitted by instructors. Students were taking their last required Social Science course in their General Education

curriculum. Data were coded for course level, attached approved competencies, and course prefix. Specifically, the Social Science domain is defined as:

> Definition: Collective term for a range of academic disciplines or fields that study society and the relationships of individuals within a society. *Some* of the big questions that the Social Sciences explore concern ways to improve the quality of human life, understand spatial and temporal events in the physical and social world, and unify all social phenomena under an overarching theory. Big questions in Social Sciences may include personal and civic morality, meaning and values, the relationship between scientific and religious worldviews, wealth and happiness, and power and justice.

On a scale of one to four, with four being capstone level and one being benchmark level; the overall average score for the Social Sciences was 2.25. Seven 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

Performance Level	4	3.5	3	2.5	2	1.5	1	0	X	Average SCORE 2.25
Frequency	3	5	10	4	11	6	11	6	1	57

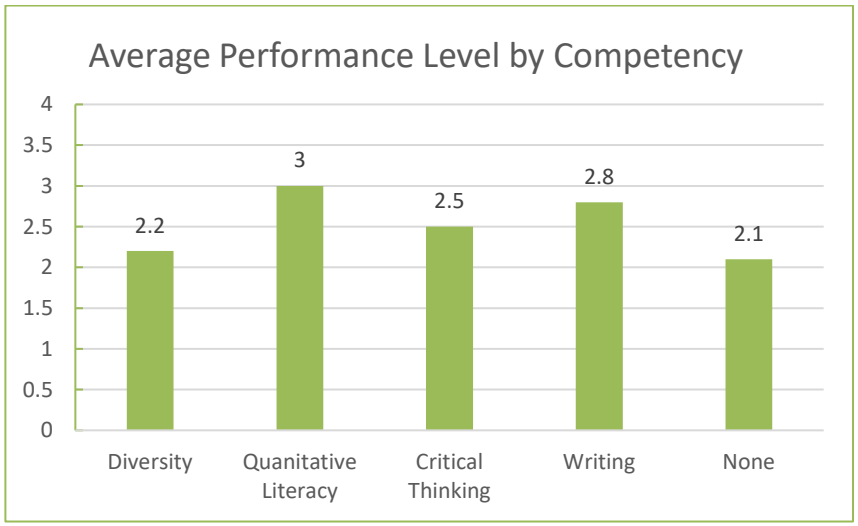
Chart/Table 3: Performance Level Frequency of Student Work Samples – Social Studies

When samples were grouped by course level, as the course level increased, an increase in the performance level is evident. Typical entry courses (000) received the lowest performance level scores (1.9) while 300 level courses scored the highest at 3.5. The result is probably also a function of the type of assignment that would be given at these different levels. Additionally, there were only two 300 level course samples. Most students would not be taking 300 level courses as part of their general education requirements.

Class level	Avg.	N	0/X
000	1.9	20	7
100	2.5	13	0
200	2.3	15	0
300	3.5	2	0
TOTAL	2.25	50	7

Chart/Table 4: Social Scince Performance Assessment Result by Course Level - Social Science

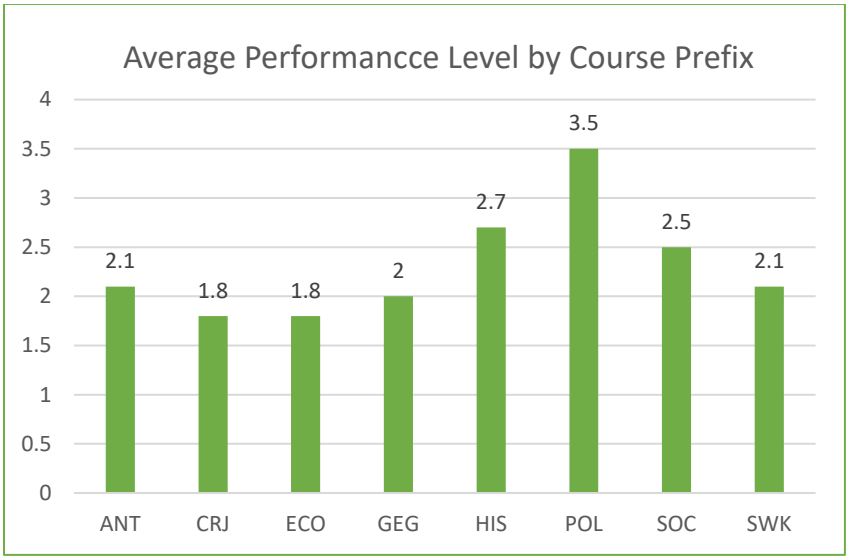
In the Social Sciences, it did not appear that there was difference in student performance when a competency was attached to the course. In some instances, more than one competency was attached to the course yielding more than 57 samples.



Competency	Avg Perf Level	N	0/X
Diversity	2.2	21	0
Quanitative Literacy	3	3	0
Critical Thinking	2.5	10	0
Writing	2.8	6	0
None	2.1	22	7
TOTAL	2.25	62	7

Chart/Table 5: Performance Level by Approved GE Competency – Social Sciences

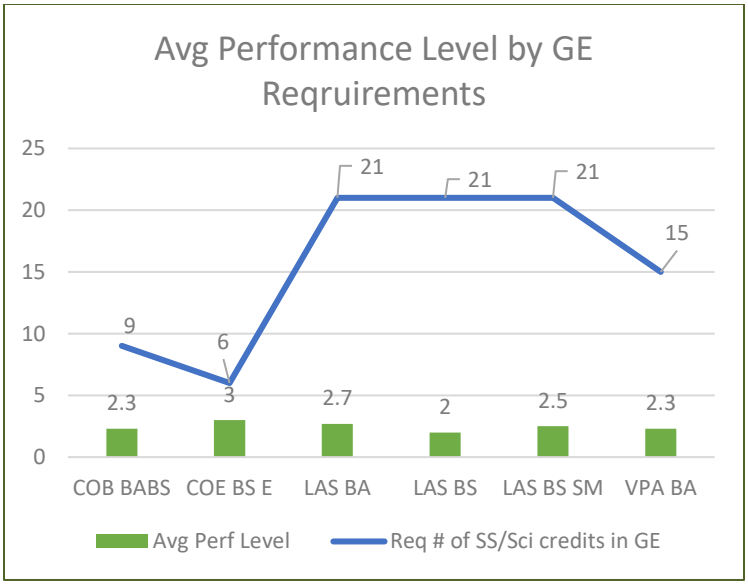
The difference in course prefix performance tended to be linked to the type of assignment submitted or material covered did not closely fit the definition of the Social Science domain.



DEPT	Ave Perf Level	N	0/X
ANT	2.1	6	0
CRJ	1.8	11	0
ECO	1.8	3	5
GEG	2	4	2
HIS	2.7	11	0
POL	3.5	1	0
SOC	2.5	7	0
SWK	2.1	7	0
TOTAL	2.25	50	7

Chart/Table 6: Competency Level by Course Prefix – Social Sciences

Data were also analyzed by the General Education program in which the student was enrolled. Currently, there are 18 different General Education requirements dependent on program of study. Not all General Education requirements were represented in the sample and some programs were collapsed that were very similar. The following results demonstrate that the number of courses required in Social Sciences does not appear to make a difference in student performance level.



GE Prog	Avg Perf Level	of SS/Sci credits in GE	Total GE credits	N	X/0
COB BABS	2.3	9	60	11	3
COE BS E	3	6	48	1	0
LAS BA	2.7	21	60	10	1
LAS BS	2	21	60	19	1
LAS BS SM	2.5	21	60	3	1
VPA BA	2.3	15	48	8	0
* 5 Samples unidentified					

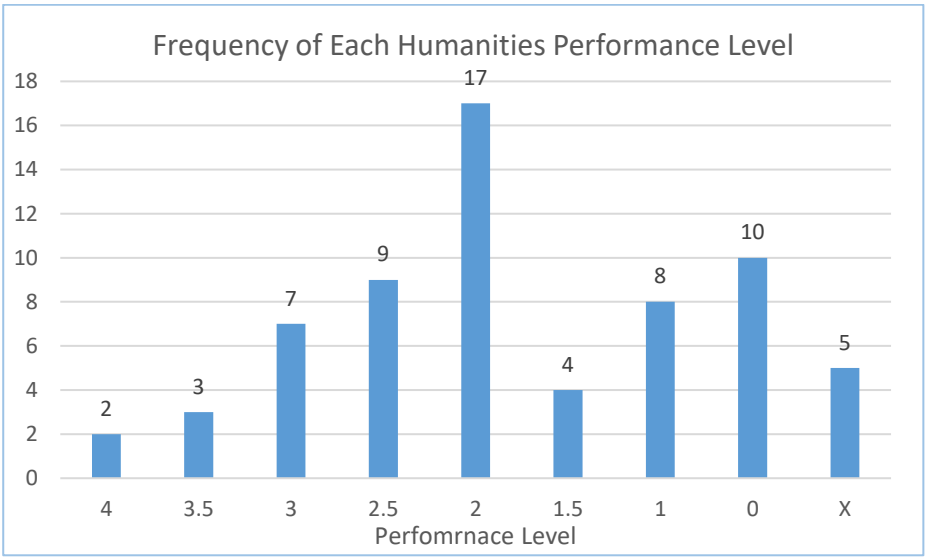
Table/Chart 7: Average Performance Level by GE requirements

B. Humanities Results

The following results are based on the review of 65 pieces of student work samples submitted by instructors. Students were taking their last required Humanities course in their General Education curriculum. Data were coded for course level, attached approved competencies, and course prefix. Specifically, the Humanities Domain is defined as:

> Definition: Humanities is a collective term for a range of academic disciplines or fields, all of which draw upon a knowledge of the development, achievements, behavior, organization, or distribution of humanity. *Some* of the big questions that the Humanities explore are: What is the meaning of human existence? What is our role in the world? Why did events happen the way they did? Can circumstances be different in the future? How have others addressed these questions?

On a scale of one to four, with four being capstone level and one being benchmark level, the overall average score for the Humanities was 2.20. Fifteen 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

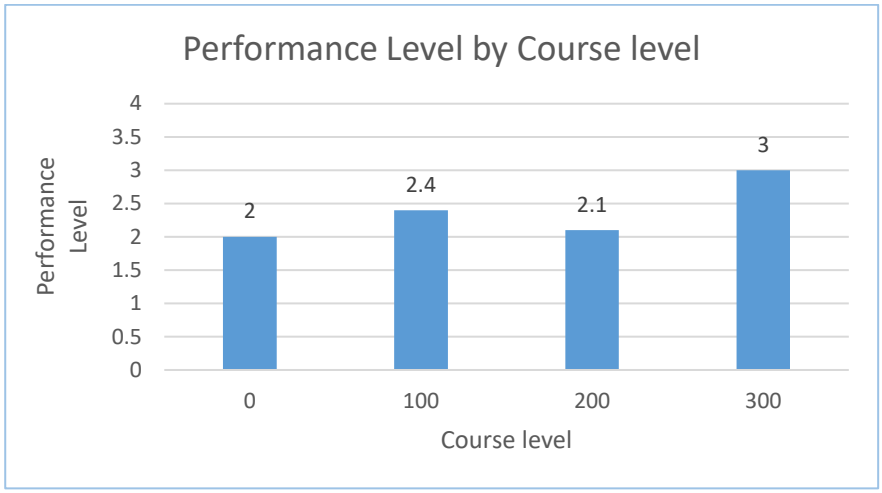
X = Submitted assignment inappropriate for Student Learning Outcome

Performance Level	4	3.5	3	2.5	2	1.5	1	0	X	AVERAGE SCORE 2.2
Frequency	2	3	7	9	17	4	8	10	5	65

Chart/Table 8: Performance Level Frequency of Student Work Samples – Humanities

When samples were grouped by course level, an increase in the performance level is evident as the course level increased. Typical entry courses (000) received the lowest performance level scores (2.0) while 300 level courses scored the highest at 3.0. However, there is not a significant difference in

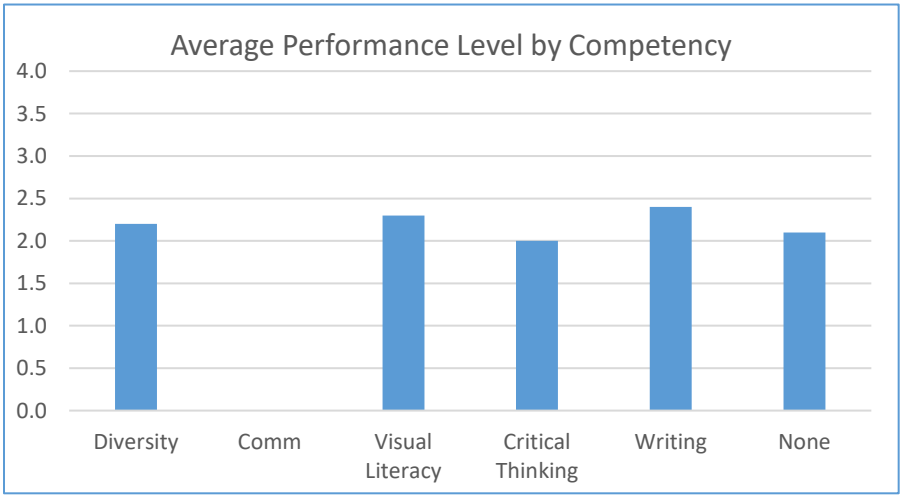
performance level between the course levels of the samples. Additionally, there were only two 300 level course samples.



Course level	Avg Perf Level	N	0/X
0	2	21	3
100	2.4	15	3
200	2.1	12	8
300	3	2	1
TOTAL	2.2	50	15

Chart/Table 9: Humanities Assessment Result by Course Level

In the Humanities, it did not appear that there was difference in student performance if a competency was attached to the course. In some instances, more than one competency was attached to the course yielding more than 65 samples.

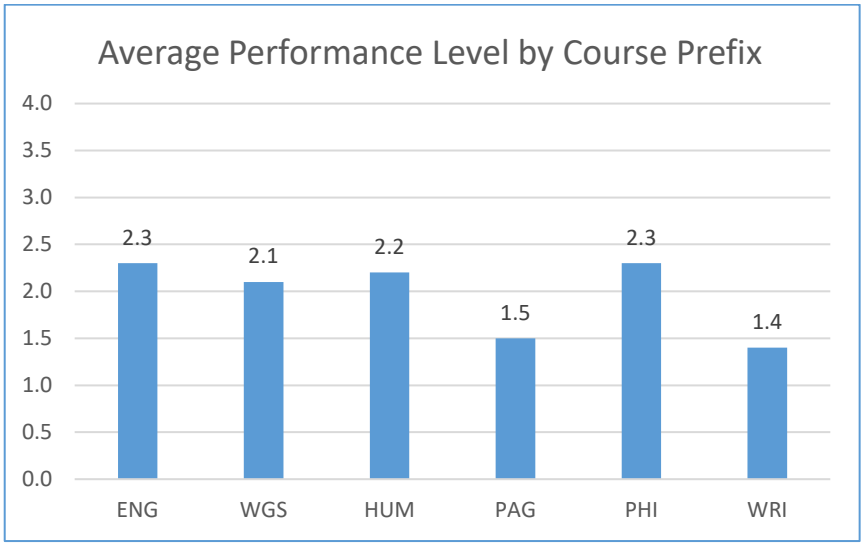


Comp	Avg Perf Level	N	0/X
Diversity	2.2	12	2
Comm	0.0	0	1
Visual Literacy	2.3	4	0
Critical Thinking	2.0	31	6
Writing	2.4	15	10
None	2.1	4	2
Total	2.2	66	18

Chart/Table 10: Performance Level by Approved GE Competency – Humanities

Professional Writing (WRI) had the lowest performance level with regard to Humanities definition (1.5) and had the highest number of excluded samples (12). Often the focus of the Humanities did not align, or did so poorly, with the definition of Humanities. Professional Writing courses are permitted to fulfill the Humanities requirement in the General Education curriculum. PA

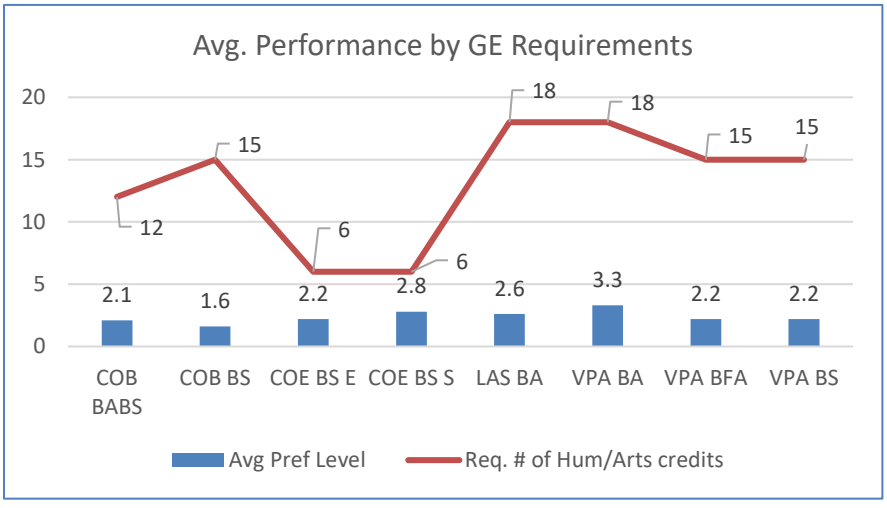
German Studies (PAG) only had one sample, therefore, conclusions cannot be drawn about that area of study. The other areas of study were similar to the overall average.



Dept	Avg Perf Level	N	0/X
ENG	2.3	35	2
WGS	2.1	4	1
HUM	2.2	3	0
PAG	1.5	1	0
PHI	2.3	2	0
WRI	1.4	5	12
Total	2.2	50	15

Chart/Table 11: Competency Level by Course Prefix – Humanities

Again, data were also analyzed by the General Education program in which the student was enrolled. Not all General Education requirements were represented in the sample and some programs were collapsed that were very similar. The following results demonstrate that the number of courses required in Humanities does not appear to make a difference in student performance level.



GE Prog	Avg Pref Level	Req. # of Hum/ Arts credits	Req. # of GE credits	N	X/O
COB BABS	2.1	12	60	16	4
COB BS	1.6	15	6	10	2
COE BS E	2.2	6	48	21	1
COE BS S	2.8	6	48	3	1
LAS BA	2.6	18	60	7	3
VPA BA	3.3	18	48	5	3
VPA BFA	2.2	15	39	2	0
VPA BS	2.2	15	42	2	0

Chart/Table 12: Average Performance by GE Requirements

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 General Education program assessed in this report currently is being revised. Many of the recommendations identified in this report are already under consideration.

Because options for fulfillment of a specific SLO within a particular domain are linked to course prefix or course prefixes, some course may not meet the SLO. Only courses that specifically identify the SLO should be used for completion of General Education domains.

SLOs should be linked more directly with courses in these categories, if used for general education, and become part of the master syllabi.

Performance levels were measured at the completion of the required social science or humanities course in a student's program of study. Therefore, a score of 2 to 3 is expected and appropriate. However, SLOs in these areas are continued in many students' curriculums and articulations of these outcomes should be identified in courses taken within the student's major.

Assessment Process

As suggested last AY, the GEAC used a different methodology to collect data focusing on only two domains, 2.3 Social Science and 2.4 Humanities. The current written assessment plan does not provide enough good data for recommendations or faculty development. Identifying, collecting and analyzing data for all 23 domains of the three goals is not practical in a three year period. Because a new General Education program is being developed, a new assessment plan will also be written and approved. The Committee will begin the process of an Assessment Plan revision during the 2017-2018 AY to coincide with the new General Education program.

The new methodology for collecting student work samples and asking faculty volunteers to participate as objective reviewers and scorers was successful and should continue with two new domains of the current General Education program until the new program is adopted and new assessment plan implemented.

In the new Assessment Plan as well as with AY 17-18 assessment of the current general education program, criteria for success should be determined. 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.

Data stratified by major and non-major would be helpful in identifying the appropriate number of courses necessary to achieve desired outcomes.

Resource Allocation to Improve General Education

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.