
MEMORAND

RESCHEDULING GENERAL EDUCATION ASSESSMENTS

11/11/09

PROPOSED BY DR. BRIAN HALEY, CHAIR OF GEAC

Proposal

The General Education Assessment Committee (GEAC) proposes that the Senate approve a change in the scheduling of General Education assessments at the College. The proposed schedule is as follows:

Attributes to be assessed in 2009-2010: Mathematics (M2), Natural Science (N2/NL2), and Social Science (S2)

Attributes to be assessed in 2010-2011: The Arts (AA2), Basic Communication (BC2), Critical Thinking (CT), Humanities (AH2), Oral Communication Skills (OS2), and Written Communication Skills (WS2)

Attributes to be assessed in 2011-2012: American History (HA2), Foreign Language (FL2), Other World Civilizations (HO2), and Western Civilization (HW2).

The sequence repeats in subsequent years.

Information Management (IM) will be assessed every year within 33 percent of the [non-strengthened campus based assessment](#) courses chosen for assessment of that year's scheduled attributes (e.g., 1/3 of selected M2, N2/NL2, and S2 courses in 2009-2010)

Background

The General Education Assessment Committee (GEAC) was formed in Spring 2009. Our charge is to oversee and facilitate General Education assessment planning. Persons responsible for establishing this committee are the Provost, Academic Deans, College Senate, and Associate Provost for Institutional Assessment & Effectiveness. As a faculty committee, GEAC reports to the College Senate. The first and current GEAC has been meeting since late in Spring 2009.

The first issue relating to assessment of General Education at the College to be examined by GEAC is the scheduling of assessments. Until recently, the College has been conducting assessments of every General Education attribute each semester. SUNY requires assessment of each General Education attribute every three years. Thus, the College has been exceeding SUNY's requirements for General Education assessment by assessing so frequently. Since the introduction of Strengthened Campus Based Assessment (SCBA), Math (M2), Writing (BC2), and Critical Thinking (CT) have been placed on a staggered rotating assessment schedule that sees one of these assessed each year, and each assessed only once every three years.

The frequency with which the College has been assessing General Education attributes has not produced any known benefits to the College, except perhaps the perception that the College is very committed to assessment. The high frequency of assessments has not yielded additional information

beneficial to the assessment process, and has made it more difficult for faculty to find the time to pause, reflect, and make recommendations based upon previous assessment results. In fact, the high frequency of assessment fosters complaints about assessment from faculty members.

GEAC pursued the goal of rescheduling our General Education assessment to correspond to SUNY's requirement that each attribute be assessed only once every three years. GEAC examined the distribution of General Education attributes across departments and programs at the College to identify attribute groupings and a scheduling pattern that would relieve individual departments and programs from having to conduct assessments more than once every three years. However, the distribution of General Education attributes across departments and programs precludes this possibility for some departments and programs, regardless of the groupings proposed. The proposed groups and schedule will relieve the maximum number of departments and programs from the need to assess more than once every three years.

Once the groupings were determined, the sequencing of the groups was dictated primarily by an existing schedule for SCBA. Thus, the group containing Math (M2) has to be assessed this year, and the group including Basic Communication (BC2) must be assessed next year. Assessment of Critical Thinking could occur in the third year of this schedule, but if the decision is made to use of the College Learning Assessment (CLA) to assess CT, this assessment would need to be done in 2010-2011 in order to obtain pilot funding from SUNY. Thus, we have placed the CT assessment in the second year for now, recognizing that this decision can be revisited at a later date.

Information Management (IM) is infused throughout the College's curriculum and its assessment has been integrated with the assessment of other General Education attributes. Our proposed schedule sustains this relationship for now, at least until a more thorough consideration of this practice can be undertaken. Our proposal does relieve two-thirds of the assessed courses in any given year of the need to assess IM.