

General Education Council  
Minutes  
7.13.09

Council present:

V. Luizzi-Chair representative  
T. Hindson-Liberal Arts Alternate  
E. Blunk-Applied Arts  
M. Tigerina-Health Professions  
B. Erhart-Liberal Arts  
S. Beebe-Liberal Arts  
C. McCall-Education  
M. Hennessy-Chair representative  
G. Farr-Science  
K. Peirce-Fine Arts and Communication  
W. Stone-Applied Arts

Council absent:

R. Cook-McCoy Business Administration  
M. Keeffe-McCoy Business Administration  
D. Olson-Science  
J. Walker-Education  
I. Davidson-Fine Arts and Communication  
R. Mooney-Health Professions

Guest:

Debbie Thorne

Meeting convened at 12:12 p.m.

Subcommittee Assessment Plans

-Changes  
-Effectiveness  
-Guidance

**Communication**

Dr. Ted Hindson and Ms. Carolyn McCall  
**English Communication**

- a. Effectiveness of the assessment process for each department/school  
The SLO information was very effective in describing the assessment process used by the English Department
- b. Identify any information that must be changed (errors, misspellings, logical inconsistencies)  
We found no information needing to be changed in regard to grammar.
- c. Provide guidance for the departmental assessment planning and reporting for 2009-10

- Develop a rubric for faculty to use when grading ENG 1310 papers to create consistency in scoring. The rubric should specifically address the scoring of thesis development (Outcome 1, Method 1), topic sentences in paragraphs

(Outcome 1, Method 2), citation and documentation (Outcome 2, Method 1) and works cited (Outcome 2, Method 2).

d. Comment upon the development of the assessment process

We have no suggestions or comments regarding the development process.

e. Recommendations for greater consistency across components

We have no recommendations.

## **Communication Studies**

a. Effectiveness of the assessment process for each department/school

The Department of Communication Studies has presented a detailed description of their assessment process.

b. Identify any information that must be changed (errors, misspellings, logical inconsistencies)

We found no information needing to be changed in regard to grammar.

c. Provide guidance for the departmental assessment planning and reporting for 2009-10

- Methods and Measures: Methods should be rewritten to more adequately differentiate between features of an informative oral presentation and features of a persuasive presentation.

- Results: On Method 1 & 2 and Result 1 & 2, eliminate or replace the phrase "complete an outline with bibliography using proper outline format." Instead, a statement should be added that directly addresses the type of presentation (informative or persuasive) being delivered. The outcomes listed seem to stress the presentation more than organization. Additionally, it seems important to include a comment addressing a reason for lower results for Method 2, Result 2 in Spring 2009.

- Action Plan: Change action plan statements to include only goals mentioned in outcomes. Eliminate portions about the outline and address only the presentation of the informative and persuasive speeches.

- Evidence of Improvement: Eliminate results listed in the top section and include only the improvement evidence.

d. Comment upon the development of the assessment process

We have no suggestions or comments regarding the development process.

e. Recommendations for greater consistency across components

We have no recommendations.

## **Motion:**

Subcommittee recommendation to approve the Communication and Communication Studies learning outcomes and assessment plan as presented with suggestions as marked on the report.

Motion passed unanimously.

## **Mathematics**

E. Erhart and K. Peirce

4a. Description of the effectiveness of the assessment process

The 2008-09 methods clearly test the outcomes and results are broken down

sufficiently for faculty to identify specific areas of student learning that need improvement.

#### 4b. Things that must be changed

The sentence in Evidence of Improvement reads “Many of the methods for evaluating the outcomes were rewritten to better reflect the expectation for student learning, consequently the result from 2008-2009 are not as easily compared to the result from 2007-2008.” This is confusing because it implies that not all of the methods from 2007-08 were changed for 2008-09 outcomes, which would mean that some of the results from these years are comparable. In addition this sentence contains grammatical mistakes. This sentence could simply be re-written as “**All** of the methods for evaluating the outcomes were rewritten to better reflect **faculty** expectations for student learning, consequently the results from 2008-2009 are not **comparable** to the results from 2007-2008.”

Outcome 1 Method 1 and 2: It's not clear what is being assessed.

Outcome 1 Result 1 and 2: It's not clear when assessment took place, who was assessed, and who did the assessing. There's no discussion of the results. All of the results have a statement beginning with “whereas” for the last sentence. This is not a complete sentence and needs to be changed. “Exponential equation” should be made plural every time it's used. The first sentence in the Action Plan for Outcome 1 states “the faculty will be asked to put increased emphasis on logarithmic and exponential equations.” This is inconsistent with the results. In result 1 students met the targets for each type of equation tested on their homework questions, while in result 2 students failed to meet the target for linear equations, exponential equations, and logarithmic equations on their test questions. In addition, it is not clear how increased emphasis by faculty on “logarithmic and exponential equations” will improve students' ability to demonstrate proficiency in and understanding of solving equations (presumably on test questions – method 2). When, where and how will this take place? What will students do differently? The action plan has to include how the plan will improve students' ability to do something and must be very specific. Finally, the plan to increase the number of students who turn in their homework does not relate to the outcome, methods and current results. It also implies that were students given the option of turning in homework OR taking the final exam. (“As evidenced, fewer students submitted their homework as compared to those who took the final exam questions.”) The action plan needs to be reworded if this is not the case. If it is the case, these two methods cannot be used. All students have to be assessed with two methods.

Outcome 2 Methods 1 and 2:

Neither method makes sense as written. (Methods 1: Student performance will be measured using a targeted homework assignment of multiple choice questions on formulas, graphs, tables or charts interpretation and inferences from them in MATH 1316. Methods 2: Student performance will be measured using a focused embedded multiple choice test questions on formulas, graphs, tables or charts interpretation and inferences from them in MATH 1316.)

Outcome 2 Result 1 and 2 lack: It's not clear when assessment took place, who

was assessed, and who did the assessing. There's no discussion of the results. All of the results have a statement beginning with "whereas" for the last sentence. This is not a complete sentence and needs to be changed. It's written in the Action Plan for Outcome 2 that "the faculty will be asked to put more emphasis on problems dealing with formula and graph and chart interpretation and inferences." This is inconsistent with the results. In Result 1, students did not meet the target on homework questions pertaining to the interpretation of formulas and charts. However, in Result 2, students did not meet the target on test questions pertaining to the interpretation of formulas, graphs, and charts. In addition, it is not clear how increased emphasis by faculty on problems dealing with "formula and graph and chart interpretation and inferences" will improve students' ability to demonstrate proficiency and understanding necessary to interpret mathematical models such as formulas, graphs, tables or charts and to draw inferences from them. When, where and how will this take place? Will the action plan be the same for both assessment environments (i.e., homework questions vs. test questions)? What will students do differently?

4c. Guidance for planning for 2009-10.

We suggest that Mathematics check all sentences for clarity and grammar. For example, the sentence in Outcome 1 Method 2 contains a grammatical mistake. "Student performance will be measured using a focused embedded multiple choice test questions on each of the following topics: linear, exponential, logarithmic and systems of equations in MATH 1315 and 1319." In addition, the word "focused" is unnecessary and distracts from the meaning of the sentence. There are similar problems in Outcome 2 Method 2. Most importantly, greater care needs to go into developing the action plans. It is not clear how the current plans will lead to student learning improvement.

4d. Development of the assessment process.

There is improvement in the development of outcomes and methods from 2007-08 to 2008-09. The 2008-09 outcomes and methods are much more clearly stated and specific, which gives greater meaning to the results.

4e. Consistency across components.

Not applicable.

**Motion:**

Subcommittee and council recommend changes to Mathematics before plan is approved. Approve subcommittee report and recommendations.

Motion passed unanimously.

**Social and Behavioral Sciences**  
E. Morrison and M. Tijerina

After a careful review of student learning outcome reports and audit reports for the social and behavioral sciences, this reviewer determined that the process used for assessment was effective and yielded useful information that can positively affect student learning. Recommendations for each department follow.

### **Anthropology**

No changes needed. The department should follow suggestions in the audit document to improve action plans for 2009-2010.

### **Economics**

#### **AUD-ECO**

Pg. 2, Column 3, first entry---Words mission after “Results”?

Pg. 2, Column 3, 3 lines from bottom—“What” should read “Why”

#### **SLO-ECO**

Pg. 1, Outcome 1, Method 2, Result 2, Sentence 2---No reference to change referred to occurring in Spring semester (although inferred)

Pg. 1, Action Plan, Line 3—Missing word “be” in phrase “judged to adapted”

Pg. 2, Result 2, Line 4—No “s” in phase “one questions”

### **Geography**

No changes needed. The department should follow suggestions in the audit document to improve action plans for 2009-2010. Its Evidence of Improvement section write up is commendable.

#### **AUD-GEO**

Pg. 2, Column 3, Second Comment from bottom—Letter “n” missing from “Care should be take”

### **History**

No changes needed. The department should follow suggestions in the audit document to clarify methods measures, results, and action plans for 2009-2010.

### **Political Science**

No changes needed. The department should follow suggestions in the audit document to improve mission, methods measures, results, and action plans for 2009-2010.

#### **SLO-POSI**

Pg. 4, Method 2, Results 2, Line 4—“follow” should read “following”

Pg. 4, Action Plan, Line 4---“follow” should read “following”

#### **SLO-AUD-POSI**

Pg. 1, Column 3, First Comment entered—delete word “real”

Pg. 1, Column 3, Second Comment—Run-on sentence

Pg.2, Column 3, Third Comment, 4 words from end—“enforceable” misspelled

### **Psychology**

No changes needed. The department should follow suggestions in the audit document to improve its results and evidence of improvement section for 2009-2010.

## **Sociology**

No changes needed. The department should follow suggestions in the audit document to improve its results section for 2009-2010.

### **Motion:**

Subcommittee recommendation to approve the Social and Behavioral Sciences learning outcomes and assessment plan as presented with suggestions as marked on the report.

Motion passed unanimously.

## **Natural Science**

Sue Beebe and Gerald Farr

### **Anthropology**

#### a. Effectiveness of assessment process:

- o Process implemented for Spring 2009; no Fall 2008 data reported.
- o Although the number of embedded questions is specified, it is not clear what types of embedded questions are being used for Outcome 1, Method 1; and Outcome 2, Method 1.

#### b. Items that **must** be changed:

Program Name/Department at top of report should be "Anthropology GE"; Program Code should be "\_\_\_".

#### c. Guidance for 2009-10 planning and reporting:

Strike the word "correctly" in both Outcome statements (i.e., "will ~~correctly~~ demonstrate an understanding of"). The word "correctly" may have caused Assoc. Dean Nelson to view targets in outcomes and methods as contradictory.

## **Biology**

#### a. Effectiveness of assessment process:

- o It is not clear how many or what types of embedded questions are being used.
- o It is not clear from the Outcomes statements how students will demonstrate that they have "gain[ed] an understanding."
- o Action plans focus on requests made for instructional change, rather than on student learning.
- o Evidence of improvement appears to be based on comparison of unlike data.

#### b. Items that **must** be changed:

Correct "boh" to "both" in Action Plan for Outcome 1 ("The results from both methods").

#### c. Guidance for 2009-10 planning and reporting:

See bulleted items in a, above.

## **Chemistry**

#### a. Effectiveness of assessment process:

- It is not clear how many or what types of embedded questions are being used for Outcome 1, Method 1; and Outcome 2, Methods 1 and 2.
  - Evidence of Improvement includes commentary on student evaluations, even though student evaluations (an indirect measure of learning) are no longer used as a Method for either Outcome.
  - Assessment process for Chemistry 1430 is dependent on one instructor who did not implement Outcome 2, Method 1 (embedded test questions).
  - The Action Plan focuses on changes in classroom instruction, rather than student learning. A “presumption” is an insufficient link to student learning.
- b. Items that ***must*** be changed:
- Correct “occurring” to “occurring” in Evidence of Improvement (“in order to assess whether learning is occurring”)
  - Correct “imbedded” in Outcome 2, Methods 1 and 2, to “embedded.”
  - Capitalize “chem” before course number in Action Plan for Outcome 2 (“Chem 1430”)
  - Correct “persent” to “present” in Action Plan for Outcome 2 (“continue to present the material”).
  - Be consistent between Outcomes in use of “Chemistry” or “Chem” in course numbers.
  - Be consistent between Outcomes in reporting numbers and percentages of students or just percentages of students who scored at least 70% on measures.
  - Place a comma after “structure” in Outcome 2; Outcome 2, Result 1; Outcome 2 Method 2; Outcome 2, Result 2; and the Action Plan.
  - Edit “nomenclature and structure” in Outcome 2, Method 1, to read “nomenclature, structure, and function.”
  - Place an apostrophe after the first use of “students” in Outcome 2, Result 1 (i.e., “the students’ understanding”).
- c. Guidance for 2009-10 planning and reporting:  
See bulleted items in a and b, above.

## Geology

- a. Effectiveness of assessment process:
- Process partially implemented by Department of Geography.
  - Although the number of embedded questions is specified, it is not clear what types of embedded questions are being used for Outcome 1, Methods 1 and 2; and Outcome 2, Method 2.
- b. Items that ***must*** be changed:
- Program Code at top of report should be “\_\_.”
  - For consistency across reports, strike course descriptions under “Specific mission for natural science” in heading.
- c. Guidance for 2009-10 planning and reporting:
- Move statements of changes in classroom instruction (i.e., final sentences under Outcome 1, Result 1; and Outcome 2, Result 1) from Results to Action Plan.

## Physics

- a. Effectiveness of assessment process:
    - o Outcomes and Methods significantly improved in 2008-09.
    - o It is not clear how many or what types of embedded questions are being used.
    - o Action Plan(s) focus on classroom instruction, rather than student learning.
  - b. Items that **must** be changed:
    - none
  - c. Guidance for 2009-10 planning and reporting:
    - o Revise wording of both outcomes from "students will understand" to "students will demonstrate understanding of."
    - o Omit Results (e.g., ranges of scores) not specified in Methods.
    - o Refocus Action Plan(s) on student learning, rather than classroom instruction.
    - o Edit Outcomes for conciseness—e.g., begin each one where the phrase "students will specifically understand" currently occurs. Edit this phrase as suggested under first bullet of c, above.
- 

**Development of the assessment process:**

- o Assessment process is beginning to yield some comparable year-to-year data.
- o Outcomes more directly assess student learning, and Action Plans are increasingly focused on student learning.

**Recommendation for consistency across components:**

Use of names and numbers of courses is inconsistent, sometimes even within a single report. Standardize across GE reports.

**Motion:**

Subcommittee recommendation to approve the Natural Science learning outcomes and assessment plan as presented with suggestions as marked on the report.

Motion passed unanimously.

**Humanities and Visual and Performing Arts**

M. Hennessy and V. Luizzi

**Comments on Specific Reports**

**Art.** Methods and results generally okay. Action plans are underdeveloped; better if they specified exactly what instructors will do to "modify" the identified sections of the course. Also, useful to state what *students* will do as a result of the action plan.

**Dance.** Methods, results, and action plans generally okay. Action plans are more specific than those for Art and Theatre.

**Music.** Methods and results generally okay. First action plan could be more specific in stating exactly how instruction will be changed and in stating what students will do as a result of the change.

**Theatre.** Methods and results generally okay. First action plan might state a specific strategy or two for encouraging students to read course materials. Second action plan focuses on method/process rather than learning, but this is inevitable given the fact that no data from previous year is available.

**English Literature.** Methods, results, and action plans generally okay.

**Philosophy.** Methods and results generally okay. “Evidence of improvement” section focuses on assessment methods rather than on student learning. Action plans cover both methods and on student learning. Is this okay?

#### General Comments

Theatre reports separately on the four embedded questions. Art, Dance, and Music report the data collectively. Because the courses are so closely related, should there be uniformity in the way data are reported?

For “evidence of improvement,” Music, Dance, and Theatre all report as follows: “At the request of the General Education director, a committee of 2313 instructors from the different disciplines was convened in Fall 2008 to revise the Learning Outcomes for the course. This is the first year those revised outcomes have been used; thus, this year's results will be used as benchmark data.” But Art does report “evidence of improvement.” Does this apparent discrepancy need to be addressed? Was art not involved in the Fall 2008 committee to revise learning outcomes for 2313?

#### **Motion:**

Subcommittee recommendation to approve the Humanities and Visual and Performing Arts learning outcomes and assessment plan as presented with suggestions as marked on the report.

Motion passed unanimously.

#### **Institutionally Designated Option**

E. Blunk and W. Stone

Our subcommittee has reviewed the supplied information and makes the following recommendations on the Institutionally Designated Option Courses

#### **University Seminar:**

1. Overall, we believe that the Mission Statement, Outcomes, Methods/Measures, Results, and Action Plan are acceptable.
2. There are no items that must be change.
3. We agree with the reviewer that only an indirect method (end of course survey) was used to measure the outcomes and that should be improved in future models. Also, “Evidence of Improvement” should be included in the next years model since this years data, is baseline data and there is no comparison to previous years.

**HPER Option:**

1. Overall, we believe that the Mission Statement, Outcomes, Methods/Measures, Results, and Action Plan are acceptable.
2. There are no items that must be changed.
3. We agree with the reviewer that on this type of course, a pre-course post-course evaluation model would be more logical, even if the current model meets the common standard. We are also assuming that this same evaluation model is in place for all the HPER courses, not just the two reviewed. In Outcome 1, it states that students "*will be able to describe and demonstrate key skills in selected sports activities*", and then for the Method and Results segment two specific sports were chosen. It seems as though the Outcome should be in closer congruency and state those specific sports activities. The "Evidence of Improvement" concept should be included in the next years model since this years data, is baseline data with no comparison to previous years.

**Motion:**

Subcommittee recommendation to approve the Institutionally Designated Option learning outcomes and assessment plan as presented with suggestions as marked on the report.

Motion passed unanimously.

Get information to departments, make changes and approve GE.

Competencies involvement

- Guidance from council
- How statements effect GE

CLA

-77<sup>th</sup>%

- Low sample size (100 from 300)
- 1/2 native and ½ transfer
- National system-CLA-vaule added
- Freshman size—4-5% increase and continued growth
- Transfers down

Coordinating Board

- Some talk of them reviewing History and Political Science and reducing to 1 each
- Redefine and specifically guided

Thank you for your assistance in reviewing the GE learning outcomes and assessment plans.

Meeting adjourned 1:12 p.m.

