

March 26, 2009

Attending: John Hemingway, William Thompson, Amy Brock, Sean Cordes, Judy Dallinger (ex officio), Steve Bennet, David Haugen, Candace McLaughlin (ex-officio), John Hemingway, Phyllis Rippey, Kathleen O'Donnell-Brown, Douglas Huff, William Thompson, David Casagrande, Moises Molina (guest)

Moises Molina presented a request from Fine Arts for Music School students to be able to take two Fine Arts classes and one Humanities. Long discussion ensued. Phyllis Rippey pointed out that Dean Kreider originally came to the council asking for only one Fine Arts class because that is all his college was able to deliver. The council had originally suggested one humanities, one fine arts and an optional third. But Dean Kreider at that time only wanted the one—and Phyllis presented this to Faculty Senate where it passed. John Miller recalled that it was the belief on GERC that departments that need appropriate waivers would be able to get those. Phyllis responding by pointing out that if we have created a rule that seems to warrant one exception after another, then perhaps a new general rule is needed.

Phyllis proposes that we table this discussion until Dean Krieder and Dean Levi might meet with us to share their views as to a generalizable rule that would solve the problem.

#### ASSESSMENT

Phyllis: Judi has begun the process of providing us with assessment data.  
Everyone pulls out sheets.

Judi: We have African American studies comments. Biology is having a little trouble. I am not sure if English 180 knew I wanted their data.

Kathleen O'Donnell-Brown: I could have Alice Roberts forward the Eng 180 data to you.

Discussion of how to deal with departments that have not supplied data.

John Miller to Judi: Could you wait till April 8?

Judi: I could.

Phyllis: They need to get their data to the Provost's office by April 7. Otherwise, the CGE report will specify that that we don't have data from those departments.

Motion made to this effect by John Miller.

Motion passes unanimously.

John Miller: Do departments know that they are supposed to do this assessment this semester?

John Hemingway: I can tell you that a reminder is necessary.

Phyllis: I thought this year we were piloting. Done only once this year. Then, next year it would start.

David Casagrande: I believe we are in a pilot like it or not because of the confusion. This first round is

going to pretty messy at this point. Are we supposed to be surveying every student in every section every semester?

Phyllis: The language of the assessment plan allows for sampling. Departments can devise their assessment plan via sampling.

John Miller: I believe that the sample needs to include students from every section.

Judi: We need *some* assessment every semester because some courses are only offered one semester a year. So we need departments that will come up with a plan that will assess all Gen Ed appropriately.

Phyllis: I will send a reminder to all departments that they are supposed to be doing this also in the spring.

David Haugen: Reads from a letter sent February 23 that suggests that the fall was a pilot and that no assessment was going to be done in the Spring.

Sofura Boukari: Discusses some of the problems that AAS is having.

Phyllis: The Provost has the ultimate responsibility for assessment. We don't need to be accounted for why reports are not forthcoming. That's up to the Provost. We are not in a position to police departments.

John Miller: I suggest that we make a motion that we will start assessing every semester in Fall 2009.

Sean: I have a friendly amendment. I think we need to clarify how to draw the sample and what the timeline is.

Phyllis: Every department has submitted a plan. I don't think we don't want to do anything to those plans.

Sean: We need to give them timelines.

Phyllis: We will give them a timeline for Academic 2009 / 2010.

John Miller: We should do by certain weeks—thus eliminating the need for dates, i.e. must report by Week X.

John Miller: Why are reporting it only once a year. We should just send it to the Provost every semester.

Phyllis: The data is due by the end of the fourth week of the semester following that in which it was collected.

David Casagrande: Asks sampling question.

Phyllis: Well we approved the plans.

David: Every section that is being offered this semester ought to be assessed.

Phyllis: That is a substantive issue. We shouldn't be raising it now. All we can do is facilitate the process and keep it going. Departments were able to implement their plans and move forward. Some sample. Some don't.

David: I just want it standardized. What's a good sample. What's a bad one? It's a mess.

Phyllis: This process is meant to be meaningful to the home departments and the commission on higher learning. Unless they complain, I question whether we want to go back and do a real review of these plans.

Phyllis: Motion: We tell each department that each semester they must assess General education. They will report the data the following semester. Fall data will be reported in the spring. Spring will be reported in the Fall. End of the fourth week of each semester is the deadline for the data from the previous semester. DEPARTMENTS ARE NOT REQUIRED TO ASSESSMENT THIS SPRING.

Motion moved and seconded. Passes unanimously.

John Miller: Judi's concern that assessment is going on in every section. I don't think we need to say that it is a perfect random sample. I think David Casagrande's point is well taken. There is confusion about how assessment is to be done. Some departments are not assessing every course. Some are. Some are assessing every course but not every section. We need to go over the language and see if it needs clarification. If it does, we take it to faculty senate. If not, we simply remind the departments to do what they need to do. Let's discuss the University Plan of Assessment next time.

David and Judi discuss the Sociology Dept's assessment of Gen Ed.

Phyllis: Come to the next meeting with thoughts about the data.

## GERC REPORT

**Proposal for the**  
**Assessment of Student Learning in General Education**  
**At Western Illinois University**

**Approved by the General Education Review Committee**

**February 15, 2007**

### **Underlying Assumptions:**

1. The assessment of student learning in regard to Western's General Education Goals should take place at the level of the department. This is in contrast to methods of assessment that evaluate

every student individually or that are conducted on a university wide level. There are several reasons for this conclusion.

- a. Assessment results are of the most use to the departments that deliver courses within the General Education Curriculum.
  - b. Western's large student body makes individual student level assessment untenable.
  - c. Conversely, the flexibility offered by a cafeteria style General Education Curriculum makes any university level assessment activities difficult.
2. General Education assessment should be as unobtrusive to faculty and departments as possible, yet should provide useful information regarding student achievement of Western's General Education Goals.
  3. Other entities in the university need the information departments will generate by doing General Education assessment. These include the Council on General Education, the Faculty Senate, deans, and the Office of Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs. As such, a regular mechanism for communicating information regarding General Education assessment is necessary.
  4. As the office responsible for cross-college academic activities, the office of the Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs is ultimately responsible for seeing that General Education assessment is carried out in a timely and effective manner.
  5. Consistent with the faculty contract [Article 20.4.c.(1).(c)] , assessment results cannot be used in the evaluation of individual faculty for personnel decisions.

**I. Preliminary Activities:** Departments are responsible for developing a plan to assess student mastery of the WIU General Education goals in the department's courses that are included in the General Education Curriculum. The office of the Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs may serve as a resource to departments in developing appropriate plans for General Education assessment. However, the following activities are required of each department offering courses in the General Education Curriculum.

A. Departments offering General Education courses must have an Assessment Committee as one of their regular department committees. Department assessment committees already in existence are sufficient. Another committee may assume these duties.

B. For departments offering courses in the General Education Curriculum, the department assessment committee, in conjunction with the faculty teaching General Education courses, will identify at least three of the General Education goals that are appropriate to the discipline(s) represented by that department. The three goals selected may be the same for all General Education

courses offered by a department or may vary by course.

C. The three goals selected by the department assessment committee will be submitted to the Council on General Education.

D. After reviewing the departments' submissions, the Council on General Education will recommend to departments which goals they will use for their General Education assessment.

E. The Council on General Education will verify that each of the General Education Goals is being used for assessment by a sufficient number of departments (or courses) to reasonably assure that a student at Western would be exposed to each of the goals.

F. The Council on General Education will develop a format for departments to use in reporting their General Education assessment results.

**II. General Education Assessment Plan:** Once the goals for each department offering General Education courses have been identified, departments need to develop a plan of assessing student learning of those goals. These plans may vary by course within a department, or department assessment plans may be consistent across courses. Each plan must include the following.

A. **Learning Outcomes:** While the General Education Goals provide the basic outline for student learning in General Education, departments must develop measurable learning outcomes that are specific to the department's discipline(s). Measurable learning outcomes will be developed for each of the department's General Education goals. Learning outcomes are from a student's point of view: "students will demonstrate..."

1. The measurable learning outcome is a narrower objective relevant to a broader goal. Measurable learning outcomes should be developed in the context of what faculty members teaching General Education courses are currently teaching.

2. **Departments may choose to assess student learning in a sample of the General Education courses and sections offered by the department, rather than in every section of every course. Every General Education course must regularly be included in the assessment process. Departments using a sample of sections should rotate the responsibility of assessment among its faculty teaching General Education courses.**

B. **Measurement:** Departments will develop forms of measurement that provide clear evidence of student learning relative to the learning objectives. Measures stem directly from the learning outcomes identified for each of the two goals being assessed by a department. Examples of possible measures include standardized tests, imbedded assessment, and portfolios.

C. **Results:** Through their assessment committees, departments are responsible for the following activities.

1. Departments will carry out the measurement in their General Education courses.

2. Departments will compile the results of the measurement.
3. Departments will analyze the findings in relation to the learning outcomes and the department's expectations of student learning.
4. Departments will report General Education assessment activities and results to their deans in annual assessment reports.

**D. Feedback:** The results of General Education Assessment can be used by a variety of actors.

1. Faculty can use assessment results to adjust teaching methods or course content if students are not meeting faculty members' expectations for student learning.
2. Departments can use assessment results to initiate adjustments in the departmental curriculum. Results can also foster discussion of teaching methods among departmental faculty.
3. Deans will receive General Education assessment results from the departments in each college that offers General Education courses. These reports will be transmitted to the Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs.
4. The Office of the Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs will compile department assessment information for institutional purposes. The Provost's office will provide General Education assessment results annually to the Council on General Education, as they are submitted by departments, unless CGE requests otherwise. The Council on General Education will report on General Education assessment to the Faculty Senate.
5. The Council on General Education will use assessment results as part of its ongoing review of General Education. Any actions taken as a result of General Education assessment will be reported annually to the Faculty Senate.
6. The Faculty Senate will be kept informed of assessment activities by the Council on General Education and the Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs. Additional information may be requested.