

General Education Curriculum Committee
Meeting of October 18, 2013, 2:30

Minutes

Attending (Voting): Banks, Bradley, Brueggemann, Carter, Futrell, Mabry, Reynolds, Singleton, Song, Swanson, Tillquist

(Non-Voting): Bays, Billingsley, Carden, Dietrich, Gilchrist, Karega, Partin

(Guests): Jill Compton (CPE), Il Barrow, Bob Goldstein

Approval of Minutes

The minutes of September 13, 2013, were approved.

Introduction of New Members

New committee members, Ansyn Banks and Kathleen Carter, were welcomed.

General Education Assessment Alignment with SACS

Gilchrist, Barrow and Goldstein distributed their SLO Annual Report Process and discussed the alignment of general education assessments with SACS/COC regional accreditation, statewide accountability, and institutional general education responsibilities. Specifically, attention was called to SACS standards 3.3.1 and 3.5.1. Gilchrist gave an overview of the key components of the assessment process and explained the alignment of the stated program mission and goals in four areas: the academic major, general education competencies, culminating undergraduate experience (CUE), and critical thinking. She discussed the various measures used to assess SLOs, including direct measures, indirect measures, evaluation of students' work, and rubrics with a range of scores (not grades). Targets oftentimes are expressed in percentages. For example: 80% of the students will be proficient in critical thinking. The findings reflect how students actually performed. Critical thinking (CT) can be evaluated using a CUE or research project. Effective communication (EC) can be evaluated based on a student's presentation or a project that could be evaluated for both CT and EC. If students are not performing at the target level, an action plan is needed to close the loop. Goldstein emphasized that SACS is keenly interested in how to close the loop, looking for specific evidence of quality improvement. It's no longer enough to say that we are doing these things; it must be demonstrated beyond grades, including the provision of samples. Regarding the issue of grades as an unacceptable measure, the rubric provides more detailed information about the competencies because it is aligned directly with the learning outcomes. Since general education is becoming a larger part of the priority of SACS, the GECC was given an opportunity to ask questions. Also, individual or departmental training on this process of alignment, assessment, and closing the loop is available. Singleton already benefitted from utilizing the new, user-friendly Compliance Assist technology. Barrow, the research analyst, can assist. Use of the findings for continual program improvement is the final step in the SLO process. Billingsley commented on the necessity of this cycle. In preparation for the 2017 reaffirmation of accreditation by SACS, the university needs to document how the academic units assess and improve the General Education Program.

Kentucky Statewide General Education Assessment Plan

Jill Compton, Senior Associate for Student Success at CPE, talked about the general education statewide assessment plan and fielded questions. She mirrored the institutional concerns about making assessment as efficient as possible. General education assessment is not only being done as part of the SACS requirement but coincides with KRS 164.2951. In response to this legislation, state institutions are working to close the loop to “provide evidence of ongoing assessment that ensures comparability for transfer purposes on a three-year cycle.” The first reports are due by October 31, 2013. Goldstein serves on the committee that will review those reports. It is about accountability and use of assessment to improve practice. Although there may be similar problem areas across the state, curriculums will not be standardized. Alignment is a faculty matter and the “tuning project” is a faculty effort. However, institutional SLOs need to match up with the statewide SLOs to bridge the gap as part of the transfer policy. Billingsley thanked Compton for her time and commented that UofL will work toward the type of assessment that Gilchrist talked about (beyond the grade) and that the state presented. Although UofL has done a good job of assessing the three overarching core competency areas, it must bring the topical categories into the statewide general education assessment framework. Also, the syllabi still need to be assessed.

Note: A student success summit is set for April and professional learning communities (PLC) are a new initiative.

Results of Rubric Assessment/Validity Test

In response to questions previously raised about the effectiveness of the current assessment rubrics, Karega and Bays developed a proposal that was presented to the GECC in May. At that time, the GECC requested that the validity and reliability of the current CT rubric be tested. The results of the pilot assessment process were discussed and questions focusing on the reliability of the raters were addressed. In cases where there is a consistent problem with the reader, rather than the rubric, more training can be provided by Dr. Larson’s team. Billingsley asked if LiveText can be used to determine if there is a reader who consistently rates against the others. Although readers don’t follow a particular order in LiveText when reviewing and rating the artifacts, the responses are time stamped. Since raters may grow tired, it was suggested that the reading time frames be cut down to one hour. Despite variability and point of view concerns, it was determined that the current instrument is valid and that UofL must move forward with collecting data and closing loops. Billingsley reiterated that SACS will want to know what the faculty are doing to improve teaching. Dr. Dietrich was thanked for her helpful input.

*ACTION: Edits were made to the rating process under Recommendations (see attachment).

*ACTION: A motion was approved to accept the recommendations under the rubric structure and rating process headings in the report to improve the validity and reliability. Details will be discussed by the assessment subcommittee.

CD Petition Update

Karega reported that two new CD petitions were reviewed and denied.

Assessment Report

At the next meeting, Karega will report on the departmental assessments conducted in the spring.

Prepared by Kathy Carden