



Assessment Coordinating Council (ACC)

Progress Report 2006 - 2008

Executive Summary

Major accomplishments in assessment between 2006-2008 include:

- Organization of an assessment structure that includes academic and student support services assessment with clear mission statement (see Appendix D);
- Development of a university-wide assessment web site for dissemination of assessment expectations, ideas, activities, results, and models for all departments and programs on campus; <http://assessment.arizona.edu/>
- Designed Feasibility Study in Fall 2007 which identified an embedded process to gather writing and assess General Education Student Learning Outcomes based on Goals and Objectives for University Wide General Education (see Appendix A); developed rubrics based on the General Education Tier Two Goals, Objectives, and SLOs; conducted workshops to test inter reader reliability using our new rubrics and Gen Ed writing samples;
- Designed Pilot Study in Spring 2008 using findings from Feasibility Study to survey instructors of Tier Two General Education classes, gather writing from a common prompt from students in these Tier Two classes; revise rubrics, improve inter reader reliability;
- Assessment Workshop related to APR held on November 7, 2008 – 52 participants;
- Assessment Showcase planned for February 11, 2009.

Part I – Leadership Team for Outcomes Assessment (LTOA)

December 2006: The University of Arizona formed a committee of faculty and administrators to prepare for a comprehensive review and assessment of the goals and objectives of the General Education program. Details are as follows:

January 2007: Jerry Hogle, Interim Vice President for Instruction, convened the Leadership Team for Outcomes Assessment (LTOA) which would meet bi-weekly. Gwendolyn Johnson, Director of Assessment, reviewed the history of General Education assessment for the committee. LTOA decided to review several national assessment programs as well as design an assessment instrument for UA.

February – March 2007: Committee members researched and reported on assessment at Pima Community College, CLAQWA (Cognitive Level and Quality Writing Assessment System), STEPS (Cal State Chico), and the Florida Writing Assessment. All of these assessments require resources. Gwen Johnson defined terms for LTOA (assessment and evaluation, goals, objectives, student learning outcomes of SLOs). Budget for NCA was requested. LTOA began developing a Feasibility Study for UA that would be meaningful, manageable, and sustainable.

April – May 2007: Sampling mechanism determined for UA Feasibility Study for Fall 2007: 2 Tier Two teaching faculty in each strand (HUM, NATS, INDV) would be asked to submit one teaching assignment given at mid term along with the student writing. LTOA members agreed to contact 6 faculty – two in each strand (Tom Fleming and Dale Ward in NATS, Tom Willard and Steve Martinson in HUM, Gerald Swanson and Grace Fielder in INDV). Goals/Objectives/Student Learning Outcomes for each strand were forwarded to the 6 participating faculty who identified which of the strands best assessed their assignments.

Summer 2007: LTOA members Beth Harrison and Anne-Marie Hall developed pilot rubrics related to the General Education Goals/Objectives/SLOs for the Fall 2007 feasibility study. Jerry Hogle researched human subjects issues with HSPP.

Fall 2007: Purpose of Feasibility Study discussed: purpose defined as identifying and defining a process for assessment that is embedded in and not added on to curriculum. HSPP/IRB issues: data collected can be used for self-study but not for research reports or public presentations. Learning Technologies Center (LTC) set up a D2L site for online submissions of papers from Feasibility Study. LTOA members also given passwords to enter the STEPS site and participate in online tour to determine if that would be a useful assessment instrument for UA. Papers from 6 Tier Two classes are either submitted manually or uploaded to the D2L site. Kathleen Gonzalez gathered all the writing samples and teams were set up to begin reviewing the submissions using the new rubrics.

Fall 2007 Feasibility Study: Collected student writing samples from 6 Tier Two classes and developed rubrics for assessment them in relation to the overall learning goals and student objectives for the General Education program. **Findings:** collection process was cumbersome – recommendation was that all further assessment must be submitted electronically; assignments varied in length and content – recommendation was that content area specialists have to evaluate; small team of faculty read assignments and attempted to score with rubrics – recommendation was that rubrics must be simplified due to [poor inter reader reliability; 4 point GRE Analytical Writing rubric was revised into a 5 point rubric application to the UA General Education Goals and Objective (see Appendix B).

Assessments such as CLA (Collegiate Learning Assessment) and VSA (Voluntary System of Accountability) discussed. LTOA recommended that UA not participate in nor adopt the CLA but rather develop and conduct our own assessment studies. Jerry Hogle recommended VSA to President Shelton. LTOA asked that their decisions about assessments be linked to UA assessment goals: for national competition, for assessment of writing skills, for assessment of individual courses in general education, to improve programs in general education, for faculty development and improvement of instruction.

Part 2: Academic Coordinating Council (ACC)

Spring 2008: New assessment structure formed to embrace graduate student/program assessment as well as students services – LTOA became Assessment Coordinating Council (ACC) and meets bi-weekly to coordinate assessment activities for the campus. Gwendolyn Johnson, Director of Assessment, is Chair of ACC and the liaison between the ACC, the Academic Assessment Group (AAG) and Student Support Services Assessment Group (SSSAG) (See Appendix C). Faculty and staff from the colleges and administrative and support units will strive to improve the quality and assessment of academic and student support groups. Chair of ACC will be liaison for two subcommittees of ACC: Academic Assessment Group (representatives/specialists on assessment from each college and UWGEC, Honors, Library) and Student Support Services Assessment Group (representatives from each student affairs entity).

Spring 2008: The UA Assessment Website was redesigned to reflect the movement toward a more holistic and integrative approach to assessment on the campus.

Spring 2008: Pilot Study developed focusing on all Tier Two faculty and students (141 sections). Learning Technology Center (LTC) administered the survey using the D2L course management system. Letter to all Tier Two faculty consisted of several questions about the four goals for Tier Two General Education courses: think critically, communicate effectively, understand and value differences, and use information effectively. Survey asked faculty about the overall preparation of their students for the Tier Two courses; how they rate the importance of the skills specified in the Overall Learning Goals and Objectives (see Appendix A); and a short answer section asking faculty to define and assess critical thinking in their Tier Two classes. In addition, there was a way for students to respond to a prompt and voluntarily submit their own assessment of their General Education courses.

References: *Assessment Clear and Simple: A Practical Guide for Institutions, Departments, and General Education* by Barbara Walvoord. Copies distributed to ACC members to read over summer.

Summer 2008: Key Findings from General Education Pilot Study – 26 faculty (out of 141 sections) or 19% responded from ARTS, INDV, NATS, HUM. Findings on the importance and level of student preparedness:

- Using Sources Ethically and Responsibly - 88% of faculty felt this was essential/very important and 78% of their students were somewhat prepared or not prepared;
- Inferring Ambiguities and Assumptions - 76% of faculty felt this was essential/very important though 85% felt their students were only somewhat prepared or not prepared;
- Composing Correct and Clear Written Materials in Multiple Genres - 76% of faculty also felt this was essential/very important but only 68% of their students were somewhat prepared or not prepared.
- Content analysis of the written comments by faculty suggest that most faculty assess critical thinking through class discussion and writing (short essays, essay exams, term papers) though some faculty shared innovative lessons such as inserting “concept questions” into lectures, developing group work in large classes by thinking a “think-pair-share” technique, writing artist’s statements to accompany studio projects, sighting assignments more at the end of the semester than the beginning. Many faculty praised students’ engagement with course material, students’ abilities to make connections, and students’ enthusiasm about other ways of knowing. Finally, faculty generally believed that students are better prepared in Tier Two than in Tier One classes to think and to write.

Fall 2008: Goals and objectives for ACC, AAG, and SSSAG distributed (see Appendix C). Assessment website updated. APR Assessment Workshop held on November 7, 2008 with 46 participants. Agenda included overview and benefits of assessment (at UA and in general), procedures for assessing students learning, learning outcomes statements, commonly used measures of student learning, program

assessment, and overview of UA assessment website. A timeline for ACC and the Work Groups' Goals and Objectives developed (see Appendix E).

Fall 2008: A workshop, "Advancing Student Learning through Outcomes Assessment", was held on November 7, 2008. A total of 52 representatives from Departments that have recently completed or are currently engaged in Academic Progress Review, and other units across campus attended the workshop. The agenda included an overview and benefits of assessment (at UA and in general), a procedure for assessing students learning, developing learning outcomes statements, commonly used measures of student learning, ideas for program assessment, and overview of the UA assessment website. The workshop was facilitated by Gwendolyn Johnson, Director of Assessment, Office of Institutional Research and Planning Support.

An important outcome of the Assessment workshop was the identification of 25 individuals who will be using the UA Assessment website to update assessment information for their respective units.

Future Plans:

- Assessment Showcase planned for February 11, 2009. Victor Borden, Associate Vice President of University Planning, Institutional Research and Accountability at Indiana University – Bloomington, IN, will be the keynote speaker. Concurrent sessions on
 - grading rubrics
 - writing multiple choice questions
 - using portfolios and capstones for assessment
 - web tools for assessment
 - assessment of student support services; assessment of the General Education program
 - writing initiatives
 - information literacy
 - case studies as the departmental, graduate, and professional levels
 - and program assessment.
- Develop and disseminate an assessment newsletter in spring 2009
- Student Learning Outcomes Assessment Workshop – fall 2009

Appendices

- A. Learning Goals and Objectives for the University-Wide General Education Program**
- B. Rubric for Pilot Study**
- C. Proposed Assessment Structure of ACC, AAG, SSAG**
- D. Mission of ACC**
- E. ACC and Work Groups' Goals and Objectives**

Appendix A

Overall Learning Goals & Objectives for the University-wide General Education Program

Compiled by Beth Harrison, Paul Melendez, Tom Miller, Dennis Ray, Tom Rhodes June 2005

Revised by Chris Hass, Anne-Marie Hall, Beth Harrison May 2006

Approved by the UWGEC May 17, 2006

At the end of their General Education program, students will be able to:

* Think critically

1. Exercise synthetic, analytic and/or computational reasoning as needed to solve problems.
2. Raise salient questions about the evidence, inferences, and conclusions of inquiries, including one's own inquiries.
3. Infer and assess the ambiguities, assumptions, values, and purposes at issue in inquiries, including one's own work.

* Communicate effectively

4. Interpret and clearly present information in varied formats, including graphs, charts, and multimedia projects.
5. Compose correct and clear written material in multiple formats such as research logs, researched reports, exam answers, and reflective essays.
6. Improve written and visual documents in response to feedback.

* Understand and value differences

7. Assess how different modes of inquiry and expression are appropriate in varied cultural and disciplinary contexts.
8. Examine how differences in cultural and individual viewpoints expand our understanding of human experience.

* Use information effectively

9. Access and evaluate the reliability of information from varied sources, including internet and library resources.
10. Use information sources ethically and responsibly.

Appendix B

Rubric for Assessing Writing in General Education

Adapted from the GRE Analytical Writing rubric

Score: 5

Displays strong analytical writing, including:

- Provides thoughtful analysis of complex ideas.
- Develops and supports main points with logically sound reasons and/or well-chosen examples.
- Is well focused and well organized.
- Uses sentence variety and vocabulary to convey meaning clearly.
- Demonstrates good control of sentence structure and language usage but may have minor errors that do not interfere with meaning

Score: 4

Displays generally strong writing, including:

- Provides competent analysis of complex ideas.
- Develops and supports main points with relevant reasons and/or examples.
- Is adequately organized.
- Conveys meaning with reasonable clarity
- Demonstrates satisfactory control of sentence structure and language usage but may have minor errors that do not interfere with meaning.

Score: 3

Displays competence in analytical writing, including:

- Has a central idea, but with limited analysis or development.
- Some organization problems.
- Some problems with sentence structure or language usage.
- Some errors that result in vagueness or lack of clarity.

Score: 2

Displays serious weakness in analytical writing. The writing is seriously flawed in at least one of the following ways:

- Serious lack of analysis or development
- Weak organization.
- Serious and frequent problems in sentence structure or language usage, with errors that obscure meaning.

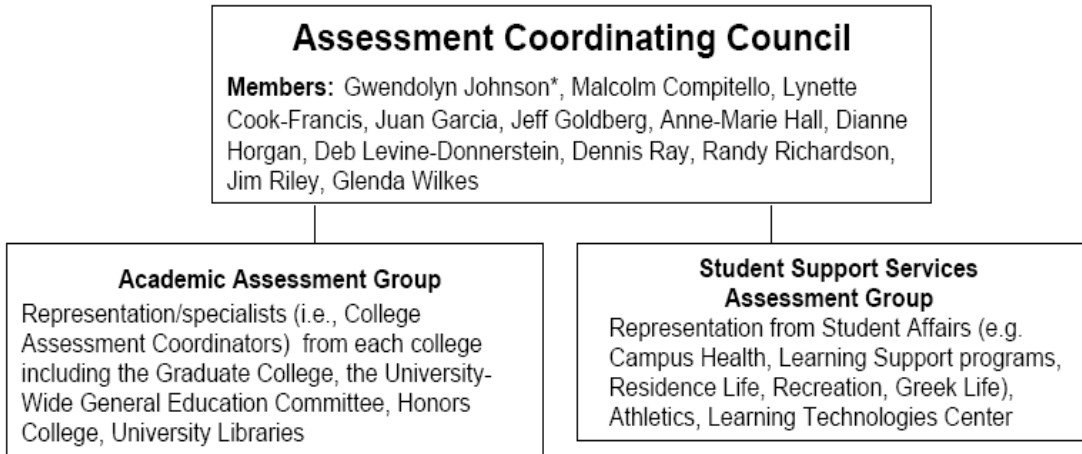
Score: 1

Displays fundamental deficiencies in analytical writing. The writing is fundamentally flawed in at least one of the following ways:

- Content that is extremely confusing or mostly irrelevant to the assigned task.
- Little or no development.
- Severe and pervasive errors that result in incoherence

Appendix C

Assessment Structure



*ACC chair serves as the liaison between the Assessment Groups

Appendix D

The University of Arizona Assessment Coordinating Council

Mission

The Assessment Coordinating Council (ACC) is convened by the Provost and reports to the Provost or her designee(s). It is the coordinating resource for assessment activities for the campus. The ACC is composed of faculty and staff representatives from the colleges and from administrative and support units who strive to improve the quality and assessment of academic and student support programs. The mission of the ACC is to:

- Connect people who are actively involved in assessment in academic and supports units with resources that are available for assessment and to help units maximize the use of shared tools and resources;
- Serve as a cross-campus forum for the exchange of ideas, information, and advice on methods and practices of assessment, including the value of assessment;
- Provide information and expertise to help units use evaluation results to change and improve academic and support programs, including how to set student outcomes and goals that support courses, programs, and the whole university experience;
- Keep the university community apprised of expectations for assessment, including expectations related to regional accreditation;
- Communicate expected outcomes and results of assessment activities in accessible language and in multiple mediums for students, parents, and the public;
- Advise the Provost and other administrators on matters related to assessment and evaluation;
- Ensure the implementation of the University's assessment plan, and to periodically evaluate and revise the University assessment plan;
- Work with those who engage in assessment activities to help them understand (or enhance) their activities as "assessment".

Appendix E

ACC and Work Groups Goals and Objectives

Assessment Coordinating Council

- Communicate expected outcomes and results of assessment activities in accessible language and in multiple mediums for students, parents, and the public;
UA Assessment website, electronic newsletter – first issue November 2008
- Serve as a cross-campus forum for the exchange of ideas, information, and advice on methods and practices of assessment, including the value of assessment;
Assessment Showcase – February 11, 2009
- Advise the Provost and other administrators on matters related to assessment and evaluation;
End of semester report/presentation – spring 2009
- Ensure the implementation of the University’s assessment plan, and to periodically evaluate and revise the University assessment plan;
Revise 1995 Outcomes Assessment Plan Fall 2008
Annual progress report – spring 2009
College Level audit of assessment activities – early spring 2009
- Keep the university community apprised of expectations for assessment, including expectations related to regional accreditation;
UA Assessment Website, electronic newsletter - – first issue November 2008

Academic Assessment Group

- Connect people who are actively involved in assessment in academic units with resources that are available for assessment and to help units maximize the use of shared tools and resources;
Create Faculty Center for Assessment –fall 2008 - spring 2009
- Provide information and expertise to help units use evaluation results to change and improve academic programs, including how to set student outcomes and goals that support courses, programs, and the whole university experience;
Workshops: APR Outcomes Assessment – November 7, 2008
- Work with those who engage in assessment activities to help them understand (or enhance) their activities as “assessment”.

Student Support Services Assessment Group

- Connect people who are actively involved in assessment in support units with resources that are available for assessment and to help units maximize the use of shared tools and resources;
UA Assessment website, electronic newsletter – first issue November 2008

- Serve as a cross-campus forum for the exchange of ideas, information, and advice on methods and practices of assessment, including the value of assessment;
Assessment Showcase – February 11, 2009
- Provide information and expertise to help units use evaluation results to change and improve support programs, including how to set student outcomes and goals that support programs and the whole university experience;
- Work with those who engage in assessment activities to help them understand (or enhance) their activities as “assessment”.