

**Meeting Date:** October 18, 2021

**Assessment Committee**

Attended: Jennifer Bown, Elizabeth Carney, Jil Freeman, Shalee Hodgson, Jason Kovac, Kelly Mercer, Dave Mount, Lisa Nielson, Russel Pasewald, Lisa Reynolds, Ashley Sears, Mary Jean Williams

Guest: Scot Pruyn

**One Topic/Item was addressed at this meeting: Proposed revision of general education course approval process**

* Elizabeth, Lisa, and Scot provided a brief history of this work and an update on the process. The committee discussed questions, concerns, and next steps.
* The brief history: The Curriculum Committee gen ed review team determined that the review process for general education courses needed to ask for different information that more clearly reflects the AAOT criteria so that reviewers can determine how courses were designed to align to the criteria. At the same time, the Cultural Literacy assessment team discovered, over two years of attempts to evaluate student samples from CL-designated classes, that many assignments did not seem to align well with the CL outcome. The gen ed application revision team collaborated with the CL assessment team to develop and pilot a new application for gen ed courses. The group that worked on the revision project was James Bryant-Trerise, Nora Brodnicki, Amanda Coffey, Alice Lewis, Lisa Reynolds, Scot Pruyn, and Elizabeth Carney.
* The update:
  + The proposed revised application was piloted last year with several instructors whose courses currently have the CL designation. Those instructors gave feedback on the experience of filling out the application. They found the application mostly clear and manageable but a few said it challenged them to consider questions they hadn’t considered before and prompted them to try to better align their course with the gen ed outcome.
  + The revision project team attempted to evaluate the pilot applications and found that the revised application provided better evidence than the previous version to judge alignment between the course and the learning outcome. At the same time, there were some differences in how the group interpreted the applications, indicating that some sort of norming process for the future Curriculum Committee gen ed review team would be wise.
  + The results of the pilot were shared with the Curriculum Committee. The item was brought to Curriculum Committee twice. No one on the committee raised objections to moving forward with the application. However, the revisions project team decided that more input and discussion was needed, with the Assessment Committee and with the rest of the gen ed assessment teams (in addition to Cultural Literacy). One question: would the application piloted with the CL outcome work also with other gen ed areas, which differ in how many outcomes they have?
  + The other need the revision team has identified is for planning support for faculty doing the application, around how to align course content and a course assessment with outcomes. Center for Teaching and Learning capacity needs to be considered in this discussion/planning.
* Discussion by the Committee:
  + Concerns about the consequences for losing gen ed credit for courses, such as a course having low seat load and being cut. This could be especially concerning in the context of recent potential program eliminations.
  + What does yes or no mean on the application rubric? How is yes or no determined?
  + The official application is submitted by the lead instructor, so the lead instructor is the instructor of record on the resulting course outline. When a course is taught by multiple instructors, the course outline is intended to guide the intent of the course. That intent can be met in different ways; for example, different assignments can all address the same learning outcome.
  + There’s a lot of variation between departments in consistency across different sections of a course and in how much freedom faculty have. Some departments, for example, use the same reading across sections. Some departments use the same assignment template that provides some guidance while giving instructors some freedom to design their own assignment. In other departments, there is little coordination across sections/instructors.
  + There’s the potential that a new gen ed application could raise a discussion/concerns about academic freedom.
  + Should the application indicate if the whole department is on board with the application?
  + Seems like there’s a need to help departments clarify the role of lead faculty – how to ensure the integrity of a course while also maintaining academic freedom.
* Next steps:
  + Further thoughts can be sent to Elizabeth by email.
  + Invite the gen ed assessment team leads to meet with the Assessment Committee for further discussion.