



General Education As a Program

January Assessment Institute
9 January 2015
Presented by Linda Ledford-Miller

Middle States visit and first steps

- ◆ MSCHE visitors paid obvious attention to and concern for GE
- ◆ Small subcommittee formed
- ◆ Posed a series of investigative questions:
 1. How is the GE program organized? That is, under whose oversight, if any?
 2. What are their GE Objectives? Do they have separate SLOs in addition to objectives or goals? Do they attach to the institutional mission and/or LOs?
Is GE tiered? that is, do the GE goals/objectives/SLOs extend beyond the basic GE courses to student learning over the entire undergraduate career?
 3. How is GE assessed? Is there a separate plan for GE, a schedule of what when, and a who? and after assessment, then what?
 4. Perhaps impossible to ascertain, but how are those involved in GE compensated?

Parallel investigation of University and GE

1. GE attributes[date from approximately 1995
2. No GE attribute for Oral competency nor computer literacy, as those were stand alone required courses
3. Once approved, GE courses were not assessed or reviewed
4. Faculty Senate efforts: ad hoc committee on GE goals and ad hoc committee on GE assessment
5. Senate goals of 2014 do not readily correlate with GE attributes of 1995 (deliberately)
6. Senate statement on GE assessment tabled as OEA got underway

1995 GE Attributes

Q	Quantitative Reasoning
CH	Humanities/Culture: History
CL	Humanities/Culture: Literature
CA	Humanities/Culture: Arts
CF	Humanities/Culture: Foreign Languages
CI	Humanities/Culture: Interdisciplinary
P	Philosophy or Theology/Religious Studies
E	Natural Science
S	Social/Behavioral Science
W	Writing-Intensive
D	Cultural Diversity

The General Education Program (Faculty Senate document 4-24-2014)

- A general education at The University of Scranton aims to generate opportunities for students to obtain and demonstrate broad knowledge of human cultures, social formations, and the physical and natural world. Moreover, philosophy and theology enjoy a special place in the Jesuit and Catholic educational traditions; in tandem with other disciplines, they encourage students to reflect on fundamental questions of ethics and faith in their personal and professional development. As such, the transformation for which we strive builds on shared, formative educational opportunities.
- Education in the spirit of discernment, intellectual rigor, and service is a communal endeavor. By educating men and women for others, we aspire to motivate and empower students to live in keeping with the Jesuit ethos of contemplation in action. Students will affirm the common differences that bind humanity, the recognition of which forms a basis for any meaningful expression of solidarity. Students and faculty will join in realizing our shared purpose, to foster positive social change in service of faith and justice for the good of the entire human community.

Senate GE continued

- Forging communities based on principles of cultural awareness, inclusion, respect, and dignity, we work to connect the knowledge we gain in the classroom with all aspects of our lives and professions. Because broad, interdisciplinary collaboration is essential to a Jesuit education rooted in the liberal arts, the general educational curriculum equips students to pursue both in-depth study in their chosen field and to engage critically with information, ideas, and arguments in other disciplines.
- Students who take full advantage of the breadth of opportunities afforded to them by the general educational curriculum will develop a commitment to life-long learning and be practiced in the creative and compassionate imagination required to respond to the spiritual, intellectual, and material needs of others in a diverse and globalizing world. These include a range of courses that support the acquisition of intellectual and practical skills for formal and informal communication (oral and written) and for the critical and innovative thinking that guides inquiry and analysis. While we speak of foundational learning as skills, we do so in full knowledge of the fact that no skill can be taught or learned in isolation from contents or processes. To that end, the general education program is designed to achieve the goals articulated below by engaging students in fundamental areas of technological and information literacy, diversity, humanities, natural sciences, philosophy, quantitative reasoning, social-behavioral sciences, and theology.

Goal 1: Students will demonstrate analytic reasoning and critical thinking within and across disciplines.

- **Learning Objective:** Students will demonstrate familiarity with and differentiate among the objects, methods, ethics, and conclusions of natural and social-behavioral scientific inquiry.
- **Learning Objective:** Students will comprehend fundamental scientific principles and arguments.
- **Learning Objective:** Students will create, solve, interpret, formulate, and execute basic mathematical models and concepts.
- **Learning Objective:** Students will communicate and represent quantitative information or results numerically, symbolically, orally, visually, or in writing.
- **Learning Objective:** Students will apply inductive, deductive, and other systems of logical analysis to solving problems.

Goal 2: Students will demonstrate proficiency in verbal (written and oral) communication within and across disciplines.

- **Learning Objective:** Students will communicate effectively in writing and orally, disseminating thoughts and ideas to persuade, defend, and/or inform audiences in discipline-specific and general venues.
- **Learning Objective:** Students will demonstrate clarity, coherence, rigor, scholarly tone, and stylistic control, which will be achieved by applying proofreading, editing and revising strategies to their work and the work of their peers.
- **Learning Objective:** Students will develop general and discipline-specific skills to deliver effective, audience-appropriate oral presentations using visual, auditory, and technological aids
- **Learning Objective:** Students will analyze, understand, and produce verbal language in a variety of forms, including works of fiction and nonfiction, dramatic and poetic texts, essays, speeches, every-day conversation, and digital communications.

Goal 3: Students will demonstrate technological and information literacy.

- **Learning Objective:** Students will demonstrate competency in finding, evaluating, analyzing, and effectively using various sources of information.
- **Learning Objective:** Students will competently identify and employ contextually appropriate technologies to support the acquisition and dissemination of new knowledge.
- **Learning Objective:** Students will recognize and demonstrate sensitivity to ethical issues regarding the use of technologies, especially communication technologies (e.g., privacy, information sharing).

Goal 4: Students will develop historically, aesthetically, and socially grounded understanding of the humanities and expressive arts that encompass the variety of human cultural production.

- **Learning Objective:** Students will analyze and interpret primary historical documents, works of art, literature, or performance; and historical, critical and theoretical texts concerned with history and culture.
- **Learning Objective:** Students will demonstrate familiarity with and differentiate among a range of methods, objects, and conventions of disciplinary inquiry within the humanities.
- **Learning Objective:** Students will recognize and appraise the value of literary, historical, and social thinking as modes of engaging the world and its inhabitants.
- **Learning Objective:** Students will generate, interpret, and value multilingual or intercultural perspectives.
- **Learning Objective:** Students will select and employ creative, imaginative, and collaborative techniques of artistic expression.

Goal 5: Students will develop historically informed and engaged understandings of God, world, and the human person that fosters a commitment to service, faith, and justice in the Jesuit and Catholic traditions.

- **Learning Objective:** Students will develop a critical understanding of the nature of justice and the ability to apply ethical theories to contemporary issues and the capacity to utilize intellectual tools to promote justice.
- **Learning Objective:** Students will evaluate arguments, questions, and issues central to classical and modern philosophy and theology.
- **Learning Objective:** Students will demonstrate knowledge and awareness of the texts, thinkers, and theories that shaped historical debates about and inform contemporary conceptions of God, self, world, and the nature of right and wrong.
- **Learning Objective:** Students will examine the Jesuit ideal of being men and women for others and understand how this ideal applies to social relationships.

Goal 6: Students will develop and articulate a cultural and global awareness and sensitivity that contributes to an integrated understanding of human diversity.

- **Learning Objective:** Students will identify and explain the myriad forms that difference takes, such as differences in economic and social class, education, language, ethnicity, race, gender, ability, religion, and sexual orientation.
- **Learning Objective:** Students will recognize how difference is historically and socially constituted, and how some kinds of difference have been transformed into structural injustices.
- **Learning Objective:** Students will acknowledge and systematically engage perspectives other than their own. In the process, they will recognize the limits of their own perspectives and experiences and the value of inclusive communication in personal, professional, and civic relationships.
- **Learning Objective:** Students will relate ideas about diversity to ideas about justice and community. They will formulate political, cultural, social, and economic positions grounded in an informed respect for diversity and a commitment to solidarity.

TO: Faculty Senate
 FROM: Faculty Senate Ad Hoc GE Assessment Committee
 DATE: 3/26/14 [excerpt]

RE: Identification of academic and non-academic offices that should have a role in a **comprehensive student learning assessment plan**

❖ **Academic Units**

- **Departments and individual faculty members**
- **College Assessment Directors**
- **General Education Program Committee/ CCC**
 - develops assessment plan for GE program
 - oversees implementation of assessment plan
 - reviews assessment data
 - shares assessment data with relevant faculty, departments, and Faculty Senate
 - oversees revisions of program based on review of assessment data
- **OEA and AAC anticipated**

Liberal Education according to the American Association of Colleges and Universities

- The AAC&U defines **Liberal Education** as "An approach to college learning that empowers individuals and prepares them to deal with complexity, diversity, and change. This approach emphasizes broad knowledge of the wider world (e.g., science, culture, and society) as well as in-depth achievement in a specific field of interest. It helps students develop a sense of social responsibility; strong intellectual and practical skills that span all major fields of study, such as communication, analytical, and problem-solving skills; and the demonstrated ability to apply knowledge and skills in real-world settings."
- " They go on to define **General Education**: "That part of a liberal education curriculum that is shared by all students. It provides broad exposure to multiple disciplines and forms the basis for developing essential intellectual, civic, and practical capacities. General education can take many forms, and increasingly includes introductory, advanced, and integrative forms of learning."

In planning a course of study for the Twenty-First Century, the AAC&U makes the following distinctions

	Liberal Education in the Twentieth Century	Liberal Education in the Twenty-First Century
What	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • intellectual and personal development • an option for the fortunate • viewed as non-vocational 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • intellectual and personal development • a necessity for all students • essential for success in a global economy and for informed citizenship
How	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • through studies in arts and sciences • "the major" and/or through general education in the initial years of college 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • through studies that emphasize the essential learning outcomes across the entire educational continuum—from school through college—at progressively higher levels of achievement (recommended)
Where	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • liberal arts colleges or colleges of arts and sciences in larger institutions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • all schools, community colleges, colleges, and universities, as well as across all fields of study (recommended)

Adapted from College Learning for the New Global Century, Association of American Colleges and Universities, page 18, figure 3.

Middle States and General Education under current standards

- The Middle States Commission on Higher Education's Standard 12 describes General Education: "The institution's curricula are designed so that students acquire and demonstrate college-level proficiency in general education and essential skills, including at least oral and written communication, scientific and quantitative reasoning, critical analysis and reasoning, and technological competency."

Middle States and General Education under forthcoming standards

- ❖ a general education program, free standing or integrated into academic disciplines, that:
 - a. offers a sufficient scope to draw students into new areas of intellectual experience, expanding their cultural and global awareness and cultural sensitivity, and preparing them to make well-reasoned judgments outside as well as within their academic field;
 - b. offers a curriculum designed so that students acquire and demonstrate essential skills including at least oral and written communication, scientific and quantitative reasoning, critical analysis and reasoning, technological competency, and information literacy. **Consistent with mission, the general education program also includes the study of values, ethics, and diverse perspectives; [and includes] periodic assessment of the effectiveness of programs providing student learning opportunities.**

And now what?

- We clearly need to view our General education curriculum as
 1. A coherent program with specific goals that can be assessed and reported, whose results can then be used for improvement of the program to improve student learning
 2. Rather than simply a group of courses that students take in specific areas, a set of competencies to be developed over the course of their degree program, that is, as end results of their college education
 3. We must assess GE as a program for our monitoring report due 1 April 2016.

And furthermore...

We need to find **logical, efficient, and valuable** ways to assess student learning in the general education program.

So let me introduce you to the **VALUE** rubrics. VALUE stands for Valid Assessment of Learning in Undergraduate Education.

❖ From the website of AAC&U:

- VALUE ... is a campus-based assessment initiative... VALUE provides needed tools to assess students' own authentic work, produced across their diverse learning pathways and institutions, to determine **whether and how well they are progressing toward graduation-level achievement in learning outcomes that both employers and faculty consider essential.**
- VALUE builds on a philosophy of learning assessment that privileges multiple expert judgments and shared understanding of the quality of student work through the curriculum, cocurriculum, and beyond over reliance on standardized tests

There are 16 VALUE rubrics

❖ Intellectual and Practical Skills

- [Inquiry and analysis](#)
- [Critical thinking](#)
- [Creative thinking](#)
- [Written communication](#)
- [Oral communication](#)
- [Reading](#)
- [Quantitative literacy](#)
- [Information literacy](#)
- [Teamwork](#)
- [Problem solving](#)

❖ Personal and Social Responsibility

- [Civic engagement—local and global](#)
- [Intercultural knowledge and competence](#)
- [Ethical reasoning](#)
- [Foundations and skills for lifelong learning](#)
- [Global learning](#)

❖ Integrative and Applied Learning

- [Integrative learning](#)

Additionally, HIPs, High Impact practices, are often part of our GE

- First-Year Experiences
- Common Intellectual Experiences
- Learning Communities
- Writing-Intensive Courses
- Collaborative Assignments and Projects
- Undergraduate Research
- Diversity/Global Learning
- Service Learning, Community-Based Learning
- Internships
- Capstone Courses and Projects

Sources

<http://www.scranton.edu/academics/provost/PDFs/Curriculum%20Pracess/General%20Education%20at%20the%20UoS%208%20Sept%202014.pdf>
<https://desire2learn.scranton.edu/d2l/le/content/24651/viewContent/752698/view>
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<http://www.aacu.org/value>
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