

GE Assessment Plan 2005-2006

The primary goal of the GE Program Assessment carried out in AY 05-06 is to assess the degree of success of General Education efforts on our campus by observing the level of student learning as exemplified by student performance on tasks directly related to GE learning goals. GE Program Assessment is expected to generate additional benefits by fostering discussion of General Education goals and outcomes on our campus and the sharing of assignments and pedagogical strategies used by faculty to reach these goals.

The [MOU](#) from Academic Affairs that governs the administration of GE on our campus mandates GE Program Assessment as a regular part of the administration of GE. Review of GE is the responsibility of GEAC; program review was scheduled for AY 04-05 as part of the regular cycle of course reviews. In AY 04-05, GEAC sought faculty feedback on the course review process as part of program assessment. The AURA committee is charged with supporting the assessment of student learning outcomes (SLOs), including GE. Established in 2003, AURA has been working with departments on establishing procedures for assessment of SLOs in baccalaureate programs across campus. At the end of AY 04-05, the committee turned its attention to assessment of SLOs in GE.

The structures and processes for GE Program Assessment were worked out at a series of meetings between members of GEAC and AURA in the summer of 2005. These meetings resulted in a series of agreements outlined in a document specifying joint GEAC and AURA responsibility, a structure and process for carrying out GE Program Assessment, and a timeline for completion of the tasks outlined (See Appendix A). Members of the two committees agreed to share the work GE assessment, with an initial pilot project focused on the assessment of SLOs in core skill areas of GE, including Writing, Oral Communication and Quantitative Reasoning. Members of the committees agreed that assessment would:

- primarily involve direct assessment of student work assigned as part of GE courses to avoid over-burdening faculty;
- focus on student learning outcomes (SLOs) derived from relevant documents ([EO-595](#), [EM 99-05](#), [MOU](#)) shaping GE;
- include broad consultation with faculty on all aspects of GE assessment including definition of SLOs, the identification of relevant student work and the actual process of assessing student work.

The structure we put in place created a Coordinating Committee comprised of the Chairs of GEAC and AURA plus the Dean of Undergraduate Studies. Three task forces were created, focused on each of the skill areas chosen for assessment (writing, oral communications, quantitative reasoning). Each task force included a member of GEAC, a member of AURA plus an additional faculty subject matter expert. Additional faculty teaching relevant GE courses were recruited by each of the task forces to participate in the assessment. In all, over 75 faculty from across campus participated in GE assessment activities with participation varying from offering their courses as sites for assessment, helping to define SLOs, creation and critique of rubrics used to assess

student work, actual assessment of student work and analysis and write-up of results. All activities reported here were carried out from June 2005-July 2006.

GE Program Assessment in each of the domains chosen, Writing, Quantitative Reasoning and Oral Communications, was guided by the same principles: direct, embedded assessment of student work based on SLOs derived from relevant GE documents. SLOs were discussed with faculty stakeholders and student work was assessed using rubrics created with faculty input, in classes voluntarily offered for assessment by faculty. Student work was assessed by faculty members who offered their services and were compensated for this work. Despite the common framework for carrying out the assessment, each domain examined presented special challenges and circumstances that necessitated creatively adapting the general model to particular circumstances. The specific procedures followed are outlined in the sections that follow for each domain assessed.