

# Structure and Process of GE Assessment 05-06

## **GE Program Assessment: Organization, Structure and Process**

Don Alger

Chair, GEAC

Phyllis Fernlund

Chair, AURA

William M. Loker

Interim Dean of Undergraduate Studies

This document outlines a procedure for carrying out GE program level assessment. We understand program level assessment to mean the assessment of broadly based student learning goals and outcomes that are foundational to our students' general education. On our campus, the GE program makes a distinction between Core and Breadth areas. In AY 05-06 it is our intention to assess three of the broad domains of student learning articulated in the GE Core: written communication, oral communication, and quantitative reasoning. We are particularly concerned with assessing *student learning outcomes* (SLOs) for these domains. In order to keep this process manageable, we will follow a model of "embedded assessment" where student work already assigned in the context of courses will be assessed to determine the level of student performance on well-defined SLOs. We view AY 05-06 activities as part of an ongoing process of program-level assessment that will be extended to other domains of the Core (critical thinking), and to the Breadth areas in future years. The GE Program Assessment discussed in this document represents a departure on this campus from routine GE assessment efforts that have focused on course level assessment.

### Organization, Structure and Process.

The General Education Advisory Committee (GEAC) has primary responsibility for the assessment of General Education on campus. The All University Responsibility for Assessment Committee (AURA) is responsible for providing campus leadership in the assessment of student learning outcomes in all baccalaureate programs, including GE. Members of these two committees have met jointly to craft a structure and process for GE Program Assessment that draws on the membership and experience of both committees, as well as other faculty with expertise, experience and interests relevant to this effort.

GE Program Assessment will be carried out by three Task Forces each composed of a member of AURA, GEAC and an additional faculty member with relevant expertise in the domains under consideration (writing, oral communication, quantitative reasoning). (See Figure One.) Overall assessment efforts will be overseen by a GE Assessment Coordinating Committee composed of the Chair of AURA, the Chair of GEAC and the Dean of Undergraduate Education. Each Task Force will have a Chair that reports to the Coordinating Committee individually and collectively. Financial resources to support this effort will be administered through AURA with the Chair of AURA having ultimate fiscal accountability for the management of funds. The GE Program Assessment effort will report to the Provost, who will also appoint members of the Task Forces, provide financial and logistical resources in accordance with a budget submitted for this effort and communicate to the campus at large the importance of this effort and encourage

cooperation and collaboration among campus stakeholders in support of GE Program Assessment.

The charge of the GE Assessment Task Forces is as follows:

1. GE Program assessment will follow the model widely utilized on campus for degree program assessment. It will be structured by an examination of GE Mission(s) and Goals, from which will be derived observable, measurable Student Learning Outcomes, which are assessed using techniques of “embedded assessment.” The missions and goals of GE are already articulated in various documents on campus (EM 99-05, AAO-MOU, University catalogue).
2. GE Program Task Forces will be charged with devising a Student Learning Outcome Assessment Plan for their respective domains. Generation of a program Assessment Plan generally consists of the following steps:
  1. Creation/review of program mission and goals (EM 99-05, etc);
  2. Identification of Student Learning Outcomes;
  3. Building a course alignment matrix, based on examination of the curriculum in each domain;
  4. Development of an implementation plan including:
    - a. elaboration of a rubric for assessment of SLOs;
    - b. identification of “sites for assessment:” particular courses where SLOs can best be assessed;
    - c. identification and collection of student work in these courses that best represents student performance on the SLO in question;
    - d. assessment of student work by multiple observers (task force members and any additional faculty associated with the assessment process) to determine student performance on the SLO(s) in question;
    - e. analysis of assessment results;
    - f. write-up and sharing of results with stakeholders in the campus community, and;
    - g. recommended changes in the curriculum or practices to enhance student learning.
3. GE Program Assessment will be a faculty-led effort, grounded in the principles of collegiality, consultation, co-governance and faculty responsibility for all aspects of the curriculum, including assessment, evaluation and curricular change. The GE Assessment Task Forces will seek broad campus participation in all phases of their work, to ensure that assessment is constructive process and that it produces valid, useful and actionable results.
4. The results of the GE Program Assessment will be shared broadly with the campus community (Academic Affairs, Academic Senate, EPPC, WASC Council of Institutional Effectiveness and Accountability, Deans, Department Chairs, faculty and students) and specifically with the WASC Educational Effectiveness Review Task Force focused on GE (WASC EER # 6).
5. Results from this first phase of GE Program Assessment will guide future efforts at GE Program Assessment as well as provide a springboard for broad campus discussion of GE reform.

## GE Program Assessment Timeline

### Timeline (05-06)

### Task Force Activities

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| September        | 1. Examine statements of GE mission and goals and, in consultation with faculty and other stakeholders, define observable Student Learning Outcomes (SLOs) for each of the broad domains undergoing assessment: writing, oral communication and quantitative reasoning. We will strive for a limited number of well-defined, measurable SLOs.  |
| October          | 2. Once SLOs are identified for each sub-Area, they will be submitted to faculty for their examination, discussion, input. One means for doing this will be to circulate SLOs for each sub-area to the faculty via email to gather feedback on (a) degree of consensus around these SLOs, (b) ideas for their improvement, and (c) a ranking of their priority given the needs of baccalaureate majors on campus. Results of this “electronic discussion” (and other face-to-face discussions) will be compiled by the Task Forces in an attempt to identify 1-3 SLOs from each sub-Area to assess over the course of the academic year. |
| November         | 3. Once SLOs have been defined for assessment, Task Forces will work with faculty with expertise in these areas to define rubrics for SLO assessment. (These may be existing rubrics, modifications of existing rubrics or new rubrics tailored to the task at hand).  |
| December         | 4. Task Forces, in consultation with faculty, will identify courses as sites for assessment – where student work can be collected to assess student performance on the defined SLOs. Some of these courses will be within the Courses in the GE Core, others may be in Upper Division Theme courses and some may be major courses, particularly WP courses.  |
| December-January | 5. Task Forces will contact professors teaching these courses and work with them sharing rubrics and fine-tuning assignments in their syllabi for assessment. SLOs and rubrics will be included in course syllabi so students will have a clear understanding of the learning outcomes they are expected to master and how they will be assessed.  |
| March            | 6. A workshop will be convened to discuss the use of the rubrics. The goal of the workshop will be to create internal consistency in the application of rubrics to student work (inter-rate reliability).  |

April-May

7. Assignments in each course will be identified where the rubric can be applied for SLO assessment. Student work on the assignments identified will be collected and evaluated by Task Force members and associated faculty using the rubrics devised for that purpose. Student work will be categorized into High Achieving, Achieving or Not Achieving using the rubric and agreed upon standards. While student work will be anonymous, it will be coded in such a way that we can link the work to individuals and track variable performance across majors, “native” versus transfer students and other potentially important factors influencing student performance relevant to GE reform. To the greatest extent possible, technologies such as the STEPS computer-based assessment program will be used to minimize paperwork and expedite sharing of results.

May

8. SLO assessment results will be reported back to the GE Assessment Directorate to be compiled and analyzed. Faculty will be encouraged to provide contextual information that enriches our understanding of student performance, in addition to the actual rubrics and scores.

May-August

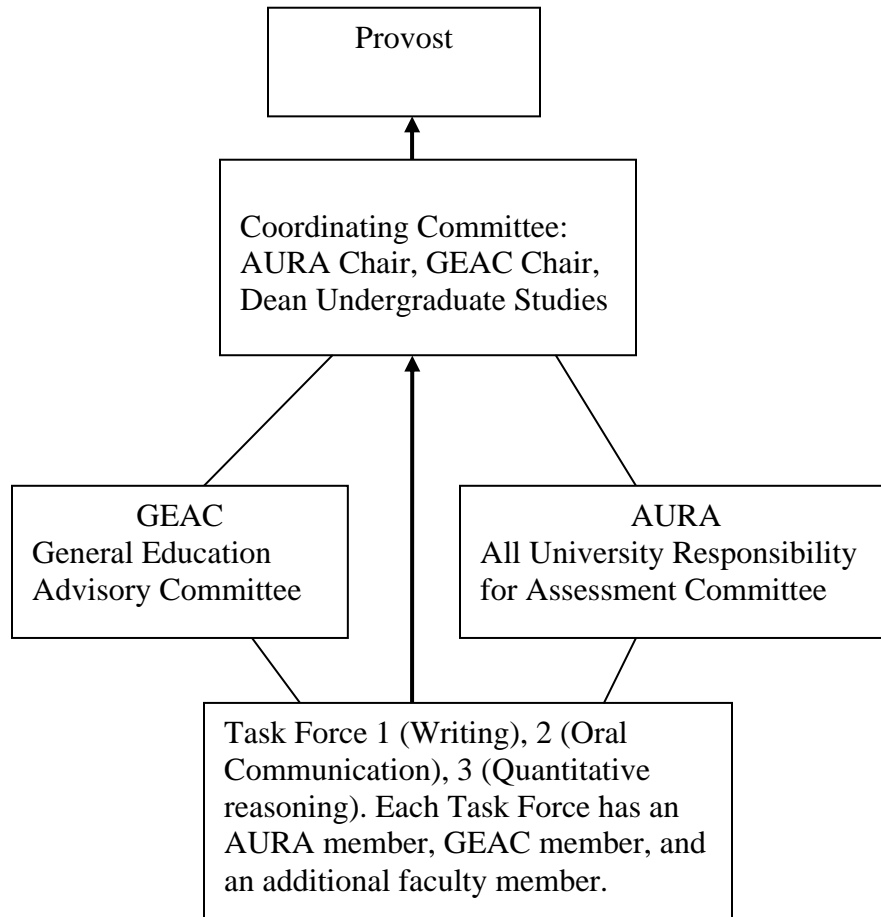
9. Assessment results will be compiled and analyzed and a report submitted to the Provost for sharing with the campus community at the start of AY 06-07. This report will focus on strengths and weaknesses in achievement of SLOs and make recommendations for curricular change to improve performance in the future.

August-September 06

10. The Provost will share the results of this assessment and facilitate a campus-wide discussion of its conclusions. This discussion will focus on the results of outcome assessment and include suggestions for improving student learning through modification of GE and/or other curricular innovations on campus. The report and recommendation will be widely shared at convocation, College and Department meetings, Academic Senate and other appropriate venues.

Our goal is to make the assessment process as manageable and meaningful as possible, without unduly burdening faculty. The goal of GE Program Assessment is to assess student learning, not to assess particular courses or individual faculty. We also hope to stimulate a dialogue about the goals and outcomes of GE on our campus. The Coordinating Committee for GE Assessment will provide the Provost with periodic progress reports throughout AY 05-06 and early in AY 06-07 to plan and further refine ongoing GE Program assessment efforts based on experiences gained during this initial phase of GE Program Assessment.

#### Organizational Framework for GE Program Level Assessment



Organization of GE Program level assessment: Task Forces exist for each of the GE domains assessed (writing, oral communication and quantitative reasoning). Each Task Force has an AURA representative, GEAC representative and an additional faculty representative with disciplinary expertise in that particular domain. Task Forces may consult with additional faculty and other stakeholders as needed for development of SLOs and implementation of assessment. Task Forces report to Coordinating Committee. The Coordinating Committee reports to the Provost who is responsible for appointments to Committees/Task Forces and for financial and other support of GE Program Assessment efforts.

## Task Force Composition

### Task Force 1: Oral Communication

- Ruth Guzley, AURA, Chair
- Mitchell Johns, GEAC
- Susan Avanzino, CMST

### Task Force 2: Written Communication

- Chris Fosen, GEAC, Chair
- Sarah Blackstone, AURA
- Sara Trechter, ENGL

### Task Force 3: Quantitative Reasoning

- Margaret Owens, AURA, Chair
- Russ Mills, GEAC
- Jack Ladwig, MATH