

MINUTES
General Education Assessment Committee
Friday, February 17, 2012
10:00 p.m. – 12:00 p.m.
ETA 101, Lake Worth

Attendance:	Diane Bifano <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Susan Caldwell <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Jennifer Campbell <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Tracy Ciucci <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Tcherina Duncombe <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Robin Hoggins-Blake <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Marcella Montesinos <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Marci Pachter <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Karen Pain <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Ginger Pedersen <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	David Pena <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Anthony Piccolino <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Andrew Plotkin <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Carole Policy <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Syeda Qadri <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Helen Shub <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Debra-Anne Singleton <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Victor Slesinger <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Melissa Stonecipher <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Patrick Tierney <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Connie Tuisku <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Bobette Wolesensky <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	

ITEM 1. Rubric Development/Embedded Assessment

Discussion: Ms. Helen Shub opened the meeting with an update on her presentation to the Joint Deans’ Council. Ms. Shub briefly described for the Council the general education assessment process and reviewed the results of the most recent assessment. She then described the improvement strategies recommended by the General Education Assessment Committee and suggested what role the Deans can play institutionally to support the implementation of these strategies. Ms. Shub also reported that at the Academic Leadership Council meeting, a discussion took place about students’ writing skills, where she had the opportunity to explain the plans for including embedded assessments focused on communication skills. The members of the Council expressed support and interest in the Assessment Committee’s progress.

Dean Diane Bifano informed the committee that she is working with faculty and staff to secure grant funding for the development of a comprehensive writing program. She also distributed a flyer for the upcoming Writer’s Symposium. The presentations will include “Writing across the Curriculum” and “Responding to Student Writing”. These topics are highly relevant to the embedded assessment plan being developed for writing skills, so all members of the General Education Assessment Committee were strongly urged to attend.

Ms. Connie Tuisku shared with the committee her experience at one of the QEP workshops. She noted that one of the primary skills associated with critical thinking is

“gathering information” which is a fundamental feature of what the library teaches students. Ms. Tuisku described to the committee how “lib guides” operate emphasizing the fact that they are information portals and are customizable to individual classes, topics, etc. The purpose of the lib guide is to help direct students to valid sources of information. Ms. Tuisku asked the committee to brainstorm and help her devise ways to make more faculty aware of the benefits of using lib guides. It was suggested that a conversation be held with the QEP manager to ascertain how this tool might be incorporated into the QEP implementation. It was also suggested by some committee members that it might be possible to connect this to the FYE Passport program, so that when students come to the library to get their passports stamped, they can learn about lib guides at that time.

Professor Patrick Tierney shared with the committee the results of the subcommittee’s efforts to draft a rubric for assessing students’ writing skills. He explained that there were a number of issues that had to be taken into consideration, such as, how many skills were to be assessed, whether the rubric should be holistic or analytic, how the faculty will incorporate the use of the rubric and how the scoring should be set. The committee reviewed the rubric and after making several minor recommendations, all agreed that the subcommittee did an excellent job in crafting the rubric. The committee also determined that the best approach for next year is to limit the rubric to one skill – grammar – since this was the skill that the faculty survey indicated was the most problematic. It was also decided that initially, faculty would not be responsible for utilizing the rubric. Instead, randomly-selected, sample work will be collected from Gordon Rule classes and scored by the General Education Assessment Committee.

The committee decided that the results of the faculty survey should be sent to the English and Speech clusters through Professor Melissa Stonecipher (English) and Professor David Childers (Speech). The accompanying emails from Professors Stonecipher and Childers will explain that the General Education Assessment Committee is working on developing a process to assess writing across the disciplines and that the survey information was very helpful.

Embedded Assessment Plan

The committee discussed at great length the various options for how to proceed with a long-term plan to integrate an embedded assessment component into the existing assessment process. The following are the highlights of this discussion:

- The committee unanimously agreed that the focus on communications must span more than just one year. In order to develop effective instruments, as well as to fully involve all faculty in the process, it will be necessary to focus on this one outcome over a multi-year time frame.
- The communications outcome consists of two distinct areas – written and oral communications. The committee decided that in the first year of this multi-year plan, the focus will be on written communications. In the second year, the committee will continue to work on writing skills but will also begin to focus on speech communications. Subsequent years will focus on both aspects of the outcome.

- During summer 2012, the writing rubric will be shared with all faculty along with an explanation of how it will be used. Ms. Shub will ask Dr. Sharon Sass if it would be possible to have a few minutes at the spring 2012 Development Day to briefly introduce the idea to the faculty.
- During fall 2012, the Institutional Research and Effectiveness (IRE) Office will select a random sample of students within a random sample of Gordon Rule classes. The instructors of those courses will be asked to submit to the IRE Office samples of ungraded writing from the selected students. Instructors will be informed that the writing samples must be considered major pieces of writing. The definition of “major pieces of writing” will not be explicitly defined for the instructors, but there will be a one-page minimum for the length expected. In addition, the writing collected must not be from in-class assignments; rather, the committee is seeking to review work that students have had an opportunity to revise.
- The General Education Assessment Committee will grade the student artifacts in spring 2013 using the rubric developed by the committee. Overall results will be shared with all faculty. Participating faculty will receive the results for the students enrolled in their own classes.
- During fall 2012 – spring 2013, as the assessments and grading are occurring, the committee will begin developing improvement strategies. The suggested strategies to date include the following:
 - Turnitin.com Workshops – This software has a feature that allows students to submit writing samples and receive feedback on grammatical errors. The committee recommends holding workshops for faculty to introduce them to this aspect of the software and to help them encourage students to use it before turning assignments in.
 - Rubric Workshops – These faculty workshops would focus on how to utilize a writing rubric. Part of this training would be aimed at improving skills among faculty to recognize common grammar mistakes, enabling them to effectively use a writing rubric. The other part of the training will focus on incorporating the results of the writing rubric into the grading scheme, allowing them to hold students accountable for their writing, even if their comprehension of the content of the course is good.
 - Develop Resources for Faculty – While it is the plan for all faculty to be able to incorporate the expectation of college-level writing skills into their grading, it is not expected that they will be responsible for teaching grammar. The role of the non-English faculty will be to identify writing problems and to then refer students to places where help is available. This may include seminars offered at the SLC, software such as Turnitin.com, or resource sheets with common errors and corrections developed by the committee.
 - Create a stronger connection between writing faculty and the SLCs to ensure that there is alignment between what is taught in the classroom and what is reinforced in the labs.
 - During fall 2012 – spring 2013, the committee will begin discussing how to approach assessing oral communications. The collection of student artifacts is less straightforward than written communications, because

most of the student work involves speeches which are more difficult to capture than written work.

- During fall 2013 – spring 2014, the committee will continue enhancing the assessment and improvement strategies for written communications. At the same time, an assessment of oral communications will be administered. During spring 2014, the committee will grade the written and oral communication assessments and develop improvement strategies.
- During fall 2014 – spring 2015, the administration of assessments and the implementation of improvement strategies will continue to be enhanced for both written and oral communications.

Data/data source:

- Action: Ms. Shub will arrange for a meeting between Karen Pain, QEP Manager and Connie Tuisku, Librarian, to discuss the integration of library tools and the QEP outcome related to gathering information.
- Ms. Shub will send the faculty survey results to Professors Melissa Stonecipher and David Childers for them to distribute to their respective clusters.
- Ms. Shub will ask Dr. Sass if it is possible to have a few minutes during spring 2012 Development Day to introduce faculty to the writing rubric and how it is proposed to be used.
- Ms. Shub will submit the committee's recommendation for a three-year plan to Dr. Sass for her review.

Meeting Adjourned at 11:40 am.

Submitted by:

Helen Shub, Scribe