

General Education Assessment Committee Report

Fall 2020

Executive Summary

Introduction

At the start of Fall 2020, faculty who were scheduled to teach First-Year Seminar (FYS) were contacted regarding submitting student work for general education assessment. This message included a copy of the Student Learning Outcome (SLO) description, rubric, and a random sample of student names. In addition, faculty were asked to send one assignment for each student, on which the students demonstrated the competencies indicated in the SLO.

At the beginning of the Fall 2020 semester, 1427 students were enrolled in 49 First-Year Seminar (FYS) sections (see Table One). These sections assessed SLO Five and Seven (Appendix A). Based on past GEAC efforts that have considered the feasibility of assessment and collected a statistically significant sample, we anticipated collecting 490 student work products that semester.

Table One: FYS Sections, Enrollment, and Student Work

	SLO 5	SLO 7
FYS sections	22	27
Total students	632	795
Students in sample	220 (10/section)	270 (10/section)
Actual work samples submitted	190	214

Rating Procedures

In Spring 2021, GEAC announced a call for faculty raters for Fall 2020 student work via email. Thirty-seven faculty volunteered and attended one of three training sessions facilitated by GEAC. Each rater then engaged in evaluating approximately ten student work products, with some faculty double-rating for reliability. Specifically, for SLO Five, 32 student work products were double rated (27%), and for SLO Seven, 58 work products were dual rated (27%).

Analysis of Category Ratings:

Preliminary results for both SLO's are considered together. The data for SLO Five is overall lower in average ratings and negatively skewed, with 60% of ratings below two. The average first rating for SLO Five is 1.6, while the average first rating for SLO Seven is 2.1.

Students failed to demonstrate appropriate outcomes for SLO Five, with 60% of students not meeting the benchmark result expected. However, the result is not due to instruments not allowing students to demonstrate competence as student scores show that some achieved above the benchmark. There is not a significant difference between first-generation and non-first generations students; both groups fared poorly. For SLO Five, differences in performance based on racial background are limited, although White students had slightly more success.

First-Generation Students

There do not appear to be significant differences between the ratings of first-generation students and those with a parent who completed college, with first-generation students scoring very close to the overall average for both SLO Five and SLO Seven. Declared students' work was rated higher than Undeclared students' work for both SLO's. The difference between groups was small, especially for SLO Five.

Racially Diverse Students

There are slight differences in average ratings by racial background. Disparate sample sizes must be considered when comparing these groups with one another. The average ratings across all racial categories were lower for SLO Five than they were for SLO Seven. White students' average ratings were the highest for both SLO's, but inter-group differences between groups were minor. The 1-point difference between multi-racial and White students for SLO Seven is worth consideration as the difference between those two specific groups was much smaller for SLO Five.

Pell Grant Recipients

On average, students who did not receive the PELL grant scored higher ratings than students who received the PELL grant. White students, on average, who did not receive the PELL grant scored the highest ratings. Students of unknown race who also did not receive the PELL grant scored the next highest ratings, followed by Hispanic and Black students.

Recommendations

The following recommendations are based on interpretations of the above analysis and historical context regarding SLO Five and Seven. Foremost, SLO Five was assessed by GEAC for the first time this term. Upon review of the submitted material, it was noted that many assessments did not align with the General Education rubric. This mismatch could be one reason for lower average proficiency relative to this SLO. Another explanation could be an insufficient emphasis on mastering higher-order thinking skills such as interpreting, evaluating, and applying data, as well as iterative opportunities to practice and receive feedback. Based on past practice whereby targeted professional development led to improvements in assignments and student proficiency, GEAC recommends that the Center for Effective Teaching (CET) provide professional development to FYS instructors about SLO Five and utilizing the rubric to design assessments. Sample assignments focused on information literacy should also be shared with faculty. In summary, GEAC recommends that the University continue to invest in FYS faculty professional

development resources relative to: 1) types and timing of assessments, 2) examining rubrics & sample assessments, and 3) engaging feedback on data collection processes.

Student Learning Outcome (SLO) #5: Demonstrate the ability to retrieve, interpret, evaluate, and use information.

Definition: Information literate students possess the set of integrated abilities encompassing the reflective discovery of information, the understanding of how information is produced and valued, and the use of information in creating new knowledge and participating ethically in communities of learning.

This SLO is met in General Education FYS: Discovering College and A: Communicating with and About the World.

		Performance Levels			
		4	3	2	1
Student output and quality of work		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Effectively defines the scope of the research question or thesis. Accesses appropriate information using effective, well-designed search strategies. Defines different types of authority (and recognizes that some authoritative content can be packaged informally), and uses to determine credibility. Addresses gaps or weaknesses in gathered information, synthesizes ideas gathered from multiple sources Draws reasonable conclusions based on the analysis and interpretation of information to achieve a specific purpose, with clarity and depth Always uses appropriate attribution and citation Demonstrates a full understanding of the ethical and legal restrictions on the use of information (copyright, fair use, open access, and the public domain) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Research question or thesis is focused. Accesses appropriate information using more complex search strategies Defines different types of authority and uses to determine credibility Recognizes gaps and weaknesses in gathered information, identifies similar ideas in related sources Draws reasonable conclusions from analysis and interpretation of sources to broadly answer the research question Uses correct citation and attribution most of the time Demonstrates an understanding of most issues related to the ethical and legal use of information 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Research question or thesis is broad but subject-specific. Accesses some subject-specific information using basic search strategies. Recognizes some different types of authority and recognizes a relationship between authority and credibility Recognizes gaps or weaknesses in gathered information, makes connections between related sources Draws some conclusions from analysis and interpretation of sources, to answer the research question Citation and attribution are attempted with the correct style Can distinguish between some different legal and ethical information issues 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Research question or thesis is general. Accesses general information with a basic search strategy. Does not differentiate between types of authority Accepts gaps or weaknesses in gathered information, does not make connections between sources Minimal analysis and interpretation of sources Citation and attribution are attempted unsuccessfully Has a basic understanding of plagiarism and recognizes that there are legal issues related to the use of information

Student Learning Outcome (SLO) #7: Demonstrate an understanding of various models for the development of the whole self.

Definition: Students identify best practices for self-development in areas such as finance, wellness, spiritual well-being, academic success, and professional motivation. Life skills and life-long learning are emphasized.

This SLO is met in General Education FYS – Discovering College and the First year Seminar Course.

		Performance Levels			
		4	3	2	1
Student output and quality of work		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identifies complex models to assist in self-development in a variety of areas Accurately translates a model's process and procedure to their own situation Effectively applies model to current situation Accurately evaluates the current and displays consideration of future success of the model after implementation Adjusts model to reflect self-awareness of success and failures. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identifies basic models to assist in self-development in a variety of areas Translate most of the a model's process and procedure to their own situation Applies model to current situation Adequately evaluates the success of the model after implementation Makes some adjustments to the model to reflect some self-awareness of success and failures. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Recognizes models to assist in self-development in some areas when model is provided Transfers a model's process and procedure to a hypothetical situation Applies model to parts of their current situation Reviews the success of the model after implementation Needs some direction to adjust model to reflect self-awareness of success and failures. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Unable to identify appropriate models to assist in self-development in a variety of areas Cannot transfer a model's process and procedure to a situation Does not make the connection between model and their own situation Unable to evaluate the success of the model after implementation Unable to adjust model to reflect awareness of success and failures.