

## Assessment Plan for General Education

### Summary of General Education Assessment Activities 2004-2007

In summarizing the assessment of general education at UNCG it is important to clarify the relationship between General Education Goals and General Education Categories (GEC) The general education goals consist of the three categories: “Proficiencies”, “Knowledge and Understanding”, and “Habits of the Mind, and Attributes of Character“ in which there are 19 elements. The 10 General Education Categories,(GEC) are the delivery system used to ensure breadth of experience in which to develop the general education goals.

In reviewing minimal assessment standards for general education assessment it is important to keep the SACS requirements related general education. A summary of the applicable SACS/COC accreditation standards that apply to general education assessment are shown below. UNCG has had difficulty achieving these standards on the last two accreditation visits. It is therefore particularly important to understand these requirements to insure that these requirements are met for the upcoming SAC/COC accreditation visit.

#### 3.3 Institutional Effectiveness

3.3.1 The institution identifies expected outcomes for its educational programs and its administrative and educational support services; assesses whether it achieves these outcomes; and provides evidence of improvement based on analysis of those results.

**Resulted in Recommendation** “Provide evidence that the goals of the general education program have been assessed and the results used to improve the program.”

#### 3.5 Educational Programs: *Undergraduate Programs*

3.5.1 The institution identifies college-level competencies within the general education core and provides evidence that graduates have attained those competencies.

#### 3.4 Educational Programs: *All Educational Programs*

3.4.1 The institution demonstrates that each educational program for which academic credit is awarded (a) is approved by the faculty and the administration, and (b) establishes and evaluates program and learning outcomes.

3.4.10 The institution defines and publishes general education requirements for its undergraduate programs and major program requirements for all its programs. These requirements conform to commonly accepted standards and practices for degree programs.

**3.4.12 The institution places primary responsibility for the content, quality, and effectiveness of its curriculum with its faculty.**

The area above was highlighted to emphasize that the responsibility for any assessment activity rests with the faculty. In fact if the Office of Academic Assessment were to perform assessment functions without the active involvement and leadership of the faculty it would be grounds for a recommendation. The Office of Academic Assessment provides support for faculty directed assessment efforts.

## Detailed Description of proposed Assessment Cycle See Appendix A)

### June 30, 2008

General Education Council establishes priority of assessment activity and communicates assessment agenda to the university community for the coming year. Assessment approach and timeline established by the General Education Council and submitted to the Deans Council and Faculty Senate for revision, funding, and approval. Assessment activities may need to be revised to accommodate institutional priorities.

### September 30 – December 31, 2008

University community informed of assessment agenda for the calendar year and responsibilities clarified and engaged in clarifying assessment strategies

### January – December 2009

Data Collection (Pending financial support)

### June 1 – 30, 2009

General Education Assessment Workshop Data Analysis (Pending financial support)

### September 2009

Action plan submitted, revised, and accepted

General Education Assessment Summit

### October 2009

Begin action plan implementation

### April 2010

Action plan implementation status report

## Ongoing Academic Assessment Activities.

Undergraduate programs are currently establishing linkages between their program objectives and general education goals utilizing the WEAVE online system. During any given assessment cycle data gathered as part of ongoing program assessment can be included in the data gathering process. This will require that all programs identify their alignment with general education goals and assess those elements of general education.

## Draft of Possible Assessment Sequence

2009 – Gathering, Interpreting and Communicating

1. Ability to write and speak clearly, coherently, and effectively as well as to adapt modes of communication to one's audience
2. Ability to interpret academic writing and discourse in a variety of disciplines
3. Ability to locate, analyze, synthesize, and evaluate information
4. A disposition to weigh opposing viewpoints in the balance of reason and to develop an informed perspective
5. A disposition to continue learning and to welcome new knowledge and insight (intellectual curiosity)

2010 Scientific, Quantitative, and Technological Competency

1. Ability to utilize appropriate technologies
2. Ability to interpret numerical data and perform basic computation
3. Knowledge of Mathematical principles and their use in solving problems
4. Knowledge of Scientific principles and their use in scientific inquiry

## 2011 Social, Historical and Global

1. Historical, cultural, and philosophical traditions that have shaped our diverse society
2. Sensitivity to social and cultural differences
3. The individual, society, and interactions between them
4. Significant elements of the world's diversity of cultural and national experiences, and interconnections among them
5. Openness to the value of new social, cultural, or aesthetic forms (flexibility of mind and sensibility)

## 2012

1. The importance that abstract ideas and artistic expression have in the process of self-understanding and in the shaping of society
2. Sensitivity and attentiveness to the ethical dimensions of any problem or experience
3. Recognition of social and intellectual responsibility
4. An appreciation for the broader social, intellectual, and historical contexts of individual events and situations
5. The aims and methods of intellectual, spiritual, literary, and artistic expression

## Potential Impact of General Administration Assessment Agendas

The UNC System has sponsored several initiatives that may result in changes to an assessment cycle. In reviewing UNC Tomorrow and the recently endorsed Voluntary System of Accountability (VSA) it appears that the UNC System may be requiring a 3 year assessment cycle. The General Education Council will need to adjust planning for assessment to synchronize assessment activities with state mandated requirements.

### VSA Requirements

- Assessment of Critical Thinking (CLA CAAP, MAAP) every 3 years
- Assessment of Educational Environment (NSSE) every 3 years

## Possible Assessment Approaches

The most important question to answer in selecting an assessment approach would be to establish the relationship between cost and benefit. Every effort should be made to limit unnecessary intrusion into the classroom and unnecessary costs.

Assessment Approaches		Commentary
<b>Portfolios</b>	Students collect examples of their work, select items to illustrate specific kinds of learning, write a reflective essay on the learning process and connect their insights to past or future experiences. Through the steps of collection, selection, reflection, and connection portfolios can both demonstrate and deepen learning. As records, portfolios can illustrate development of knowledge and intellectual skills over time.	Some portfolios already exist in some programs. Could be used to gather data but a commitment will need to be made to gain access and perform assessment on a sample. Does reinforce concepts with students.
<b>Capstone Experiences</b>	When designed to truly “cap” prior learning, the experience does not so much teach new material as allow students to review, make connections, and apply their knowledge to new problems or in new environments. For assessment purposes, a program’s faculty can collectively survey the work	Limited possibility to develop General Education Capstone. Program capstones could be used as source of data

	produced, looking for evidence of the complex, integrated learning expected of all graduates. Taken as a whole, the year's "vintage" provides information about the program's strengths and weaknesses.	for general education competencies with cooperation of faculty and departments
<b>Performances</b>	Unlike a tangible piece of student work, the performance is ephemeral unless captured on tape or disk. Even when recorded for repeated viewing, performances can be difficult to assess, so the development of usable rubrics and adequate training for raters are both of particular importance.	Time consuming. Could be used for field experiences. Requires a clear understanding of how to evaluate objectives. Rubrics and training needed.
<b>Classroom Assessment Techniques/Action Research</b>	CATs locate assessment of student learning right in the classroom and put its control into the hands of individual instructors. Although the CATs were originally intended for formative assessment at the course level, they can be adapted to the program level and also help answer summative questions.	Requires investment of individual faculty members time and commitment.
<b>Local Tests</b>	With local tests, the testing instrument can be tailored to the intellectual content, curricular design, teaching practices, and expectations of the campus's educational programs. It can lend itself to rapid adaptation if those conditions change. The process can also promote faculty ownership of learning by solidifying collective commitment to outcomes, curricular elements, and assessment methods.	Requires major commitment to test development. Better matches institutional objectives. Student motivation is a significant aspect. Would require commitment to provide students with testing opportunity
<b>Commercial Tests</b>	The terms "standardized" and "objective" are often applied to commercially available tests, implying that other assessment methods meet neither criterion. Standardized refers to uniform test conditions and scoring procedures, so ratings from multiple administrations are presumed to be reliable. However, locally developed tests and other assessments can also maintain consistency.	Alignment with institution objectives is critical. Student motivation is a significant aspect. Would require commitment to provide students with testing opportunity. Some may be required by general administration. ie. CLA
<b>Course-Management Programs</b>	Electronic course-management programs (like Blackboard and WebCT) have made it possible for professors and students to interact in new ways. They have the capability to keep a running record of discussions that would be lost if they took place in the classroom. If a course (or general education program) expects students to develop critical questioning, collaborative decision making, or an ethical perspective, these capacities may be captured well over time in a threaded electronic discussion.	Would be possible to capture discussion on some of the more difficult attributes and habits of the mind. Would require willingness of faculty to coordinate data capture.
<b>Common Assignments, Secondary Readings, &amp; Other Embedded Assessments</b>	Embedding assessment is an efficient way to collect high-quality, direct evidence of learning with minimal disruption and maximum utility. One technique is to give a piece of student work a "secondary reading" in addition to the primary reading it receives by the professor to assign a grade. For example, an assessment committee could sample a set of research papers from an American history class, asking general educations about historical perspective, critical	Probably the least intrusive approach to general education program assessment. Would require personnel to gather and prepare materials for assessment. The need to provide clear

	thinking, writing, or information literacy skills. The secondary readings could be used both to evaluate an individual's achievement and to assess a course or a program. Another technique is to ask students in a number of different courses to complete a common assignment (response to a common reading using guiding questions) or give examinations that include a common question.	description of expectations would require faculty commitment.
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The General Education Council will prioritize assessment approaches for each year based on institutional needs. Multiple approaches will be encouraged. This process will require significant financial support and administrative support. Administrative support for the assessment of general education will be critical at all institutional levels. This support will include creating an environment conducive to ongoing assessment of general education through administrative leadership. Policies and procedures need to be developed to ensure faculty support for assessment activities and the use of assessment findings. Faculty incentives to support general education assessment must be provided and faculty must be recognized for their level of support. Funding must be provided to support not only data gathering and analysis activities but also implementation of action plans resulting from that analysis.

<b>Yearly Budget for General Education Assessment.</b>	<b>Cost</b>
Commercial Tests	
CLA – per administration (GA mandated VSA every three years)	\$18,500
NSSE – per administration (GA mandated VSA every three years)	\$5,000
Commercial tests (if selected and aligned with general education goals)	\$30,000
Student incentives	\$20,000
Local Tests	
Local test development and revision (Yearly)	\$30,000
Student incentives	
Data Gathering	
General Education Assessment Specialist (new position)	\$45,000
Costs either from test administration or data collection –Requires cooperation of faculty members for data collection using other testing formats GA's	\$30,000
Analysis Costs	
General Education Assessment Workshop – Provide Analysis of Assessment Data	\$30,000
General Education Summits	\$3,000
General Education Action Plans	
General Education Development Grants (per grant)	\$10,000
Implementation of action plan (Most important funding)	?????

It is recommended that the assessment of general education be presented in such a way as to compliment program assessment and minimize the intrusion into other faculty activities. Identifying ways to utilize either local or commercial tests without significant disruption will be difficult unless a strategy can be developed which will ensure student motivation. Less intrusive measures such as utilizing existing work products from classes will require coordination of data gathering activities with faculty members. Issues

to be addressed will include identification of the sample, notification of faculty, collecting and organizing data, distribution of the data. Accountability measures must be established to ensure that faculty members actively participate in gathering data and support action.

Analysis Workshop members could include

Faculty members can be selected from eligible for

- General Education Council
- Curriculum Committee
- Faculty Senate
- general education faculty
- faculty

Staff members on annual contracts

- Assessment Office
- Associate Deans
- Library
- Writing Center
- Speaking Center
- Associate Provost for Undergraduate Education

**Appendix A - Tentative Assessment Cycle Proposal (feasibility to be determined by stakeholders)**

Recommended Assessment Cycle.

	Cycle I	Cycle 2	Cycle 3	Cycle -4
September – December 2008	<p>General Education Council establishes assessment priorities and determines method of assessment</p> <p>General Education Council informs university community is informed of assessment priorities and institutional participation.</p>			
January 2009- December 2009	<p>Office of Academic Assessment Coordinates gathering of data based on General Education Council Plan</p> <p>Survey Faculty on Goal Delivery</p> <p>Survey Faculty General Education Satisfaction</p> <p>Spartan Survey</p>			

September – 2009 December 2009		General Education Council Establishes Assessment Priorities and Methods.  <b>NSSE Administration Mandated by General Administration For VSA</b>  University Community is informed of assessment priorities and participation identified		
January 2010- December 2010		Office of Academic Assessment coordinates gathering of data based on General Education Council plan	<b>CLA or Equivalent Selected</b>  Spartan Survey	
June – August 2010	General Education Council Assessment Workshop 2009 Data – Faculty paid for participation in assessment workshop. Analysis of Data Completed and Report prepared			
September – December 2010	General Education Summit – Makes Recommendations for action plan.	Data Gathering Continues	General Education Council Establishes Assessment Priorities and Methods.  <b>CLA or Equivalent Administration Freshmen</b>  University Community is informed of assessment priorities and participation identified	
January 2011- December 2011			<b>CLA or Equivalent Administration Seniors</b>  Office of Academic Assessment coordinates gathering of data based on General Education Council plan	
April 2011	General Education Council Reports Action Plan Progress	Office of Academic Assessment compiles data		
June – August 2011		General Education Council Assessment Workshop 2010 Data –		

		Faculty paid for participation in assessment workshop. Analysis of Data Completed and Report prepared		
September – December 2011		General Education Summit – Makes Recommendations for action plan.  General Education Council Establishes Plan		General Education Council Establishes Assessment Priorities and Methods.  University Community is informed of assessment priorities and participation identified
January 2012- December 2012				
April 2012		General Education Council Reports Action Plan Progress		Office of Academic Assessment coordinates gathering of data based on General Education Council plan
June – August 2012			General Education Council Assessment Workshop 2011 Data – Faculty hired for participation in assessment workshop. Analysis of Data Completed and Report prepared	
September – December 2012			General Education Summit – Makes Recommendations for action plan.	General Education Council Establishes Assessment Priorities and Methods.  University Community is informed of assessment priorities and participation identified
January 2013- December 2013				Office of Academic Assessment coordinates gathering of data based on General Education Council plan
April 2013			General Education Council Reports Action Plan Progress	
June – August 2013				General Education Council Assessment Workshop 2011 Data – Faculty hired for participation in

				assessment workshop. Analysis of Data Completed and Report prepared
September – December 2013	<p>General Education Council establishes assessment priorities and determines method of assessment</p> <p>General Education Council informs university community is informed of assessment priorities and institutional participation.</p>			General Education Summit – Makes Recommendations for action plan.
January 2014- December 2014				Office of Academic Assessment coordinates gathering of data based on General Education Council plan
April 2014				General Education Council Reports Action Plan Progress
June – August 2014				
September – December 2013				General Education Summit – Makes Recommendations for action plan.