

American Association of Colleges and Universities
General Education Assessment Workshop
May 2007

UWM Final Report

Our goals for the Institute were to

1. Improve our abilities to redefine the overarching educational philosophy for general education
2. Learn about translating GE principles to student learning outcomes at the program level
3. Learn about the strategies to reform a course-based distribution model to an outcomes-based GE program
4. Learn to link course-level assessment to program-level assessment
5. Learn about successful strategies others have used to address resource issues for GE in a generally competitive budget environment where multiple good/excellent programs/initiatives vie for the same \$
6. Learn to identify and analyze the political and cultural opportunities and barriers to reforming GE
7. Develop strategies to overcome obstacles

The understanding we have gained in our conversations with a number of Institute faculty members and with other teams can be crystallized in the following points:

- Visible, audible and ongoing expressions of commitment and support from the highest levels in the institution are essential
- Informing and involving the campus throughout the process is necessary
- Opposition has to be anticipated and managed.
- Inviting debate from the constituencies sooner than later in the process will help in addressing the issues
- Identify and emphasize the positive aspects of reform
- Build consensus about the essential objective, viz. student learning
- The structure/model and the outcomes of GE are unique to the institution and its mission
- GE outcomes should be woven through the major
- Incentives and rewards should be looked at

Based on what we have learnt and what we know about our institution, the essential parts of our general strategy for reform are

- Meet with the Chancellor and Provost upon returning to campus to discuss the GE reform and discuss the importance of their visible commitment to the reform.
- Gather and analyze information on (a) current patterns of student behavior in selecting courses from the current list in the distribution areas, and (b) the student credit hour impact of the current student behavior on the various departments offering GE courses.
- Form a working group representing broad constituencies to analyze the various options for reform and develop various scenarios for the impact of the options considered.
- Meet with various groups early and often and communicate aspects of the proposed reform and invite discussion. Groups considered include Deans, Associate Deans, Department Chairs, and members of the faculty senate and curriculum committees.
- Develop student learning outcomes for GE and seek approval and buy-in from faculty.
- Work with major programs in integrating the GE outcomes with the major program outcomes.
- Develop assessment plans for GE learning outcomes at program and course levels.
- Conduct professional development sessions for faculty teaching the main GE courses on the assessment of student learning outcomes.
- Constitute a standing GE council to review the program including the achievement of student learning outcomes and closing the loop based on assessment data.

Our tasks for the coming academic year:

Summer 2007	Meeting with the Chancellor and Provost Formation of the task force Gathering and analysis of data on current GE program and student patterns
Fall 2007	Consideration of various options for GE reform including formulation of GE learning outcomes Consultations with constituent groups on campus
Spring 2007	Achieve consensus and faculty buy-in for GE learning outcomes and assessment plan. Seek the endorsement and approval for GE outcomes and assessment from faculty senate.