

General Education Assessment



A Brief Overview

NC STATE UNIVERSITY



Presentation Overview

- Overview of History of General Education at NC State
- Overview of Assessment of General Education at NC State
- Current Assessment Plan
- Future Outlook
- Questions



History of General Education

- 1978 - The Provost's Forum asks the question, "Is there something missing in the education and development of students attending NC State?"
- 1988 - The Council on Undergraduate Education (CUE) was formed.
- May, 1992 - Council of Deans and Provost approved CUE's recommendation to implement new general education requirements (GERs) in fall, 1994.



The 1992 Plan for General Education Requirements

- Offered several courses for each “category” of General Education
- Advising for students to take courses in each category varied by program
- There are several courses in each category and it was unclear why certain courses were offered in certain categories
- Students and sometimes faculty are unclear what our GER is accomplishing

History of General Education Assessment

- May, 1992 - Outcomes-based Assessment plan for new GERs was created
 - Results – tough time implementing; not enough faculty ownership and support/training of faculty
 - Several implementation attempts failed (e.g. Riverside BASE, some program assessment plans)
 - Others were successful in pockets, but were not comprehensive in the overall assessment of GER (e.g. portfolios, some dept. assessment plans, use of university wide survey data)
 - Other out growths were very successful (e.g. Hewlett Initiative, First Year Inquiry)



Why was GER Assessment Failing Overall?

- Several reasons
 - Unclear objectives for GER categories
 - Unclear categories for GER
 - Unclear selection of courses for particular categories
 - No faculty ownership in assessment process
 - No assessment support system for faculty
- There remained a commitment to outcomes assessment



Current General Education Assessment

- 3-4 objectives (goals) have been articulated for each category and approved by CUE
- A course-embedded assessment approach allows the faculty to improve that for which they are responsible in a flexible meaningful manner
- Each faculty member can write his/her own learning outcomes and identify his/her own assessment methods for the GER category objectives in which his/her course falls

Current General Education Assessment, Cont.

- Faculty gather their own evidence that the learning has occurred. They can decide to refine their course(s) according to the information gathered.
- Multiple section information is rolled up and viewed holistically.
- Results are reported to college curriculum committees; recommendations for refinement can be made at this level.



Current General Education Assessment, Cont.

- CUE reviews the information according to a pre-defined schedule, thus some courses may have an opportunity to have collected up to 5 years of data prior to CUE's first review.
- CUE accepts the College curriculum recommendations or makes further recommendations.



Benefits of this Approach

- Faculty have ownership over the process
- Faculty and students understand the purpose of GERs
- We are able to see how well we are meeting our general education program objectives (i.e. goals)
- When we don't meet our GER objectives, we know what needs to be improved
- This process will broaden our understanding of what our GER should do - - it has led us to new kinds of conversations and new decisions



Challenges

- Timing – we are making a lot of improvements in undergraduate education. We need to be careful about coordinating all these initiatives so we don't overwhelm faculty.
- Support for Faculty – our faculty are committed to quality undergraduate education, yet they have a lot on their plate. We need to provide them with the materials (training, planning time, feedback, etc.) they need in order to excel.



A Look to the Future

- Faculty see first-hand how assessment is about improving teaching and learning
- Continue to discuss how overarching values, such as diversity, critical thinking, ethics, technological literacy, etc. need to be implemented into general education and the discipline and assessed
- Moves us closer to providing evidence that we are educating our 21st Century Learner



For More Information

- Assessing General Education

- http://www.ncsu.edu/undergrad_affairs/assessment/files/ger/ger.htm

- Council on Undergraduate Education

- http://www.ncsu.edu/provost/governance/standing_committees/CUEd/minutes/

- Undergraduate Academic Program Review

- http://www.ncsu.edu/provost/academic_programs/uapr/UAPRindx.html

- 21st Century Learner

- http://www.ncsu.edu/undergrad_affairs/assessment/files/principles/ren_learner.pdf



Questions?

http://www.ncsu.edu/undergrad_affairs/assessment/assess.htm

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One Minute Evaluation

- What is the most valuable thing that you learned from this workshop?
- What is one question that you still have?