DRAFT FOR DISCUSSION--General Education Assessment Plan
University of California, Merced

Overview

Our approach to general education assessment, as displayed in the graphic and described in the corresponding outline has been reviewed and approved by the faculty on the College One Executive Committee. Feedback was also solicited from faculty on the Core Committee. The graphic representation and corresponding key represent a general view of our approach to general education. As we further refine our general education assessment plan in preparation for the Educational Effectiveness report, we will continue to revise and adjust our thinking. Future iterations of our graphic and corresponding documentation will be maintained on the UC Merced accreditation Web site.

Our plan is directly influenced by our purpose of ensuring that all students have mastered the guiding principles upon graduation from the University of California, Merced. To ensure consistency and congruence between the UC Merced guiding principles and the WASC accreditation criteria, the following table demonstrates how the criteria map to our guiding principles.

Guiding Principles	WASC General Education Criteria
Scientific Literacy: To have a functional understanding of scientific, technological and quantitative information, and to know both how to interpret scientific information and effectively apply quantitative tools	College-Level Quantitative Skills Scientific and Technical Knowledge
Decision Making: To appreciate the various and diverse factors bearing on decisions and the know-how to assemble, evaluate, interpret and use information effectively for critical analysis and problem solving	Information Literacy The Habit of Critical Analysis of Data and Argument
Communication: To convey information to and communicate and interact effectively with multiple audiences, using advanced skills in written and other modes of communication	College-Level Written and Oral Communication
Self and Society: To understand and value diverse perspectives in both the global and community contexts of modern society in order to work knowledgeably and effectively in an ethnically and culturally rich setting	Diversity Social and Political
Ethics and Responsibility: To follow ethical practices in their professions and communities, and care for future generations through sustainable living and environmental and societal responsibility	Civic Responsibility
Leadership and Teamwork: To work effectively in both leadership and team roles, capably making connections and integrating their expertise with the expertise of others	The Ability to Work with Others

Aesthetic Understanding and Creativity: To appreciate and be knowledgeable about human creative expression, including literature and the arts	Cultural and Aesthetic
Development of Personal Potential: To be responsible for achieving the full promise of their abilities, including psychological and physical well-being	The Capability to Engage in Lifelong Learning

Our goal is to further map all major curriculum goals to our general education guiding principles, which are now mapped to the WASC criteria. This way, we can ensure alignment of goals for every student for all aspects of their education. We can further use this as a basis for assessing learning outcomes. As a result, we will be capable of determining where challenges arise and what solutions might serve us best to address them.

As we look ahead to the educational effectiveness report, this approach will act as a framework. We have already started identifying what types of assessment are being done across campus. We are working closely with faculty, the Office of Institutional Planning & Analysis, and Student affairs to integrate assessment and determine which assessments provide information on whether or not UC Merced students are achieving the Guiding Principles. Through this work, our Educational Effectiveness Report will be prepared to describe our design and approaches that we are taking as an institution to assure quality in teaching and learning. This framework offers us a road map to go beyond simple documentation of the kinds of evidence of learning we collect, and the ways we will use this evidence. Rather, we will be able to integrate and analyze the information such that we can ensure a proper educational foundation for moving forward.

Outline for General Education Assessment Plan Graphic

Note: The outline below provides information about what each box in the graphic means. The key is to think about the graphic as a cycle. All of the data we are gathering feeds into the other parts in such a way that we can maximize the quality of student learning outcomes. The General Education Guiding Principles are the outcomes and the various pieces of the map are places that we want to obtain assessment results to determine the extent to which we are achieving those principles. Core 1 and Core 100 is key to our general education assessment plan, because they provide two key integrating experiences that all students must participate in. At these two junctures in a students' academic career, College One can assess their experiences and determine the extent to which general education as a whole is meeting its necessary objectives. Further, our extensive quality assurance processes ensure that continuous feedback loops are built into the system such that identified challenges can be promptly dealt with and new solutions can be implemented.

Inputs/Outputs:
- **Performance Indicators** (baseline data about incoming students, stats, demographics, etc)
- **Baseline Data:** National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE) & University of California Undergraduate Experience Survey (UCUES) (These surveys cover student expectations for college experiences and evaluations of them) (I saw that Merced is participating in these surveys and this is useful contextual information in which we can ground our general education assessment)
- **Data from Student Services: (**this would be data that we obtain from assessments done by other offices, Student Affairs, Housing, Tutoring, Advising, and any specialized surveys that Students Affairs might conduct to try to gather feedback on what students are doing outside the classroom that contributes to their GE)
- **Input from Quality Assurance Processes** (This box is here to reinforce that we plan to use our quality assurance processes as inputs back into the assessment process)

General Education Assessment Components: We are reviewing the concept of portfolios as a mechanism for tying together all of the components laid out on this graphic.
- **General Education Curriculum** (represents 3 general education curriculum)
- **Major Curriculum** (self-explanatory but represents any aggregate assessment that is done by each of the majors)
- **Core 1** (class that all freshman take)
- **Core 100** (class that all juniors take)
- **Integrating Experience** (includes Core 1 & Core 100 as key gen ed components, but also represents symbolically that other experiences like the general education curriculum, the major curriculum, and other outside activities impact the integrating experience.)
- **Special Academic Programs** (things like Service learning and Freshman Seminars)
- **Independent Study** (Internships, undergraduate research experiences, etc)

Inputs/Outputs:
- **Performance Indicators** (graduation rates, progress to graduation, etc)
- **Graduating Senior Surveys**
- **Alumni Surveys**
- **Employer Surveys**
  - The above surveys are, of course, long-term but we wanted to indicate that we are planning to use them as a source of general education assessment

Quality Assurance Processes:
- **Program Review** (see procedures in accreditation materials)
- **Undergraduate Degree Review** (see procedures in accreditation materials)
- **Self-Studies** (We would like to have the Teaching & Learning Center spearhead these self-studies, which would entail having faculty conduct assessment self studies on their courses)
- **Continuous Evaluation of General Education Assessment Plan** (This quality assurance process would be led by the College One Executive Committee and would serve as a direct feedback mechanism back to the general education curriculum)