

University General Education Council
April 12, 2017, 3:30 p.m. – 5:00 p.m.
Adams Center Classroom

Present: G. Straughn, G. Brooks, E. Gumm, S. Talley, K. Hendrick, D. Mendenhall, K. Tippens, Q. Xu, N. Santana, R. Ashlock, J. Wallace

Absent: K. Pybus, B. Hammack, M. Smallwood, M. Lynn

Ex-officios: T. Milholland (T. Lee and P. Vardiman were absent)

Guests: Ron Morgan, Bruce Scott, Susan Lewis, Phyllis Bolin

The meeting began at 3:34 p.m.

I. Call to order by E. Gumm.

II. Prayer by E. Gumm.

III. Approval of the minutes from 3.23.16 and 11.21.16

Motion to approve by K. Hendrick; seconded by N. Santana; 6 in favor; 1 abstention; motion passes.

Action Items

IV. HIST 280 – Add to Historical Literacy Menu

R. Morgan – This course used to be HIST 480. We are removing that from the catalog and adding HIST 280 in its place. This is required for Social Studies majors, but we can only offer it every other year. When our teachers have taken the state certification exam, they were doing poorly on Texas History. Part of the reason was because our Texas History course was being taught as a research course instead of a broad survey course. We decided to change it to a 200-level course with a broader focus and make it available on the University Requirements menus to allow other students to take it and therefore make it feasible to offer every year. It will be an online course, and while it is not as broad geographically as US History, it is very multi-ethnic. K. Hendricks – Will this only be online? R. Morgan – It could be offered face-to-face, but we want to make sure it is accessible to all our social studies majors, so for now the idea is to make it online.

R. Ashlock – How do field trips, museum trips, etc. fit in for the public history requirement if this is online? R. Morgan – We do a lot virtual exploration instead of physical trips. Assignments could be involved with local museums as well.

Motion to approve by R. Ashlock; seconded by D. Mendenhall; all in favor; motion passes.

V. HIST 280 – Add to Social Science Menu

E. Gumm – I don't see a chart of how things are lined up for the Social Sciences competencies for inclusion on the Social Sciences menu. R. Morgan – It is in paragraph form, but there is no table. I can ask Vernon Williams to create a chart.

Motion to approve by S. Talley pending the receipt of the chart articulating the competencies for social science; seconded by R. Ashlock; all in favor; motion passes.

Information Items

VI. QEP Report from Phyllis Bolin – including assessment of CORE and Capstone courses

P. Bolin – Please refer to the handout. (Attached.) We look at things in three levels: Explore, Create New Knowledge, Public Dissemination.

One of the pieces we started with was looking at SAILS assessments. Freshmen would take this during their first couple of weeks of college. We included the 2012 freshmen group since they were taking capstone in 2015 so we could use them as a comparison. In every area, our students scored lower than other students from institutions like ours. This gave us a benchmark. You will note that our capstone student results, however, were significantly higher than students at institutions similar to us. Our students are learning well.

G. Brooks – Did the students have an option to take the survey? P. Bolin – Every student was given a code, and we tried to incentivize them by having instructors count it as a quiz grade, but there was only a brief window for them to take the exam, and some just didn't get around to it.

G. Straughn – Do you know what the scale is for this SAILS score? P. Bolin – We don't know, all we have is comparison data. We have a more detailed report that will let us select by major, etc. E. Gumm – It looks like the range is 0-1000.

Our goal was to introduce literacy skills in CORE 110, build them in CORE 210, then master them in BCOR. When we looked at the research paper in CORE 110, we saw that so many students had never written one and they struggled, so we changed that after year one to an annotated bibliography assignment. The rubric adjusted for this change, but it remained basically the same. By year four, we hit our ideal target in every area.

The results for CORE 210 were not quite as stellar. We had high points and low points. The assignment assessed was a position paper that the students wrote. CORE 115 is included with this group

BCOR is the next area. There were some changes over the years. We assessed a film review then moved to another sort of signature assignment.

Capstone is a different way of thinking, so instead of selecting an assignment, we had faculty and consultants come in to make a rubric for assessment. There is a big improvement in the results between Year 4 and Year 5. There could be several variables to explain this. Students could be better prepared. The assessment group could have refined their process.

All of this will go into the QEP Impact Report. You can find more detailed reports available on the QEP ACU blog. See handout for the link.

G. Straughn – Is there an impact with the changes in CORE for the coming years? P.

Bolin – We don't have any obligation beyond what we've already done. We can choose to continue in the areas that we wish. I did mention in our report that we will not be continuing to assess CORE 210 and BCOR.

E. Gumm – We have moved to an every-other year assessment schedule for the SAILS exam. P. Bolin – Our data with our freshmen has remained fairly stable over the years.

Q. Xu – There are different percentages for each acceptable and ideal goal. Why is that?

P. Bolin – We want them to increase slightly every year. We are holding the students to slightly higher standards each year. K. Hendrick – Do we assess all capstone projects or a sample? P. Bolin – A sample. K. Hendrick – Will we continue to do that? P. Bolin – Yes. E. Gumm – Institutional Effectiveness will be taking over the assessment of this piece. T. Milholland – Finding the dollars to provide the assessment can be a challenge, which is why some times we move to the every-other-year format. And as a separate issue: How much more change does our General Education have to go through to constitute a substantive change? We need to look at this for SACS. S. Lewis – Funding has been moved from QEP to the Office of Institutional Effectiveness. Just wanted to clarify that.

VII. Update on the Educational Innovation Task Force regarding a possible Adult Education (degree completion) program – Greg Straughn

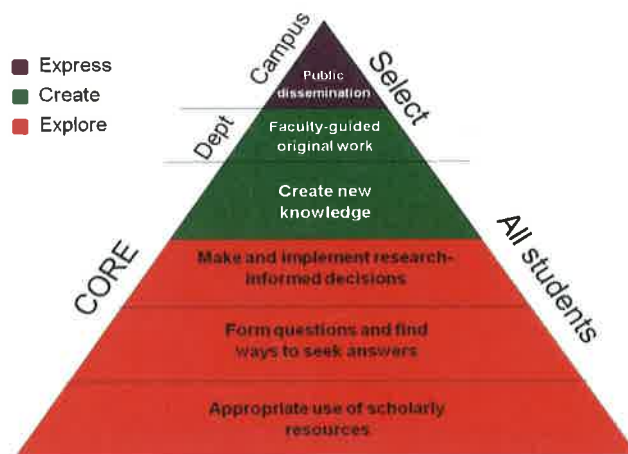
G. Straughn – This is what I think will probably be coming to the council in the coming year. The charge to the task force is to find new market deliveries for undergraduate students. We came up with four germane themes – role of the credit hour, role of the faculty, experiential learning, and competency-based education. What tolerance do we have for more courses with credit hours different than the standard three? We've done some experimentation with accelerated courses. Bundling or unbundle roles with faculty – what are the possibilities? We don't want to impede the relationships between faculty and students, but we want to look at innovation with delivery methods. Competency-based education fits with an adult degree completion program. We used to have the BAS program. As we have matured in the online space, we are looking for new ways to feed that market. How could our residential population move into select courses within this online sphere? We don't want to have our freshmen students taking all their courses

online, though, and not engaging with the university. The collateral piece is what would the general education requirement look like for those adult education degrees? We have a 56-hour general education requirement for residential students. How would that change for the adult education group? How does Bible fit into that? Same number of required hours? We did have robust conversation about what would be best for our students in communication in both written and oral areas. One of the proposals is a junior-level writing course. That would affect University Requirements.

K. Hendrick – My son was a BAS student who was in face-to-face classes, and it added some nice diversity. I'm not sure having all the courses online is necessarily best. G. Straughn – We are looking for expanding beyond the Abilene area market, which is why we are focused on online courses.

The meeting adjourned at 4:29 p.m.

Pursuit – A Journey of Research and Creative Expression



Goal 1 Explore--Students will acquire information literacy competencies and skills at both the basic and more advanced research levels through exploration and inquiry

The first Goal of **Explore** will be discussed in the next few pages as assessments for each course are described. The assessments for **Explore** are found in the General Education classes of CORE 110, CORE 210, and BCOR 310.

The QEP created a program in which (SLO 1.1) students will understand and appropriately use scholarly sources; (SLO 1.2) integrate knowledge to frame research questions and develop strategies to seek answers; and (SLO 1.3) analyze, interpret, and/or evaluate and implement research-informed decision.

SAILS Assessments. In order to assess student progress in achieving these outcomes, the Standardized Assessment of Information Literacy Skills (SAILS) was given to students enrolled in CORE 110 (Cornerstone) during the first three weeks of class and then repeated during the senior capstone experience. Scores for students entering in fall 2012 were utilized as pretest baseline scores and used in comparison to the scores of students enrolled in Capstone Experiences during the fall and spring of 2015-2016. Overall scores, standard error, and true group average scores for each course are compared in the chart below.

Table 1: SAILS-Overall Scores, Stand Error, and True Group Average Score

Pursuit Goal 1: Explore	SAILS Skill Sets	Fall 2012 CORE 110 n=695	Institution Type: Masters CORE 110 n=26,703	2015-2016 Capstone n=346	Institution Type: Masters Capstone n=26,020
1.1.A Determine Information needed	1. Developing a Research Strategy	494 ± 4	503 ± 1	549 ± 6	511 ± 1
	2. Selecting Finding Tools	498 ± 5	507 ± 1	560 ± 7	516 ± 1
	3. Searching	464 ± 4	484 ± 1	532 ± 6	493 ± 0
	4. Using Finding Tool Features	506 ± 6	530 ± 1	555 ± 8	535 ± 1
1.1.B Access and use information	5. Retrieving Sources	488 ± 6	518 ± 1	566 ± 8	523 ± 1
	6. Evaluating Sources	473 ± 5	481 ± 1	518 ± 7	477 ± 1
1.1.C Information use strategies	7. Documenting Sources	444 ± 6	473 ± 1	540 ± 8	492 ± 1
	8. Understanding Economic, Legal, and Social Issues	448 ± 5	466 ± 1	519 ± 7	475 ± 1

Comparisons in Table 1 are made in the following three ways:

- (1) **Comparison of CORE 110 to Capstone students.** Scores on the 8 skills set improved significantly from entering students to senior-level students. After 3 years of taking CORE classes, post-test comparison data showed significant increases in the overall scores, with improvement in all skill sets. Despite mixed results in some other assessments, gains exhibited were overwhelmingly strong showing that students had been introduced, practiced, and had reinforced their information literacy scores in the years they were enrolled at ACU.
- (2) **Comparison of entering students in CORE 110 to entering students from institutions like ACU.** The comparison group of entering students in CORE 110 in fall 2012 did NOT perform better than the Institution-type benchmark for entering students on **ANY** skill set. This provides an dismal snap shot of the information literacy skills for entering students at ACU and shows how much more unprepared they were. The comparison makes scores of pre- and post-test results even more significant when you consider the improvements gained.
- (3) **Comparisons of Capstone students to senior level students from institutions like ACU.** Capstone students at Abilene Christian University performed **BETTER THAN** the similar institutions on **all** SAILS Skills Sets. This is the most significant result observed. ACU entering students went from performing lower in **all** skills sets to performing better on **all** skills sets in comparison to institution like ACU.

Assessments of Goal 1 Explore student learning outcomes found in CORE classes.

Information Literacy skills are *introduced* in CORE 110, *practiced* in CORE 210, and *reinforced* in BCOR 310.

Table 2: CORE 110 Assessment Results
Percentages of Students Scoring 2.5 or Higher on a 4-Point Scale

CORE 110	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5
Obj. 1.1.A: Determine Information Needed	61%	56%	61.1%	84.8%	74.4%
Obj. 1.1.B: Access and use information	No assessment	67%	70.5%	84.8%	81.1%
Obj. 1.1.C: Information use strategies	40%	55%	80%	90.9%	91.1%

Note: the artifact for CORE 110 changed from a research paper after Year 1 to a annotated bibliography. With the new artifact and adapted rubric, scores from Year 2 to Year 5 showed fairly consistent improvement, **meeting all of the Acceptable Targets** (70% of samples score 2.5 or higher out of 4) and **most of the Ideal Targets** (80% of samples score 2.5 or higher out of 4). CORE 110 faculty met regularly to discuss curriculum and to brainstorm ways to improve teaching of information literacy skills. This course had embedded librarians who worked with each class to provide consistency in information literacy skills and assist students in making a connection to a librarian over their years at ACU.

Table 3: CORE 210 Assessment Results

Percentages of Students Scoring 2.5 or Higher on a 4-Point Scale

CORE 210	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5
Obj. 1.1.A: Determine Information Needed	63.6%	75.0%	74.67%	85%
Obj. 1.1.B: Access and use information	No assessment	61.7%	72%	78.33%
Obj. 1.1.C: Information use strategies	70.5%	61.7%	66.67%	66.67%
Obj. 1.2.A: Describe relevant theories	63.6%	75.0%	74.67%	85%
Obj. 1.2.B: Analysis applied to situation	63.6%	48.3%	57.33%	58.33%
Obj. 1.3.A: Evaluate information and its sources critically	50%	40%	57.33%	65%
Obj. 1.3.B: Use info effectively to accomplish a specific purpose	65.9%	55.0%	70.67%	66.67%

Results for CORE 210 from Table 3. Objective 1.1.A, 1.1.B, and 1.2.A exhibited small but significant increases most years, making the **Acceptable Target** (70% of samples score 2.5 or higher out of 4) during the final year and with 1.1.A and 1.2.A making the **Ideal Target** (80% score 2.5 or higher out of 4) in the final year.

Year 5 exhibited some major improvements in Obj. 1.1.A *Determining information needed* and Obj. 1.2.A *Describing relevant theories*, but showed only slight gains in the other objectives. However, **all objectives Met or approached the Acceptable Targets** (70% of samples score 2.5 or higher) except for Objective 1.2.B *Analysis applied to situation*. Overall, students' thesis statements have improved and are clearly identifiable in most papers and significant gains have been made in student interpretation of findings in Objective 1.2.A.

Table 4: BCOR 310 Assessment Results

Percentages of Students Scoring 2.5 or Higher on a 4-Point Scale

BCOR 310	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5
Obj. 1.1.A: Determine Information Needed	36.7%	65.9%	61.7%
Obj. 1.1.B: Access and use information	43.3%	68.2%	58.3%
Obj. 1.1.C: Information use strategies	55.9%	69.7%	87.5%
Obj. 1.2.A: Describe relevant theories	51.7%	53%	46.7%
Obj. 1.2.B: Analysis applied to situation	51.7%	51.5%	65%
Obj. 1.3.A: Evaluate information and its sources critically	52.0%	56.1%	50.8%

Results of BCOR 310 from Table 4. Assessment results begin in Year 3. The QEP calls for an **Acceptable Target** of 73% of samples scoring 2.5 or higher and an **Ideal Target** of 85% of samples scoring 2.5 or higher. Overall, the assessment team noted the papers reviewed in Year 5 (2015-2016) were similar in quality to the Year 4 papers. Areas of increase or decrease were insignificant except for 1.1.C *information use strategies*. Scores from this learning objective have significantly improved in the three years of assessment, exceeding the Ideal Target the final year. Year 5 showed an increase in consistency in the prompts but research requirements varied by section.

Goal 2 Create-Obj. 2.1 Students prepare, present and assess the effectiveness of scholarly and creative products. The QEP created a program in which students demonstrate effective use of information skills through written communication; apply information to the planning and creation of a particular product or performance; and, demonstrate critical thinking as they develop produce, and evaluate a product or performance. These student learning outcomes are found in Capstone Experiences.

Table 5 Capstone Assessment Results
Percentages of Students Scoring 2.5 or Higher on a 4-Point Scale

Student Learning Outcomes	Capstone Experience	Year 4	Year 5
2.1.A Demonstrate effective use of information literacy skills through writing	Use of Sources to Answer Question	43.3%	78.3%
	Ethical and Appropriate Use of Sources	50.0%	76.7%
2.1.B Apply information to planning and creation of a product or performance	Organization or Structure	83.3%	88.3%
	Mechanics	83.3%	88.3%
2.1.C Demonstrate critical thinking as they develop, produce, and evaluate a product or performance	Purpose of Project	80%	91.7%
	Integrative Thinking	46.7%	71.7%

Results of Capstone assessments from Table 5. Research papers from Capstone Experiences were assessed for the first time in Year 4 (2014-2015) in the roll out of *Pursuit*. In the fall of Year 5, the assessment team met with faculty to share the results and discuss their understanding of the rubric and how papers were analyzed. All assessment outcomes improved from the Year 4 assessment. All **Acceptable Targets** (73% of samples score 2.5 or higher out of 4) were Met except for the target for *Integrative Thinking*, though it approached the Acceptable Target of 73%. The **Ideal Target** (85% of samples score 2.5 or higher) was Met in ½ of the outcomes.

Summary of all outcomes for the QEP are currently being prepared in the QEP Impact Report, a portion of the Fifth-Year Interim Report for SACSCOC.



For more information:

Detailed information can be found on Yearly Assessment Reports for CORE 110, CORE 210, BCOR 310, and Capstone located at <http://blogs.acu.edu/qep/>