

**University General Education Council
February 27, 2019, 3:30 p.m. – 5:00 p.m.
Adams Center Classroom**

Present: K. Witemeyer, J. Smith, G. Brooks, C. Flanagan, K. Wick, D. Kneip, D. Mendenhall, L. McCurley, M. Rogers, S. Talley, K. Tippens, M. Ice

Absent: B. Rix, R. Green,

Ex-officios: C. Riley (V. McCracken and S. McDowell were absent)

Guests: Eric Gumm

The meeting began at 3:32 p.m.

I. Call to order by J. Smith.

II. Prayer by C. Riley.

III. Minutes from 2/27/19

Motion to approve minutes K. Tippens; seconded by S. Talley; all in favor; motion passes.

Discussion Items:

VI. General Education Assessment

J. Smith - our updated plan shows the revised version with new options. There are some areas that make sense to continue to assess locally like COMM 211 and Math, but there are others that I think can benefit from outside sources. The Proficiency Profile from ETS can look at data in key areas for us. Another external source is the Value Institute. They look heavily at general education outcomes. They have rubrics to measure the outcomes we already use. We can utilize student artifacts like papers (up to 100 students per sample), and they will judge those for us.

Our knowledge and inquiry outcomes have been course-embedded up to this point. This makes sense to continue for Science, Bible, and the Historical Literature menus. For Outcome #3 - Intercultural Knowledge, it makes sense to utilize the Value Institute to analyze student artifacts for Cultural Awareness menu courses. We should probably look at mapping different for ENGL 112. For Problem-Solving Skills, the capstone assessment is a good fit here. What remains of the old Humanities is most closely linked to the current Social Science menu.

Regarding the collection of data, our method in the past has been to collect results every year, but this gives us no time to take action on what is learned. I propose moving to a

three-year cycle. Year one we collect data. Year two - analyze & share results. Year three - implement change. We can rotate this among each set of outcomes.

I've mapped costs with Susan Lewis, and we have the finances to make the proposed changes, so the council can focus more on the assessment itself.

D. Mendenhall - With the implementation cycle idea, if we immediately start assessing right after implementation before we've had a chance to settle in, will we ever get an accurate picture with data since it will always be taken from a year where things are unsettled as change has just begun? J. Smith - This could be an issue with large changes, but I anticipate the changes being more minor in nature. K. Tippens - Could the reporting year be more accurately the Reporting & Planning phase so we have a year to implement before the change goes into effect? J. Smith - Yes. That could be a better label. Our outcomes are pretty standard across institutions, but they are our choice, not SACS driven. D. Kneip - The social science menu is huge and greatly diverse. Is it realistic for one office to keep all of that straight? J. Smith - It is doable according to what other institutions have done. There will be ongoing work, but once the initial set-up is done, it should be easier.

J. Smith - Having a central office where we are pulling everything together makes sense, though I see this council helping with that as well. D. Kneip - There is conversation about whether or not we will keep the Cornerstone assignment. ENGL 112 no longer has the paper, but now they do an annotated bibliography. If the Cornerstone assignment goes away, we need to be aware of the reliance of that in this assessment. J. Smith - That assignment shows an important purpose for preparing students for all their future courses. Since so many students come in with English credit, we want to preserve this assignment in Cornerstone since all ACU students must take Cornerstone. E. Gumm - I can confirm that Cornerstone will be retaining this assignment. It is an annual discussion, however. Forty percent of our students transfer in credit for ENGL 111 and 112. I would hate to rely on ENGL 112 to reflect upon our entire freshman class. D. Mendenhall - And what are the numbers there for COMM 211? E. Gumm - I don't have the numbers on that. It is lower than English. History is another area that transfers in a lot of credit. J. Smith - It is good to remember that the assessment is not measuring our students but our programs. C. Flanagan - I like the 3-year cycle, but is there something to be said for doing it all in one year. J. Smith - David Hendricks is one who likes doing it every year because it creates consistency and faculty are in the habit of reporting the data. From the perspective of being able to use the information, though, that is where we need to extend our time frame. We have not done a good job of taking our assessment data and using it to inform change. SACS is looking for ways to show continuing improvement in general education. C. Flanagan - I like the cycle idea, but how about putting everyone on the same cycle. J. Smith - I think it will be difficult to get it off the ground all at once. I think it would be easier to start them a few at a time and get something in motion so we can figure out what is manageable. E. Gumm - The Value Institute component - Are they using our rubric or are we using their rubric? J. Smith - We submit items to them and they judge the artifacts. The judges are highly trained. S. Talley - Their rubrics and our products? J. Smith - Yes. This allows us to save a lot of time and can protect against faculty fatigue. E. Gumm - How many readers for each

artifact? J. Smith - Two and if there is a discrepancy, three. S. Talley - The training is great, otherwise even our own faculty will disagree and the data will be less effective. E. Gumm - One conversation that we had with the Cornerstone annotated bibliography was looking at stratified samples instead of completely random. J. Smith - We are keeping random but taking sections into account to pull equally from sections, including honors.

J. Smith - Let's look at assessment within your discipline. As we look at Outcome #2 - when you think about intro-level courses on our menus and you think about how those look in your departments, what type of grading assessments are happening within your courses? Is it just objective tests? D. Kneip - All of ours are objective tests. It tells us if they have the nuts and bolts, but we all want them to have more than that, but that is harder to measure. J. Smith - So it gets the knowledge but not as much of the inquiry. S. Talley - Our survey courses have a lot of objective tests, but we also have reflective pieces that are writing assignments graded by rubrics. A processing measure. C. Flanagan - Our intro classes are large so we do mostly objective testing. Some of our courses, like Developmental, also include reflective papers. K. Wick - We do objective-based tests as well but we also give them projects to apply what they learned such as analyzing articles. D. Mendenhall - We have standard rubrics for writing and visual assignments for in-course assessments. We have one course on the Social Science menu and the class as a whole selects a case study and does the research during the semester with a final that writes up the results. G. Brooks - We have weekly quizzes and periodic exams. They also write a lit review on a topic they are given. They have several reflection pieces as well. We have a rubric for our writing assignments. S. Talley - We have a rubric we use across our department. So we integrate across all our courses for reading-response projects for scholarly articles. J. Smith - What is sound like we might need here is a tool like a form that asks faculty that teach these menu courses how many students were at various levels - advanced, adequate, marginal, insufficient - for each of the assessment areas. This would give us a standard reporting measure, no matter how many different ways the faculty are assessing within the individual courses. So training and creating instruments for reporting might be better than changing the system of assessment. S. Talley - We would have a place to indicate what our measures were, correct? J. Smith - Yes. D. Kneip - I would definitely affirm that. That is the most valuable part of doing assessment so I understand the thought process behind each assignment and assessment piece. J. Smith - Yes, I think we need to remind ourselves what we are measuring in each of these menus. We also want to protect faculty from having to report the same data multiple places. The decentralized approach we have been taking doesn't seem to be working so coordinating this process will help.

J. Smith - Integrative thinking and collaborative skills - I'm interested in your first reactions to this. ENGL 112 is on this list right now, but it doesn't seem to be a great fit. Do you think there are other courses that would fit better? D. Kneip - Perhaps Cornerstone? Or maybe the Capstone piece? Within the discipline, the capstone is where you are most able to do that. E. Gumm - I would caution that the annotated bibliography piece does not pull things from more than one discipline. We dropped that requirement. It does lend itself to integrated thinking, but perhaps not to the collaboration piece. C. Flanagan - It does say field of study **or** perspective. J. Smith - The *or* statement does

give us some flexibility. G. Brooks - The lit review paper type of assignment would address this idea. They are building on the work of others, so it could be collaboration. Or does it have to be a group project? J. Smith - Thinking more broadly could be useful. E. Gumm - I keep looking back to the Social Science criteria and the multiple perspectives would work well for integration. There might be a bigger challenge with collaboration. J. Smith - Potentially Cultural Awareness as well, with the emphasis on seeing things from the perspectives of others. C. Flanagan - In my classes, just working within Google Docs has eased collaboration. Perhaps that would spark some idea. J. Smith - I think the research idea is an interesting way to look at this. S. Talley - Peer editor or peer reviewer can work for that as well. J. Smith - Yes, we know these things are happening incidentally, but they are not intentional. D. Kneip - So many students have a dislike of "group work" but they don't realize that it happens all the time. J. Smith - We will continue to rethink whether or not these outcomes make sense and reevaluate. Rethinking, reorganizing, and perhaps renaming them might make it easier to measure.

J. Smith - Continue to think about these outcomes, especially those in the soft skills area. How does our general education curriculum address these and measure these?

The meeting adjourned at 4:54 p.m.