

University General Education Council
March 8, 2023, 4:00 p.m. – 5:00 p.m.
Zoom Meeting

Present: K. Witemeyer, J. Smith, T. Naldoza, J. Jones, S. Talley, M. Atkinson, R. Brown, K. Carroll, S. Sanders, L. Sharp-Penya, R. Ashlock

Absent: R. Rama

Ex-officio: B. Reeves, E. Gumm (C. Riley, G. Mihills, M. Allen were absent)

Guests: D. Counts, D. Kennamer

The meeting began at 4:00 p.m.

- Call to order by J. Smith
- Minutes from 2/8/23

No corrections, so minutes were accepted as approved.

Discussion Item

1. General Education Assessment Planning

J. Smith – On the Abilene campus, about 20% of the degree plans have been approved. Most of the others do not plan major changes. We are making good progress.

My hope for our conversation is to hear from those of you who reached out to departments to see what ideas were generated about our general education assessment.

M. Atkinson – I wasn't sure what to ask our CORE faculty, but what you see on the spreadsheet is what we got from them. If I need to ask other questions, I am happy to, I just need to know what we need. J. Smith – These courses have had a pretty stable set of assignments with the annotated bibliography. It looks like they intend to continue that in CORE 110. We might need to get more specificity from CORE 115 about discussion elements to match that outcome. D. Counts – We are currently looking at how we can fulfill those outcomes. Jackie will likely be ready to provide those soon.

R. Ashlock – Stephanie and I will get together with Amanda and have something ready for the next meeting regarding the Bible options.

J. Smith – It looks like we have many options for Communication. Our English faculty have always been very responsive to assessment. Our challenge this time is to come up with a single focused idea instead of scattering across too many artifacts.

L. Sharp-Penya – We discussed assessing face-to-face and online for a summative speech in both COMM 120 and COMO 120. We looked at assessing A1 and A3 on that same assignment. Assessing its delivery and design. We also talked about the need to more clearly distinguish the difference between A1 and A3 to make sure we are measuring what we want to measure. J. Smith – I'm glad you brought up the varying modalities. Regarding the distinction between the sub-points, as we think about the overall outcomes, we are focused on reporting on the top-level outcomes. I wouldn't look at each of those sub-items as separate items but more as how they support the larger outcome. L. Sharp-Penya – Since A1 and A3 speak to audience, we would like to change the way we assess the outcome to target this more specifically at the rubric level. J. Smith – Sometimes a summative grade is appropriate, other times a more targeted assessment is appropriate. B. Reeves – If we look for data at the rubric level, that's where I can help. J. Smith – The more we can automate this the better. Streamlining the process will help us not get bogged down.

R. Brown – Math's assessment has traditionally been very thorough. However, it is more of an assessment of knowledge at the end of the course, not necessarily what the students have learned. We might want to have them consider a pre- post-test model.

J. Smith – As I think about what a good assessment looks like, I want to see 2-3 measures for each outcome. The more direct those can be, the better. We are looking at student artifacts. What we see so far is that we are going to need to add 1-2 measures in the A area. Maybe add one in the C area. Almost all of the menus address some aspect of the C outcome, however. We also need to decide how we want to approach the D area with our Bible courses. In addition to course-level assessment, we have the writing across the curriculum piece. That could be an additional option for communication.

R. Brown – It seems to be that adding the writing-across the curriculum assessment would be valuable. It is a higher-level assignment and different than the rest of the data we are collecting. L. Sharp-Penya – I think it is important to add COMM/COMO in A1. A huge part of what we do is develop oral arguments.

M. Sanders – If writing across the curriculum captures data at the upper-level and ENGL 111/112 focuses on lower-level, I wonder if there is a way to connect those two points. It seems like it would show student growth and could be helpful. J. Smith – Are you thinking about a comparison? M. Sanders – I don't know exactly what it would look like, if we assess something specific in ENGL 111 and the same in the upper-level project. S. Talley – Everyone could write to a prompt on something like vocation or faith. J. Smith – Would we want to look at changing the writing across the curriculum prompt? We are talking about several dozen courses and the topics are currently broad. M. Sanders – Sometimes these are capstone papers, so I think it might be difficult to implement something entirely different. L. Sharp-Penya – There is a prompt in the capstone course about vocation. This is often different from the writing across the curriculum assignment. Couldn't we have different prompts but assess on the same rubric? J. Smith – That's a good idea. Flexibility is helpful. S. Talley – There are some benchmarks of good writing that we all agree on. J. Smith – It might be good to get some additional insight from Cole Bennett and Laura Carroll. I think the idea of having

an early and late assessment of writing could be very helpful. What we grade right now doesn't have to be what we continue to grade. S. Talley – I would be interested in hearing faculty input from those teaching those writing-intensive courses. J. Smith – It's the appropriate time to reevaluate our rubrics. L. Sharp-Penya – Is the goal to demonstrate student growth or to meet a particular standard at the end? If it is to meet a standard at the end, we might not need a pre- and post-test. We need to keep our goal in mind. J. Smith – That's a good point. We need to explore all our options to see what is going to be the most formative about how we shape our courses and work with students. I'm less interested in simply continuing what we've always done.

J. Smith – For our next steps, I will reach out to our writing across the curriculum experts and draft a starting plan that we can then refine.

The meeting adjourned at 4:48 p.m.