

GENERAL EDUCATION

PROGRAM REVIEW

SUMMARY REPORT OF FINDINGS AND ACTION ITEMS

The findings and actions items recommended by the faculty of Seaver College as a result of their comprehensive assessment of the Seaver College General Education program during the 2011-2012 academic year are summarized in this document.

Findings

The reported findings are summarized for each GE component in this section.

Critical Thinking

- Students met the criterion level of achievement (70%) for two SLOs.
 - SLO 3. Students make valid inferences when formulating arguments. Performance level = 70%.
 - SLO 4. Students use adequate, appropriate, and properly cited evidence to support claims. Performance level = 70%.
- Students did not meet the criterion level of achievement (70%) for three SLOs.
 - SLO 1. Students describe and explain an issue or problem clearly and thoroughly, providing appropriate attention to context. Performance level = 67%.
 - SLO 2. Students employ terms and concepts in an informed manner, allowing them to acknowledge and examine their own assumptions. Performance level = 67%.
 - SLO 5. Students consider multiple salient and opposing viewpoints in formulating a position. Performance level = 24%.
- The GE program needs to improve in the three areas of critical thinking associated with SLOs 1, 2 and 5.

Quantitative Reasoning

- Students enrolling in mathematics courses designed for natural science majors tended to perform at or above the criterion levels of performance. 85% of students achieved medium competency and 27% achieved at a level of high competency exceeding the criterion levels of 80% and 20%, respectively.
- Students enrolled in quantitative reasoning courses designed for non-natural science majors overall failed to perform at or above the criterion levels of performance. 68% of students achieved medium competency and 7% achieved at a level of high competency falling below the desired criterion levels of 80% and 20%, respectively.
- Students' ability to read and interpret logical statements is correlated with the ability to interpret quantitative data in other forms.
- Based on the assessment findings, immediate efforts should be focused on improving instruction in quantitative reasoning courses designed for non-science majors.

Scientific Reasoning

- All GE lab science courses assessed met or exceeded the benchmarked level of student achievement. All students in seven assessed classes met the benchmark level of achievement and at least 75% of students met the benchmark level of achievement in the three other assessed courses.
- GE lab sciences courses fall short of providing breadth of knowledge as it relates to science. While students met the designated benchmark levels of achievement, the assessment revealed limits in both student interest and understanding of science.

Oral Communication

- Students met the criterion level of achievement (80%) for two of the three SLOs.
 - SLO 1. Students will effectively deliver oral presentations through informative and persuasive speeches. Performance level = 94%.
 - SLO 2. Students will demonstrate the ability to critically think by way of implementing an effective persuasive presentation. Performance level = 90%.
- The assessment methodology used for SLO 3. “Students will demonstrate knowledge of rhetorical theory” did not yield useful evidence. Thus, faculty need to assess and determine if students understand and can apply the knowledge of the theory of rhetoric.

Written Communication

- Students met the criterion level of achievement (70%) for three SLOs.
 - SLO 1. Students will write in an engaging, effectively organized style that enhances reader's understanding of the topic. Performance level = 80%.
 - SLO 3. Students will use appropriate materials from a variety of resources to support ideas, consistently employing a standard documentation style. Performance level = 71%.
 - SLO 4. Students will demonstrate a sophisticated use of grammatical conventions with writing that is virtually free from the kinds of errors that distract from meaning and readability. Performance level = 70%.
- Students did not meet the criterion level of achievement (70%) for one SLO.
 - SLO 2. Students will effectively address an audience, providing substantial supporting evidence, insightful analysis, synthesis, and critique of the subject. Performance level = 68%.

Human Response to Art

The diversity of courses (sculpture, graphic design, acting, dance, orchestra, opera and choir) that act to fulfill the Fine Arts component of the GE program necessitated unique course-level SLOs that were grounded in the common learning outcome for this GE component - Students explain the historical, cultural, or technical significance of the art form. The findings are summarized on a course-by-course basis.

- ART 270 – Sculpture I
 - All SLOs are being achieved at the criterion level of achievement.
- ART 416 - Computer Graphic Design
 - Most SLOs are being achieved at the criterion level of achievement, but the entering competency level of the some students results in lower than desired achievement.
- THEA 210 - Acting I: Introduction to Acting

- All SLOs are being achieved at the criterion level of achievement, but the entering competency of the students creates challenges for learning.
- THEA 226 - Dance for Music Theatre
 - Students are learning at an appropriate level for the course.
- MUS 105/305 - Concert Choir
 - All SLOs are being achieved at the criterion level of achievement.
- MUS 135/335 – Orchestra
 - All SLOs are being achieved at the criterion level of achievement.
- MUS 184/384 - Opera Workshop
 - All SLOs are being achieved at the criterion level of achievement, but only Fine Arts majors enrolled in the course.

Human Response to Literature

- Students met the criterion level of achievement (70%) for three SLOs.
 - SLO 1. Students will demonstrate critical thinking, reading, and writing skills through rigorous analysis of literary texts.
 - SLO 3. Students will communicate ideas about literature in its historical and cultural context through writing assignments, oral presentations, and class discussion.
 - SLO 4. Students will develop a deeper understanding of the ways in which the formal elements of language and genre shape meaning.
- Students did not meet the criterion level of achievement (70%) for one SLO.
 - SLO 2. Students will be introduced to the concept and practice of research.
- In terms of the knowledge content parameters set by the General Education curriculum for Literature, student samples demonstrated learning that expresses an introductory knowledge of literature.

Christianity & Culture

- The four SLOs were successfully achieved as 74% of all student papers exhibited student learning at or above the criterion level of achievement (70%).
- Strengths arising from the assessment were:
 - Students showed a good grasp of the ethical and religious dimensions of the various aspects of contemporary society.
 - Students recognized the complexity of the issues, resisted simplistic solutions, engaged the topics philosophically and theologically, and attempted to bring Christian principles to bear on the issues.
- A weakness noted in the assessment was:
 - Students often cited Christian scripture and tradition somewhat simplistically and uncritically, failing to take fully into account the historical, religious, and literary complexity of the sources.

American Experience

The findings for this GE component are summarized independently for the Political Science (POSC 104) and American History (HIST 304) courses.

- Political Science
 - 76% of all student essays evaluated demonstrated advanced or excellent levels of student learning meeting the criterion level of achievement for all political science SLOs.

- 83% of students were able to identify and explain significant political and historical developments that have shaped America’s democracy and its diverse society in the context of the discipline of political science (SLO 1)
 - While not directly assessing the SLO 3 - Students apply their knowledge by developing a personal vision regarding diversity – student responses to essays used to assess SLO 1 exhibited a strong sense about how their own understandings of areas related to diversity have grown and changed over time.
- American History
 - 77% of all essays examined demonstrated acceptable levels of student learning for the SLO - Students identify and explain significant historical developments that have shaped America’s diverse society in the context of the discipline of history. This level of achievement is below the criterion level of 80%.
 - 86% of all students were able to apply their knowledge by developing a personal vision regarding diversity, exceeding the criterion level of achievement (80%) for SLO 3.
 - A strength arising from the assessment was that students find the attention to diversity in HIST 304 applicable to their lives.
 - Weaknesses noted in the assessment were that only 77% of students were able to identify historical diversity and only 63% were able to explain historical diversity.

Foreign Language

Assessment of all languages fulfilling of the GE foreign language requirement, except Hebrew, was initiated in the 2011-2012 academic year. Enrollments in Spanish classes in the academic year provided sufficient evidence to reach valid findings and the assessment was completed in its entirety. Assessments in the other language courses (French, German, Italian, Japanese, Chinese and Arabic) did not have large enough enrollments to generate sufficient evidence to support valid findings. Thus, assessments in these languages were initiated, but remain ongoing to collect additional evidence. Summary assessment reports for these languages will be provided in future years.

- 100% of all students could communicate effectively in Spanish during their oral interviews indicating that student learning for SLO 1 - Orally narrate events using different time frames and express opinions and emotions – was demonstrated at the criterion level of achievement.
- 96% of all students had basic to good competence in written expression in Spanish. This indicates that student learning for SLO 2 - In writing, narrate events using different time frames, and express opinions and emotions – was demonstrated at the criterion level of achievement.
- All students (100%) were good to excellent in explaining the cultural aspects of Spanish-speaking countries during a concluding group oral presentation on a cultural topic demonstrating that student learning for SLO 3 - Explain cultural aspects of Spanish-speaking countries including traditions, important figures, art, and religious beliefs – exceeded the criterion level of achievement.

Human Institutions & Behavior

The findings for this GE component are summarized independently for the Sociology (SOSC 200), Economics (ECON 200) and Psychology (PSYC 200) courses.

- Sociology
 - Students in SOC 200 achieved the SLOs at the criterion level of achievement (70%). Students exceeded the criterion achievement level (70%) in the areas of sociology concepts (83.54%; SLO 1) and theories (75.33%; SLO 2).
 - Students best demonstrated applied and factual knowledge for the concepts of culture and structure, but a shallow or poor understanding of functionalism. The concept of social institution was the next weakest topic with an average score of only 72.24%.
- Economics
 - 94% of all students in ECON 200 achieved the SLOs at the criterion level of achievement (70%).
- Psychology
 - Students in PSYC 200 did not achieve the SLOs at the criterion level of achievement (70%).
 - 69% of students met the standard of achievement for SLO 1 (identify major concepts of Psychology). PSYC 200 students understood the definition of psychology and correlation, but struggled with concepts of spontaneous recovery, obsessive compulsive disorder, and fundamental attribution error.
 - 69% of students met the standard of achievement for SLO 2 (apply Psychology theories to human behavior). PSYC 200 students understood the theories of nature versus nurture, dreaming, and Piaget's cognitive development; however, they struggled with theories of Sternberg's intelligence and Rational Emotive.

Western Culture

- For SLO 1, demonstrate a historical and chronological understanding of Western cultures from the ancient world to the present, students met the criterion level of achievement (70%).
 - In HUM 111, 70% of the student samples demonstrated knowledge at the introductory level (the expected level of achievement for the course) with nearly 30% of student samples demonstrated knowledge at the more advanced level of developing.
 - In HUM 212, 82% of student samples demonstrated knowledge at the level of developing and mastery (the expected level of achievement for the course) with 30% exceeding expectations at the mastery level.
 - In HUM 313, 65% of student samples demonstrated knowledge at the level of mastery, 5% below the expected level of achievement.
- For SLO 2, demonstrate skill in analyzing and evaluating diverse voices in historical evidence from literature, the art and both primary and secondary historical texts, students met the criterion level of achievement (70%).
 - In HUM 111, slightly more than 70% of the students demonstrated skill in historical and cultural analysis the introductory level and almost 30% of student samples demonstrated skill in historical and cultural analysis knowledge at the level of developing.

- In HUM 212, 82% of student samples demonstrated skill in historical and cultural analysis at the level of developing and mastery. Almost a third (32%) of student samples exceeded expectations with performance at the mastery level.
- In HUM 313, 62% of student samples demonstrated skill in historical and cultural analysis at the level of mastery, 8% below the expected level of achievement.
- For SLO 3, write clearly and coherently on the formation and global implications of western cultural values—political, philosophical, aesthetic, religious—and the historical contexts in which they were formed, , students met the criterion level of achievement (70%).
 - In HUM 111, slightly more than 80% of the student samples demonstrated effective writing skills and articulated the formation of western values and their impact on other cultures the introductory level.
 - In HUM 212, 78% of student samples demonstrated effective writing skills at the level of developing and mastery with 18% exceeding expectations at the mastery level. 74% of student samples articulated the formation of western values and their impact on other cultures at the level of developing and mastery in this course.
 - In HUM 313, only 48% of student samples demonstrated effective writing skills at the level of mastery, 22% below the benchmark; however, 80% of all student essays demonstrated effectiveness at the level of practicing and mastery. 55% of student samples in HUM 313 articulated the role of values and their impact at the level of at the level of mastery, 15% below the benchmark.
- The Western Culture GE curriculum meets or exceeds the criterion levels for student achievement and satisfies faculty expectation for student learning. While the desired levels of performance were not found in HUM 313, expectation of mastery in this course is likely a problem of expectation instead of performance. In all but the area of writing, the samples from Humanities 313 came within a few percentage points of the level of mastery. All students' samples demonstrated learning that expresses broad cultural perspectives informed by the history, literature, philosophy, or artistic achievements of western civilization.

Nonwestern Culture

- Students successfully described aspects of the history, literature, religion, philosophy, or artistic traditions of a civilization outside Western civilization, and discussed how learning about these broadened their view of the world at the criterion level of achievement.

Research & Inquiry

- Assessment of this component of the GE program, including assessment of information literacy, is ongoing. This component of the GE program is fulfilled through the various academic majors offered at Seaver College. At present, information from current five-year and annual reviews of all academic programs is being conducted to assess the student achievement in the area of research and inquiry. The findings will be summarized by July 1, 2012.

First-Year Seminar Program

- Findings for the FYS program are summarized in the report at <http://seaver.pepperdine.edu/dean/links/firstyearseminar.htm>.
- Student surveys conducted in 2009, 2010, and 2011 indicate a high level of student satisfaction with the first-year seminar courses.

Action Items

The action items recommended for each GE component are reported in this section.

Critical Thinking

- The five critical thinking SLOs and the assessment rubric for critical thinking should be distributed to all Seaver faculty.
- Faculty should align their course-specific SLOs related to critical thinking with the GE critical thinking SLOs published in the assessment report.
- Faculty should devote instructional time to improve critical thinking and devise specific assignments related to critical thinking. The assignments should be structured to explicitly enhance student performance in the areas of weakness indicated in the assessment report.
 - Describing and explaining an issue or problem clearly and thoroughly, providing appropriate attention to context.
 - Using terms and concepts in an informed manner, allowing students to acknowledge and examine their own assumptions.
 - Requiring students to consider multiple salient and opposing viewpoints in formulating a position.

Quantitative Reasoning

- Based on the assessment findings, immediate efforts should be focused on improving instruction in quantitative reasoning courses designed for non-science majors.
- Future assessment efforts should investigate the following areas:
 - Student understanding of logical statements.
 - Student understanding of how quantities are coordinated throughout an interval.
 - The apparent disconnect for students between their math courses and the rest of their academic program.

Scientific Reasoning

- The faculty in the Natural Science Division involved in the GE curriculum should discuss ways to insure that GE lab science courses develop in students a clear understanding of and appreciation for science. This is especially true for courses offered primarily for non-majors.
- GE lab science courses offered in the International Programs need to be assessed. The Natural Science Division will communicate with each professor teaching a lab science course in the study abroad program and emphasize the need for an effective laboratory experience. Based upon the assessment results, any lab science course offered in the International Programs that is not achieving the desired levels of student performance on the GE lab science SLOs will no longer be offered.
- The process used to assess student learning related to the scientific method can be improved in order to acquire consistent quantitative information across all GE lab science courses. These changes will be implemented in the next assessment cycle.

Oral Communication

- The committee recommends a one-day seminar for all faculty teaching COM 180. There is a strong need to encourage the continual mentoring, education and hiring of individuals who can effectively teach in the fields of critical thinking and oral presentations in this course.

- Senior professors in the COM Division and other tenured faculty from across Seaver with appropriate expertise should teach COM 180 program to advance the critical thinking and oral presentation skills of students

Written Communication

- Writing Intensive courses in the majors must be assessed in order to fully integrate all components of written communication area of the GE program. A more focused oversight (assessment) of WI courses offered on the Malibu campus and in the International Programs is needed to ensure that students:
 - practice writing in their chosen field of study, and
 - meet the expected levels of achievement for writing in their chosen field of study.
 Student learning for SLO 2 and SLO 3 could be improved through this assessment as it would insure that students across all majors are regularly asked to synthesize and analyze information in writing (SLO 2) and to learn and practice the research and documentation style appropriate to their chosen discipline (SLO 3).
- To begin the assessment of WI courses, faculty teaching WI courses should provide feedback regarding their current practices and their concerns/questions about teaching writing, particularly in relation to the written communication SLOs.

Human Response to Art

The diversity of courses (sculpture, graphic design, acting, dance, orchestra, opera and choir) that act to fulfill the Fine Arts component of the GE program necessitated unique course-level SLOs that were grounded in the common learning outcome for this GE component - Students explain the historical, cultural, or technical significance of the art form. The action items are summarized on a course-by-course basis.

- ART 270
 - Separate Sculpture 1, 2, and 3 into two separate offerings: Sculpture 1 and a combined Sculpture 2 and 3 course.
- ART 416
 - The course is not fulfilling its SLOS. The course needs to be reconsidered and either taught without the pre-requisite, redesigned as a lower-level course, or dropped from the GE program.
- THEA 210
 - The course is intended for non-majors and enrollment should be limited to non-majors.
- THEA 226
 - The course title and catalog description need to be revised.
 - The facility for the course is inadequate. A studio equipped appropriately for a dance class is required if dance is included in the curriculum.
- MUS 105/305
 - While the SLOs are being achieved, non-curricular factors present future challenges for maintaining a successful choir. These challenges include:
 - An academic schedule enabling students to enroll in choir.
 - The talent and aptitude levels of the students.
 - The quality of the rehearsal space.

- MUS 135/335
 - Rehearsal time with the students should be scheduled.
 - More students need to enroll in orchestra.
- MUS 184/384
 - MUS 184/384 be removed as a Fine Arts GE course.

Human Response to Literature

- Continue the assessment of the GE literature component in the 2012-2013 academic year in ENG 315, 325, 326, and 380 to determine if research is a component of the course and if students are meeting the expected level of achievement for SLO 2.
- Assess the Literature GE courses in the International Programs and during the Malibu campus summer program as part of the assessment plan.

Christianity & Culture

- The positive findings of the assessment should be reported to the Religion faculty to encourage persistence in the development of solid biblical and theological foundations in students. Attention also must be devoted to implementing better ways of modeling the use of Christian scripture and tradition in analyzing contemporary issues.
- Areas in need of improvement also need to be reported to the faculty and plans for improving in these areas need to be formulated. Such plans must include:
 - Design and implementation of a follow-up assessment tool to provide further data on achievement related to the Student Learning Outcomes for this component of the GE curriculum.
 - Based on the findings of this and the follow-up assessment, develop resources to allow faculty to more effectively address areas of where desired levels of learning are not being achieved. Faculty workshops on best practices, led by some of our own most effective teachers and periodically by outside experts, should be considered.

American Experience

The action items for this GE component are summarized independently for the Political Science (POSC 104) and American History (HIST 304) courses.

- Political Science
 - Professors need to be more deliberate in making connections between different political events and implement assignments that encourage students to reflect on political development over a long period of time.
 - Many international students struggle in POSC 104. To better serve our international students, we need to consider options or creation solutions to improve international student performance in this area.
- American History
 - The history component of the GE curriculum should be a lower division course; in other words, HIST 304 should become HIST 204.
 - Political Science 104 should no longer be required as prerequisite for the History GE class.

Foreign Language

Action items for the Spanish-language courses are presented in this summary. Action items for other languages acting in fulfillment of the GE foreign language requirement will be reported in future years when the respective assessments are completed.

- Page 81 of Seaver College catalog should be revised to reflect all courses that fulfill this GE requirement. The list of courses that fulfill the Foreign Language GE requirement should now include Arabic (ARBC) 251.
- In light of the confusion that resulted when trying to discuss “culture” as related to the Foreign Language GE for this assessment, modify the GE PLO for foreign languages to state “Students listen, speak, read, and write within the appropriate SITUATIONAL context in Spanish,” thus eliminating the ambiguous term “cultural”.
- Continue discussions among all language faculty related to the definition and assessment of culture and determine if an additional SLO is necessary for the 251 courses.
- Consider adding a reading-specific SLO to directly address that component of the Foreign Language GE PLO.
- Revive the position of Lower Division Coordinator in charge of SPAN 151,152, 251 (the GE sequence) or create a Course Head role for the final class in the GE sequence.
- Work with IT’s Technology and Learning Group to consider efficient ways to record, preserve and archive the oral activities used to assess foreign languages.

Human Institutions & Behavior

The action items for this GE component are reported separately for the Sociology (SOSC 200), Economics (ECON 200) and Psychology (PSYC 200) courses.

- Sociology
 - Create a class activity to provide students increased understanding and application regarding the theory of functionalism.
- Economics
 - Further assess marginal analyses in order to better understand student learning in ECON 200.
- Psychology
 - Discuss assessment results with other faculty teaching PSYC 200.
 - Broaden the assessment of the Psychology SLOs to more fully understand the scope of student learning by using different testing formats (MC/essay) and testing intervals (exams every 5 weeks versus quizzes every week).

Western Culture

- Continue the assessment of student learning in HUM 313 during the 2012-1013 academic year to better understand the apparent lower levels of student learning in this course.
- Assess the Western Culture GE courses in the International Programs and during the Malibu campus summer program.

Nonwestern Culture

- We want to change the assessment question for the Direct Evidence so that students are reflecting more how their perspectives or views on the world have changed as a result of completing the GE requirement. In this way the GE requirement will not only simply increase students’ knowledge of nonwestern culture, but to increase their knowledge in a manner that can transform students’ way of looking at the world, and their relation to it.

- We want to emphasize, more so than the present, that we study nonwestern civilizations not to confirm a currently held perspective, but to inform and change students' perspective. For example, when discussing an event such as the Cultural Revolution, our intent is not simply to confirm students' present beliefs regarding the evils of Communism, but rather to transform students to recognize the vulnerability of their own humanity in this event.
- Form a committee with the charge to evaluate and coordinate the Nonwestern Culture GE curriculum.

Research & Inquiry

- Assessment of this component of the GE program, including assessment of information literacy, is ongoing. The action items will be reported by July 1, 2012.

First-Year Seminar Program

- Direct assessment of student learning in the individual classes needs to be prioritized. This is being addressed by incorporating a common assessment activity in all FYS courses in the fall of 2012. Additionally, each faculty member should collect direct evidence of student learning in his or her own class using a clearly defined and carefully administered assessment plan which is consistent in all of the first-year seminars.
- In the summer FYS workshop, professors who are teaching first-year seminars in Fall 2012 will be urged to:
 - Make a more concerted effort not only to introduce their students to the concept of vocation in a Christian context, but to make it a real part of the course so the vocation SLO can be met in more specific ways.