February 3, 2015

Assessment Plan Recommendations presented by
General Education Learning Outcomes and Assessment Task Force

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- Kristine Pray (EDUC)
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- Hallie Baker (On-Line Education Consultant)
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Charge: To recommend learning objectives and an assessment plan for the new General Education Program for implementation in fall 2015.
Assessment Plan

I) Common Category Rubrics and Course-Specific Assessment Methods

a. The courses in each Gen Ed category will be assessed according to a common category rubric linked to the category-learning objective. The rubric ranks learning outcomes for the category-learning objective according to four levels: advanced, proficient, developing, undeveloped.

b. The Undergraduate Assessment Committee will oversee and approve the creation of common category-rubrics generated by the faculty.

c. Every full-time faculty member teaching Gen Ed courses is required to choose a course-specific assessment method that aligns with the common category rubric. Part-time and adjunct faculty members teaching Gen Ed courses may use one of the assessment methods assigned by the course master syllabus. Care should be taken to ensure that the course-specific assessment methods can be administered in an on-line environment and are implementable by adjunct faculty.

II) Gen-Ed Course Assessment Report: Two Parts

a. Part One: Numerical Results: The four-level ranked numerical results are derived from applications of course-specific methods. Every instructor is responsible for submitting numerical assessment results for the first offering of each Gen Ed course he or she teaches within a three-year assessment cycle. For the assessment cycle beginning fall 2015, the schedule is the first time that the course is taught after the approval of the common category rubric.

   i. The numerical results, and a description of the course-specific assessment method used, will be submitted directly to the Assessment Committee within 30 days after final grades are due or by the end of the faculty member's contract (whichever comes first).

   ii. The GEL Task Force recommends that Blackboard serve as the first platform through which numerical results are submitted. Starfish may be another viable option at a later stage.

b. Part Two: Reflection: Every instructor is responsible for writing a brief reflection about the assessment results. Examples of questions this report might address are: “What does the assessment data indicate?” “What might be done to improve results? “How might the assessment process be improved?”

   i. Full-time and part-time faculty members will include the Reflection Report within an addendum section to the Faculty
Annual Reports submitted to the Department Chairs, Division Chairs, and the Vice-President of Academic Affairs. The VPAA will then forward these addendums to the Assessment Committee.

1. The Gel Task Force recommends that Annual Reports include a prompt that asks whether Gen Ed courses were taught and whether they were assessed.

ii. Adjunct instructors will submit the Reflection Report to their supervisors within 30 days after final grades are due. Supervisors will then forward these reports to the appropriate academic Vice President. The Vice Presidents will then forward these reports to the Assessment Committee.

III) Gen Ed Assessment Training

a. Full-time and part-time faculty: The Undergraduate Assessment Committee in consultation with the Vice President of Academic Affairs is responsible for offering training in Gen Assessment to new full-time faculty.

b. Adjunct faculty: The Undergraduate Assessment Committee, in consultation with the appropriate academic Vice President, is responsible for offering training in Gen Ed Assessment to new part-time and adjunct faculty.

IV) Indirect Assessment

a. A survey will be administered to students in their senior year and/or to alumni.

b. The survey will include questions designed to address topics such as:
   i. The effectiveness of the Gen Ed program in promoting learning goals described by the University’s mission.
   ii. The effectiveness of the Gen Ed program in providing students the skills, dispositions, and knowledge they need to achieve personal life goals.

c. The Undergraduate Assessment Committee will develop, administer, and analyze these surveys.

V) Undergraduate Assessment Committee Functions

a. The Undergraduate Assessment Committee oversees and analyzes the Gen Ed Course Assessment Reports. The committee will make evaluations about course effectiveness in achieving the category learning objective as well as the effectiveness of the overall general education program.

b. The committee’s Gen Ed assessment responsibilities include:
i. Determining whether a course in the category is adequately meeting the category-learning objective. Addresses questions such as:
   1. Does the course fit the category?
   2. Does the course-specific assessment method serve the objective?

ii. Determining whether the learning objective is adequate for the category.
   1. Are there patterns across courses that indicate a need to revise the learning objective?

iii. Determining whether the overall General Education program is meeting the learning goals set by the faculty and the University’s mission.

c. The Undergraduate Assessment Committee’s activities include:
   i. An annual report summarizing results and offering analysis. This report will be submitted to the Vice President of Academic Affairs, the Vice President for Graduate and Continuing Studies, and the Division Chairs.
   ii. Presentation of a summary of the annual report to the faculty at the annual Faculty Fall Conference.
   iii. Consolidation reports of the numerical results so that faculty can use this information in their Reflection Reports.
      1. Such reports could break down the data in various ways beyond category: course-level, discipline etc.
      2. Schedule could be staggered to make manageable, e.g., categories 1-4 in year one, 5-8 year two, etc.
   iv. Developing, administering, and analyzing indirect assessment methods such as surveys.

d. Other possible initiatives:
   i. Organizing working groups at annual conference or special retreat.
   ii. Providing faculty consultation about course-specific assessment methods.

VI) Ad Hoc Gen Ed Review Task Force

a. An ad hoc Gen Ed Review Task Force may be appointed as necessary by the Vice Presidents of Academic Affairs and Graduate and Continuing Studies.
Glossary

**Category Learning Objective:** The learning objective that describes what a student will be able to do or know as a result of taking a Gen Ed course in the category.

**Common Category Rubric:** Provides criteria for assigning learning outcomes according to four levels: advanced, proficient, developing, undeveloped.

**Course Master Syllabus:** identifies the course learning objectives and aligns them with the goals of the major, degree, Gen Ed or licensure area. It also indicates how learning will be assessed and evaluated. If the course is a component of a licensure program, it must meet licensure requirements. The Department Chair or a designated faculty member holds responsibility for maintaining and updating the master syllabus.

**Course-Specific Assessment Method:** the method faculty use to rate learning outcomes according to the Common Category Rubric. Examples might be an essay question, paper assignment, performance, or presentation.

**Gen Ed Course Assessment Report:** consists of two parts: the numerical results derived from applying the course-specific assessment method and the Reflection Report about the assessment results.

**Learning Goal:** Goals are broad, general statements of what the program, course, or activity intends to accomplish. Goals should provide a framework for determining the more specific educational objectives of a program, and should be consistent with the mission of the program and the mission of the institution.

**Learning Objective:** A statement in specific and measurable terms that describes what the learner will know or be able to do as a result of engaging in a learning activity.

**Learning Outcome:** A measure of the learning objective: the results ranked according to levels.
LEARNING OBJECTIVES

1. Communication in Writing: This category is designed to develop the ability to communicate clearly and effectively in writing. 3 hours.

   - Demonstrate effective communication through writing.

2. Communication in Speech: This category is designed to develop the ability to communicate clearly and effectively in speech. 3 hours.

   - Demonstrate effective communication through speech.

3. Communication in a Global and Digital Age: This category is designed to develop communication and information-gathering skills through emphasis on a non-native language or other means of communicating in a technology-driven, global society. Minimum of 3 hours or participation in a Muskingum University-approved international program.

   - Demonstrate effective communication skills in a non-native language.

   or

   - Identify and use digital resources to communicate.

4. Religious Understanding: This category is designed to develop an understanding of religious ways of life. Minimum of 3 hours.

   - Describe the distinctive traits of religious belief systems.

5. Moral Inquiry: This category is designed to develop an understanding of the means by which individuals and communities evaluate and respond to ethical problems, both personal and social. Minimum of 3 hours.

   - Formulate and justify a position on an ethical problem.

6. Quantitative Reasoning: This category is designed to develop competency in understanding and using numerical concepts and methods.

   - Demonstrate an understanding of numerical concepts and use the appropriate methods to solve problems.
7. **Scientific Understanding:** This category is designed to develop an understanding of the natural world, the scientific method, and the forces and elements inherent in the natural order. Minimum of 7 hours (must include one lab science course and courses from two course prefixes)

- *Describe scientific principles and apply methods of scientific inquiry.*

8. **Health:** This category is designed to develop an understanding of important health issues and to foster choices for students’ health throughout life. Minimum of 2 hours.

- *Identify and evaluate biological, psychosocial, and/or behavioral factors that influence health.*

9. **Artistic Understanding and Expression:** This category is designed to develop an understanding of the role of the arts in the human endeavor. Minimum of 3 hours.

- *Perform, create, or interpret artistic work (s).*

10. **Cultural Diversity:** This category is designed to develop an understanding of diversity (gender, race, ethnicity, sexual orientation, age, etc.) in the contemporary world. Minimum of 3 hours.

- *Recognize and examine the role of diversity in society.*

11. **International Perspectives:** This category is designed to develop an understanding of global societies, and a familiarity with patterns of social and political behavior in a comparative context, in order to lay the basis for responsible world citizenship. Minimum of 3 hours.

- *Recognize and compare the social, cultural, and/or political patterns of global communities.*

12. **Western Traditions:** This category is designed to develop an understanding of social, political, cultural and behavioral dimensions of human existence in Western European traditions. Minimum of 3 hours.

- *Describe and interpret the social, cultural, political and/or behavioral dimensions of Western European traditions.*

13. **The U.S. Experience:** This category is designed to develop an understanding of the United States, its institutions, customs, culture, diversity of people and resources, and challenges facing the nation in the contemporary setting. Minimum of 3 hours.

- *Describe and evaluate how traditions, practices, or institutions address or inform the society and culture of the United States.*
Level Schema for Category Rubrics

**Learning Objective: xxxxxx**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Element One</th>
<th>Advanced</th>
<th>Proficient</th>
<th>Developing</th>
<th>Undeveloped</th>
<th>Registered but did not complete</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
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<tr>
<td>Element Two</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assessment Results</td>
<td>Number of advanced students</td>
<td>Number of proficient students</td>
<td>Number of developing students</td>
<td>Number of undeveloped students</td>
<td>Number of students who did not complete</td>
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</table>
Examples of Possible Rubrics

7. **Scientific Understanding:** This category is designed to develop an understanding of the natural world, the scientific method, and the forces and elements inherent in the natural order.

**Learning Objective:** *Describe scientific principles and apply methods of scientific inquiry.*

Describe and Apply correspond to Bloom's taxonomy (Knowledge ➔ Comprehension ➔ Application)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th><strong>Advanced</strong></th>
<th><strong>Proficient</strong></th>
<th><strong>Developing</strong></th>
<th><strong>Undeveloped</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Describe Scientific Principles</strong></td>
<td>Student accurately articulates a scientific principle with proper use of scientific terms and sufficient supporting evidence.</td>
<td>Student accurately articulates a scientific principle using most scientific terms correctly or with some supporting evidence.</td>
<td>Student articulates a scientific principle with some inaccuracies or provides no supporting evidence.</td>
<td>Student does not articulate a scientific principle or articulation is entirely inaccurate. Supporting evidence is missing or irrelevant.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Apply Methods of Scientific Inquiry</strong></td>
<td>Student applies the scientific method to investigate a physical system or solve a problem using correct procedures and drawing valid conclusions.</td>
<td>Student applies the scientific method to investigate a physical system or solve a problem. Most procedures are correct or most conclusions are valid.</td>
<td>Student applies the scientific method to investigate a physical system or solve a problem. Some procedures are correct or some conclusions are invalid.</td>
<td>Student fails to apply the scientific method to investigate a physical system or solve a problem. Most procedures are incorrect. Conclusions are invalid.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Some examples that can be used to assess the first row:

- State Newton’s Third Law. Give three examples and identify the third law pairs involved.
- Identify the two forces that are in balance inside the Sun. Describe the effect of increasing or decreasing the temperature in the Sun's core in terms of these competing forces.
- Explain how each of the three types of light spectra originate and describe the type of spectrum we would see in a spectroscope. If the missing wavelengths of light in an absorption spectrum are re-emitted, what happens to the re-emitted light?

Some examples that can be used to assess the second row:

- A lab where students are asked to verify the conservation of momentum by measuring the speed of carts before and after collisions then calculate the appropriate momenta with units. Afterwards they would be asked to consider the precision of their results and account for any missing momentum.
- An exercise where students are asked to perform a ‘back-of-the-envelope’ calculation of the surface temperatures of Earth, Venus and Mars. They would then be asked to assess the importance of the greenhouse gasses on each of these worlds and explain why each deviates from our model.
5. **Moral Inquiry**: This category is designed to develop an understanding of the means by which individuals and communities evaluate and respond to ethical problems, both personal and social.

**Learning Objective: Formulate and justify a position on an ethical problem**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Learning Objective: Formulate and justify a position on an ethical problem.</th>
<th>Advanced</th>
<th>Proficient</th>
<th>Developing</th>
<th>Undeveloped</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Student offers an argument that supports a position on an ethical problem, successfully relating it to theoretical approaches.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Assessment Results</td>
<td>Number and percentage of advanced students.</td>
<td>Number and percentage of proficient students.</td>
<td>Number and percentage of developing students.</td>
<td>Number and percentage of undeveloped students.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: the “theoretical approaches” will vary depending on course and discipline. The assumption is that courses will introduce conceptual frameworks within which students will formulate and justify positions on an ethic
11. **International Perspectives**: This category is designed to develop an understanding of global societies, and a familiarity with patterns of social and political behavior in a comparative context, in order to lay the basis for responsible world citizenship.

**Learning Objective**: *Recognize and compare the social, cultural, and/or political patterns of global communities.*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Identify social, cultural or political patterns.</th>
<th><strong>Advanced</strong></th>
<th><strong>Proficient</strong></th>
<th><strong>Developing</strong></th>
<th><strong>Undeveloped</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Clearly identifies all relevant social, cultural or political patterns of global communities.</td>
<td>Identifies a few social, cultural or political patterns of global communities.</td>
<td>Identifies some social, cultural or political patterns of global communities.</td>
<td>Does not clearly identify any social, cultural or political patterns of global communities.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| Compare social, cultural, or political patterns. | Critically and thoroughly compares the social, cultural or political patterns of global communities. | Compares some of the social, cultural or political patterns of global communities, and may lack critical analysis of similarities and differences. | Compares a few of the social, cultural or political patterns of global communities, but has trouble describing or analyzing similarities and differences. | Does not compare the social, cultural or political patterns of global communities, with little or no description or analysis of similarities and differences. |

| Assessment Results | Number and percentage of advanced students. | Number and percentage of proficient students. | Number and percentage of developing students. | Number and percentage of undeveloped students. |
Example of Online Survey for Numerical Data

**Numerical Assessment Data for Category 5 - Moral Inquiry.**

Please enter your numerical data below.

1. **Faculty Member reporting:**

2. **Class Subject area: (e.g. RELG, PHIL)**

3. **Course Number**

4. **Section Number**

5. **Number of students registered for the class.**

6. **Number of students assessed (may be different from the number of students registered for the course).**

3. Moral inquiry. This category is designed to develop an understanding of the means by which individuals and communities evaluate and respond to ethical problems, both personal and social.

Learning Objective: Formulate and justify a position on an ethical problem.

**7. How many (number) of students achieved each level?**

- **Advanced**: Student offers an argument that supports a position on an ethical problem, successfully relating it to theoretical approaches.
- **Proficient**: Student offers an argument that supports a position on an ethical problem, but with some error in relating it to theoretical approaches.
- **Developing**: Student offers an argument that supports a position on an ethical problem, but with no significant relationship to theoretical approaches.
- **Undeveloped**: Student fails to formulate an argument that supports a position on an ethical problem.
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<tr>
<th>GEN ED Assessment Schedule</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>PRELUDE</strong></td>
<td><strong>Spring-Summer 2015</strong></td>
<td><strong>January 2015</strong> Faculty approve assessment plan and learning objectives.</td>
<td><strong>January-April 2015</strong> Assessment Committee oversees common category rubric creation.</td>
<td><strong>April 2015</strong> Assessment Committee approves 3-5 common category rubrics and distributes these to faculty.</td>
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<tr>
<td>GEN ED Assessment Schedule</td>
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| YEAR ONE  
2015-2016 |
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<tr>
<td>August 2015</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assessment data system completed and presented to faculty at Fall Conference.</td>
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<tr>
<td>January 2016</td>
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<tr>
<td>First set of numerical results submitted.</td>
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<tr>
<td>January-May 2016</td>
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<tr>
<td>Assessment Committee analyzes fall 2015-first data set.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Assessment Committee oversees common category rubric creation.</td>
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<td>April-May 2016</td>
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<tr>
<td>Assessment Committee approves all remaining common category rubrics and distributes these to the faculty.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Second set of numerical results submitted.</td>
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<td>Assessment Committee submits year-end report.</td>
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| YEAR TWO  
2016-2017 |
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>August 2016</td>
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<tr>
<td>Assessment Committee updates faculty at Fall Conference.</td>
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<tr>
<td>First Reflection Reports submitted as addendum to Annual Reports.</td>
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<tr>
<td>August-December 2016</td>
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<tr>
<td>Assessment Committee analyzes spring 2016-second data set and Reflection Reports.</td>
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<td>January 2017</td>
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<tr>
<td>Third set of numerical results submitted.</td>
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<tr>
<td>January-May 2017</td>
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<tr>
<td>Assessment Committee analyzes fall 2016-third data set.</td>
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<tr>
<td>May 2017</td>
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<tr>
<td>Assessment Committee submits year-end report including data consolidation report.</td>
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<td>Fourth set of numerical results submitted.</td>
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<td>GEN ED Assessment Schedule</td>
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