

Project Name: General Education Assessment--A New Perspective!

Version: 1.0

Published: 04/01/2008

ACADEMY PLAN (PORTFOLIO QUESTIONS)

The portfolio questions allow your institution to address the impact that you are intending this project to make on assessing student learning. These questions describe your overall plan in implementing the project, who at the institution will be engaged, and allow you to disclose any other information important to the project as you see fit.

Shared Responsibility

The Academy for Assessment of Student Learning Team plans to work cooperatively with two established campus-wide committees: the General Education Committee and the Assessment Oversight Committee. The General Education Committee has been working for the past three years on revising the campus general education program which will become effective with the fall 2008 term, and the Assessment Oversight Committee has been charged with monitoring all on-going assessment activities. The goal of this three-way partnership is to provide the campus community with assessment data and analysis that will support current practice or provide stimulus for program improvement in the general education program.

The Academy Team decided to follow what has been a successful campus-wide program plan of assessment that includes setting goals, determining objectives/outcomes (including at least one direct and one indirect method of assessment), and selecting criteria for measuring the objectives/outcomes. The Academy Team chose the National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE) as the indirect measurement to be used to assess the goals of the general education program. The direct measure will be accomplished through assessment of student performance in the Educated Perspective Seminar (EPS) courses. These Educated Perspective Seminar (EPS) courses are developed by faculty in our various schools and departments and approved by the General Education Committee. One Educated Perspective Seminar (EPS) course will be required for all students as a requirement for graduation. The Educated Perspective Seminar (EPS) courses are designed to provide an opportunity to assess the four main goals of the general education program. Assessment will be accomplished by having each Educated Perspective Seminar (EPS) instructor identify a primary project(s) or activity(ties) that demonstrates student learning related to the four main goals of the general education program, and an appropriate evaluation tool to assess student understanding of the goals. The results will be discussed and analyzed to determine methods for improving student learning.

Impact of Academy Participation

A general education standing committee was created in the spring of 2003. The charge to that committee was to review, assess, and monitor all aspects of the general education program and to make recommendations and proposals for change. Through a three-and-a-half year process involving campus discussions and departmental and student input, the committee has developed a revised general education program to better meet the general education goals of the college and to provide for more effective assessment.

The current general education program was assessed in somewhat of a “hit and miss” fashion. The previous Assessment Committee made steps towards approaching the program but, with changes in administration, especially the Vice President for Academic Affairs position and turnover on the committee, the assessment process was never stream-lined or found to be especially valuable. When the General Education Committee was formed in 2003, the members began a two-year process to collect information from across the campus on what was good about the current program, what was lacking in the current program and how the students and campus might be better-served by general education. The committee collected information from students, departments, administrations and the administration. As they began to plan revisions to the program, input from the departments, administration and students was sought on a regular basis. All general education offerings in what is now termed the “choice block” (24 hours in the arts, social sciences, history, philosophy and languages) are somewhat less predictable than in the current program. In all areas, required hours have been reduced but potential hours are greater. Student choice, number of course offerings and scheduling by the deans and departments will dictate the outcome of this shift. Student choice is the most unpredictable aspect of this situation with course offerings and scheduling being at least somewhat controlled by the departments and deans. An Educated Perspectives Seminar (EPS) course is now open to offerings from all members of the campus community, and categories are no longer strictly tied to current academic disciplines.

The institution is considering participating in a plan called the Voluntary System of Accountability (VSA), developed by the National Association of State Universities and Land-Grant Colleges and the American Association of State Colleges and Universities, which combined represent 600 public schools that enroll 7.5 million students and award about 70 percent of the U.S. bachelor’s degrees each year. The “College Portrait” is the product of nearly two years of work and provides consistent, comparable and transparent information on the characteristics of institutions and students, cost of attendance, student engagement with the learning process, and core educational outcomes. The information is intended for students, families, policy-makers, campus faculty and staff, the general public, and other higher education stakeholders. The highlight of this plan is a common template for reporting institutional data on the Web. What is new and potentially groundbreaking about this template, called the “College Portrait,” is that the institutions that use it agree to make at least some of their student

engagement results available to the public within two years. As part of the program, participating schools agree to release data from at least one of the following surveys: the College Senior Survey (CSS), the College Student Experiences Questionnaire (CSEQ), the National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE), or the University of California Undergraduate Student Experience Survey (UCUES). Equally promising is that within four years, the same schools will release their data on student learning to the public. There are three examinations schools can use for this information: the Collegiate Assessment of Academic Proficiency (CAAP), the Collegiate Learning Assessment (CLA), and the Measure of Academic Proficiency and Progress (MAPP).

Other Important Aspects

The Educated Perspective Seminar (EPS) is a special topics course designed for all students and transfer students to complete. It is to be used as a course to assess the general education goals of the general education program.

In order for students to conceptualize the integration of disciplines within the liberal arts perspective and to utilize the knowledge and skills emphasized in the general education program, courses in this category will incorporate knowledge, concepts, and philosophies across various disciplines by examining a topic of interest pertinent to today's citizens. Students from a variety of majors will come together in each course bringing the perspectives advanced in their majors to the discussions and assignments.

All students, including transfer students, graduating from Wayne State College must complete at least one Educated Perspective Seminar (EPS). Students must complete 60 hours, including 30 hours of General Education courses, before taking an Educated Perspective Seminar (EPS) 300 course. An Educated Perspective Seminar (EPS) 300 course cannot count toward a student's major or endorsement.

The only general education requirement for transfer students with an AA or AS degree from an accredited Nebraska community college is one completed Educated Perspective Seminar (EPS) course. Transfer students from any college without an AA or AS degree, must meet all general education requirements.

PROJECT SECTION

Describe this Student Learning Project

Wayne State College will be implementing a new assessment plan for the general education program. The initial plan will be to assess the general education program using one direct and one indirect measure of assessment. The direct measure will be an evaluation of the four general education program goals in the Educated Perspective Seminar (EPS) courses. The indirect measure will be the National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE). A sampling of Freshmen and Senior students will be selected to complete the National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE) in the spring of 2009. National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE) questions pertinent to the assessment of the general education program goals will be analyzed to determine assessment for the improvement of student learning.

The instructor of the Educated Perspective Seminar (EPS) course will identify project(s) or activity(ties) in the course that correspond to the four goals of the general education program. Based on student performance on those project(s) or activity(ties), instructors will rate each student's achievement of that goal on a 5-point scale. Students will also self-rate their achievement on each goal. Faculty will also be given an opportunity to comment on their experiences with these four goals in their classrooms. This will be compiled using a general education program goals assessment form and reported electronically to the office of assessment for data collection.

The general education program goals assessment form will be completed by all Educated Perspective Seminar (EPS) course instructors. The form will ask the instructor to identify a primary project(s) or activity(ties) from their course that demonstrates student learning as it relates to the four general education program goals. Each general education goal must be assessed within the Educated Perspectives Seminar (EPS) course.

Additional assessment may be implemented if the college decides to join the Voluntary System of Accountability (VSA). The Voluntary System of Accountability (VSA) participation would involve continuing the implementation of the National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE) and the Collegiate Assessment of Academic Proficiency (CAAP) testing as requirements for the "College Portrait", Voluntary System of Accountability (VSA) program. The Voluntary System of Accountability (VSA) communicates information on the undergraduate student experience through a common web reporting template called the "College Portrait."

Focus of the Student Learning Project

General Education

Degree Level

Baccalaureate Degree

Assessment Activities

Writing Outcomes; Creating data collection instrument(s) ; Collecting data; Analyzing data ; Using data to implement change

Organizational Areas Involved

The organization area most involved in the Student Learning Project (SLP) is our entire general education program. Eleven of the fourteen institutional academic departments offer courses in the general education program. These include: Communication Arts, Language & Literature, Art & Design, Music, Physical Science & Mathematics, Life Sciences, Health, Human Performance & Sport, Family and Consumer Sciences, Sociology, Psychology & Criminal Justice, History, Politics & Geography, Technology & Applied Sciences, and Business & Economics.

The Academy for Assessment of Learning Team will be working with the General Education Committee to assess the general education program. Additional input will be received from the Wayne State College Assessment Oversight Committee and the Vice President for Academic Affairs. All students will be required to successfully complete an Educated Perspectives Seminar course for graduation requirements and will be assessed on each of the four goals of the General Education program through a project(s) or activity(ties) designed by the Educated Perspective Seminar (EPS) course instructors. The Educated Perspective Seminar (EPS) course faculty and students will provide assessment data for analysis for the improvement of student learning.

Desired results from the project

The desired results of this project are:

1. Create/implement one direct and one indirect measure to assess the four goals of the general education program.

- a. Implement the National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE) as the indirect assessment measurement for the general education program.

- b. Create and implement direct assessment of the four general education goals within the Educated Perspectives Seminar (EPS) courses.

Planning and Managing the Student Learning Project

a. A detailed description of the activities/tasks that are necessary to ensure each of the above outcomes or results are met. For example, who will be doing what, step by step? (approximately 100 words)

The Director of Assessment and the Vice President for Academic Affairs with leadership from the Academy for Assessment of Student Learning Team will be implementing the indirect measure National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE) to a sampling of Freshmen and Senior students during the Spring of 2009 and again in the Spring 2011. The National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE) has previously been implemented at the institution in the Spring of 2003 and the Spring of 2006.

Each Educated Perspectives Seminar (EPS) course proposal will be approved by the General Education Committee along with the rubric/template for assessing the four goals of the general education program. This rubric parallels the General Education Course Submission Form. The first Educated Perspective Seminar (EPS) courses will be offered in the fall of 2008 and a rubric/template will be prepared by each Educated Perspectives Seminar (EPS) course instructor. These results will be reported electronically through the Network and Technology Services (NATS) Department of the institution. Faculty will rate the student project(s) or activity(ties) on the rubric. Student results will be combined for each course and the results from all courses will be combined each year. The data will be aggregated by the Office of Assessment during the summer of 2009 and each summer from then on. The General Education Committee and the Educated Perspectives Seminar (EPS) faculty will then analyze the aggregated data in the fall of 2009 and a plan of action will be developed to improve student learning. This cycle will be continued and on-going for future academic years.

b. The timeline for each of the above activities/tasks. Each timeline should be on a quarterly timescale or finer. (approximately 50 words)

-April 2008—Possible faculty orientation of the General Education Program at the April 15, Spring Faculty Meeting. During the spring assessment retreat on April 28, conduct a faculty survey to determine general education program assessment perceptions.

-Summer 2008—Create a General Education website promoting the new program and assessment plan, create a promotional publication to showcase the new general education program and assessment plan.

-Fall 2008—Implement discipline specific showcases for general education programs.

-Spring 2009—Administer the National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE) exam, extrapolate the data, prepare an analysis report, and communicate results to the General Education Committee and faculty. This will be done through coordination of the Office of Assessment, Vice President for Academic Affairs and the Assessment Oversight Committee. The results will be analyzed and plans made by the General Education Committee to improve student

learning. The data may also be reported and used by accreditation agencies and other internal and external sources.

c. A short rationale for the length of time (from implementation to completion) for the Student Learning Project (SLP). (approximately 50 words)

The first full year for the Student Learning Project (SLP), academic year 2008-2009 will coincide with the first year of the revised general education program at Wayne State College. The 2008-2009 academic year will be a transitional year with new students starting to complete the new general education program requirements while current students will continue with the current general education program requirements. It will take a couple of years to get all the students on the newly revised general education program and for faculty and departments to offer and implement a full schedule of Educated Perspective Seminar (EPS) courses. The Student Learning Project (SLP) targets the Educated Perspective Seminar (EPS) courses as the primary course where direct measurement of the four new general education goals will be assessed. By the spring of 2011, which will be the fourth year of Academy participation, the majority of our students will be completing the requirements of the newly revised general education program requirements.

Monitoring Plan

The Assessment Director, who serves as the team leader for the Academy for Assessment of Student Learning Team will coordinate and monitor the progress of this Student Learning Project (SLP).

The results of the National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE) will be analyzed by the Vice President for Academic Affairs, the Director of Assessment and the Assessment Oversight Committee. Specific and relevant questions from the National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE) that relate to the general education goals will be identified and targeted for analysis. Results will be shared with the General Education Committee and that committee will make recommendations for improving student learning.

Each Educated Perspectives Seminar (EPS) course faculty member will assess the students using a rubric/template each semester and results will be accumulated and analyzed by Educated Perspectives Seminar (EPS) course faculty and the General Education Committee. Results will be shared and distributed through general faculty meetings and on assessment retreat days.

Evidence of Success

The Educated Perspective Seminar (EPS) courses will be showcased through Educated Perspective Seminar (EPS) faculty sharing sessions, publicity, and student evaluations. The Educated Perspective Seminar (EPS) courses will assess the four general education program goals and the General Education Committee will analyze the results and make suggestions for change to improve student learning. The EPS course evaluations will show that at least 60% of

our students will perform above the development level. The National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE) results will show a progressive improvement from the previous analysis done in 2003 and 2006.

Products Resulting from the Student Learning Project

Currently, you can go to the Wayne State College Assessment website at <http://www.wsc.edu/assessment>. When products have been completed they will be shared and can be obtained from this website. The General Education Program Goals Assessment Form/Template will be uploaded and shared when completed.

Project Links

[Wayne State College Assessment](http://www.wsc.edu/assessment)