

**Objective 4 Assessment Review Report – Spring 2019**  
Humanistic & Artistic Ways of Knowing

**A. Evaluate the assessment plan for each course, together with its implementation. Provide a brief summary of the Committee’s findings in this area. Describe any recommended changes.**

**ART/CMP**

Assessment reports for 2016 and 2017 were submitted. Assessment reporting was not conducted by the previous chair. The current chair has instituted a policy for timely assessment reporting going forward.

The ART 1100 (fall 17) assessment plan examines syllabi, randomly selected quizzes, and final exams. The sample set is 10% of the student population drawn randomly from all 10 sections. Syllabi and student assessment materials were utilized for outcomes 2 and 7. Syllabi and course materials were reviewed to determine whether or not the course was likely to help students achieve these competencies. Competencies 1, 3, and 4 were assessed using the department’s Objective 4 Student Assessment Rubric.

The ART 1101 (fall 2016) and 1102 (spring 2017) assessment plan examines syllabi and randomly selected midterm exams for the course. Syllabi and student assessment materials were utilized for outcomes 2 and 7. Syllabi and course materials were reviewed to determine whether or not the course was likely to help students achieve these competencies. Competencies 1, 3, and 4 were also reviewed using the Objective 4 Student Assessment Rubric from the assessment plan. Midterm exams were assessed. The sample size was 10% of the total student population of ART 1101 and 1102.

ART 2210/CMP 2250 (2016 and 2017) assessment plan examines syllabi and major written assignments. Objective 4 competencies 1, 2, 3, 4, and 6 were assessed.

**ENGL/HONS**

The assessment plan for ENGL 1110 [1175], 1115, 1126, and 2257/8 specifies that assessments will be conducted annually, with fall syllabi and assignment prompts being assessed during even calendar years and a random sampling of final exams or papers being assessed during odd calendar years; the department has dedicated rubrics for this assessment, which focus on all competencies. The English undergraduate director prepares a report and makes recommendations. Assessment has been conducted for fall courses from 2015 to 2018 (in process). Thus far, the process has been manageable and has led to concrete adjustments. A possible criticism is that spring courses are not included in the assessment; however, these constitute a fairly small number of the total courses included in the assessment.

The HONS 1102 assessment plan examines submitted syllabi and randomly selected graded essays from two separate writing assignments, complete with the assignment prompts. A committee uses common rubrics to evaluate the value of the syllabus and assignments, as well

as student competency. There is a three-year rotation with two Objective 4 competencies evaluated each year. Student competency number 5 is not assessed for this course.

There is no submitted assessment for spring 2017 (competencies 1 and 2); the University Honors Program was unable to find that document following a 2018 transition in leadership. The spring 2018 assessment examined competencies 3 and 4.

#### LANG/CSD/ANTH

Objective 4 assessment plans for 1101/1102 language courses stipulate the collection of the course syllabi, a sample of student's final exams, and written assignments to assess student competency in Objective 4. Most of the instructors are collecting and assessing these materials. It is worth noting that the majority of the language courses also evaluate listening and verbal production of the language, in order to comply with language acquisition norms stipulated by the American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages (ACTFL). Because ACTFL norms are closely related to the Objective 4 outcomes, the majority of the language reports assess five of the seven competencies each reporting cycle. Some of these courses are either no longer taught or only infrequently taught; therefore, some reports have not been submitted. The committee encourages supervising departments which have not submitted reports, write and submit them to GERC in the future.

#### SOPA

There are approved assessment plans for MUSC 1100/1106/1108/1109; THEA 1101; DANC 1105/2205. Changes in administration have made annual data collection in Theatre/Dance more difficult. The Director for the School of Performing Arts initiated the work in 2016. However, when his position changed to "chair" for the Department of Music, he concentrated on that area. Implementation in Music consisted of collecting data, such as student responses to exam questions as well as syllabi, on two outcomes each fall semester, beginning in 2016. This process has served the Department of Music well. If Theatre/Dance used a similar rotation, those reports were not found. With respect to implementing the assessment plan, it is recommended that newer appointments be mentored and/or walked through what is expected for General Education data collection and assessment. Some have observed that reporting is cumbersome and recommend it be streamlined through Activity Insight to manage and unify the University's processes.

#### PHIL/TGE

Approved assessment exist plans for PHIL 1101/1103 and TGE 1257. There are catalogued assessment reports for PHIL for 2016–2017, and for TGE for 2015–2016 & 2016–17 (there is also one for 2017–2018, but the same outcome was mistakenly reported in consecutive years). PHIL presented summarized findings, which match the master catalogued report spreadsheet propose changes, appear in keeping with the stated goals of the objective, and move to a clearer definition of that objective within the specific parameters of the Philosophy courses. TGE presented a summary, and the assessment plan seems to align with the goals of the objective, moving toward a clearer manner of interpreting assessment outcomes. It is recommended that TGE adopt a page from the PHIL 1103 plan; i.e. to assess two outcomes yearly, such that each outcome is assessed twice within each five-year window.

**B. Evaluate the assessment outcome for each course. To what extent are students in each course satisfactorily achieving the learning outcomes for the objective: Provide a brief summary of the Committee's findings in this area. Describe any recommended changes.**

#### ART/CMP

The majority of students in ART 1100, 1101, 1102, and ART 2210/CMP 2250 are satisfactorily meeting Objective 4 competencies. With the aim of tracking student success in these courses, the department hopes to identify assignments that address key competencies, such as a reflective essay in current art history curricula that will assess the competency “self-reflection, intellectual elasticity, widened perspective, and respect for diverse viewpoints.” The Department of Art also wants to find better ways to assess online courses effectively. Specifically, online forums are not easy to capture and document, due to the nature of the technology.

ART 2210/CMP 2250 (2016 and 2017): Objective 4 competencies 1, 2, 3, 4, and 6 were assessed. The instructor found that 77% of students met competency 1; 92% met competency 2; 92% met competency 3; 92% met competency 4; and 77% of students met competency 6.

#### ENGL/HONS

For English, for fall 2015 courses, the review of syllabi and assignment prompts prompted the chair to call for more consistent inclusion of General Education goals in syllabi, noting especially problems with Early College courses and courses taught by teaching assistants. The fall 2016 review of student work noted concerns again in achieving competencies with Early College courses (as well as how assignments were designed); this feedback played a part in the subsequent ECP workshop. The fall 2017 review noted that final assignments of some courses still needed to consider how these developed the respective competencies; problems again seemed to reside in the ECP sections. All three reports noted the difficulty of choosing and assessing evidence.

For Honors, the internal assessment committee found that syllabi did not adequately address competency 3, though they were confident that the content should “abound in the teaching of the class.” The committee unanimously agreed that syllabi and assignments adequately addressed competency 4. Students improved with regard to competency 3 between the two assignments, but noted that, like the syllabus, the assignment itself was not explicitly linked to competency 3. Minor adjustments to the syllabus and assignment would correct this issue. The committee observed student improvement throughout the semester but recommended that assignments be more explicitly linked to competency 4. Overall, the committee decided that HONS 1102 addressed competencies 3 and 4, and that students were improving in both. The two assignments they evaluated were not as strongly linked to the competencies as they desired, but also discussed to what extent those particular goals were better satisfied by other assignments. (Note: the instructors were not coached on which competencies would be evaluated, and therefore did not submit assignments specific to those themes.)

#### LANG/CSD/ANTH

Since there are no assessment reports for ARBC 1101; ARBC 1102; CSD 1151/1151L; CSD 1152/1152L; CHNS 1101/1102; and LATN 1101/1102. The committee is thus unable to make a judgment on the assessment outcomes for students in these courses. The assessment reports all showed that 80% or higher of the students were meeting the goals outlined in the assessment plans. In many cases the percentage of students meeting the goals were 90% or higher. Several reports included steps to be taken in response to the assessment results. For example, more practice in speaking in class would improve student accents in JAPN 1101. In-class writing exercises would help RUSS 1101 students improve reading and writing skills in the Cyrillic alphabet. For SPAN 1101, instructors recommend that course materials be further standardized for evaluation purposes, including specific protocol for course writing assignments.

#### SOPA

As of January 2019, MUSC 1106 (American Music) was offered once and therefore data was only collected on outcomes 1 and 3. MUSC courses 1100/1108/1109 assessed outcomes 1, 2, 3, 4, 6, and 7. (Ironically, outcome 5 is not assessed in Music!) The majority of students are meeting expectations, with a number exceeding expectations in 1100/1108/1109. Data available for THEA 1101 & DANC 1105 revealed students satisfactorily meeting expectations.

#### PHIL/TGE

Philosophy has determined that the language of the outcomes is sufficiently vague, that—as written—they can be difficult to interpret and apply. Thus, they are drafting an internal rubric to interpret the outcomes in a manner specific and appropriate to philosophy courses. Philosophy students have demonstrated at least minimally adequate achievement. Further refinement of the outcome language may serve for clearer assessments and determination. TGE students have met at least minimal adequacy in the assessed outcomes, but that more specificity in instrument language was needed for greater inter and intra-rater reliability. Changes were made to that end, as well as more realistic scenarios to augment those from the texts, for student exercise within the course.

**C. Evaluate the list of courses currently approved to satisfy the objective. To what extent does the current list contribute to a strong, coherent system of general education. Would a reduction or increase in the number or variety of courses in this objective strengthen the overall system? Provide a brief summary of the Committee's findings. Describe any recommended changes.**

#### ART/CMP

ART 1100, ART 1101, ART 1102, and ART 2210 cover a broad range of introductory course content in art: basic visual literacy (ART 1100); survey of art history from Paleolithic to Gothic (1101); survey of art history from Gothic to Renaissance (1102); and an introduction to the history and appreciation of photography (ART 2210/CMP 2250). These courses equip students with Objective 4 competencies and provide a foundation for further study. We recommend no changes to course offerings.

#### ENGL/HONS

For English, there are no indications that the courses--Introduction to Literature, Introduction to Film, and World Literature-- are unsatisfactory as General Education courses. For Honors, likewise, the general perspective is that these classes offer a nice variety of options for students to explore the Humanities via literature.

#### LANG/CSD/ANTH

We believe that in order to learn the basics for mastering a language, two semesters of the same language should be required to satisfy the Objective. Studying only one semester of a language does not give students the necessary background to continue their language studies independently. Where the language uses an orthography different from the Roman alphabet, this is even more important, since it may take the whole semester for students just to master the basics. For Japanese it may take four semesters to read and write the language at a primary school level. As such, we recommend allowing students to complete Objective 4 requirements using two courses from the *same* category (ex. SPAN 1101 and 1102), rather than requiring the courses come from different courses within Objective 4.

#### SOPA

MUSC 1100/1106/1108/1109; THEA 1101; DANCE 1105/2205 survey a broad range of material, which engages student inquiry and learning. Music is pleased to announce that we are adding Survey of Rock History (MUSC 1105), beginning fall 2019. SoPA faculty believe that “our general education courses align well with the outcomes set forth through Objective 4.” However, two chairs agreed that Visual and Performing Arts should have their own Objective. “We believe the mandate for Visual and Performing arts through Objective 4 isn’t strong *enough*.” These sentiments are valid and worthy of further discussion.

#### PHIL/TGE

PHIL 1101/1103 and TGE 1257 present a broad enough spectrum for inquiry within the spirit of Objective 4 to clearly merit inclusion as General Education courses. The range presents benefit to the students and their options within this objective.

**D. Evaluate the stated learning outcomes of this general education objective. Are there any problems with the learning outcomes as currently described, or ways in which they might be improved? Provide a brief summary of the Committee’s findings in this area. Describe any recommended changes.**

#### GEM Objective 4: Humanistic and Artistic Ways of Knowing

The committee discussed that competencies #2 and #3 could be hard to distinguish for some. Some observed that these two competencies may have pieces that are mixed and not properly aligned.

Student learning competency #5 needs to stay to provide flexibility even though it is not incorporated in every course or section. More may be doing it than realize. The possible ways of fulfilling this competency are myriad and could facilitate students’ achievement of the other competencies.

The committee sees no evidence to indicate there are problems with the current competencies, but opportunities to share and discuss them with other departments would be welcome. One suggestion includes bringing together instructors within the objective to brainstorm implementation of these student learning outcomes.

**E. Evaluate the objective itself and its place within the system of general education. To what extent does the objective, in its current form, contribute to a strong overall system of general education? Are there ways in which the objective could be modified to improve it? Could the system be improved with its elimination or replacement? Provide a brief summary of the Committee's findings in this area. Describe any recommended changes.**

The Objective 4 Review Committee agrees that this objective is an essential piece of the general education program. It provides opportunities for students to learn more about human nature, culture, language, art, music, and positive ways of adding meaning and beauty to life in today's ever-increasing global world. Moreover, as mentioned earlier, learning a second language may increase students' job opportunities after graduation. Allowing students to complete two language courses under this objective may serve students' long-term interests. This is an important objective that cannot be discounted.

The Objective 4 Review Committee warns against diluting this objective by adding or approving more courses.

**F. General comments on assessment process**

The committee noted that more than one person should assess student artifacts.

Departments may need more help, support, and/or instruction to develop inter-rater or intra-rater reliability methods. Faculty who receive assessment assignments within their departments should easily be able to find resources or individuals who can assist or mentor them.

The committee recommends and desires more standardization. This could come in the form of more guidelines, as well as clean examples of best practices. One area of current need includes the adjuncts who teach some of these courses. Are they receiving support and guidance when teaching general education courses? If department chairs had materials they could easily share they could point out the appropriate competencies adjuncts need to assess and return for assessment review before they teach. Knowing this beforehand, adjuncts and other instructors would know which text questions or types of assignments need to be included and assessed for review of the general education competencies connected to their course.

The committee suggested that faculty may be interested in professional development opportunities directed by an expert with expertise within the objective to talk about assessment. For example, if an assessment expert with a Humanities or artistic background could come and talk to the Objective 4 course instructors, this could be useful.

The committee realizes that faculty continue to worry about assessment. Sometimes they worry that punitive actions will be taken against them, such as courses or budgets being cut, as a result of the assessment reports. If assessment is truly used to improve student learning and instructors' teaching, this may inspire faculty to participate in more assessment activities.

The committee observed that some departments with more onerous (but not necessarily more helpful) approaches should be encouraged to revise their assessment plans.

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