

**GE Affinity Group Meeting
_ Break Out Group
CSUCO, February 28, 2008
Review and Assessment Break-Out Group**

1. What are the expectations of this session?
 - a. Campuses are at different stages of development of assessment strategies and may have different needs.
 - b. What do you do when courses do not meet the criteria for inclusion in a campus GE program? How do you approach decertification? Often people do not submit review materials because they know there will be no consequences of not doing so?
 - c. How do campuses handle GE program review vs. course review of examination of components/areas of GE. Totality of the program vs. quality of courses is an issue.
 - d. Are there ways to have embedded assessment of courses that is common across different GE areas?
 - e. Are there best practices that we could share via a CSUCO web site?
 - f. How are campuses using of electronic portfolios?
 - g. What should be done after GE assessment data is collected and analyzed?
 - h. Do campuses have a program review document specifically tailored to GE review?
 - i. Dealing with transfer issues.
 - j. Implementation of EO 595/CO enforcement of compliance.

Topical Discussions

- a. Misc. Comments
 - i. The addition of the word “development” is a welcome change in the language outlining Area E.
 - ii. Assessment requires a huge commitment of institutional resources.
 - iii. Faculty often will submit minimal materials for course assessment—the culture needs to change first on campus before meaningful assessment will take place.
 - iv. Given the resources GE generates, a fraction of 1% of the funds is not an unreasonable amount to spend on assessment.
- b. Course Review, Certification and Decertification
 - i. Fresno allows one more semester of offering a course found to be out of compliance before formal decertification.
 - ii. Approximately six campuses indicated that their decertification process really “had teeth.”

- iii. Other than a mechanical “checklist” approach, how can you approach course review/certification?
 1. Some programs are very large with lots of courses/sections.
 2. Stress assessment of outcomes rather than reviewing syllabuses. You can take a portfolio approach to things like composition. For large programs, one can sample.
- c. Program vs. Course Review
 - i. External review can be valuable—can give ammunition to facilitate change and provide a neutral perspective on politically sensitive topics.
 - ii. The new EO 595 document appears to drop the requirement for external review. In fact, GE reviews should be handled in the same fashion as other program reviews. Perhaps the language in the document should be clarified.
 - iii. Fresno reviews each instructor’s GE course syllabus every 5 years. This is separate from GE program review. Few campuses review all iterations.
 - iv. At Dominquez Hills they attempt to be developmental in approach.
 - v. At San Marcos the experience has been that it is very difficult to decertify courses. Some schools have dropped GE designation for major courses.
 - vi. A central issue is how we address GE as a coherent program rather than on a course-by-course basis. This is impacted by major-related desired outcomes.
 - vii. East Bay has only recently begun to consider GE review the same way as other program reviews. The review is driven by attention to student learning outcomes. Faculty groups developed common rubrics to use in assessment. This approach was well received and generated a lot of excitement.
 - viii. The CLA and other types of institutional measures (retention, time to graduation) may supersede more focused assessments of student learning on some campuses.
- d. Embedded Assessment/Common Assessment Across Areas
 - i. San Marcos is looking at coherence and outcomes within GE areas. Basic skills (e.g., composition, information literacy) should be infused throughout the GE program.
 - ii. There is no single best approach to assessment. We may have to settle for imperfect designs as long as we make progress towards improving student learning and outcomes.

- iii. One should avoid “finger-pointing” in assessment and focus on improving student learning (e.g., global competence).
 - iv. Piecemeal approaches are less effective than comprehensive approaches (combination of syllabi, samples of student work, formal assessment instruments).
- e. Sharing Best Practices
- i. It is important that faculty not feel threatened. Simple assessment designs often work well. It is easier with simple designs to convince faculty that it will work and yield meaningful results. It helps to design a first assessment that get students’ overall perceptions of their GE experience (and by extension, their perceptions of the faculty which were very positive).
 - ii. At Bakersfield, GVAR prompts were designed to capture students’ perceptions and experiences with diversity—doing double duty.
 - iii. Perhaps we could share writing assessment prompts and other strategies to embed assessment of a variety of GE outcomes at the same time we do other types of assessment.
 - iv. Perhaps we should focus on what students would miss if not for the content/skills that should be contained in this course/program.
- f. Use of E-Portfolios
- i. Everyone should attend Western Assessment Conference at Fullerton (March 20)
 - ii. Defining the content of portfolios is a fundamental issue when designing an assessment strategy.
- g. Closing the Loop of Assessment to Impact Curriculum/Pedagogy
- i. Data should be used to inform the curriculum.
 - ii. It seems to be much easier to get faculty to pay attention to discipline-specific outcomes and to change curriculum accordingly. How do you get the same commitment to GE outcomes when there is not the same level of identification with GE as with the discipline?
 - iii. We need to focus on skills/abilities (core competencies) rather than on content/areas.
 - iv. Do students really understand the goals of the GE program? It seems like this would make a commitment to assessment easier.
 - v. It is difficult to get commitment to GE and common outcomes when there are some programs that do not participate in offering GE courses.
 - vi. Integrating GE into major program review will likely result in more commitment to GE-related outcomes and higher attainment.

- h. GE-Specific Review Documents
 - i. It would be helpful to have a clearinghouse at the CO for a variety of GE-related materials.
- i. Implications of Transfer for Assessment
- j. CO-Enforced Compliance
 - i. "Compliance" is an impacted term.
 - ii. We should strive for coherence rather than compliance.