Current Assessment Activities

Over the past few months, Mason faculty members from different disciplines created general education learning outcomes for Global Understanding and Social & Behavioral Sciences through workshops and online blogs. In order to evaluate the general education program and to help fulfill the requirements of the SACS reaffirmation of accreditation, Mason is assessing these two general education categories in Fall 2009.

Based on current course enrollment data, a few courses/sections from each of the categories were randomly selected for assessment. Faculty who teach these courses/sections will submit a course portfolio.

The following learning outcomes have been approved by the University General Education Committee.

Global Understanding

Upon completing the course, students will be able to:

- Develop understanding of global patterns and processes and their interaction with society
- Demonstrate understanding of the interconnectedness, difference, and diversity of a global society
- Identify, evaluate, and properly cite resources appropriate to the field, such as audio/visual/online/print materials, or artifacts
- Apply awareness of global issues to a consideration of individual or collective responsibilities within a global society
- Devise analytical, practical, or creative responses to global problems or issues

Social & Behavioral Sciences

Upon completing the course, students will be able to:

- Demonstrate understanding of key concepts, terminology, principles, or theories within the field
- Demonstrate understanding of methodological approaches appropriate to the field
- Identify, evaluate, and properly cite resources appropriate to the field, such as audio/visual/online/print materials, or artifacts
- Explain how individuals, groups, or institutions are influenced by contextual factors as appropriate to the field
- Use appropriate method(s) to apply social and behavioral science concepts, terminology, principles, or theories to significant issues

Faculty Resources

A general education course in these categories should address a majority of the approved learning outcomes—in the case of these outcomes, three.

Faculty who teach general education courses are strongly encouraged to include these learning outcomes in their syllabi, in addition to their course specific learning outcomes.

A list of learning outcomes for Mason’s other general education categories can be found at https://assessment.gmu.edu/Genedassessment/index.html.

To prepare for the assessment of general education synthesis and IT courses in the spring, the General Education Committee will finalize the draft outcomes for these two categories this fall.

To learn more about assessment, or to register for one of our workshops, visit: https://assessment.gmu.edu

Please submit feedback to Karen Manley, Eye on Assessment Editor kmanley@gmu.edu 703-993-8834 MS 3D2
**Upcoming Assessment Workshops**

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*Register online for our workshops @ [https://assessment.gmu.edu/workshops.cfm](https://assessment.gmu.edu/workshops.cfm)*

**Data Quotes — National Survey of Student Engagement**

Each year the NSSE collects information from undergraduates at four-year colleges and universities across the country to assess the extent to which students engage in a variety of educational practices. In spring 2009, a total of 1,571 randomly selected first year and senior Mason students participated in the survey.

Results from the NSSE, along with comparisons with the BCSSE (Before College Survey of Student Engagement) and 3 peer groups, will be available in October at [https://assessment.gmu.edu](https://assessment.gmu.edu). Some highlights of the NSSE 2009:

Mason seniors were less likely than comparison groups to:
- Have done a practicum, internship, field experience, etc - 43% compared to 53-55%
- Have done community service or volunteer work - 45% compared to 59-63%
- Work on a research project with a faculty member outside of course or program requirements - 12% compared to 20-24%

Mason seniors were far more likely to:
- Work more than 30 hours per week off campus - 29% compared to 11-16%
- Say that their college contributed very much to their knowledge, skills and personal development in writing clearly and effectively - 40% compared to 34-36%

**Data Quotes — Graduating Senior Survey**

The Graduating Senior Survey Report 2007-08 is now available. The survey had a response rate of 71% with 2,678 graduates participating. Major findings include:

- The vast majority of respondents felt they were “competent” or “very competent” about their level of knowledge and abilities in their field of study.
- 73% reported they had taken or were taking a synthesis course. More than 86% gave positive evaluations to the courses, including that they were “intellectually challenging.”
- At least 75% of both native and transfer students said that the courses in their majors emphasized all seven key elements of critical thinking included in the survey.
- 44% reported they had taken at least three upper-level courses providing them opportunities to revise their writing after receiving feedback from their instructors.

If you would like a full copy of the report, email us at assessment@gmu.edu. The report is also available at [https://assessment.gmu.edu/Results/GraduatingSenior/senior.html](https://assessment.gmu.edu/Results/GraduatingSenior/senior.html). For more results and reports (including customized reports for degree programs), go to [https://assessment.gmu.edu/Results/index.html](https://assessment.gmu.edu/Results/index.html).