

## Report on Assessment of General Education at Cal State LA

The General Education program (<http://www.calstatela.edu/apra/learning-outcomes#general-education-learning-outcomes>) is defined by a set of learning outcomes (GELOs) aligned with the Institutional Learning outcomes. The program is also informed by the Liberal Education and America's Promise (LEAP) outcomes promoted by the American Association of Colleges and Universities (AAC&U) adopted by the California State University System.

The Assessment Coordinator for General Education (GE) and the GE subcommittee of the Academic Senate analyzed alignment between the ILOs and GELOs as shown in Table 1. All GELOs map to one or more Institutional Learning outcomes. Upper division GE courses provide deeper application and require a higher level of proficiency to demonstrate mastery of the outcomes, so they are designated with an R (reinforced). All upper division GELOs map to all ILOs.

The revision of the GE program since Cal State LA's last WSCUC review was a data informed process. Results of surveys, analyses of syllabi, and the use of Program Review as a vehicle for examining GE outcomes has informed course development and the identification of GE designated courses. For example, survey data on student perceptions of learning from 2009 - 2010 provided evidence for the Quarter to Semester Conversion group, composed of faculty staff, students and administration, that the content of ENGL 102 was effective in promoting critical thinking and would meet GE outcomes for that area.

Syllabi are important documents for understanding how communication of important policies and information occurs in courses. In 2008, the GE director performed a syllabus audit and found that significant numbers of GE course syllabi were missing critical items such as course requirements. As a result, GE course syllabus templates ([www.at the now disabled GE web site](#)) were developed and distributed to department chairs.

Table 1. Alignment of General Education Learning Outcomes and Institutional Learning Outcomes

	Lower Division GE curriculum areas and sub-areas														Upper Division GE		
GELOs																	
ILOs																	
Knowledge: Mastery of content and processes of inquiry.	I	I	I	I	I	I	I	I	I	I	I	I	I	I	R	R	R
Proficiency: Intellectual skills.	I	I	I	I	I	I	I	I	I	I	I	I	I		R	R	R
Place and Community: Urban and global mission.				I									I	I	R	R	R
Transformation: Integrative learning.													I	I	R	R	R

Initial = Initial/introduced, R = Reinforced

As a follow-up in Fall 2015, requests for syllabi were sent to all departments offering GE courses. A total of 263 syllabi were obtained, representing more than 90% of the GE courses offered that term (about 30% of the 835 sections of GE offered). All syllabi were examined to determine whether items in Table 2 (most required by University Policy) were present.

Table 2. 2015 - 2016 General Education Syllabus Audit

<b>Required Elements</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Instructor Contact Information	99.6%
General Course Description	99.6%
Prerequisites	61%
Course Objectives/learning outcomes	99.2%
GE Area: GE requirements that course fulfills (e.g. name of lower division block, subcategory of block, diversity)	61%
Course Requirements: policies and procedures	100%
Grading System: relationship of grading system to course requirements.	98.9%
Americans with Disabilities Act Statement of Accommodation	88.6%
Academic Honesty Policy	92.8%
Final Exam: date and time	89%

Results from the two reviews indicate that using templates and raising faculty awareness of the policy through discussions with GE coordinators improved syllabi content. For example, 99% of syllabi included a statement of outcomes or course objectives. There are still areas for improvement as the Americans with Disabilities Act statement and academic honesty policy should be at 100% as they are required by University Policy.

### **Survey of Students on General Education Outcomes**

In Winter Quarter, 2016, a survey examining student perceptions of whether GE designated courses were helping them achieve the stated GELOs was piloted. It was administered to more than 3000 students taking a GE course and had a 13% response rate. Students reported their agreement (1 = *strongly disagree*, 5 = *strongly agree*) with statements describing whether the GE class helped them to achieve each GELO. Overall, students indicated the courses helped them achieve GE outcomes (green shading indicates stronger agreement and orange shading indicates much weaker agreement). Students also indicated that some GE courses were effective in helping them achieve multiple GE outcomes (see Table 3).

Table 3. Student perceptions of how GE courses help them achieve the GELOs.

GE Course Area	Outcomes									
	Written communication	Oral communication	Reason critically across disciplines	Quantitative reasoning	American and California government	Natural Sciences	Arts and Humanities	Social Sciences	Lifelong understanding and self-development	Develop writing skills with useful feedback
Written Comm	4.34	4.02	4.08	3.89	3.55	3.33	3.79	3.49	4.18	4.33
Oral Comm	4.35	4.44	4.09	3.86	3.88	3.26	3.65	3.59	4.33	4.33
Critical Reasoning	4.61	4.39	4.67	4.72	4.39	4.06	3.94	3.82	4.39	4.06
Quant and Math Reasoning	3.37	3.37	3.96	4.41	3.04	3.81	2.85	3.12	3.67	3.30
American and California Gov't	3.62	3.44	3.68	3.42	4.06	3.26	3.58	3.86	3.80	3.76
BIOL Sciences	3.45	3.45	3.73	3.95	3.19	4.05	3.57	3.76	3.52	3.05
PHYS Sciences	3.59	3.53	3.63	4.00	3.19	4.59	3.24	3.56	3.88	3.47
Applied Sciences	3.86	3.57	3.71	3.86	3.43	3.57	3.71	3.43	4.00	3.57
Literature	4.06	4.06	3.94	3.50	3.40	2.88	4.13	3.19	3.88	4.06
Arts	3.26	3.05	3.21	3.26	2.95	2.53	4.05	2.79	3.42	2.95
Philosophy	3.58	3.42	3.92	3.58	3.42	2.92	3.75	3.00	3.92	3.83
Social Sciences	3.95	3.91	4.18	4.11	3.89	3.82	3.75	3.91	4.30	3.80

	Outcomes									
Social Sciences (D)	3.75	3.70	4.10	3.65	4.10	3.26	3.84	3.58	4.15	3.85
Life Long Learning	3.91	3.91	4.29	3.97	3.48	3.17	3.53	3.56	4.50	3.89
Written Communication/ Research	4.46	4.34	4.26	4.23	3.97	3.88	4.24	4.06	4.40	4.48

These findings were disseminated to the university community at an EEAC meeting and at the 2016 Cal State LA Assessment Faire. They are a useful starting point to help faculty reflect on whether GE outcomes are adequately addressed or whether they need to be made more explicit to students. The survey is administered by the Office of Institutional Research and the assessment coordinator for GE, so faculty time is protected while offering a powerful data source for formative assessment.

Results from the pilot study were used to revise the GE student perception survey and procedures of data collection, and a new sample of students were invited to complete the survey after completing the Fall 2016 semester. Over 3000 students completed the survey, and the sample represented a 16% response rate and comprised 30% of the population of students who completed GE courses in the fall semester. Results from the 2016 survey again demonstrated that students perceived that most courses helped them achieve the appropriate GE outcomes, and in many cases, they felt the courses helped them achieve multiple outcomes. American government and politics courses, in particular, are perceived as helping students achieve diversity outcomes more in the new GE program than in the previous program, which is likely a result from the new GE program including departments other than HIST and POLS in those areas. Ethnic studies departments report strong enrollments in those courses. Starting this year, programs undergoing program review respond to this information, either in the self-study or in the upcoming annual assessment reports. Feedback is being provided to programs on perceived student achievement of outcomes to compare with direct evidence of student learning. The summary reports will be used for the GE program review to describe its success in addressing GE program outcomes and ILOs. The results from the 2016 survey were presented at the Annual Assessment Faire in April 2017 (see slides for more information).

### **Integration of General Education Assessment into Program Review**

The General Education (GE) program of a university affords a rich opportunity for investigating student outcomes as it is the single curricular element in which all students participate. It is a challenge to evaluate a large program both meaningfully and consistently, particularly as most GE courses address several outcomes, so Cal State LA has developed a plan to integrate GE assessment into Program Review. Another important focus of the plan is the requirement to use multiple methods to collect direct evidence about student achievement of GE outcomes.

A reporting form has been newly implemented (AY 2016-2017) as part of the Self-Study process. This form ([link to form](#)) requires programs to describe the following developmental phases:

1. Syllabi content focusing on GE outcomes and aligned assessments
2. Results of direct assessment of student work
3. Changes implemented that have improved student GE outcome achievement and a summary plan describing the timeline for improving student mastery of GE outcomes.

The information captured on these reporting forms from each department or program will be used to evaluate the university-wide GE program.

