

General Education Assessment Committee
Meeting #8, Friday, September 19, 2003
Room 5302 - Friedman Hall

Present: Raja Aravamathan (Paper Science and Printing/COGE), Mike Clark (Speech Pathology and Audiology), Linda Delene (Planning and Assessment, Provost's Office), Margaret Dupuis (English), Elaine Anderson Jayne (University Libraries), Gina Garza-Kling (Mathematics), Lisa Paulius, (Physics), Matthew Steel (Music), Craig Tollini (GSAC), and Carol Weideman (HPER). Absent: Noel Allende-Goita, (Music), Bassam Harik (Economics), Robert Reck, (Marketing), and Fred Sitkins (Industrial and Manufacturing Engineering).

Delene called the eighth meeting of the General Education Assessment Committee to order at 1:30 PM, asking for approval of the 6/12/03 summary meeting note. It was approved as written. Delene reported that the CBASE instrument had been administered in 29 sections of largely freshman writing courses, and that each student took one area of the test, social studies, science, mathematics or English. The test had been redesigned since the Committee's consideration of it last May and the institutional matrix form was no longer available thus the use of specific subject areas. Around 650 students took the exam but one section's results are not useable since the directions were not provided to the students so there is no identifying descriptive information for that section's results. The same test will be administered to seniors this spring semester and Delene asked the group to consider research questions for the seniors' CBASE administration. The Committee will review the sampling design for the spring's administration at its October meeting. Data from the registrar's office on the five-year average of graduating seniors by college will serve as the basis for that sampling plan. The assessment of student learning outcomes for Areas I and II in general education is also underway. Delene expressed gratitude for the cooperation of many faculty, and the valuable assistance from Jim Gilchrist and David Sheldon. Gilchrist is continuing meetings with departmental faculty and designing a template for assessment information from each class that will be shared with all general education instructors.

Members of the committee then considered the alternatives for analyses and scoring for the freshman CBASE administration and recommended the following reports: (a) summary by major, (b) summary by ethnicity, (c) summary by gender, (d) comparative or comparable institution report, (e) the electronic data file for later analyses, (f) the chance score report, and (g) the item analysis. Delene was uncertain about the sort for "comparable" institutions and will discuss that with the Assessment Resource Center at the University of Missouri prior to ordering the reports.

The Committee then discussed how to motivate students to do their best work on such assessment activities. Delene reported that serious undergraduate student engagement with assessment activities is a national problem even with a variety of approaches. Among ideas expressed by members of the committee were some a lottery with prizes for best scores, chance prizes, some combination of the two, and something that would speak to loyalty at WMU. It was suggested that faculty colleagues ask their undergraduate students as to what would motivate their performance with assessment tasks. Faculty will report the responses at the next meeting.

Delene indicated that, following a well-established tradition, a faculty colleague should chair this committee since assessment is the purview of the faculty. After some discussion, it was suggested that perhaps the role and assignments for the Committee on General Education (COGE) of the Faculty Senate should be restructured to include general education assessment outcomes as well as curricular inputs to general education. This idea was greeted with some enthusiasm by several committee members and will be pursued at later committee meetings. With no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 2:45 PM.

NEXT MEETING: 1:30 – 3:00 PM, Friday, October 17, 2003