

Nov 15, 2017

Motion to Align General Education Courses with Faculty Senate Approved Criteria General Education Committee, November 2017

Introduction:

In April 2012, Faculty Senate adopted criteria broadly describing the essential components of the different General Education categories.

All General Education courses introduced since 2012 have been required to satisfy these attributes. To date, no mechanism to evaluate alignment of courses that existed before 2012 has been developed. This has led to a *de facto* grandfathering of some courses while courses created after 2012 have been required to meet new general Education criteria. In order to provide a valuable and consistent General Education experience to all UMaine students, all of our General Education courses should be encouraged to satisfy the Senate approved criteria.

In 2009, our accreditor, the New England Association of Schools and Colleges (NEASC), requested that the University emphasize, "implementing a comprehensive approach to the assessment of student learning." Part of the University's response was the 2012 refinement of the criteria and new course assessment outlined above for General Education courses. The General Education Course evaluation process described below builds on this by looking at the courses existing prior to 2012.

The General Education Committee of Faculty Senate and University of Maine Administration have together developed a program of General Education Course evaluation as outlined below. This program is intended as part of an ongoing conversation between Faculty, Faculty senate and UMaine Administration pertaining to student outcomes of learning in General Education courses.

Framework:

UMaine faculty will assess the General Education program over the course of four years using samples of student work taken from regularly offered general education courses.

Working groups recruited by the Faculty Senate General Education Assessment Subcommittee have developed 9 rubrics to assess UMaine's General Education outcomes.* The proposed approach uses these

rubrics in an annual scoring session to ensure a more consistent framework through which to view student achievement. Specifically, 1) faculty will collect work as part of their normal class that reflects the general education area being measured (student work might reflect the entire category (if a final paper or exam) or a subset); 2) This work will be uploaded into an online database for scoring; 3) Annually, faculty volunteers with familiarity of particular general education areas will score student work as part of an integrated scoring session/professional development event; 4) Scores will be summarized by the Office of Assessment and reported to Individual Faculty, the Faculty Senate and the Office of the Provost.

Assessment Timeline:

- 9 outcomes assessed in 4 years (schedule repeats in Spring of 2022)
 - Spring 2018: Western cultural traditions
 - ✶ Fall 2018: Social contexts and institutions
 - Spring 2019: Artistic and creative expression
 - Spring 2019: Ethics
 - Fall 2019: Population and the environment
 - Spring 2020: Quantitative Literacy
 - Fall 2020: Writing
 - Spring 2021: Cultural diversity and international perspectives
 - Fall 2021: Science

Assessment Method (completed by the Assessment Office):

- Course sections from a stratified random sample from the Registrar's list of course sections that include the targeted general education area will be identified. To qualify, courses must have at least 10 students enrolled and satisfy the requirements for the specified general education area. The final selection of courses will include:
 - 10 course sections from lower division courses
 - 10 course sections from upper division courses (as possible, some General Education areas do not have large numbers of course sections offered at the 300-400 level)
- From each course, 10 students will be randomly selected

Department/Unit/Faculty participation:

- Participation in the assessment of the General Education Program is strongly encouraged by Faculty Senate of all Units where General Education courses are taught should their course be randomly selected.
- Faculty are welcome to volunteer their courses for evaluation by this process.

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- Units submit de-identified papers (or other assignments) that are aligned to the specified general education area.
- Individual faculty will not be asked to participate in more than one learning outcome assessment per academic year.

Data collection:

- Student assignments will be submitted using a simple web interface.
- Instructions for student assignment de-identification and upload will be simple and provided (by the Assessment Office) to all participating Units.

Scoring:

- Faculty volunteers familiar with the particular general education area will be provided targeted workshops/webinars to examine the rubrics, assignment alignment, and data collection.
- Faculty will be recruited to score student work as part of an annual professional development & scoring session held in May (3-hour session per learning outcome).
- Scoring instructions will be simple and provided (by the Assessment Office).

Results and reporting:

- Course/student level results will be reported back to individual faculty members.
- Aggregate results by General Education area will be reported through the Faculty Senate and Office of Assessment.

Ongoing Review:

- It is intended that this process will be reviewed annually in order to fine tune or modify student work collection, refine the scoring rubric, faculty scoring of student work, General Education course descriptions.
- Faculty may also monitor campus trends and decide that certain General Education courses are not meeting requirements of the area's attributes or student learning goals. If such patterns exist, it will be the responsibility of Faculty Senate to develop a response to address them.

* The link to the faculty-developed rubrics is:

<https://drive.google.com/open?id=0B69P9704XdkHRXRkc2g4NTMyUEE>

Motion:

The Faculty Senate of the University of Maine, in the spirit of ensuring that General Education courses are in alignment with criteria approved by the Faculty Senate in 2012, move to adopt the mechanism described above in order to periodically review all UMaine General Education courses. After each General Education area review a report on the assessment outcomes will be submitted to the Faculty Senate Academic Affairs and General Education committee.