

GENERAL EDUCATION PROGRAM ASSESSMENT 2004–2005

Foundations

Assessment remains a difficult issue. We devoted most of a whole meeting (September 22) to getting oriented on assessment at the postsecondary level. (Monica Stitt-Bergh from the UHM General Education Office ran this orientation for us.) Some of us attended the GEC's 15 December 2004 meeting at which the GEC assessment subcommittee presented its plan to assess general education programs here. Sammons has also attended the meetings of the General Education Office's Advisory Group, so he has heard of the Assistant Vice Chancellor's plan (presented 1 March 2005) for assessing general education, including Global & Multicultural Perspectives; but he is uncertain where that plan stands now. (The UHM Foundations Board has also seen the Assistant Vice Chancellor's draft plan.) At least two major obstacles to assessment remain: (a) we are not sure how much assessment to require when in the future we will have to consider currently designated courses for renewal; and (b) the UHM Foundation Board itself has neither the expertise nor the resources to do program assessment. Frankly, we are at sea about assessment.

Contemporary Ethical Issues

A questionnaire was distributed during the Fall 2004 semester to solicit student responses from those taking E-designated courses during the term. This questionnaire was sent out by the GEO staff to all faculty currently teaching CEI-courses. The responses to Likert scaled questions were compiled and reviewed by the board in the subsequent Spring term. Of the 56 courses offered in Fall 2004, 42 (73%) were surveyed with a total of 892 student questionnaires returned (61% return rate).

Generally students felt that the ethical issues covered in the class related to the course content (64% strongly agreed, 26% agreed with this statement). Asked about feeling comfortable expressing their opinions, most of the students were in agreement (43% strongly agreed, 31% agreed). As far as how the instructor fared in introducing techniques for deliberating on ethical issues, 43% strongly agreed and 35% agreed with this statement. Students generally felt more competent in evaluating ethical issues in their major (40% strongly agreed, 34% agreed). Statistics from the survey may be viewed at <http://www.hawaii.edu/gened/cei/assessment.htm>

These data are consistent with surveys done in Fall 2003.

Hawaiian, Asian, and Pacific Issues

The HAP Board reviewed and discussed the student-based assessment instrument which has been administered in the previous semesters. There were issues brought to our

attention, however, after discussion, the board felt that the assessment instrument was sufficient.

These assessments will be used when reviewing courses submitted for renewal for the next two-year period.

Oral Communication

Using the E Board's student survey as a template the O Board developed an End of the Semester O Focus Student Survey, which was distributed to all instructors teaching O designated courses in the Fall 2004 semester. Seventy-five sections received surveys for students; 46 sections returned surveys. A total of 687 surveys forms were returned (1,120 students were enrolled). The students who returned their surveys expressed a fairly high level of satisfaction with their O courses, and in some cases indicated gratitude for the opportunity to develop their oral communication skills.

In preparation for developing an Assessment Plan for the O focus the Board invited Monica Stitt-Bergh from the GEO to discuss assessment. It was clear from her presentation in early November 2004 that the first task would be to develop learning outcomes.

Several discussions have since followed in which learning outcomes were identified and discussed. It was generally agreed that we should assess level of competency rather than attempting to measure growth and improvement. It was also agreed that common learning outcomes need to be shared by all faculty teaching O focus courses, requiring the establishment of a competency rubric with faculty input. The Board recognizes the need to establish different rubrics for different kinds of oral activities; however, these rubrics have still to be developed.

Writing Intensive

Is there a program of evaluation that assesses W courses to see if they are doing what they are supposed to do—help students improve their writing?

Evaluation is decentralized at UHM; primary responsibility is with departments. However, some W instructors voluntarily distribute a W survey form to their students at the end of the semester (10-12% return rate). Other instructors select *Course and Faculty Evaluation* (CAFÉ) questions that address the writing components of the course (faculty select questions from a list of 300+ items).

The W Board has developed a working statement of the program's mission, goals, and learning outcomes.

Do program supervisors monitor the progress of students as they move through W courses?

College/school advising units are responsible for monitoring student progress. However, MWP does monitor the number of W classes offered to ensure that student needs are being met. MWP also periodically reviews course-taking patterns for particular majors.