General Education Assessment
Oral Discourse
2007-08

University in the High School Program
The University at Albany, SUNY

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Institutional Research, Planning & Effectiveness
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Summary

In 2007-2008 the University at Albany followed its on-campus schedule of General Education assessment by assessing Oral Discourse classes offered through the University in the High School Program (UHS). UHS faculty were requested to submit a syllabus for their courses and to complete Form 1 and Form 2. However, in contrast to the on-campus course assessment which samples 20% of the total number of students enrolled in the given category, 100% of the UHS students in all 102 Oral Discourse classes were sampled.

Form 1s were received from 82 of the 102 UHS sections sample (80%) and 70 out of 102 (68%) requested Form 2s were received.

Results

The assessment results indicate that almost half of UHS students “exceeded” or “met” expectations. While it may at first appear that the number of students “exceeding” in this category is high enough to raise concerns about grade inflation, it should be noted that the majority of students who enroll in University in the High School courses tend to be highly motivated and high performing. In fact, only juniors and seniors with an overall average of B or better are allowed to enroll in UHS classes. Therefore, one could reasonably expect students who have a high average overall to perform well in these classes. Finally, for perspective, the number that “exceeded” was lower than in the UHS Foreign Language category consisting of Latin courses in Spring 2007. At that time 64.79% of the students taking the courses “exceeded” in achieving the learning objectives and 40.82% Met.

Table 1
Results reported as percentages

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Objective</th>
<th>A/A-Exceeding</th>
<th>B+/B/B-</th>
<th>D+/D/D-</th>
<th>E Not Meeting</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. communicate ideas (creative, expressive, intuitive, intellectual)</td>
<td>44.3%</td>
<td>50.7%</td>
<td>4.3%</td>
<td>.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>according to a specific set of criteria</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>2. establish and maintain an appropriate performer/audience relationship in a given oral exercise, and actively engage with listeners/audience</td>
<td>46.7%</td>
<td>49.1%</td>
<td>3.9%</td>
<td>.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. respond to and, where appropriate, incorporate listener’s comments and questions</td>
<td>47.8%</td>
<td>48.1%</td>
<td>3.6%</td>
<td>.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. critique, orally or in writing, an oral performance</td>
<td>47.5%</td>
<td>48.3%</td>
<td>3.8%</td>
<td>.3%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Process notes

On July 30, 2008 Karen Chico Hurst, Elana Stein and Kristina Bendikas met to review the assessment results and discuss ways to improve the administration of the process in 2008-2009.

1. This past year the process for collecting the material was divided between the UHS office and Institutional Research, Planning and Effectiveness (IRPE). The notices and reminders were sent from UHS, but the materials were collected in the office of the Interim Director of Program Review and Assessment (IDPRA). This resulted in some errors and confusion among instructors. Faculty sent materials twice, and some incurred the expense of sending their materials back via registered mail to ensure their delivery.
   
   **Corrective Action to be Taken:** All materials will be requested and collected by UHS staff.

2. Since UHS has fall, spring classes, and full year classes in the General Education categories being assessed this year, a concern arose about possible confusion and overlap in due dates.
   
   **Corrective Action to be Taken:** Forms 1 and 2 will be due at the same time, at a date appropriate to the high school schedule and regardless of whether the class is fall only, spring only, or full year.

3. Some of the material collected was redundant or excessive. Several faculty sent all their class materials rather than just selected examples. Moreover, some faculty did not indicate which tools were used to measure which objectives as requested on Form 2.
   
   **Corrective Action to be Taken:** UHS staff will remind faculty that the assessment process only requires *selected* examples of assessment tools be sent, and these should clearly indicate which objective or objectives they were used to measure.

4. Both UHS and IRPE are concerned about the amount of paper that this process currently demands. This was a concern already raised by the General Education Assessment Committee (GEAC), a standing committee of the Council on Academic Assessment, pertaining to on campus as well as UHS assessment. This past year some UHS faculty sent documents electronically and indicated that it was preferable to mailing hard copies. This fall IRPE will be piloting an electronic collection option for General Education assessment on campus. IRPE in conjunction with the General Education Assessment Committee will then determine whether to extend the on campus pilot to include UHS faculty in Spring 2009 with the possibility of moving to permanent electronic collection beginning in Fall 2009.
   
   **Corrective Action to be Taken:** UHS faculty will be offered the opportunity to send their materials as Word or PDF documents, if they wish, and to participate in the electronic submission pilot if it is extended to UHS faculty in Spring 2009.

This fall the General Education Assessment Committee will review all the assessment materials received as part of the assessment of Oral Discourse classes, and communicate to findings to UHS.

Dr. K. Bendikas
IRPE
The appendices that accompany this report have been redacted to protect the identities of respondents and the integrity of the General Education Assessment process.