General Education Assessment
2009-10

Foreign Language

University in the High School Program

The University at Albany, SUNY

Prepared by Steven Doellefeld, Ph.D., MBA, Associate Director of Assessment
Institutional Research, Planning & Effectiveness

April 2013
Background

In 2009-10 the University at Albany assessed the degree to which students were achieving student learning outcomes in the History and Foreign Language General Education categories. As with previous assessments, the assessment of General Education courses offered through the University in the High School (UHS) program were conducted at the same time. A representative sample of classes from the Foreign Language category was selected by IRPE and the General Education Committee. The UHS sample was chosen to be generally representative of the categories rather than random. The UHS office provided materials electronically, and IRPE redacted instructor information.

There were a total of 12 courses offered through UHS in 2009-10 that met the Foreign Language General Education requirement. Six (6) of those courses were selected for the sample, with enrollments ranging from 7 to 19. Five (5) of the instructors sampled responded. Of those, 2 respondents either didn’t properly complete the General Education assessment forms or didn’t submit supporting documentation. The data contained in this report represents 3 classes, with a total enrollment of 77 students.
The Foreign Language General Education requirement has two learning objectives that must be fulfilled:

1. Students will demonstrate proficiency in the understanding and use of fundamental elements of a foreign language.

2. Students will demonstrate knowledge of distinctive features of the culture(s) associated with the language they are studying.

Figure 1: Foreign Language Learning Objective 1

- Exceeded, 75%
- Met, 21%
- Approached, 4%
- Failed, 0%

Figure 2: Foreign Language Learning Objective 2

- Exceeded, 61%
- Met, 29%
- Approached, 11%
- Failed, 0%
In excess of 89% of assessed students either met or exceeded expectations in all two learning objectives in this category.

**Recommendations:**

1) The GEAC should give consideration to differences in performance between UHS and on-campus populations (this is detailed in the results section below.)

2) IRPE needs to work closely with UHS to improve the quality of the data submitted by instructors. Perhaps a tutorial or sample assessment forms should be provided to all instructors participating in UHS courses that meet General Education requirements.

3) IRPE needs to work closely with UHS to reinforce the importance of the assessment process to instructors in an effort to improve response rates.

**Comment [BJ1]:** NV: I copied the recommendations from 10-11 oral report please change as necessary.

**Comment [BJ2]:** NV: of the 5 who responded, 2 did not submit form 2 and one left out L.O. 2
In the Foreign Language category, large majorities of the assessed UHS students either met or exceeded expectations for each of the two learning objectives – 96% for objective 1 and 89% for objective 2. More striking is the impressive numbers of students rated as having exceeded the expectations for the learning objectives, 75% in learning objective 1 and 61% in learning objective 2. In comparison, the on-campus rates of exceeding learning objective goals were distinctively lower – 35% for learning objective 1 and 38% for objective 2.¹

Neither the UHS sample nor the on-campus sample seemed significantly distressed in performance. None (0%) of the students in the UHS sample “did not meet” the requirements in both learning objectives, and only a small percentage of the on-campus sample (3% in objective 1 and 1% in objective 2) failed to meet the objectives’ goals.

Performance in regards to the percentage of students who were “approaching” or “did not meet” each of the learning objectives did not illustrate emerging patterns to differentiate the UHS sample from the on-campus samples. In combining the two categories of “approaching” or “did not meet” requirements, each of the learning objectives provided diverging patterns for each of the two learning objectives. In learning objective 1, the UHS sample only had 4% who were “approaching” or “did not meet” while the on-campus sample had 12% of students falling short of meeting the standards. Contrastingly, objective 2 illustrated that 11% of UHS students did not meet or exceed goals, while a mere 3% of the on-campus sample “approached” or “did not meet” the requirement of learning objective 2.

We reserve some concerns regarding the accuracy and generalizations of the UHS sample used to assess learning objective 2. The UHS sample used for comparisons for learning objective 2 is considerably smaller than for objective 1. While the entire UHS sample included 77 students, one instructor who had the biggest class within the sample omitted the distribution of the performance for objective 2.

¹ Note that the complete report of the assessment of the Foreign Language General Education category from 2009-10 is available from IRPE.
It is important to note 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. One could reasonably expect students who have a high average overall to perform well in these classes. Additionally, on-campus students taking courses meeting this General Education requirement may be doing so only to fulfill the General Education requirement, and that is a potential explanation of the differences across these populations.
Process notes

- This year the UHS office collected all the requested materials and scanned the sample documents into .PDF format before sending them to IRPE electronically. The names of the instructors were redacted from the forms, which were then coded. While this was a labor intensive endeavor for the IRPE office, it saved a substantial amount of paper, as well as additional copying time and paper when the material is be made available to the General Education Assessment Committee. IRPE encourages instructors to submit electronic versions of their teaching materials and assessment forms.