General Education Assessment
2009-10

History

University in the High School Program

The University at Albany, SUNY

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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. The UHS office provided materials electronically, and IRPE redacted instructor information.

There were a total of 18 courses offered through UHS in 2009-10 that met the History General Education requirement. All of the instructors were asked to participate in assessment. Eight (8) of the instructors responded, with enrollments ranging from 8 to 103. Of those, one respondent didn’t properly complete the General Education assessment forms. The data contained in this report represents 7 classes, with a total enrollment of 243 students.
The History General Education requirement has four learning objectives that must be fulfilled:

1. Students will demonstrate knowledge of a basic narrative of American history (political, economic, social, and/or cultural), including an awareness of unity and diversity in American society.

2. Students will demonstrate knowledge of representative institutions in American society and how they have shaped and been shaped by different groups.

3. Students will demonstrate an understanding of the relationship(s) between America and other parts of the world.

4. Students will demonstrate an understanding of various tools and approaches used in interpreting U.S. history.

Figure 1: History Learning Objective 1
2) Students will demonstrate knowledge of representative institutions in American society and how they have shaped and been shaped by different groups.

- Met, 65%
- Approached, 3%
- Failed, 0%
- Exceeded, 32%

Figure 2: History Learning Objective 2

3) Students will demonstrate an understanding of the relationship(s) between America and other parts of the world.

- Met, 65%
- Approached, 3%
- Failed, 0%
- Exceeded, 32%

Figure 3: History Learning Objective 3
In excess of 85% of assessed students either met or exceeded expectations in all four 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.
In the History category, performance is significantly higher in the UHS sample in comparison to the on-campus sample. In the UHS sample, the percentage of students who were “approaching” or “did not meet” each of the learning objectives was significantly lower across all four learning objectives, ranging from a low of 3-4% in categories 1, 2 and 3 to a high of 15% in category 4. In the on-campus sample, the percentage of students who were “approaching” or “did not meet” each of the learning objectives are relatively stable and evidently higher than UHS across all four learning objectives, ranging from a low of 28% in category 1 to a high of 31% in category 4.\(^1\)

In the UHS sample, the percentages of students either meeting or exceeded expectations for all four learning objectives ranges from a low of 85% in learning objective 4 to a high of 97% in objective 3. In comparison, the on-campus rates of exceeding or meeting learning objective goals were distinctively lower across all learning objectives, ranging from a low of 70% for objective 4 to a high of 72% for objective 1 (lack of deviation across rates can be partially attributed to one of the three instructors entering the same numbers for all categories, and it was a large class).

In the UHS sample, the percentage of students “exceeding” General Education goals ranges from a low of 27% in category 1 to a high of 47% in category 4. In the on-campus sample, the percentage of students who were “exceeding” each of the learning objectives range from low of 21% in category 1 to a high of 46% in category 2. While slight variation across populations would be normal, these results appear to indicate higher performance levels of the UHS students across all History general Education learning objectives.

In the UHS sample, learning objective 4 presented a deviation from the emerging patterns of the other learning objectives in regards to rates of students exceeding as well as not meeting requirements. While none (0%) of the UHS students “did not meet” requirements in learning objectives 1, 2 and 3, 5% of the same sample “did not meet requirements” in learning objective 4. Strikingly, learning objective 4 also presented the highest rate of “exceeding” general education requirements with 46% of the students “exceeding” expectations – highest rate of “exceeding” learning goals in the UHS sample in comparison to the other three objectives. Please note that the UHS sample for objective 4 was considerably smaller than for the remaining learning objectives since two instructors omitted objective goal attainment for objective 4.

\(^1\) Note that the complete report of the assessment of the History General Education category from 2009-10 is available from IRPE.
Figure 5: Performance on the History Learning Objective 1

Figure 6: Performance on the History Learning Objective 2
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.