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University of Nebraska at Kearney General Studies Council

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GSC Working Session
Notes
28 September 2012, 8:00am
FNDH 2147

- Objectives: 1) Decide how to use collected data to improve the GS program;
 2) Decide what further data may need to be collected.

Business

1) *TaskStream assessment data*

Trantham will export data from TaskStream and look at ways to analyze it that will help benefit the quality of the GS program.

2) *CAAP data*

After administration of CAAP in 2013/2014, we'll link the results of freshmen who took CAAP in 2010 with their results as seniors in 2013/2014 and look at value added.

3) *WEAVEonline assessment questions*

The council helped formulate answers to the questions about assessing the GS program that are asked in WEAVEonline. Several of the questions cannot be answered until after we evaluate TaskStream data. The questions will be revisited later on.

4) *Student portal survey*

Kruse and Moore will look at data from past student surveys about the portal, and will make a draft of a simpler student survey for use on TaskStream.

GSC members in attendance:

P. Burger – NSS

J. Carlson - NSS

M. Kruse - FAH

D. Mitchell – FAH

T. Moore – BT

M. Sutherland - LIB

K. Trantham – NSS

D. Snider – *ex officio*

K. Schipporeit – *ex officio*

Next regular meeting: Thursday, October 4, 2012, 3:30 pm, Warner Conference Room

Table 1

Comparison of scores on the critical thinking and essay writing tests.

	UNK 2007-2008	National 2007- 2008	UNK 2010-2011	National 2010-2011
First-Year Critical Thinking	59.9 ± 5.0	61.4 ± 5.5	62.5 ± 4.6	61.0 ± 5.3
Senior Critical Thinking	62.7 ± 5.5	62.9 ± 5.5	65.1 ± 4.5	63.0 ± 5.4
First-Year Essay	2.8 ± 0.6	3.2 ± 0.6	3.0 ± 0.5	3.0 ± 0.6
Senior Essay	3.0 ± 0.6	3.3 ± 0.6	3.5 ± 0.5	3.3 ± 0.6

Note. Scores given are the group's mean ± standard deviation for each group and testing year. The national norm group scores are also given. As indicated, UNK student scores improved from the 2007-2008 testing session to the 2010-2011 testing session, both relative to the national comparison group and in absolute terms.

Ranges

Essay writing 1-6

Critical thinking 40-80

WEAVEonline Assessment Questions

- 1) ~~Please indicate the number of graduates during the academic year, the number of majors, and/or number of minors.~~
- 2) Briefly discuss strengths of your department/program based on your assessment data.
- 3) Briefly discuss any areas that may need attention.
- 4) Provide a description of when/how assessment results were shared with department/program faculty. Were the assessment results discussed at a faculty meeting or retreat? Is the entire dept./program involved in decision making related to actions to be taken based on the data?
- 5) Critically evaluate the assessment process. Did the process assess department/program learning outcomes well? Was the data gathered useful?
- 6) Based on your assessment results, what changes has your department/program made over the last 4 years to improve student learning? Give 2-3 specific examples of the changes made.

Student questionnaire for Portal Courses

Freshmen and some transfer students at UNK take a portal course as part of their General Studies requirements. All portal courses have the number 188. (For example a portal course offered in the history department would be HIST 188.)

This survey will help UNK improve the quality of portal courses. It is optional, but your participation is appreciated. Your answers will be kept confidential, and we do not ask you to tell us your name.

Please respond to the following questions about your enrollment at UNK

1. Did you complete a portal course last semester? [y/n]
2. Which portal course did you take? [drop down menu with list of all portals from fall 2010]

Please respond to the following questions about your experiences in the General Studies portal course which you took last semester.

3. The class assignments and activities improved my critical thinking skills. [y/n]
4. The materials which I read facilitated critical thinking. [y/n]
5. The required writing assignments promoted critical thinking. [y/n]
6. How many of the following kinds of work assigned?
 - a) Reading a book # _____
 - b) Reading a book length collection of materials
(i.e. articles, essays, book chapters, short stories) # _____
 - c) Writing activities:
 - 1-5 pages # _____
 - over 5 pages # _____
 - None
 - d) Preparing two or more drafts of a writing assignment # _____
7. About how often did homework and class activities emphasize the following mental skills?

1=never	2=at least once in the semester	3=at least monthly
4=at least weekly	5=daily	

 - a. Memorizing facts
 - b. Analyzing idea (for example, looking at a concept in depth and considering all of its components)
 - c. Organizing information discussed in class to form new, more complex ideas
 - d. Making judgments about the quality of arguments or methods from the portal
 - e. Applying theories and concepts from the portal to new situations

8. About how often did you do the following in your portal course?
- | | | |
|-------------------|---------------------------------|--------------------|
| 1=never | 2=at least once in the semester | 3=at least monthly |
| 4=at least weekly | 5=daily | |

- a) Ask a question or make a comment without being called on
- b) Come fully prepared to class
- c) Tutor or help other students in the class
- d) Participate fully in small-group discussions
- e) Work harder than you expected in order to meet the class standards.

9. Did your portal teacher do any of the following in class? (check those that apply)

- a. Discuss the reason you are taking a General Studies portal course
- b. Present/discuss the portal and General Studies learning outcomes
- c. Give written feedback on your writing assignments
- d. Explain why you needed to purchase and use TaskStream
- e. Require you to upload at least one writing assignment into TaskStream for grading

10. As a result of your portal course, do you think you improved in the following skills?
[y/n]

- a. Analyzing critical issues confronting individuals and society
- b. Gaining a global (or worldwide) perspective relating to the course topic
- c. Understanding and the process of reasoning and argumentation
- d. Constructing a clear, organized essay or argument related to the course topic
- b. Writing a well-organized paper

11. Why do you think General Studies courses are required? (check those that apply)

- a. They are a requirement to graduate.
- b. They are preparation for classes in my major.
- c. They teach skills like analyzing information, writing, and thinking clearly.
- d. They help students to figure out what to major in.
- e. They contribute to intellectual development in a university-level education.
- f. I don't know.

Other: [text box]

12. What did you like most about the portal course you took? [text box]

13. What did you like least about the portal course you took? [text box]

Finally, a few questions about your background:

14. Are you
- a. a first-time college freshman who had never taken a college course prior to fall 2010
 - b. a college freshman who had taken one or more college courses before fall 2010 semester
 - c. a transfer student
15. What is your age?
- a. [type-in text box, if possible; otherwise, age ranges: 17-19, 20-23, 24-27, over 27]
 - b. prefer not to say
16. Are you
- a. male
 - b. female
 - c. prefer not to say
17. What is your race or ethnicity?
- a. African American
 - b. Native American / Inuit
 - c. Caucasian
 - d. Mexican-American
 - e. Asian-American / Pacific Islander
 - f. Puerto Rican, other Hispanic origin
 - g. Multiracial
 - h. Other
 - i. Prefer not to say

Thank you for taking the survey!