

Department Learning Outcomes Assessment Report

Assessment Cycle	2020-2021
Department/Program	<u>General Education</u>
Date of Committee Approval	<u>October 8, 2021</u>
Name of Submitter	<u>Scott Waalkes, Director of General Education</u>

Dates of data distribution and meetings: 9-10-21, 9-24-21, and 10-8-21

The General Education Committee met on the dates above to discuss and interpret the results reported below. The Committee approved the text of this report on October 8, 2021.

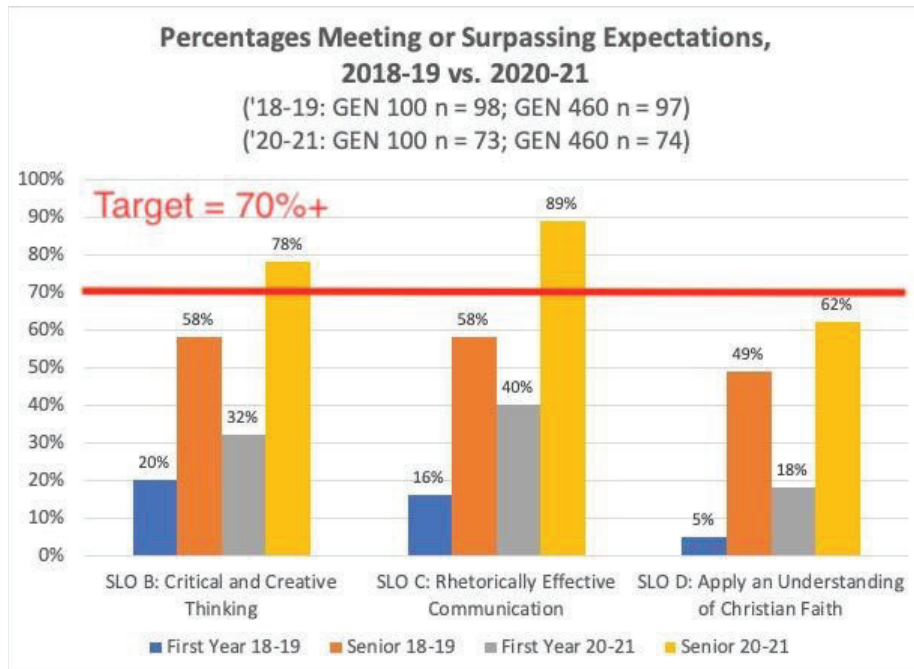
Participants in these meetings were the members of the General Education Committee:

- Scott Waalkes, Chair
- Julia Frankland
- David Hahn
- Sheri Hartman
- Kate Huisinga
- Andy Reynolds

Identify and describe the one best example of “closing the loop” from Step 0:

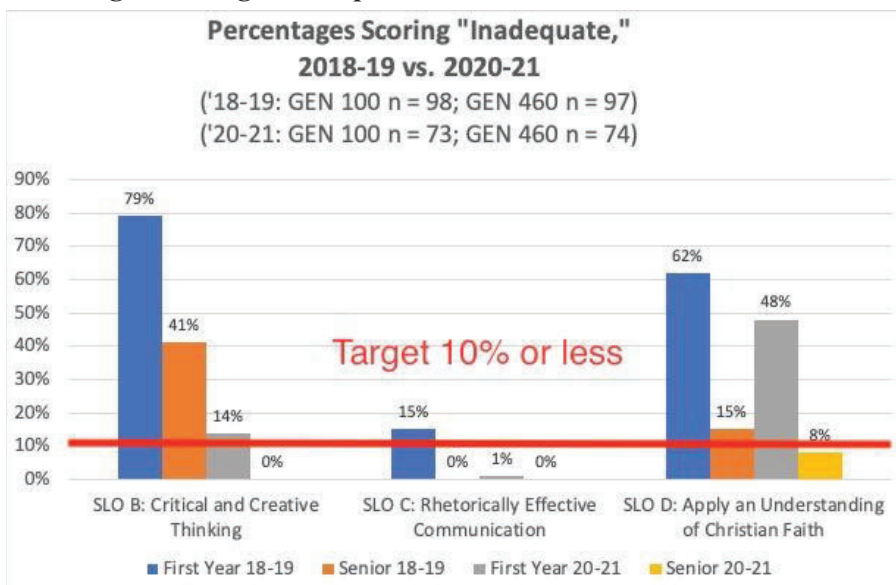
- 1. The name of the program of study: General Education**
- 2. The exact wording of the specific PLO identified as a challenge:**
 - Students will understand the foundations of the Christian faith and the role of service to the church, community, and world and apply this knowledge to ethical and social issues (SLO D)
- 3. A brief summary of the evidence used to identify the PLO as a challenge:**
 - In 2018-2019, we missed the target of having 70% or more of seniors Meeting or Surpassing Expectations (scoring a “3” or “4” on the rubric) in our direct-measure assessment of GEN 100 and GEN 460 essays, with only 49% of senior essays scoring there (see Figure 1 below).

Figure 1. Percentages Meeting or Surpassing Expectations



- In 2018-19, we missed the target of 10% or fewer scoring Inadequate (“1” on the rubric) in our direct-measure assessment of GEN 100 and GEN 460 essays, with 15% of senior essays scoring there (Figure 2).

Figure 2. Percentages Scoring “Inadequate”



4. The specific action steps taken to address the challenge:

Responding to 2018-19 and earlier data showing SLO D as a challenge, at least four steps were taken. First, a previous General Education Director (Greg Miller) and then-Dean of Theology, Arts, and Sciences (Jim Brownlee) completed a collaborative process that created the 3 “Faith-Learning Shared Commitments” with faculty teaching primarily in Theology, Arts, and Sciences. Out of this process, faculty members committed to

- Make disciplinarily appropriate connections to the story of the gospel as presented in Scripture and expressed in the Malone Doctrinal Statement
- Using activities or assignments, encourage students to develop compassion and a posture of service in order to emphasize the role of service to the Church, community, and world
- Using activities or assignments, encourage students to apply Scriptural and theological principles to a social or ethical issue.

Second, a new Instructor Response Form was created as part of regular reviews of Components in the curriculum. Specifically, faculty members teaching in GEN 460, Understanding Persons (ECON 202: Principles of Macroeconomics, PSYC 121: Intro to Psychology, and SOC 201: Intro to Sociology), and Engaging the Created Order (BIOL 190: Nutrition and BIOL 220: Environmental Sciences) were asked to “Briefly describe how you promote each of the 3 Faith-Learning Shared Commitments in your course.” By bringing these Commitments to the attention of teaching faculty, the report reminds them of specific ways they can advance Outcome D in their teaching practices.

Third, in the process of developing Component Reviews in 2018-2019, faculty members teaching in the various components were asked to develop curriculum maps by consensus based on whether their courses had a low, medium, or high focus on the Gen Ed SLOs (see Table 1 below).

Table 1. General Education SLO Curriculum Mapping by Components (Low, Medium, or High Focus Levels)

	SLO A: Students will understand theories and cultural influences that have shaped the world.	SLO B: Students will think critically and creatively (including being "able to integrate Christian faith with disciplinary knowledge, and develop multiple approaches to problems.")	SLO C: Students will communicate effectively in multiple contexts.	SLO D: Students will understand the foundations of the Christian faith and the role of service to the church, community, and world and apply this knowledge to ethical and social issues.
GEN 100	L	M	H	M
BIBL 100	M	M	L	H
THEO 211	M	H	M	H
Philosophy	M	H	M	H
ENG 145	L	H	H	H
COMM 110	M	H	H	H
PSYC 140	L	H	M	M
Engaging Created Order	M	M	M	H
ENG 200	M	H	H	M
UPS	M	M	M	H
Fine Arts				
HIST 112	H	M	H	H
American Cultures & Inst's.	H	M	M	H
Global Encounters	H	M	M	M
GEN 460	M	H	H	H

Fourth, the writing prompts given to first-year and senior students were “tweaked” to add instructions to students. For first-year students, GEN 100 College Experience course faculty improved the essay prompt by adding explicit language related to faith-learning integration, making the essays more suitable for comparison with GEN 460 essays. For senior students in GEN 460, the essay prompt was improved by adding the following language as concluding instructions:

- “Do not merely summarize different highlights of the course. Instead, craft a compelling essay in which you weave different ideas and examples together in order to support a thesis and to develop a larger conclusion. Your essay should not read like a list. Instead, it should read like a narrative with a beginning, middle, and end.”

5. An evaluation of whether or not the action has resulted in improvement to student learning with respect to the specific PLO identified as a challenge:

We believe that the improvements shown in Figures 1 and 2 reflect, in part, the four efforts described in the previous section.

6. The processes that are in place to maintain and monitor the effectiveness of the action steps:

We will again review our direct-measure essays that assess Gen Ed SLOs B, C, and D again in May 2023, using samples from the 2022-2023 academic year.

7. Ways in which the challenge has informed departmental strategic planning, budgeting, and/or expenditures:

Time allocation: Addressing the challenge required at least three meetings of faculty during open meeting times (Mondays at 10 am). Refreshments might also have been provided. For minimal budgetary outlay, there appears to have been a demonstrable increase in student learning outcomes.