

TLA

Teaching,
Learning,
and
Assessment



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Assessing General Education at UD

As another academic year starts with the arrival of the incoming freshmen on campus, how is UD helping students to attain the university's general education goals?

Of the 14 accreditation standards that The Middle States Commission on Higher Education (MSCHE) identifies, Standard 12 specifically addresses General Education. It suggests that the curricula should be designed as to allow students to acquire and

demonstrate college-level proficiency in essential skills, including oral and written communication, scientific and quantitative reasoning, critical analysis and reasoning, and technological competency.

MSCHE expects the institution to consider what evidence exists that illustrates graduates' attainment of acceptable levels of competency in these six critical areas.

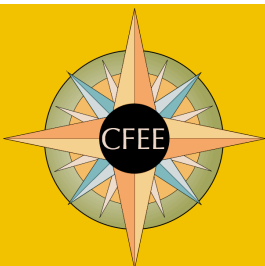
To promote further enhancement of general education at the University of Delaware, the Office of Educational Assessment

(OEA) is currently focusing on collecting various evidence illustrating students' attainment of general education at UD.

Dr. Karen Stein, in-coming Chair of the University Faculty Senate General Education Committee and Associate Professor of Leadership in the School of Ur-

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Center for Educational Effectiveness

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and the Center for Teaching and Learning

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ban Affairs and Public Policy, shares her thoughts on general education at UD:

"In 2004, the University Faculty Senate adopted 10 broad goals of general education—skills and knowledge in which every student upon graduation should be proficient. This, in itself, was not uncommon. In fact, most major universities and colleges expect their students to engage in General Education in addition to disciplinary-based knowledge and skills.

Most academic institutions take a "menu approach" to general education that goes like this. There will be lists of courses usually categorized by broad discipline (humanities, sciences, or original titles like global diversity, etc). Students are then instructed to take so many credits in so many categories (choose 9 credits from the courses listed in the humanities, 6 credits from the courses listed under global diversity, etc.) to fulfill that institution's general education requirement. But we at

UD chose to go another way. Instead of a general education requirement that is based on students' choosing among a menu of certain courses that we designate as general education courses, a Faculty Senate resolutions states that "each department or program responsible for administering undergraduate majors is encouraged to direct its students to acquire basic skills, avail themselves of discovery learning, and participate in a capstone experience."

Some faculty may equate group requirements or breadth requirements with general education, believing that if students fulfill the former, they also fulfill the general education goals. But, that is not necessarily true, as those requirements were not intentionally designed to link with general education. In fact, how or if students achieve our general education goals is not clear. This fall OEA will be conducting the first university-wide assessment of whether or not students are meeting our gen-

eral education expectations. The results of that assessment will give us much to think about.

The world - and UD - changes rapidly. After six years, it may be time to re-open the conversation about the connections among FYE, DLE, breadth requirements, group requirements, disciplinary knowledge, and general education, and how general education can be even more effective in preparing students for life in the technologically sophisticated, diverse, highly communicative and globally integrated world in which they will live and work."

Approaching Middle States Accreditation

"While assessment of student learning outcomes is a requirement for accreditation, the primary motivation for measuring student learning should be an institutional commitment to continuous improvement of the teaching/learning process. That can only be achieved through ongoing assessment of the extent to which students are mastering specific learning outcomes, and those teaching paradigms and pedagogies that most effectively contribute to student learning."

*Michael F. Middaugh
Associate Provost for
Institutional Effectiveness*

Standardized testing to be conducted in the fall to assess General Education

OEA will be conducting a university-wide assessment during the Fall Semester 2010 to evaluate undergraduate students' attainment of the general education goals. OEA will be utilizing the [Educational Testing Service Proficiency Profile \(ETS EPP\) test](#). "As an outcomes assessment used by colleges and universities, it provides a profile of the academic skills developed by students through general education courses, thus helping institutions document their effec-

tiveness and make continuous improvement."

The test will be administered to 600 students (300 freshmen, 300 seniors). This general education test measures skills including written communication, quantitative reasoning, and critical thinking in the context of the humanities, social sciences and natural sciences. This test will help to ensure the University is meeting MSCHE's requirement for General Education, Standard 12, and provide valuable data and informa-

tion on how the university's students are performing.

In addition to administering the Gen Ed test, the OEA is conducting a study examining the validity and effectiveness of the test by comparing it to the [AAC&U VALUE rubrics](#). The scores on the standardized test will be compared to scores derived from the review of students' work via rubrics, generally recognized as state-of-the-art evaluative tools for qualitative assessment of general education competencies.

Call for Action

OEA is currently seeking faculty who teach senior level capstone courses to assist in conducting the ETS Gen Ed test.

Faculty would need to provide 40 minutes of a class period during which students will complete the paper and pencil version of the Gen Ed test. Faculty may serve as a proctor of the test, appoint someone else, or ask the OEA to provide a proctor.

Following the completion of the test, students will be asked to submit work samples which demonstrate their proficiency in written communication, critical thinking and quantitative reasoning skills. Students work samples will be reviewed by volunteer faculty via the application of the above mentioned VALUE Rubrics. Students' names will not appear on their work samples or on their test scores, providing complete anonymity.

The faculty's role in this project is to provide adequate amount of class time for stu-

dents to complete the Gen Ed test, and to convey to students the importance of General Education and its assessment. All other logistical tasks will be completed by the OEA.

The test will take place during the month of October.

Faculty who are interested in allowing the OEA to implement the 40 minute General Education test in their class should [click on this link to sign up](#), or e-mail the OEA staff at: cfee-info@udel.edu.

On the sign-up form you can also indicate whether you are interested in assessing the students' work using the AAC&U VALUE rubrics for the purpose of this study.

Should any questions arise regarding this request, please contact the Office of Educational Assessment at cfee-info@udel.edu or call 302-831-2027.

Office of Educational Assessment names three Assessment Scholars

The Office of Educational Assessment (OEA) has named three Assessment Scholars to document and enhance the quality of student learning engagement at UD. The Assessment Scholars will play an integral part in preparing for the Middle States accreditation process by:

- Examining the assessment of Gen Ed and whether students are meeting the Gen Ed goals, document UD students' level of Gen ED competency for MSCHE accreditation's Standard 12, and make recommendations for improvements that will be shared with the Faculty Senate.
- Reviewing the OEA data, and documenting Standard 14- Assessment of Student Learning for the MSCHE accreditation.
- Serving as a resource on issues pertaining to the assessment of Gen Ed and assessment as part of the instructional process.

The three assessment scholars that have been selected are:



Dr. Del Levia is an Associate Professor of Ecohydrology in the Geography Department at the University of Delaware. He holds a secondary ap-

pointment in the Department of Plant and Soil Sciences. As both an educator that employs student-centered approaches in the classroom and an Assessment Fellow, Dr. Levia utilizes best practice assessment strategies at both individual course and programmatic levels. A recent article on Dr. Levia's assessment efforts and their congruous nature with national standards has been published in *Journal of Geography in Higher Education*, an international peer-reviewed publication.



Dr. Don Lehman is an Associate Professor in the Department of Medical Technology. He has been employed at UD for 20 years. He received his BS in Medical Technology and MS in Microbiology & Immunology from Wright State

"I am looking forward to working with the other Assessment Scholars, Michael Mid- daugh, and the Office of Education Assessment. The Department of Medical Technology undergoes external accreditation every 7 years, and we are currently preparing our documentation for an upcoming review. This is the third self study I have been through since I have been at UD. With my background in accreditation and education, I believe I will be able to strongly contribute to the self study the University is preparing for the Middle States Commission on Higher Education.

The role of the Assessment Scholars is to assess the strengths and weaknesses of the assessment data that the academic units have submitted. We are looking at Standard 14, Assessment of Student Learning. The University must analyze its overall effectiveness in achieving goals for student learning. In other words, how effective are the academic and support programs in documenting if students achieve each key learning outcome?"

-Dr. Don Lehman

University and his EdD from the University of Delaware. He is knowledgeable about computer-assisted instruction as he utilizes the online virtual world "Second Life" in a forensic science class he teaches. He is an editor of two books: *Textbook of Diagnostic Microbiology*, 4th ed. 2011, Elsevier; *Success! In Clinical Laboratory Science*, 4th ed. 2010, Pearson.



Dr. Iain Crawford is an Associate Professor in the Department of English. He teaches courses in Victorian literature in the Department of English and his research focuses on the works of Dickens. He has also served as a peer evaluator for the Higher Learning

Commission and for the Western Association of Colleges and Schools, visiting a number of campuses as a member of their accreditation teams and reviewing their work on assessment.

Relational Database

“The Assessment Database is a central repository for all of the files that departments on-campus have created throughout their assessment cycles. All of the documents are organized by semester, which allows auditors and other interested parties to easily see how programs are revised to improve areas of weakness found during assessment. Storing the document in one location makes it easier for auditors to evaluate the university as a whole, and allows assessment scholars to be able to compare their respective depart-

ments' compliance with university recommendations.

Currently we have a team of assessment scholars going through the database to find exemplary departments and those that we lack documents from.”

-Dan Blanchard, Graduate Assistant/
Webmaster for OEA

Below is a snapshot of the database.

To obtain access to the database, please contact us at:
cfee-info@udel.edu

UD ASSESSMENT SYSTEM

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Program

College	College of Health Sci...
Department	Medical Technology
Major	None
Mission	In accordance with the goals set forth by the University of Delaware and the College of Health Sciences, it is the mission of the Department of Medical Technology to: Provide excellent undergraduate professional education in the Clinical Laboratory Sciences, Contribute to the health sciences body of knowledge through basic and clinical research, and Function as an expert resource within the University community and the mid-Atlantic region regarding all issues related to Clinical Laboratory Science.

Learning Goals

Semester	Statement	Gen. Ed. Goals	Active
2010 Winter	Utilize proper techniques in the performance of all laboratory testing.		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
2010 Winter	Interpret accurately clinical significance, clinical procedures, and laboratory test data.	Critical Thinking/Research	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
2010 Winter	Evaluate laboratory data using statistical analysis.	Quantitative Reasoning	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
2010 Winter	Apply principles of continuous assessment to all laboratory services.	Critical Thinking/Research	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
2010 Winter	Utilize principles of quality assurance and quality improvement for all phases of laboratory services (i.e., pre-analytical, analytical, and post-analytical).	Critical Thinking/Research	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

Center for Educational Effectiveness

This newsletter is a collaborative project of the [Office of Educational Assessment](#) and the [Center for Teaching and Learning](#).

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Questions and comments:

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