



Committee for the Assessment of General Education

Monday, September 30, 2013
11:00 AM, 140 Murray Hall

Minutes

1. Members Present: Melanie Bayles, Carol Beier, Jon Comer (Chair), John Gelder (Vice-Chair), Bridget Miller, Greg Wilber

UAT Personnel Present: Lisa Cota, Mark Nicholas, Sarah Wilkey

2. Update on Gen Ed 2012-13 rating process and report generation:

Cota gave a brief summary of her initial analyses of Science Reasoning and Diversity portfolio scores from summer 2013. The average of overall scores for the 227 artifacts in this year's Science portfolio was 2.84 (mode = 3), second highest since 2003 and significantly higher than the scores in 2005, which were the low average for the portfolio. Numerous cross tabulations of student traits were run but only OSU GPA was a significant correlate with Science scores ($p = 0.0182$).

In contrast, the Diversity portfolio had an average overall score of 2.31 (mode = 2) for 232 artifacts. This is the lowest average for this portfolio dating back to 2007, is significantly lower than the high mark of 3.16 achieved in 2008, and is a continued cause for concern.

Cota discussed analysis options for these data. Since the raw scores are ordinals but historically have been treated as interval-ratio data, she felt past analyses, especially linear regression, had limited usefulness. She has other ideas for analyzing the overall scores and sub-scores, and the committee agreed to follow her lead on applying appropriate, useful, and understandable statistics for reporting this year. She noted that this year's report will feature much less hypothesis testing than occurred in the 2011-12 report. Cota will complete a report due to the Regents in early November, after which the committee asked Wilkey and Cota to finish a first draft of the university's general education assessment report by November 30 for committee review and comment. Historically, the report is finalized by February of the following year so it is available for the joint CAGE-GEAC-AAIC meeting customarily held in March, and the committee agreed to maintain this timeline.

3. VSA and VALUE Rubrics:

Wilkey reported on OSU's past efforts to comply with the Voluntary System of Accountability (VSA) by employing one of the three accepted standardized test options. These tests have always been problematic in terms of inducing students to come to UAT to take these "extra" curricular tests, to put forth their best effort when taking the tests, and the value of the results to the university since the scores are almost entirely used for reporting purposes with very little developmental aspect. Nicholas then explained the VALUE rubrics developed and disseminated by the Association of American Colleges and Universities (AAC&U), and that the VSA now permits a fourth option using VALUE rubrics for writing and critical thinking competency. Universities may collect artifacts, score them internally, and then report scores every 3-4 years to the VSA instead of giving standardized tests. Universities must collect artifacts for incoming freshmen in the fall semester and seniors in the spring semester, and an institution of OSU's size would be required to have at least 350 artifacts from each group. Overall, if OSU were to adopt this option then it would be most efficient to use the VALUE rubrics in place of our own Writing and Critical Thinking rubrics and collect and score artifacts for both VSA reporting and general education assessment. This segued directly into the next agenda item.

4. Development of General Education Assessment Writing Portfolio for 2014

The VSA requires reporting by participating universities every 3-4 years and for Writing and Critical Thinking to be assessed in the same year. This would mark a departure for OSU in that while Writing was due to be assessed in the summer of 2014 (for artifacts collected during the 2013-14 academic year), Critical Thinking was just assessed in summer 2012 and is not scheduled again until summer 2015. However, the committee felt the benefits of dual-purposing general education assessment and VSA reporting outweigh the negatives, and while it may be challenging to obtain 350 artifacts for Critical Thinking for both freshmen in the fall and seniors in the spring, it is worth the effort and the vast majority of artifacts could also be assessed for Writing as well. It was estimated that over the past three summers UAT has spent at least \$25,000 per summer (\$2,200 to each artifact reviewer for at least 12 reviewers each summer) and also at least \$10,000 every three years for the Collegiate Learning Assessment (CLA) portfolio exam.

The committee felt that it would make sense if the schedule for general education was adjusted, which would lead to uneven budget needs on a rotating 4-year basis. CAGE would need much more money to hire artifact reviewers in summer 2014 for writing and critical thinking, less the next summer to review Diversity (and separate it from Science; the two portfolios were both assessed in summer 2013), reviewing Science artifacts in summer 2016, and possibly taking a break in summer 2017

before starting the cycle again for Writing and Critical Thinking for the next VSA-required reporting in 2018. Comer will both report on this possibility at the AAIC meeting on October 4 as well as work with the Provost's Office to determine actual budgets and the feasibility of using funds for assessment in this manner, including the unevenness of the budget from year to year.

The committee asked Wilkey and Cota to proceed with plans to collect freshmen artifacts in fall 2013 and make plans for senior artifact collection in spring 2014. CAGE will contact departments that teach large, freshman-level general education courses (ENGL, PHIL, POLS, others?) that perhaps have writing assignments that are designed to evince Critical Thinking and which can also be assessed for Writing. It is anticipated that a vast majority of artifacts could be deployed into both portfolios, but that additional Writing artifacts could be sought that do not demonstrate Critical Thinking and likewise some artifacts might be found that show Critical Thinking but which are not structured in a prose format that would permit assessment of Writing. All avenues will be pursued to get both portfolios to the necessary 350 freshmen and 350 senior artifacts.

5. A&S General Education Initiative

Comer reported on a new initiative in the College of Arts & Sciences to assess general education at the departmental level. Plans are in development but A&S Heads were recently tasked with identifying one, large-enrollment, multiple-section, lower-division general education course (if they offer one) to target for artifact collection in spring 2014 and assessment in summer 2014, following an assessment model closely patterned on CAGE (e.g., paid summer reviewers, two reviewers per artifact, norming sessions before and after artifact review). While this initiative is in the early stages, Comer was consulted by the A&S Dean to explain what CAGE does, to offer suggestions based on CAGE experiences, and he recently attended an A&S Heads Meeting to describe CAGE and to answer questions about how CAGE might assist A&S in this effort. Comer also hopes that this will generate more collected, useful artifacts from A&S that could help increase the size of the general education assessment portfolios discussed above. However, the A&S initiative seems more focused on assessing learning of outcomes specific to OSU's general education designations (H, I, S, L, A, N, D) compared to CAGE's Critical Thinking, Diversity, Science Reasoning, and Writing portfolios. Comer provided the Dean with all 16 VALUE rubrics and the five OSU rubrics (including the dormant Math Skills rubric) for departments to consider as assessment tools.

6. Meeting adjourned at 12:05 PM

Respectfully submitted by Jon Comer