

## **SUBCOMMITTEE ON POLICY AND ASSESSMENT 2019-20 ANNUAL REPORT**

### **SUBCOMMITTEE OPERATIONS**

The Subcommittee on Policy and Assessment (SCPA) is charged with reviewing proposals for new undergraduate requirements, policy issues, proposals for new or revised Change of Major criteria, and developing and maintaining guidelines and procedures for periodic assessment. SCPA recommendations are submitted to the Council on Educational Policy for action. The Subcommittee's full duties are outlined in [Irvine Bylaw 85.C.1](#). Professor Steve Mang, Physical Sciences, chaired the Subcommittee in 2019-20. The Subcommittee met three times during the academic year.

### **SUBCOMMITTEE ISSUES**

- The Campus Assessment Coordinator, Venette Van Duyn, briefed the Subcommittee on the assessment work expected by the Western Association of Schools and Colleges (WASC) Senior College and University Commission (WSCUC). Members were informed that WSCUC will expect: 1) quantitative information about the degree to which undergraduate students have mastered course learning outcomes in the eight General Education categories; 2) assessment plans and results that measure student competency in at least two learning outcomes in the major for each of UCI's approximately 85 undergraduate majors, and 3) information on undergraduate student mastery of five core competencies (written and oral communication, quantitative reasoning, information literacy, and critical thinking) at the time of graduation. (November 21, 2019)
- Subcommittee members discussed ongoing General Education (GE) assessment efforts and decided to assess GE Area II (Science and Technology), GE Area III (Social and Behavioral Sciences), and GE Area IV (Arts and Humanities) during AY 2019-2020. Members agreed to copy department chairs when contacting instructors with GE survey information to help chairs have a better understanding of what is expected for instructors of GE courses. (November 21, 2020)
- The Subcommittee declined to opine on the Interim Policy and Procedures for Student International Activities. (November 21, 2020)
- The Subcommittee discussed how to optimize communication with Schools, Departments, and instructors and increase response rates to GE surveys, assessment reports for learning outcomes in the major, and the core competencies mapping exercise. (January 16, 2020)
- The Subcommittee sent a letter to Associate Deans for Undergraduate Education and Department Chairs asking them to coordinate mapping of the five WSCUC core competencies onto required courses for the majors in their programs and Schools in preparation for UCI's WASC accreditation visit in 2022. Deadlines were later extended due to the COVID-19 pandemic. (February 14, 2020)
- The Campus Assessment Coordinator sent the GE survey, as approved by the subcommittee, to GE instructors teaching in Winter 2020 and Spring 2020.
- The Subcommittee discussed the lack of Senate oversight of independent study 199 courses. (March 19, 2020)
- The Subcommittee reviewed and discussed the Teaching Associate Exception Request checklist. (March 19, 2020)

## **MEMBERSHIP**

### **Voting Members**

Steve Mang, Chair, Physical Sciences

Peter Bowler, Biological Sciences

Juliette Carrillo, Arts

Amanda Holton, Physical Sciences

Daniel Mumm, Engineering

Samuel Schriener, Pharmaceutical Sciences

Jennifer Wong-Ma, Information and Computer Sciences

### **Ex Officio Members**

Elizabeth Bennett, University Registrar

Michael Dennin, Vice Provost for Teaching and Learning & Dean, Division of Undergraduate Education

Daniel Gross, Campus Writing Coordinator

Venette Van Duyn, Campus Assessment Coordinator

### **Consultants**

Helen Morgan, Director, Social Sciences Undergraduate Student Affairs

Brad Queen, Director, Composition

Aliya Thomas, University Editor

Annual Report Prepared By: Kate Brigman, Executive Director

## Appendix A - Assessment Notice Sent 2/14/20

Dear Associate Deans and Department Chairs,

The Academic Senate Policy and Assessment Subcommittee will be conducting its annual review of undergraduate assessment activities this upcoming Fall 2020. You are receiving this notice because the majors and departments within your school have required assessment work that will be due during this current academic year. Please read the following instructions carefully and note the required assessment work at the following levels: Institutional (Core Competencies) and General Education.

UCI performs direct assessment of student learning for the purposes of ensuring a high quality education for all students, for the continuous improvement of teaching and learning, and to meet the standards of UCI's regional accrediting body, the [WASC Senior College and University Commission \(WSCUC\)](#). UCI must reaffirm its accreditation every 10 years, and will have a WSCUC site visit in Fall 2022. It is critical that UCI collect high quality assessment evidence to meet accreditation requirements and to avoid formal recommendations and sanctions from WSCUC that may result in more frequent accountability reporting. UCI emphasizes that good assessment work is already happening every day via regular department and course activities. The following requests are designed to synthesize and report on the good work already happening.

### **Core Competencies**

***Due March 28, 2020***

As part of institutional best practices and per Academic Senate policy, all undergraduate majors and general education courses regularly assess their learning outcomes. We thank you for providing this evidence of achievement of learning outcomes, and we are writing with a follow-up request. In addition to learning outcomes specific to majors and courses, UCI expects that all undergraduates (regardless of major) have achieved five *core competencies*. These core competencies are integral to a high quality liberal arts education and prepare students to excel in their graduate careers and in the workplace. These core competencies are:

1. **Written communication:** communication by means of written language for informational, persuasive, and expressive purposes. Written communication may appear in many forms, or genres. Successful written communication depends on mastery of the conventions of the written language, facility with culturally accepted structures for presentation and argument, awareness of audience, and other situation-specific factors.
2. **Oral communication:** communication by means of spoken language for informational, persuasive, and expressive purposes. In addition to speech, oral communication may employ visual aids, body language, intonation, and other non-verbal elements to support the conveyance of meaning and connection with the audience. Oral communication may include speeches, presentations, discussions, dialogue, and other forms of interpersonal communication, either delivered face to face or mediated technologically.
3. **Quantitative reasoning:** the ability to apply mathematical concepts to the interpretation and analysis of quantitative information in order to solve a wide range of problems, from those arising in pure and applied research to everyday issues and questions. It may include such dimensions as ability to apply math skills, judge reasonableness, communicate quantitative information, and recognize the limits of mathematical or statistical methods.

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4. **Information literacy:** according to the Association of College and Research Libraries, the ability to “recognize when information is needed and have the ability to locate, evaluate, and use the needed information” for a wide range of purposes. An information-literate individual is able to determine the extent of information needed, access it, evaluate it and its sources, use the information effectively, and do so ethically and legally.
5. **Critical thinking:** the ability to think in a way that is clear, reasoned, reflective, informed by evidence, and aimed at deciding what to believe or do. Dispositions supporting critical thinking include open-mindedness and motivation to seek the truth.

We expect that all undergraduates at UCI will have achieved each of these core competencies through any course of study. The WSCUC has also added this demonstration of core competencies to its standards of accreditation. Specifically, it is asking all institutions to demonstrate that its students have achieved the five core competencies at or near graduation.

For more details on the Core Competencies WSCUC standard, see the [WSCUC 2013 Handbook of Accreditation](#). For sample rubrics to assess core competencies, see [AACU's VALUE rubrics](#).

The Academic Senate Policy and Assessment Subcommittee asks that you share these core competencies with your Undergraduate Chairs and ask them to consider how competencies can be defined and measured in upper division courses within their major. Specifically, we ask that Chairs “map” each core competency to 1) one or more of the learning outcomes already established for the major; 2) one or more *required* upper-division courses where the core competency could be measured; or (3) one or more *elective* upper-division courses where the core competency could be measured. Alternatively, the core competency may not be reflected in the curriculum and consequently is not assessed in the major; in this case the major expects students to have achieved that core competency as part of their General Education courses.

The matrix will appear as below:

Core Competency	Assessed via one or more learning outcomes within the major (specify the learning outcomes)	Assessed in one or more <b>required</b> upper-division courses (specify the courses)	Assessed in one or more <b>elective</b> upper-division courses (specify the courses)	Not assessed in the major; Competency expected to be assessed in General Education courses only
Written communication				
Oral communication				
Quantitative reasoning				
Information literacy				
Critical thinking				

For example, below are the learning outcomes for the Anthropology major:

### 1. Awareness of cultural diversity and global relations:

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The student demonstrates knowledge of how social relationships, individual choices, and institutions are shaped by culture. The student demonstrates knowledge of cultural variation and diversity such that there are a range of perspectives, practices, and beliefs within each culture and across cultures. The student demonstrates knowledge of the relationships that link people and societies across cultural, national, and regional boundaries and is able to identify ways that different regional histories shape global relationships. Core concepts: cultural construction, cultural relativism, ethnocentrism, colonialism, capitalism, north/south relations.

### 2. Research and analytical skills

The student demonstrates knowledge of the basic steps involved in scholarly research. The student demonstrates the ability to locate and to critically evaluate a range of information sources on a chosen topic. The student can describe research methods used by anthropologists such as participant observation, thick description, and interviewing.

### 3. Communication skills

Writing: The student is able to write clearly and to make connections between broader arguments or generalizations and specific examples and data that support or contradict the arguments. Public speaking and group presentations: The student is able to organize and articulate ideas and information and communicate them orally.

Given these learning outcomes, we might expect a completed matrix for the Anthropology major to look like this:

Core Competency	Assessed via one or more learning outcomes within the major (specify the learning outcomes)	Assessed in one or more upper-division courses (specify the courses)	Assessed in one or more <b>elective</b> upper-division courses (specify the courses)	Not assessed in the major; competency is expected to be assessed in General Education courses only (write "Yes" below)
Written communication	SLO 3			
Oral communication	SLO 3			
Quantitative reasoning			125A, 125S	
Information literacy	SLO 2			
Critical thinking	SLO1, SLO2			

Please note that the first column in the matrix (Assessed via one or more learning outcomes within the major) supersedes the others. That is, if a core competency is already assessed in one or more learning outcomes for the major, you would not need to complete the other columns and specify particular courses where the core competency is assessed.

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Similarly, if a core competency is assessed in one or more upper-division courses (Column 2), you would not need to complete Columns 3 and 4.

Please also note that completing this matrix is meant to serve as a survey of the extent to which these core competencies are currently being assessed across campus. This exercise is not intended to result in changes to the curriculum or any additional separate assessment work in these areas.

In some cases, it might be difficult to imagine that a core competency can be assessed by a particular major. Take for example the competency of quantitative reasoning. At first blush, quantitative reasoning may seem difficult to assess in arts and humanities majors in their final year of study; however, when quantitative reasoning is re-imagined as not just mathematical or statistical computation but rather as “a habit of mind, a way of thinking about the world that relies on data and on the mathematical analysis of data to make connections and draw conclusions” (AACU, 2009), Chairs might creatively reconsider how students in these majors demonstrate these skills.

Please complete the matrix online: [Core Competencies Survey](#) (the link is also in the email sent to you). The survey link can be forwarded to Chairs as necessary. **Please complete the survey no later than March 28, 2020 at 6pm.**

### General Education

**Faculty teaching GE courses to submit brief surveys by March 28 and July 1<sup>st</sup>, 2020.**

Over the past 4 years, UCI has regularly assessed the learning outcomes of each of the 8 General Education categories. This assessment took place via a survey of instructors teaching these GE courses.

Last year, the Policy and Assessment Subcommittee simplified this assessment process and will be piloting a new survey form this current academic year. This form will be sent to all GE instructors in Categories II (Science and Technology), III (Social and Behavioral Sciences), and IV (Arts and Humanities).

This form is designed to give instructors a chance to reflect on their courses, with an eye towards improving how they teach their classes and assess students in the future. The questions are designed to be fairly open-ended, so instructors can answer them in any way meaningful to them and their course. The ultimate goal is reflection and improvement of teaching, which we hope translates into better outcomes for students. We expect the time-on-task now to be under an hour, because we expect instructors have already been thinking about these issues throughout the quarter.

The survey that will be sent out to GE instructors will ask the following questions:

Option 1) Write about an instrument that does a good job of assessing how well students meet one or more of the Course Learning Outcomes (CLOs) specified for your General Education course. Describe the instrument and what CLOs it assesses. Explain why it does a good job, and report any relevant statistics and an interpretation of student performance on the instrument.

OR

Option 2) Write about where/how your students are struggling to meet one or more of the Course Learning Outcomes (CLOs) specified for your General Education course. Describe how success is currently assessed, why students struggle with the CLOs, or why assessment is difficult or just

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inadequate, and indicate how any of these might be improved. You can critique any changes from prior course offerings or propose changes for subsequent offerings.

### AND OPTIONALLY

Write criticism or praise for the current CLOs, as they relate to your course. Are there any that don't apply? If one or more don't, can you suggest improvements to them or alternative CLOs to replace them?

Instructors teaching GE in courses in the Winter will be asked to submit their surveys by **March 28, 2020**, and Instructors teaching GE courses in the Spring will be asked to submit their surveys by **July 1<sup>st</sup>, 2020**. Please encourage the GE instructors in your departments to complete these surveys.

The Assessment Committee would like to extend its gratitude to departments in advance for submitting these assessment reports for the review. Please do not hesitate to call or email Steve Mang and/or Venette Van Duyn if you have any questions or concerns about the review process.

We look forward to assisting you with your assessment efforts.

Sincerely,

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