The Evaluation of General Education at UAA:

Final Report and Recommendations of the

General Education Requirements Assessment Task Force

April 28, 2014

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Task Force Charge: The Faculty Senate Motion of September 7, 2012, which created the General Education Assessment Task Force (GERA), called for a two year project including:

- Researching national best practices in assessment of general education learning outcomes;
- Fostering a campus wide dialogue on general education and GER outcomes assessment;
- Recommending the next steps toward developing a GER assessment plan and any funding implications of that recommendation.

Key Findings and Themes: The following represent key themes that have consistently and forcefully emerged from the task force’s investigation:

- The Value of General Education: Society values broadly trained individuals who can think, communicate, imagine, analyze, and engage with their surrounding community and the wider world.
- Communication and Awareness: UAA needs to articulate this message of value to all involved (faculty, staff, administration, students, community)
- Conceptual, Skills-based learning: The role of general education includes building conceptual learning, transferable skills and intellectual perspectives as a foundation for specific content knowledge.
- Integration and Collaboration: General education SLOs will be reinforced if they are integrated throughout a student’s academic career, and if they are taught and learned in more than a single “GER” course
- “Authentic” assessment: A best practice is using course embedded assignments rather than artificial constructs designed just for “assessment.”
- Flexibility, simplicity and sustainability: There is no need to assess all 9 outcomes in every GER course, every year. This may result in data overload and faculty frustration. Instead, it is best to intentionally stagger, sample, and selectively focus campus energies on one or two outcomes at a time.
- Assessment as inquiry, dialogue and engagement: The goal is not to generate a number but to foster investigation, discussion, and action on best teaching and learning practices.
- Faculty Driven and Student Focused: Assessment processes should build from the ground up, not the top down.
- Partnership with OAA/Undergraduate Academic Affairs: While faculty should plan, design, and implement assessment, they will require resources and support provided by the institution. In addition, the partnership with OAA allows for the process to develop with a level of consistency, which can be lost with faculty turnover on committees.
Incentivize Faculty Participation and Workloads: Assessment must be a valued part of faculty work. As its ultimate goal is program improvement, it must count as significant work for the institution, and the actual amount of time and effort contributed to assessment must be fully recognized. Resources such as faculty training, conferences, and mini-grants should be allocated to assessment.

Breadth and Depth—Multi-disciplinary exposure in general education combined with in-depth study of a particular area/major remains the national model.

The “well-rounded” student remains the goal: The aim of higher education is to develop graduates who are thoughtful, engaged, capable, aware, and compassionate.

GER Assessment Process Recommendations: the following are a brief summary of the Task Force recommendations for implementing a GER assessment process (not each done every year; staggered over a number of years)

Stagger and Sample: Assess a limited number of GER SLOs each year from a random sample of GER classes.

Program Level Assessment of GERs: Map the PSLOs that correspond to GER SLOs. Look at the results of both the GER assessment and the program-level assessment. In some cases, use the program-level assessment, e.g. Tier 2 courses.

Faculty Survey: Investigate faculty perceptions of performance on GER SLOs.

Student Survey: Investigate student perceptions on the value of and performance on GER SLOs.

Faculty generated reporting: Use a methodology that begins with faculty-level reporting.

Faculty Inquiry Groups: Discussion around student achievement of the GER outcomes should include faculty (tenure-track, term, adjunct) teaching towards the selected GER outcomes. This can be small working groups

Seminars and Open Forums: UAA needs to continue to build on the work of AAC and GERA. Engaging the faculty is critical to the goal of improving student learning. General education teaching, learning and assessment seminars, workshops and forums will be critical to achieving this goal.

Structure and Funding— for the organization and leadership of assessment of GER SLOs, we recommend the following:

Build on the existing assessment structure: The AAC will review the GER assessment plan, serve as a peer advisor, and review any major changes to the GER SLOs or assessment plan according to its regular procedures.

A Standing, Selected General Education Assessment Committee (GERA): Create a faculty body reporting to the Faculty Senate, which would help oversee the assessment of GERs and foster dialogue on general education teaching and learning. The committee would work with the faculty inquiry groups and would plan and organize the seminars, workshops and open forums around GER assessment. Members must meet certain criteria related to assessment experience and expertise.
• **A GER Faculty Fellow/Director:** Create a multi-year appointment for a faculty member to chair the GERA standing committee, to research and share best practices, to head up the planning and organization of the seminars, workshops and open forums, to act as lead faculty voice on GER assessment, and to partner with OAA. The Faculty Fellow will receive a workload buyout and will report to the Vice Provost for Undergraduate Academic Affairs, or the appropriate administrator, should a University College be developed. Preferred qualifications for such a Faculty Fellow would include significant experience in general education, in curriculum development, and in assessment.

• **Partnership with OAA—Undergraduate Academic Affairs:** Recognize and sustain the key partnership with OAA—Undergraduate Affairs, whose role is to maintain continuity of process, to provide support and organization to faculty bodies and actions, to provide funding for initiatives, to provide institutional perspective, and to report to Statewide, BOR and NWCUU, as needed.

• **Funding:** GER assessment should be a line item in the Office of Undergraduate Academic Affairs assessment budget, in the same way that the colleges and campuses receive assessment funding. This funding can be used for faculty development around assessment. The Faculty Fellow will need to be funded. This should be equal to 3/4 of the faculty member’s workload. Additional funding will be needed to support the working groups, seminars, workshops, and open forums. This can build off existing funds for assessment activities, but will require some additions. We encourage UAA to consider ways to incentivize faculty participation beyond just the reporting of results. For example, stipends or mini-grants for faculty inquiry groups that will analyze, discuss and make recommendations on assessment, teaching and learning practices in the GERs. Finally, both the GERA Standing Committee and the GER Faculty Fellow will need dedicated staff support.
I. Brief History of General Education Assessment at UAA and the creation of the GER Assessment Task Force

II. National Best Practices: GERA research findings:

   A. Overview of Task Force Work
   B. Value of General Education
   C. Need to Communicate the Value of General Education
   D. General Education as Conceptual and Skill Based Learning
   E. General Education as Integrated throughout the Curriculum
   F. High Impact Teaching Practices
   G. General Education Models and Structures: LEAP initiatives; core course; menu style
   H. Assessment processes: Best practices

III. Recommendations for next steps in GER assessment at UAA:

   A. Surveys: Faculty and Student surveys
   B. Faculty Generated GER Reporting—Staggered and Sampled
   C. Faculty Inquiry Groups
   D. Program Level Reporting on GERs
   E. Seminars and Workshops

IV. Structure and Funding:

   A. Standing Faculty Committee for GER assessment (aka GERA)
   B. Faculty Fellow
   C. Partnership with OAA-Undergraduate Academic Affairs
   D. Funding

V. Conclusion
THE GERA REPORT

I. Brief History of General Education Assessment at UAA and the Creation of the GER Assessment Task Force

UAA has engaged in various forms of general education assessment since at least 1998. Will Jacobs and Robert Madigan oversaw a two year general education assessment in 1998 and 1999 in preparation for the 2000 NWCCU accreditation. Their reports for each of those two years are available through OAA.

From 2000 to 2005 a UAA GER review committee examined national and local general education structures and practices (chaired by Dan Kline, English). Their efforts led to the formation, in 2004, of a General Education Review Committee (GERC) as a standing subcommittee of the Undergraduate Academic Board (UAB). The purpose of the GERC is to review the status of GER courses, and insure that these courses meet the intent of the general education requirements. This body also developed a 3 Tiered division of the GERs: Tier I—basic college level skill in written and oral communication, and quantitative reasoning; Tier II—disciplinary introduction to the fine arts, humanities, natural science, and social science; and Tier III—Integrated upper division Capstone. This group also developed 9 GER Student Learning Outcomes and category descriptors for those outcomes and Tiers. Between 2005 and 2010 UAA underwent a major catalog review to insure that all current and new GER courses were updated to include the new GER SLOs. Additionally, beginning in 2005, many departments and programs created GER Integrated Capstone courses to help students fulfill this new requirement.

Beginning in 2005, the College of Arts and Sciences created a committee specifically entrusted with assessing the Associate of Arts (AA) degree. This AA assessment committee has filed an annual assessment report since 2006. The assessment of the AA degree has served as de facto assessment for the UAA GER courses, since the AA degree closely approximates the GER requirements. The AA degree requirements, however, do not include a natural science lab GER, a quantitative GER, or the GER Integrative capstone. In 2009 the GERC undertook a pilot assessment study of a selected sample GER Integrated Capstone courses.

In September 2012 the UAA Faculty Senate passed a motion creating a General Education Assessment Task Force (GERA), giving it a two year term to undertake the following duties:

• Research national best practices in assessment of general education learning outcomes;
• Foster a campus wide dialogue on general education and GER outcomes assessment;
• Recommend next steps toward developing a GER assessment plan and any funding implications of that recommendation.

The following 2014 report entails the findings and recommendations of the GERA committee.
II. **National Best Practices: GERA research findings.** This section presents the Task Force’s findings on national best practices in approaches to general education structures, teaching and assessment.

A. **Overview of Work Accomplished by GERA Task Force:** The General Education Requirements Assessment Task Force (GERA) formed in October 2012 and conducted its work through May 2014. The following list briefly summarizes the work of the GERA Task Force, 2012-14. Much of the following material can be accessed at [http://www.uaa.alaska.edu/governance/ger-assessment-task-force/index.cfm](http://www.uaa.alaska.edu/governance/ger-assessment-task-force/index.cfm)

- Task Force research into national best practices in GER assessment (October 2012-to present).
- Learning from our Faculty and Students Workshops: Organized and led a series of four Open Forum workshops on a general education assessment process for UAA (Fall 2013)
- Led a Faculty Senate Open Forum on the value of general education at UAA and nationally (January 2014).
- Created a pilot survey of faculty perceptions on the value and assessment of UAA’s nine GER Student Learning Outcomes (administered late March-early April 2014; results to be presented September 2014 at the Assessment Seminar).
- Members participated in an AAC&U (Association of American Colleges and Universities) General Education Assessment workshop for the UA system (UAA, January 2013).
- Members participated in an AAC&U national conferences and workshops on general education (Boston, February 2013, and Portland, February 2014).

B. **The Value of General Education:** Society, employers and UAA all value broadly trained individuals who can think, communicate, imagine, analyze and engage with their surrounding community and the wider world. This message came across consistently in the GERA task force research. It is perhaps not surprising that academics and universities would champion the value of general education learning outcomes (see, for example, History Professor William Cronon’s “Only Connect” article [http://www.williamcrnon.net/writing/Cronon_Only_Connect.pdf](http://www.williamcrnon.net/writing/Cronon_Only_Connect.pdf), or Harvard University’s general education program website [http://www.generationeducation.fas.harvard.edu/icb/icb.do](http://www.generationeducation.fas.harvard.edu/icb/icb.do)). Furthermore, various national educational organizations have been targeting general education as an essential component of what colleges and universities do (see for example the work of ACC&U, [http://www.aacu.org/resources/geraeducation/index.cfm](http://www.aacu.org/resources/geraeducation/index.cfm)). What is both enlightening and encouraging is the extent to which employers share in this vision of general education learning outcomes being valuable (see AAC&U 2013 national employer survey results at [http://www.aacu.org/liberateducation/le-sp13/hartresearchassociates.cfm](http://www.aacu.org/liberateducation/le-sp13/hartresearchassociates.cfm)).

C. **Need for Communication and Awareness of Value of General Education:** Increasingly, universities and colleges are becoming aware of the need to communicate the value of general education learning outcomes to students, faculty, administration, staff, BORs, and the surrounding community. The University of Wisconsin gives one
example, with its First Year Student learning “Wisconsin Experience”, which combines with its “Wisconsin Idea” to focus on connecting with and serving the world beyond the classroom. (See https://www.newstudent.wisc.edu/ and http://www.wisconsinidea.wisc.edu/)

D. **General Education as Conceptual and Skills based learning:** While there remains a rather eternal ongoing debate of content versus conceptual based learning, the national landscape increasingly is moving towards the latter in both general education and BA/BS programs. Simply put, there is just too much information to cover in any one course or even program. Whether in History or Biology, their respective national societies have increasingly called for concept based emphasis in undergraduate programs. While recognizing the need for a grounding in content, both national societies stress this content should be focused on building discipline related skills and concepts (the scientific process and experiential lab learning for biology, historical context and the dynamics of causation, change and continuity for history). This focus on skill building and conceptual learning reaches all the way to the survey and introductory general education course and is becoming a key part of re-organizations and re-imaginings of undergraduate and general education programs. (For Biology’s national society 2013 report calling for change see http://visionandchange.org/finalreport/; for the American Historical Association’s Tuning project see http://www.historians.org/teaching-and-learning/current-projects/tuning)

E. **General Education as Integrated throughout the curriculum and University:**
National best practices clearly establish that general education should not be seen as just a one course check off. For example, effective written communication is universally seen as a key general education learning outcome, and most all higher education institutions require at least one writing course as part of their general education requirements. But effective writing skills cannot simply be taught in one class, for one semester, or even one year. Writing is a craft that has to be constantly taught, practiced and evaluated. Each discipline has its own conventions, expectations and models for writing (lab reports, business reports, social science research papers, literary analysis, and so on). A written communication general education course can and should provide a foundation in writing skills, but each discipline can and should continue to build on those writing skills as their students matriculate through their program. The same goes with other general education learning outcomes, such as critical thinking, information literacy, or ethical reasoning. Skills and concepts are introduced in general education courses, but they are developed and refined throughout the rest of the students’ undergraduate experience.

F. **High Impact Teaching Practices:** (see for example https://www.newstudent.wisc.edu/practices/ or http://www.aacu.org/leap/hip.cfm)
National discussions and initiatives stress the importance of bringing some of the following high impact practices into the general education classroom: small classes; hands-on learning experiences; writing-intensive courses; undergraduate research experiences; close work with faculty; experiencing diversity within and outside the classroom; opportunities for engagement with the surrounding communities; opportunities to integrated and synthesize knowledge; and timely and frequent feedback
on student performance towards learning outcomes. UAA incorporates much of this (relatively small class sizes in many GERs, opportunities for undergraduate research, and so on). But we could be more systematic, supportive and communicative of high impact teaching. This would include recognition and reward for high impact teaching practices in the GER, through faculty workload and review processes.

G. **National General Education models and structures:**

1. **AAC&U LEAP model:** The AAC&U LEAP initiative has been influential (found at [http://www.aacu.org/leap/vision.cfm](http://www.aacu.org/leap/vision.cfm)). It articulates the key outcomes in broad strokes and seems to simplify outcome numbers by reducing them to 4 categories. Yet investigations of universities that adopted LEAP outcomes and reorganized their general education program and courses to fit the LEAP initiative did not really simplify their general education structures and offering. For example, Appalachian State recently reorganized its general education program into 4 broad goals (based off LEAP language), but those are subdivided into 21 learning outcomes! Illinois State defines 4 broad shared learning outcomes for its general education, which then build towards 12 general educational goals, but which then further map out into 40 distinct skill or abilities that they seek to develop through their general education curriculum. (See the Hanover report for details, [http://www.uaa.alaska.edu/governance/ger-assessment-task-force/upload/Best-Practices-in-the-Assessment-of-GER-Student-Learning-Outcomes-University-of-Alaska-Anchorage.pdf](http://www.uaa.alaska.edu/governance/ger-assessment-task-force/upload/Best-Practices-in-the-Assessment-of-GER-Student-Learning-Outcomes-University-of-Alaska-Anchorage.pdf)). UAA’s 9 GER SLOs are straightforward by comparison.

2. **Core Courses Model:** The Core Courses Model is attractive because it offers a type of cohort learning experience for all students—they all take a limited, set number of common courses, or at least a couple common core courses as part of their general education experience. This often matches up with the practice of creating common “learning communities” whereby students build on knowledge and skills learned together. A common required Freshman seminar is one such approach seen at a number of colleges and universities. The common core model seems well suited to small liberal arts colleges, and to universities that have fairly static student undergraduate population (i.e., a small student transfer population). For larger, diverse, cosmopolitan and commuter type universities, however, the core model presents problems. Transfer students, military veterans, returning students, and other non-traditional students often find it difficult to take a required common core “freshman” learning experience course, given their educational and life backgrounds. (For an example of some issues raised by this model see Appalachian State University’s General Education Review Task Force Report of July, 2011 at [http://academicaffairs.appstate.edu/sites/academicaffairs.appstate.edu/files/Genera1%20Education%20Review%20Task%20Force%20Report%202011.pdf](http://academicaffairs.appstate.edu/sites/academicaffairs.appstate.edu/files/Genera1%20Education%20Review%20Task%20Force%20Report%202011.pdf))
3. **Menu or Cafeteria Style:** Under this model, there is selection of courses that a student can choose to fulfill each category of general education requirements (Natural and Social Sciences, Humanities, and so on). This is the model UAA is currently using, and there is still widespread use of this model nationally. Even those institutions that have moved towards the LEAP model still have a wide selection of courses that fit into each of the LEAP major categories and subcategories. This model offers students flexibility in fulfilling their general education requirements, and it offers multiple departments responsibility and involvement in the design and delivery of the general education program. There is concern that it does not provide students enough guidance in navigating through GERs, and that it does not provide for common learning experiences. It can be argued, however, that at UAA there are some existing shared learning experiences. The selection of courses at the Tier 1 level (Oral Communication, Written Communication, Quantitative Skills) is fairly circumscribed in terms of numbers of courses and departments. For example, English alone offers the courses that satisfy the 6 credit Written Communication GER. Furthermore, of their 6 lower division courses that meet the 6 credit GER, Engl 111 serves almost de facto as the core introductory writing course for many UAA students. Also, UAA faculty are currently exploring possibilities for building learning communities. Some members of the English and the Communication departments are looking into taking student cohorts through a blocked out sections of the Oral and the Written communication course requirements during the same semester. The best approach for UAA might be combination of opportunities for shared, focused learning experiences, along with flexibility in delivery and fulfillment of GERs.

**H. Assessment practices and processes--National best practices.** Assessment practices have increasingly been moving away from the strict focus on what had been termed “accountability.” Instead, the emphasis is on assessment as improvement, and assessment as fostering discussion and action on the scholarship of teaching and learning. For assessment of general education student learning outcomes, the following approaches have emerged as national best practices:

**A. Faculty Driven and Student Focused:** Any general education assessment process should involve faculty from the ground up, providing opportunities for collaborative investigation, dialogue and engagement on improving teaching and student learning around selected GER outcomes. Student learning, improvement and success are the ultimate goals.

**B. “Authentic” or organic assessment:** General education assessment should be bottom up, holistic, and built off of “authentic” teaching practices and assignments, i.e., course embedded student work and assignments completed for course credit, rather than created simply for assessment purposes.
C. **Flexibility, simplicity and sustainability:** There is no need to assess all outcomes of every GER course, every year—instead, stagger, sample, and selectively focus. Work with and off of assessment practices already in place (e.g., PSLO and Associates of Arts assessment, and the Annual Academic Assessment Survey). Make the reporting process easy. Allow for multiple opportunities for voluntary participation. Provide avenues for discussion and implementation of recommendations.

D. **Integration and Collaboration:** General education learning outcomes should not be seen as just being taught and learned in a single “GER” course (or even a couple). General education learning outcomes are embedded in multiple courses, at multiple levels, across disciplines and colleges. For example, writing skills or critical thinking skills are indeed taught as GERs, but these skills continue to be developed throughout many different courses and programs beyond the general education level.

E. **Assessment as inquiry, dialogue and engagement:** Assessment should be seen as a reinforcing a culture of inquiry, as a part of the scholarship of teaching and learning. The goal is not to generate a number but to foster investigation, discussion and action on best teaching and learning practices.

F. **Incentivize Faculty Participation and Workloads:** The importance of teaching GERs and assessment of them must be built into faculty workloads and review processes. Additionally, incentivize the process of assessing general education learning outcomes by creating stipends or mini-grants for faculty inquiry groups.

G. **Partnership with Administration:** Nationally, the best assessment structures are those that create an active partnership between faculty and administration. Top down administrative models do not engender active faculty participation, nor do they foster a culture of inquiry and discussion. On the other hand, faculty left entirely on their own for assessment purposes tend to drift and not sustain; not surprising given the many demands on their time. UAA has developed a positive model of partnership between its faculty and OAA.

## III. Assessment of the GER SLOs at UAA—Task Force Recommendations for next steps:

Following the lessons drawn from our research into national best practices, the GERA task force makes the following recommendations for creating valid, useful and sustainable assessment process for the GER Student Learning Outcomes. (These are not all done each and every year—stagger the processes)

A. **Faculty Survey:** Administer a survey to gauge faculty perceptions on the value of general education, and on assessment of student performance on GER SLOs. The GERA Task Force developed and administered a survey in April 2014. The findings of that survey will be fully presented at the Fall Academic Assessment Seminar, September 2014.
B. **Student Survey and Focus Groups:** Design and administer a survey to gauge student perceptions on the value of general education, and of student performance on GER SLOs. Also, periodically set up student focus groups to gauge perceptions, but also to communicate to students the purpose and value of general education. (For examples of approaches to student surveys on general education see [http://www.umass.edu/oapa/oapa/publications/assessment_bulletin/1998/StudentPerspectives.pdf](http://www.umass.edu/oapa/oapa/publications/assessment_bulletin/1998/StudentPerspectives.pdf) and [http://survey.fgcu.edu/Survey.aspx?s=5c1b2f006f1b4ddf87476f876a3cb7c4#](http://survey.fgcu.edu/Survey.aspx?s=5c1b2f006f1b4ddf87476f876a3cb7c4#))

C. **Faculty generated reporting**— 3 options are suggested here, but the basic principles are as follows: to **stagger** the focus on a limited number of GER learning outcomes (1-3/year); to **sample** a limited number of GER courses for each year’s assessment process; to encourage faculty involvement by creating a **simple reporting process**, and by creating **opportunities for faculty participation and discussion**. Whichever option is chosen, the step of discussion around the results and possible improvements will be the core of any assessment process. (See [http://www.washington.edu/oea/pdfs/reports/OEAReport0403.pdf](http://www.washington.edu/oea/pdfs/reports/OEAReport0403.pdf) for an excellent example of the value that faculty derived from such an approach, especially page 14.)

1. **Faculty Generated narrative report:** a sampling of faculty teaching GER courses meeting the selected outcome/s to be assessed that year are asked to submit a 1-2 page form that summarizes the following details: course, outcome measured, assignment used to measure the outcome, results and analysis of student learning on outcome (via narrative summary, or via percent achieving on a 1-4 scale), implications or any plans for improvement. A GER assessment committee and OAA—Undergraduate gather, analyze and report out to UAA. (The UAA Associate of Arts Assessment Committee is currently engaged in this type of reporting.)

2. **Faculty Generated Rubric Scoring and reporting:** similar to above, except GER faculty work with a rubric (created by UAA GER faculty, working off of AAC&U and other models). Leads to numeric scores to be aggregated.

3. **Collection and analysis of student artifacts** select one or two GER SLOs to assess for the year, gather a sampling of student artifacts (either hardcopy or uploaded to a dedicated site/system), then create relevant GER faculty groups to create common rubrics, review student products, share teaching and learning strategies, and offer recommendations. Faculty working groups should meet and discuss during the contract year. (For an example, see [http://generaleducation.appstate.edu/program-assessment](http://generaleducation.appstate.edu/program-assessment))

D. **Seminars, Workshops and Open Forum:** Continue to build on GERA and AAC work towards cultivating a culture of assessment through the scholarship of teaching and learning. Sponsor and lead seminars and workshops for UAA faculty, staff and students that focus on the value of general education, and help build assessment practices that enhance teaching and learning of general education outcomes.
E. Mapping Program Level Assessment to GERs: the intent here is to build on assessment already done at the program level and tie it to assessment GER learning outcomes. For example, the History BA program has 3 main program student learning outcomes: effective writing skills, effective historical research skills, and effective historical thinking skills. Each of those could easily map to related GER SLOs (written communication, critical/integrative thinking, and informational literacy). Periodically, we might want to consider choosing a sample of programs to report out how their majors did on selected GER outcomes beyond the GER course. In this way, UAA would get a nice snapshot of the performance of its upper division students on general educational objectives. This process would have the added benefit of highlighting the idea that general educational outcomes are not a one-time check-off; they are continuously relevant and developed through a student’s academic career.

F. Timing and Process: Stagger assessment over a 3x7 year cycle, whereby a set of 3 GER learning outcomes are tracked over 3 years, with Year 1 for administering and collecting results, Year 2 for inquiry, discussion and recommendations, and Year 3 to track implementation and action. Year 3 would also see the beginning of the assessment of a second set of 3 GER learning outcomes, starting with the administering and collecting of results for that second set. This cycle would allow for program improvements to be made during the interim.

Table 1 Assessment of GER student learning outcomes—timing and process proposal

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>YEAR</th>
<th>OUTCOME</th>
<th>COLLECTION</th>
<th>DISCUSSION/INQUIRY</th>
<th>ACTION</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Year 1</td>
<td>Begin first set of 3 GER SLOs</td>
<td>Faculty generated reporting, or student products (sampled)</td>
<td>Open Forums on value, teaching techniques and assessment practices</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Year 2</td>
<td>Continue first set</td>
<td>none</td>
<td>Faculty inquiry groups to discuss results and recommendations</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Year 3</td>
<td>Finish first set</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Implement action and re-assess on first set of 3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Year 3</td>
<td>Begin second set of 3 GER SLOs</td>
<td>Faculty generated reporting, or student products (sampled)</td>
<td>Open Forums on value, teaching techniques and assessment practices</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Year 4</td>
<td>Continue second set</td>
<td>none</td>
<td>Faculty inquiry groups to discuss results and recommendations</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Year 5</td>
<td>Finish second set</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Implement action and re-assess on</td>
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<tr>
<td>Year</td>
<td>Activity</td>
<td>Faculty generated reporting, or student products (sampled)</td>
<td>Open Forums on value, teaching techniques and assessment practices</td>
<td>Faculty inquiry groups to discuss results and recommendations</td>
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<td>---------</td>
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<td>-----------------------------------------------------------</td>
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<tr>
<td>Year 5</td>
<td>Begin last set of 3 GER SLOs</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Open Forums on value, teaching techniques and assessment practices</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Year 6</td>
<td>Continue last set none</td>
<td></td>
<td>Faculty inquiry groups to discuss results and recommendations</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Year 7</td>
<td>Finish last set</td>
<td></td>
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**IV. Structure and Funding:**

A. **Build on the existing assessment structure:** The AAC will review the GER assessment plan, serve as a peer advisor, and review any major changes to the GER SLOs or assessment plan according to its regular procedures.

B. **A Standing, Selected General Education Assessment Committee (GERA):** Create a faculty body reporting to the Faculty Senate, which would help oversee the assessment of GERs and foster dialogue on general education teaching and learning. The committee would work with the faculty inquiry groups and would plan and organize the seminars, workshops and open forums around GER assessment. Members should meet certain criteria related to assessment experience and expertise.

C. **A GER Faculty Fellow/Director:** Create a multi-year appointment for a faculty member to chair the GERA standing committee, to research and share best practices, to head up the planning and organization of the seminars, workshops and open forums, to act as lead faculty voice on GER assessment, and to partner with OAA. The Faculty Fellow will receive a workload buyout and will report to the Vice Provost for Undergraduate Academic Affairs, or the appropriate administrator, should a University College be developed. Preferred qualifications for the GER Faculty Fellow would include significant experience in General Education, significant experience in curriculum development, and significant experience in assessment.

D. **OAA—Undergraduate Academic Affairs:** The administration at UAA will play a key role in partnering with faculty in the assessment of GERs. Administration will provide continuity of process, support and organization, funding for initiatives, and institutional perspective. Here at UAA, OAA/Undergraduate Academic Affairs has proven invaluable
in providing administrative support, financial funding, shared leadership, institutional perspective and process continuity. A fruitful partnership has been developed between OAA—Undergraduate Affairs and both the GERA Task Force, and with the Academic Assessment Committee. This is a model worth continuing.

E. **Funding:** GER assessment should be a line item in the Office of Undergraduate Academic Affairs assessment budget, in the same way that the colleges and campuses receive assessment funding. This funding can be used for faculty development around assessment. The Faculty Fellow will need to be funded. This should be equal to 3/4 of the faculty member’s workload. Additional funding will be needed to support the working groups, seminars, workshops, and open forums. This can build off existing funds for assessment activities, but will require some additions. We encourage UAA to consider ways to incentivize faculty participation beyond just the reporting of results. For example, stipends or mini-grants for faculty inquiry groups that will analyze, discuss and make recommendations on assessment, teaching and learning practices in the GERs. Finally, both the GERA Standing Committee and the GER Faculty Fellow will need dedicated staff support.

V. **Conclusion:** The intersection (and contrast) of national, statewide, and UAA discussions and initiatives makes planning for assessment of general education at UAA seem a constantly moving target. There are currently multiple discussions related to general education going on at UAA, at UA Statewide, and at the BOR. The actual assessment of the GER learning outcomes is actually the relatively easy part of the equation. The Task Force strongly recommends that the key principles articulated in the executive summary of this report guide any discussion and decision on general education practices, structures, delivery and assessment. Any assessment process for the GERs should be sustainable, flexible and simple. The purpose of assessment is not to gather and report out a number, but rather to facilitate an on-going discussion on the scholarship of teaching and learning in the GERs. The University should remain committed to the role of general education in helping to develop well-rounded individuals; and UAA should continue to communicate the value of general education to all its members and constituents.