General Education Assessment Report Template

**Academic Year:** 2015-2016

**Course Name/Catalog Number:** PSC 101, Introduction to American Government

**General Education Component:** Constitutions

**UULO(s) assessed this year:**
- ☐ Intellectual Breadth/Life-long Learning
- ☐ Inquiry/Critical Thinking
- ☐ Communication
- ☐ Global/Multicultural Knowledge and Awareness
- ☒ Citizenship & Ethics

**Other learning outcomes assessed this year:** Knowledge of separation of powers, and rights of the accused.

**Process:** Please provide a brief narrative of the assessment process for this course. Include a description of the type of student work assessed (e.g., research papers, exams, etc.), the number and roles of people involved in the process, any tools used for the assessment (e.g., checklists, rubrics, etc.), and how student learning was evaluated.

Representatives of the department—including the department chair—attended a General Education assessment workshop. During the workshop, we met faculty from other departments that are also offering courses that meet the General Education—Constitutions requirement, including History and Public Affairs. The “Constitutions” group decided that Citizenship and Ethics would be the appropriate UULO for assessment, as measured through student knowledge of separation of powers and rights of the accused. The group judged that knowledge in these areas is broadly related to skills that facilitate active citizenship in the U.S. Based upon guidance we received from assessment staff, the group decided that each unit would decide (a) which student work would be assessed, and (b) the tools used for assessment, and (c) the process of assessment. The Political Science Department opted to use items from multiple choice exams related to separation of powers and rights of the accused. The data were collected in Fall 2015 from sections of PSC 101, including the large section that enrolls 212 students. Our benchmark for effectiveness is that 70% or more of students select a correct answer to the items.

**Results:** Please provide a brief summary of the results of your assessment process. Include both what you learned about your students’ achievement of the specified learning outcomes and what you learned about the assessment process itself, if applicable.

On the item related to rights of the accused (the standard required for determining guilt in criminal cases), approximately 92% of students answered the question correctly. Other items related to
knowledge of due process produced results and were close to the benchmark (65% correct). On
the item related to separation of powers (trends’ in the legislative branches powers, specifically
defense and budgeting), approximately 55% of students answered the question correctly. The
student test data present a mixed picture. For some of our learning outcomes, including
knowledge of key Constitutional rights (e.g., rights of the accused), the data suggest that we are
reasonably effective on promoting the learning outcome. However, for separation of powers, it is
clear that some additional work may be required. It is worth noting that the item used for
separation of powers somewhat specific and did not assess broad knowledge of the concept of
separation of powers. In the future, we intend to use several items on separation of powers
(including the concept, and examples of powers granted to each branch) in order to provide a
more fine-grained assessment.

Conclusions: Please describe how the results of this assessment process might be used to revise
instruction in this course and/or refine the assessment process in future years.

The coordinator for PSC 101 and lower-level instruction will share the results of the assessment with
instructors who teach PSC 101 and with other faculty members in the department. The General
Education-Constitutions Committee will also review the data and, in conjunction with the Course
and Curriculum Committee, make recommendations about how to improve student
comprehension of the concept of separation of powers, and specific examples of powers granted
to each branch of the Federal government. These recommendations will also be discussed in a
general faculty meetings.

Appendices: Please attach any applicable assignment descriptions, rubrics, results tables, or graphic
representations of results.