Academic Year: 2015-2016

Course Name/Catalog Number: COE 102

General Education Component: First-Year Seminar

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:
1. Prepare students to succeed in other general education courses
2. Give students a stronger sense of community and purpose
3. Provide students with both direct contact with university faculty and small-group interaction with peers

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.

COE 102 learning outcomes were assessed directly and indirectly. The Inquiry/Critical Thinking UULO was directly assessed by analyzing student writing samples with rubrics. The writing samples were position papers focused on inquiry and critical thinking skills (See Appendix 3). To assess this UULO, two random papers per fall 2015 COE 102 section were collected (N = 14). 10 COE FYS/SYS instructors and one FYS/SYS coordinator scored the sample papers using a modified AAC&U Information Literacy rubric and the AAC&U Critical Thinking rubric (See Appendix 4).

The COE FYS/SYS instructors and FYS/SYS coordinator met on March 7, 2016, normed the AAC&U rubrics, scored each sample twice, and debriefed as a group. See Appendix 5 for averages for each section of the rubrics. The coordinator reviewed the rubrics and determined the rubrics appeared to be scored similarly by the instructors. The results were shared with the instructors and discussed as a group on April 25, 2016.

The remaining four UULOs and three additional COE 102 learning outcomes were assessed indirectly by online Learning Outcomes Surveys in Fall 2015 (53.4% response rate) and Spring 2016 (38.4% response rate) (See Appendices 1 and 2). Student surveys were sent via email to students with reminder emails if necessary.
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.

The results of our direct assessment appeared to evidence students performing at a first-year level for both critical thinking and information literacy (See Appendix 5). Although skills and competencies may vary by class, fall 2015 assessment results were slightly higher than fall 2014 (See Appendix 6). Therefore, this gain may also be attributed to our instructors targeting these skills and competencies since last year’s assessment. The instructors were very positive about the direct assessment experience and enjoyed conducting the assessment and discussing the results as a team.

The results of our indirect assessment indicated that students perceived they improved moderately to much on their skills, knowledge, and awareness of UULOs (Table 2, Appendices 1 & 2). These results also indicated that students perceived that they were better prepared to succeed in other general education courses (Table 3, Appendices 1 & 2), had a stronger sense of community and purpose (Table 4, Appendices 1 & 2), and were satisfied with their direct contact with university faculty and small-group interaction with peers (Table 5, Appendices 1 & 2). We also learned that we will need to focus on achieving a higher response rate when conducting this survey as a college in the spring semester as opposed to having the survey conducted for us by the university in the fall. Ideas to increase our response rate include discussing the purpose of the survey with instructors at the beginning of the semester and disseminating the survey link earlier in the semester.

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 results of our FYS direct assessment were shared and discussed with our first and second-year instructors at the same time that we discussed the results of our SYS direct assessment. This discussion produced a helpful comparison between these seminars that sparked ideas about potentially revising instruction in FYS. These ideas included: (1) not assuming prior student knowledge of writing in future teaching (e.g., focusing on writing basics such as properly citing sources), (2) better use of the student’s draft as a learning process for writing (e.g., accepting multiple drafts), and (3) adding in potential outside of class 1-on-1 writing sessions with students to aid in their critical thinking, information literacy, and general communication skills and competencies. While our instructors were very positive about the direct assessment process, there was discussion about potentially refining the rubrics used for future assessment. This will be further discussed in fall 2016 for the upcoming 2016-2017 FYS assessment.

The results of our indirect assessment process indicated that our FYS program is thriving and our students are learning the skills and knowledge necessary to promote academic success and retention. We are currently looking into ways to refine the survey to better get a sense of the impact of our FYS on these outcomes (e.g., taking into account student prior skills and knowledge in relation to the UULOs).
Appendices: Please attach any applicable assignment descriptions, rubrics, results tables, or graphic representations of results.