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Assessment of Student Learning Minutes  
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1-30-2004

### Assessment of Student Learning minutes 01/30/2004

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DATE: Friday, January 30, 2004

SUBJECT: Assessment of Student Learning Committee Minutes

PRESENT: Katherine Benson (Chair), Stephen Burks, Nancy Helsper, Paul Myers, Michael O'Reilly, Tim Lindberg, and Jessie Hass

ABSENT: Jim Hall, Dwight Purdy and Ray Sibul

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Benson called the meeting to order at 9:45 AM in the Prairie Lounge.

The ASL Minutes dated 12/05/03 were approved as amended.

**GenEd Sub-committee Report** (Stephen Burks, Nancy Helsper)

Burks distributed copies of a document with data from the Spring 2003 General Education Survey that analyzed the Summary of Scores for Achievement of General Education Objectives by the number of years each student had been at UMM. He also asked committee members to look at the Summary of Scores for Achievement of General Education Objectives (Spring 2003) that had been distributed at an earlier ASL Meeting. Committee members were asked to look at the percentages of scores that were moderate and above in all of the General Education categories, noting that the sample size has increased every year. He said the GenEd Subcommittee looked at obvious factors that may be affecting the survey: 1) we may be getting sample selection bias, 2) he discussed ways of figuring out if there is a trend, and 3) PSEO numbers are increasing, so more students are completing GenEd Requirements with PSEO credits from other institutions. Burks noted that one GenEd requirement is directly checked with Foreign Language, is directly measured with an additional question. It was agreed that we do in fact need a big sample year in 2004 if want to see the overall trend. Helsper concluded that we should go ahead with the same questions as last year, and noted that the survey is scheduled for March 15-April 2, 2004.

Helper said, as committee members may recall, Dean Schwaller (Dec. mtg.) said that the GenEd Subcommittee for Goals and Objectives is working on software for faculty to rate whether students have met the objectives of each GenEd course. She noted that this does not affect their grades. Helsper said that John Bowers and Matt Senger are working on this software, and a progress report will be made to her next Friday. Helsper asked if a committee member would like to attend this meeting. [Benson attended].

Burks questioned if the committee approves of this plan for faculty to rate GenEd success and should we go ahead with it? Benson said that the original memo, asking the Curriculum Committee to generate specific objectives for each GenEd goal came from this committee (Lopez, Chair). It asked the Curriculum Committee to develop measurable objectives for all goals of the GenEd Requirements (GER). Helsper said that they had discussed the Schupe Software, but if we use it, our data would reside on the non U of M computers. It was decided that it would be better to develop our own software, and noted that Bowers is working with the TC (Technology). Helsper said that the disciplines are all in charge of their own GenEd assessment. Members discussed piloting the software. One member commented that the Faculty using it would have a direct measurement Of whether or not the students are meeting the goals of the GER. Helsper said that the NCA itself is suggesting that faculty do this; she believes this will answer the questions, and this method will satisfy the NCA. Helsper also commented that this might tell us if some of the courses are in the wrong GenEd categories. Helsper believes we will see positive results from our efforts to measure the objective criteria for the GER goals. Benson said that assessment is a valuable tool and faculty should be encouraged to use assessment to achieve their own goals, but it doesn't work when assessment is "top-down". Helsper noted that Dean Schwaller has had training to be an NCA evaluator, and feels that we will satisfy the NCA requirements using this approach. Helsper believes that Faculty would not be required to use the software, it would be on a voluntary basis.

Benson said the committee should decide if the proposal should be accepted, noting the following questions:

1. Do we like the assessment process?
2. Do we take an official vote, yes we approve or no?
3. Does it require compliance or is it positive engagement? In other words, will faculty find it helps fulfill their goals?

Discussion continued, members agreeing with the procedures. Burks questioned whether, if the pilot is successful as a volunteer project, it will be mandated in the future (feels this may be a debate in the future). Helsper commented that if we don't have enough people on board, it might be up to this committee to convince faculty to do this assessment.

Benson asked for a formal motion to approve the procedure. The motion was made by Burks/Myers and unanimously accepted.

1. This committee supports the measurable objectives for GenEd Criteria that have been developed so far and reported to us at the last meeting by Dean Schwaller.
2. We support the assessment procedure that Dean Schwaller showed us at the last meeting to be implemented as a pilot with a sample of volunteers to generate feedback on effectiveness.

Benson noted that Dean Schwaller was unable to attend the Social Science Division meeting to talk about the difficulties with the Social Sciences (SS) General Education Requirement. She said that the SS criterion is proving to be difficult to measure and faculty can try to find their own way to measure it. Then: "She said one option would be to change the criterion." The Division will discuss this at the next meeting. Benson commented that if the pilot software is required, not voluntary, she feels there may be resistance from faculty. Helsper said if we have a good sampling of courses from each category, there shouldn't be a problem. In other words, not all courses or faculty will have to use it. Benson said if we are to assess multiple years of data, the same assessment tools need to be used with the same courses over time. Myers commented that if the assessment tools were working, why wouldn't faculty want to do it?

### **NCA Changes (Paul Myers)**

Myers distributed documents from 4 sections of the NCA's Restructured Expectations: A Transitional Workbook, which included:

1. Commission Statement on Assessment of Student Learning
2. The Criteria for Accreditation
3. The Operational Indicators
4. The Self-Study Process in Accreditation (summary of what needs to be done to get through the accreditation.)

Myers noted that some of the changes are still in progress. The documents were reviewed and discussed. Myers noted the following changes:

- The former criteria were broader - NCA narrowed the terms, used a more thorough set of samples, and developed criteria that are more specific and easier to address.

Helsper questioned when will they become effective; Myers replied that some are already in effect. Myers said that the Transitional Workbook would be included in the 2004-05 standards. Myers noted that section 3A in The Criteria for Accreditation document is the outline of our report. O'Reilly asked if the discipline reports are available to students; Helsper replied that they are posted on the web. Helsper said that in 1998, Assessment of Assessment was done; faculty were surveyed.

Benson asked if there were any other comments, insights, or questions, and thanked Myers for his work in identifying features critical to us. Pederson will send copies of the Myers handouts to people absent from today's meeting.

## ASL Upcoming Meeting Schedule

Wednesday, February 18	3:00 - 4:30 PM	Prairie Lounge [Meeting was cancelled.]
Friday, March 5	9:45 - 11:15 AM	Prairie Lounge
Wednesday, March 24	3:00 - 4:30 PM	Humanities Conference Room #112
Friday, April 16	9:45 - 11:15 AM	Humanities Conference Room #112
Wednesday, April 28	3:00 - 4:30 PM	Prairie Lounge

Meeting adjourned at 11:15 AM.

Respectfully submitted,  
Linda Pederson

URL: <http://www.morris.umn.edu/committees/asl/minutes.01.30.04.html>