



## 2010-2015 General Education Strategic Plan

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### General Education Assessment Task Force

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## OBSERVATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

We have organized the findings of our review around the ten areas set forth in the task force charge, as delineated above. For each area addressed, observations on current conditions are followed by recommendations for future actions.

### 1. Purpose of the General Education Curriculum

#### Recommendations

In 2008, the GEC proposed the creation of a general education advisory group as a way for general education faculty to come together separate from the GEC's work of curriculum oversight, and work toward a more coherent General Education program unified across departments, programs, and colleges [Appendix 3, Continuing Item #5]. This recommendation was endorsed on page 13, item #9 of the 2009 External Review Report of the GEP, with the reviewer noting that such a group "might function as a faculty learning community that could create opportunities for faculty development: mini-conferences, brown bag discussions, and workshops on teaching strategies, 'bottlenecks' in student learning, and other issues relevant to the goals and competencies for the General Education curriculum": [http://www.fgcu.edu/General\\_Education/files/Florida\\_Gulf\\_Coast\\_University\\_External\\_Review\\_Report.pdf](http://www.fgcu.edu/General_Education/files/Florida_Gulf_Coast_University_External_Review_Report.pdf).

GEATF members recommend that the 2008 GEC proposal be enacted with the creation of a permanent General Education Working Group (GEWG). The GEWG would meet monthly or as necessary, and would be responsible for 1) implementing, reviewing, and developing the General Education Assessment Plan on a continual basis, 2) working in collaboration with the Faculty Senate General Education Council (GEC) to ensure alignment between assessment activities and the GEP curriculum, and 3) ensuring that the mission, goals, and assessment of the GEP are aligned with both state and accreditation requirements, as well as the subject matter areas and pedagogical techniques of GEP faculty. The GEWG would report to the Provost or designee.

Task force members recommend that the GEWG begin meeting in fall 2011, and include the following members:

- Academic Advising Council Representative
- Academic Technology Services
- Communication Subject Area Coordinator
- General Education Program Director (*ex officio*)
- Honors Program Director (*ex officio*)
- Humanities Subject Area Coordinator
- Library Services Representative
- Mathematics Subject Area Coordinator
- Natural Sciences Subject Area Coordinator
- Social Sciences Subject Area Coordinator
- Student Affairs Representative
- Student Government Representative

- Testing Services Director (*ex officio*)

During the spring of 2011, the first GEWG subject area coordinators and chair would be appointed by the Provost, in consultation with the academic deans. Subsequent GEWG subject area coordinators would be selected by program leaders within their own general education subject areas. GEWG representatives from the Academic Advising Council, Library Services, Student Affairs, and Student Government would be selected through the particular means chosen by their respective constituent groups. Subsequent GEWG chairs would be chosen from among the subject area coordinators by a vote of the membership.

GEATF members recommend that one of the first tasks of the GEWG be to undertake a review of the 2004 General Education Mission Statement, and issue a recommendation to the General Education Council for action.

## **2. Compliance with State and Accreditation Requirements**

### Recommendations

To ensure continued compliance with state and regional accreditation standards, GEATF members recommend continued implementation of the General Education Assessment Plan, in conjunction with the additional measures outlined below.

## **3. Student Learning Outcomes**

### Recommendations

GEATF members recommend ending the list of ten General Education Learning Goals and Objectives, and continuing to focus assessment efforts on the General Education Competencies/Student Learning Outcomes, as defined and developed by the General Education Council and the General Education Working Group (see below).

Task force members also recommend that the FGCU Student Learning Goals and Objectives be renamed as “Core Educational Values,” in order to clarify their role as aspirational goals rather than measurable outcomes. Task force members recommend that the GEWG work in collaboration with the Assessment Council in this area.

## **4. Core Competencies**

### Recommendations

Task force members recommend that the 2005 General Education Competencies be renamed as “General Education Student Learning Outcomes,” in order to reduce confusion and better align them with student learning outcomes at all levels of institutional assessment at FGCU.

GEATF members also recommend that the General Education Program Director, working in collaboration with the General Education Council and the new General Education Program Working Group, explore all possible avenues for ensuring that the General Education Student Learning Outcomes are in full alignment with the content and pedagogy of courses within the GEP. This would include the continuation and further development of the current General Education Assessment Plan to help ensure that students in the GEP develop the academic knowledge and skills necessary for them to succeed in their major programs and beyond.

## **5. Organizational Structure**

### Recommendations

The GEATF recommends that three-day working conferences be offered for each of the five general education subject areas on a biennial basis. In these working conferences, GEP faculty members from different disciplines and academic units would collaborate in developing a consensus statement to guide assessment for each of the four General Education Outcomes, determining the coordinator to represent them on the GEWG, and educating new faculty on what it means to teach GEP courses within that particular general education subject area. Members could also propose changes to the General Education Student Learning Outcomes to create better alignment with the FGCU and GEP mission statements.

These working conferences could be offered under the auspices of the university Teaching, Learning and Assessment Initiative: <http://www.fgcu.edu/TLAI/index.html>, as vital components to the successful implementation of a continuous, faculty-driven cycle of improvement model. By creating a designated place and time for faculty who span many disciplines, departments and colleges to work in collaboration, the conferences would provide an opportunity to develop interdisciplinary connections and perspectives organized around each subject area.

## **6. Modes of Delivery for the Curriculum**

### Recommendations

Task force members recommend that faculty taking part in the new GEWG subject area working conferences explore existing models, both on-campus and at other comparable institutions, for offering the highest possible quality general education instruction in an environment of increasing student enrollments and limited human, physical and financial resources.

## **7. Evaluation Methods**

### Recommendations

GEATF members recommend that participants in the GEWG faculty working conferences explore ways to bring all of the General Education Student Learning Outcomes into better alignment with course content and pedagogy across the GEP curriculum. This would include, but not be limited to, the development of meaningful embedded and external assessments for measuring student achievement for all defined outcomes.

GEATF members have created a five-year General Education Assessment Plan that includes both embedded and external assessments, which will be further developed and enhanced through the ongoing work of the GEWG. The external assessments also play a valuable role as part of the university's commitment to the Voluntary System of Accountability (VSA).

## **8. Use of Assessment Management Tools**

### Recommendations

The GEATF recommends continued utilization of the ETS Proficiency Profile for external assessment of student achievement in Critical Thinking, Writing, and Mathematics as outlined in the 2010-2011 General Education Assessment Plan. Task force members also recommend that the GEWG continue to explore and evaluate potential external assessment tools that may better measure student achievement of the General Education Student Learning Outcomes.

## **9. Incentives for Assessment**

### Recommendations

Task force members recommend that the GEWG explore additional incentives for both students and faculty to engage in meaningful assessment activities for the GEP.

## **10. Required Resources**

### Recommendations

GEATF members recommend that the GEWG work in conjunction with the Office of Academic Affairs, the General Education Council, and the Assessment Council to help ensure that the necessary resources are available to support meaningful assessment of the General Education Student Learning Outcomes. Suggested resources would include an appropriate stipend and release time for the GEWG chair, release time for GEWG subject area coordinators and the Academic Advising Council representative, and compensation commensurate for worked completed by faculty members participating in each assessment cycle.