

**General Studies Assessment Retreat  
Summer Retreat  
May 16th, 2005**

Morning session

Present: Lillis, Moorman, Daake, Kropp, Powell, & Saldivar

Below is an overview of the topic/information covered:

1. Principles of good practice
  - a. (From Palomba & Banta) A Good Assessment Program:
    1. Asks important questions
    2. Reflects the institutional mission
    3. Reflects programmatic goals & objectives
    4. Contains a thoughtful approach to assessment planning
    5. Is linked to decision making about the curriculum
    6. Is linked to processes such as budget & planning
    7. Encourages involvement of individuals
    8. Contains relevant assessment techniques
    9. Includes direct evidence of learning
    10. Reflects what is known about how students learn
    11. Shares info with multiple audiences
    12. Lends to reflection & action b faculty, students, & staff)
    13. Allows for continuity, flexibility, and improvement of assessment
  - b. Comments so far were regarding standardized tests and are as follows: (which will be covered thoroughly on Tuesday's retreat).
    1. They are one good way to compare our students to other school's students
    2. They allow our assessment to gain credibility
    3. Maybe all students should take the GRE, then both parties will benefit
- 2.
3. Assessment Plan (with retreat revisions listed here):

- **Goals:**
  - What the GS Program intends to accomplish (in the GS Philosophy statement)
  - Also relates to the mission statement
  - Relevant portions from "Role & Mission of UNK document" include:
    - It aims to **graduate persons who know the accomplishments of civilizations and disciplined thought**
    - The University pursues the preservation, enrichment, and transmission of knowledge and culture **across a broad scope of academic disciplines**
    - The University **requires its baccalaureates to complete an area of specialization and an extensive general studies curriculum that emphasizes the liberal arts**
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- **Purpose of Assessment:** The purpose of assessment is to provide the basis for informed decision making and improvements to the program.
- **Objectives:** Really there are 3 sets of objectives:
  - 4 General objectives
  - Perspective objectives (catalog version for categories)
  - Perspective objectives (additional criteria for perspectives)

As a result of examining the objectives:

- At the June 6th meeting we'll need to look at which department assessment plans know about their specific perspectives objectives.
- We need to clarify these objectives (whether published or unpublished)
- CD may be more appropriate in the GS Council/Program (see General object #4) and this objective does not include "international experiences"
- Remove the wording at the end of the intro statement "the following activities" so that it will read ...is designed to develop and demonstrate: 1,2,3,4

Measuring General Objectives:

- ETS has a normed test with some items that may measure this
- NSSE has some questions with this

- The key is to align these things (i.e., lifelong learner may be "The ability to understand how to locate and gather information within a library and understand how libraries are generally organized

4.

Afternoon session

Present: Daake, Kropp, Lillis, Powell, & Saldivar

Faculty General Studies Survey:

Comments:

- It seemed to have a lot of three responses
- The survey doesn't measure whether the program is meeting objectives, but rather the faculty's perceptions
- Some questions can remain the same each time, and others can be changed based upon the results from the previous surveys

Revision Suggestions:

- Ask the faculty if they think their courses meet these objectives
- Have them report how long they've been at UNK
- The questions are formulated to ask faculty members what other faculty thinks, so re-word the items to be personal to self
- Eliminate #3 option, or add a "Don't Know/NA" response option to the surveys
- Would like student input/involvement on this

Strengths:

- People approve of the CD component to GS (#12)
- Political, moral, and ethical dimensions (#11)

Concerns:

- It doesn't give information on how students feel about the GS Program
- Perception of the GS Program as a list of courses
- static
- Faculty teaching in isolation

Items that Leapt Out:

- #21 (about Faculty community)

*Initiatives:*

- GS Sponsored Roundtable about interdisciplinary GS courses
- Develop a larger number of interdisciplinary capstone courses

- #6 (Our GS Program is a list of courses), 9, & 10

- #8 (Our students learn about GS mostly through catalog)

*Initiatives:*

- Publicize the GS Program goals/objectives at orientation, advising, etc.
- brochure for GS
- GS website

*Initiatives:*

- An initiative that was newly suggested was to have a faculty orientation for those who teach GS courses (and possibly include information on web smart into that orientation).

*Initiative:*

- Support (Council going to conferences, budget, and interdisciplinary logistics)

Timeline:

- Every spring of the odd years (i.e., Sp 05, Sp 09, 13, 17, etc.).

Student Assessment Committee GS Survey:

Comments:

- Students perceive faculty teaching GS courses as a burden
- Good to have the DK option
- Students see the GS Program as a obstacle in the way of majors courses
- Some want to see major changes to GS Program
- Some want to see GS Program discontinued

Revision Suggestions

- Add a section for student comments
- Revise #6 to allow for the option of NA

- Ask them about learning choices
- Ask them about what they had too many or too few hours in
- Ask them if GS Program was too much repetition for them
- Focus on their learning experiences
- (Then ask the faculty these same above questions)

Concerns:

- PR problem
- How the GS Program is perceived by students
- The majority of students learned about the GS Program in the catalog (so maybe the catalog should have more GS information in it).

Items that Leapt Out:

- *Initiatives:*
  - Possibly create a survey for freshmen (have you heard about GS, etc.)
  - We'll add a part in the assessment plan to collaborate with the SAC and have recommendations that SAC will give survey annually in spring with revision suggestions made to it.

Timeline:

- Annually by SAC spring semester

**Individual Course Analysis**(Maybe should be called the Categorical Course Analysis) (pg 3 of assessment plan)

Comments:

- Needs to be revised by formulating the objectives more specifically than the surveys
- For the introduction, state what the reason for the survey is and the objectives
- Thank the students for taking the survey
- Say something like, "In order to improve students' experiences with GS at UNK, we're asking you to complete this survey and provide us with feedback."

Revision Suggestions

- Is this course required for your major?

- Move questions # 1 & 2 to the end of the survey
- Maybe use Bloom's taxonomy to help with survey revision
  - Initiative:*
    - Have the Gs Council look at the objectives and re-work them prior to revising the surveys

Registrar's Questions:

Comments:

- leave as is in the assessment plan
- Delete question #8 from your handout, as per the council meeting and the council's passing vote to remove it
- Links to the 4 General GS objectives:

Registrar's Question	GS Objective
#3	#3
#4	#1
#5	#2
#6	#4

Timeline

- Every semester (1 per year?, so at the next GS council meeting, we will ask the council with General Objective #1, how does a student demonstrate objective #1 (operationally define).

Faculty Focus Groups:

Comments:

- Remove from the assessment plan
- It may be more beneficial to have student focus groups
- Maybe have student focus groups in conjunction with the SAC focus groups in the fall of 05 to be used to improve student outcomes

NSSE

Comment:

- See the objectives that were linked to each of the questions on the "Planning Subcommittee Meeting of March 1st, 2005 Notes document"