

### General Studies Portal Assessment Results (Spring 2014):

In accordance with the long-term assessment plan for General Studies Program, Portal courses were assessed in Spring 2014. A total of 297 responses were received.

Portal course assessment utilizes common assessment instruments and rubrics approved by the General Studies Council. Assessment results were collected using a Qualtrics survey during the last 3 weeks of the semester.

The General Studies Council determined in October 2015 that students in general studies courses should meet the standard of at least 70% of students achieving Proficient and Advanced for each identified learning outcome (both category and program level), where “Proficient” describes the skills of the typical student near the end of the course and “Advanced” is anything above proficient.

The assessment results for Portal learning outcomes (PO) are reported in Table 1. As shown in the last column of Table 1, less than one-half of the responses were rated Proficient and Advanced for both PO 1 – analyze critical issues confronting the individual and society, including a global context (39.73%) and PO 2 – interpret an argument through engaged discourse within the discipline (48.15%); however, over one-half of the responses for PO 3 – construct a cogent argument pertaining to the course topic (57.91%) were rated Proficient and Advanced. Although the 70% goal was not met, closer examination of the results indicated that the majority of the responses do fall within the “Developing” and “Proficient” columns. Recognizing that the purpose and intent of the Portal course is to “help students become intentional learners” through developing critical thinking skills provide a possible explanation for the results. It is also possible that faculty evaluators had higher expectations for work meeting the “Proficient” and “Advanced” level than where students are actually performing. Given these results, the General Studies Council may re-examine the established benchmark and/or rubric.

In addition to assessing the specific learning outcomes for Portal courses, the instruments used in the assessment process also measured the achievement on the GS Program Level Learning Outcomes; the assessment results for these Program Level Learning Outcomes are reported in Table 2.

As shown in the last column of Table 2, the results indicated that less than one-half of the responses were rated Proficient and Advanced for all four Program Level Learning Outcomes (GS) measured: GS 1 – evaluate information appropriate to the task (47.81%); GS 2 – apply principles of critical thinking to demonstrate integrative learning (44.78%); GS 4 – communicate effectively in written form (48.48%); and GS 5 – analyze cultural issues within a global context (39.73%). Although the 70% goal was not met, closer examination of the results indicates that the majority of the responses do fall within the “Developing” and “Proficient” columns.

Overall, the results reported above indicate that the 70% goal was not met for any of the learning outcomes at the course level or program level. As mentioned earlier, although the initial 70% goal was not reached, the majority of the responses are at or above “Developing.” Additional information and feedback from instructors carrying out the assessment will be sought prior to making any recommendations regarding strategies to improve the results. It should also be noted that the data collection process focused on the “aggregate” rather than providing course identifiers; going forward, being able to evaluate the results on a course-by-course basis would be helpful in identifying areas of strength and needed improvement. In addition, it should be recognized that the results reported above are from the first-time data collection in the assessment cycle. Thus, the results should be considered the first step in determining the base-line for achievement of the learning outcomes. As more data become available, recommendations for any potential changes can be made.

