

General Studies Assessment Results (Fall 2015):

In accordance with the long-term assessment plan for General Studies Program, Democracy in Perspective courses and distribution courses in the Natural Sciences, Analytical & Quantitative Thought, and Wellness categories were assessed in Fall 2015.

The goal was to collect assessment data from 25% of the courses in each of the categories; courses to be assessed were selected using the following criteria: **diversity** (variety of course pre-fixes chosen), **representativeness** (number of Departments contributing courses and level of their participation), **multiple-sections** (courses selected had multiple sections offered), and **enrollments** (selected courses had enrollments of less than 30 students). Honors courses are excluded from the selection process.

The specific courses selected for assessment were approved by the General Studies Council at the April 30, 2015 meeting; faculty responsible for the courses were then contacted and informed of the process to follow in conducting the assessment. Assessment results were collected using a Qualtrics survey during the last 3 weeks of the semester. The specific courses in each distribution category and the number of observations are presented in Table 1.

As reported in Table 1, the responses in the Democracy in Perspective area totaled 177 out of 569 students enrolled in all Democracy courses for a response rate of 31.11%. The response rate in the A&Q Thought courses was 27.2% (133 responses out of a total of 489) and 22.60% for Wellness courses (160 responses out of total enrollment of 708). The response rate in the Natural Science area was 10.11% (258 responses out of a total of 2,552); however, the 11.76% response rate for Natural Science lecture courses (174 responses out of a total 1,480) was slightly higher than the 7.84% response rate for Natural Science lab courses (84 responses out of a total 1,072). Overall, the response rate for fall 2015 was 16.86% for the four categories Democracy, Natural Science, A&Q Thought, and Wellness (728 responses out of a total enrollment of 4,318).

The General Studies Council has determined 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 Democracy in Perspective courses are reported in Table 2. As shown in the last column of Table 2, the goal of 70% Proficient and Advanced were met for all three Democracy Learning Outcomes (DP): DP 1 – explain roles that democratic concepts play in a just democracy (84.80%); DP 2 – analyze how citizens engage in democracy (83.04%); and DP 3 – evaluate democratic practices across different contexts (83.63%).

The assessment results for Natural Science distribution courses are reported in Table 3. As shown in the last column of Table 3, the goal of 70% Proficient and Advanced was only met for the first Natural Science Learning Outcome (NS): NS 1 - articulate the relevance of the Natural Science course to their general education (83.63%). Although below the desired 70% goal, the results show that over one-half of the responses for NS 2 – explain how knowledge of natural science is applicable (59.20%) and NS 3 – apply appropriate scientific methodology (69.84%) were Proficient and Advanced. The two learning outcomes with the lowest Proficient and Advanced responses (NS 4 – evaluate validity and limitations of scientific theories/claims (29.76%) and NS 5 – analyze scientific data through laboratory experiences (23.41%)) were also the two learning outcomes with high proportions of responses in the “Not Assessed” categories. Given this, using a separate process to collect assessment data from “lecture” and from “lab” courses might yield higher response rates and allow for more meaningful evaluation of the data. While assessment in Natural Science area is complicated by the need to collect data from both “lecture” and “lab” courses; it must also be noted that the assessment results represent less than 15% of all students enrolled in Natural Science courses (see Table 1) during fall 2015.

The assessment results for Analytical & Quantitative Thought distribution courses are reported in Table 4. As shown in the last column of Table 4, the goal of 70% Proficient and Advanced were met for the following Analytical

& Quantitative Thought Learning Outcomes (AQ): AQ 2 – express formal relationships using various forms of analytical reasoning (78.91%); AQ 3 – define problems using techniques appropriate to the discipline (73.44%); AQ 4 – solve problems using techniques appropriate to the discipline (71.88%); AQ 5 – draw appropriate inferences from data (75.78%); and AQ 6 – evaluate analytical results for reasonableness (76.56%). The only outcome that did not achieve the 70% goal was AQ 1 – articulate the relevance of the A&Q Thought course to their general education (67.19%).

The assessment results for Wellness distribution courses are reported in Table 5. As shown in the last column of Table 5, the goal of 70% Proficient and Advanced were met for three of the five Wellness Learning Outcomes (WO): WO 1 – articulate relevance of the Wellness course to their general education (90.51%); WO 3 – recognize the potential consequences of personal choices (93.04%); and WO 5 – develop action strategy for wellness (81.65%). Although the 70% goal was not met for WO 2 – describe the components of wellness (67.72%) and WO 4 – analyze roles of society in wellness promotion (58.80%), over one-half of the responses were at the Proficient and Advanced level.

In addition to assessing the specific learning outcomes for Democracy in Perspective courses and courses in the Natural Science, Analytical & Quantitative Thought, and Wellness distribution categories, 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 6.

As shown in the last column of Table 6, the goal of 70% Proficient and Advanced were met for the following Program Level Learning Outcomes (GS): GS 1 – evaluate information appropriate to the task (82.49%); GS 4 – communicate effectively in written form (70.60%); GS 5 – analyze cultural issues within a global context (81.65%); and GS 6 – evaluate in context significant concepts relating to democracy (83.82%). The only outcome that did not achieve the goal was GS 2 – apply principles of critical thinking to demonstrate integrative learning (67.33%). No data was collected on the third Program Learning Outcome (GS 3 – communicate effectively in spoken form) during fall 2015.

Generally speaking, the results reported above indicate that the 70% goal was met for the majority of the learning outcomes in each of the distribution categories and program level. However, the low response rate in the Natural Science area makes meaningful evaluation of the assessment results difficult and does raise issues regarding data validity. However, prior to making any recommendations regarding strategies to improving the results, the GSC will seek additional information and feedback from instructors carrying out the assessment. 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 as 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.

Table 1. Courses Included in GS Assessment in Fall 2015 and Responses.

Category	Course	Responses	Percent assessed
Democracy:	JMC 100	54	
	PSCI 140	71	
	TE 100	52	
	<i>Total</i>	<i>177</i>	
	<i>Enrollment in all Democracy Courses (fall 2015)</i>	<i>569</i>	<i>31.11</i>
Natural Sciences:	CHEM 160	76	
	GEOG 103	48	
	PHYS 201	1	
	PHYS 210	49	
	BIOL 103 (lab)	66	
	PHYS 205L (lab)	18	
	<i>Total (lecture only)</i>	<i>174</i>	
	<i>Total (lab only)</i>	<i>84</i>	
	<i>Total (lecture and lab)</i>	<i>258</i>	
	<i>Enrollment in all Natural Science lecture (fall 2015)</i>	<i>1,480</i>	<i>11.76</i>
<i>Enrollment in all Natural Science lab (fall 2015)</i>	<i>1,072</i>	<i>7.84</i>	
<i>Enrollment in all Natural Science Courses (fall 2015)</i>	<i>2,552</i>	<i>10.11</i>	
A&Q Thought:	CSIT 130	42	
	MGT 233	49	
	PSY 250	42	
	<i>Total</i>	<i>133</i>	
	<i>Enrollment in all A&Q Thought Courses (fall 2015)</i>	<i>489</i>	<i>27.20</i>
Wellness:	FSID 110	123	
	PE 150	37	
	<i>Total</i>	<i>160</i>	
	<i>Enrollment in all Wellness Courses fall 2015)</i>	<i>708</i>	<i>22.6</i>

Table 2. Democracy in Perspective Assessment Results for Fall 2015 (Percent of Total Responses by Learning Outcomes).

Democracy in Perspective Learning Outcome (DP):	Not Assessed	Does not meet	Beginning	Developing	Proficient	Advanced	Proficient and Advanced
DP 1: <i>Explain the roles that democratic concepts, including individual rights, play in a just democracy.</i>	0.00	2.92	0.00	12.28	66.67	18.13	84.80
DP 2: <i>Analyze how citizens engage in democracy.</i>	0.00	2.34	0.58	14.04	60.82	22.22	83.04
DP 3: <i>Evaluate democratic practices across different contexts (such as settings, time, socioeconomic conditions, cultures, and political boundaries).</i>	0.00	2.34	2.34	11.7	68.42	15.20	83.63

Table 3. Natural Sciences Assessment Results for Fall 2015 (Percent of Total Responses by Learning Outcomes).

Natural Science Learning Outcome (NS):	Not Assessed	Does not meet	Beginning	Developing	Proficient	Advanced	Proficient and Advanced
NS 1: <i>Articulate the relevance of the Natural Science course to their general education.</i>	0.00	1.75	3.51	11.11	39.18	44.44	83.63
NS 2: <i>Explain how knowledge of natural science is applicable to their lives.</i>	32.40	1.20	0.80	6.40	25.20	34.00	59.20
NS 3: <i>Apply appropriate scientific methodology within one of the natural sciences.</i>	1.19	0.40	7.94	20.63	49.21	20.63	69.84
NS 4: <i>Evaluate the validity and limitations of scientific theories and claims.</i>	46.03	0.00	4.37	19.84	15.87	13.89	29.76
NS 5 (lab courses only): <i>Analyze scientific data acquired through laboratory experiences in one of the natural sciences.</i>	67.46	0.79	1.19	7.14	17.86	5.56	23.41

Table 4. Analytical and Quantitative Thought Assessment Results for Fall 2015 (Percent of Total Responses by Learning Outcomes).

Analytical and Quantitative Thought Learning Outcome (AQ):	Not Assessed	Does not meet	Beginning	Developing	Proficient	Advanced	Proficient and Advanced
AQ 1: <i>Articulate the relevance of the A&Q Thought course to their general education.</i>	0.00	6.25	6.25	20.31	40.63	26.56	67.19
AQ 2: <i>Express formal relationships using various forms of analytical reasoning.</i>	0.00	5.47	3.91	11.72	31.25	47.66	78.91
AQ 3: <i>Define problems using techniques appropriate to the discipline.</i>	0.00	6.25	3.13	17.19	23.44	50.00	73.44
AQ 4: <i>Solve problems using techniques appropriate to the discipline.</i>	0.00	5.47	5.47	17.19	22.66	49.22	71.88
AQ 5: <i>Draw appropriate inferences from data in various forms.</i>	0.00	7.03	3.13	14.06	31.25	44.53	75.78
AQ 6: <i>Evaluate analytical results for reasonableness.</i>	0.00	6.25	3.13	14.06	24.22	52.34	76.56

Table 5. Wellness Assessment Results for Fall 2015 (Percent of Total Responses by Learning Outcomes).

Wellness Learning Outcome (WO):	Not Assessed	Does not meet	Beginning	Developing	Proficient	Advanced	Proficient and Advanced
WO 1: <i>Articulate the relevance of the Wellness course to their general education.</i>	0.00	0.63	0.00	8.86	63.92	26.58	90.51
WO 2: <i>Describe the components of wellness.</i>	0.00	0.00	3.80	28.48	40.51	27.22	67.72
WO 3: <i>Realize potential consequences of personal choices.</i>	0.00	0.00	1.90	5.06	45.57	47.47	93.04
WO 4: <i>Analyze roles of society in wellness promotion.</i>	0.00	10.65	4.63	25.93	40.28	18.52	58.80
WO 5: <i>Develop action strategy for wellness.</i>	0.63	0.00	0.00	17.72	60.13	21.52	81.65

Table 6. General Studies Program Level Assessment Results for Fall 2015 (Percent of Total Responses by Learning Outcomes).

Program Level Learning Outcome (GS):	Not Assessed	Does not meet	Beginning	Developing	Proficient	Advanced	<i>Proficient and Advanced</i>
GS 1: <i>Evaluate information appropriate to the task.</i>	0.13	1.92	1.67	13.79	52.21	30.28	82.49
GS 2: <i>Apply principles of critical thinking to demonstrate integrative learning.</i>	15.15	1.69	2.72	13.10	39.03	28.3	67.33
GS 3: <i>Communicate effectively in spoken form.</i>							
GS 4: <i>Communicate effectively in written form.</i>	11.15	0.87	3.03	14.35	40.23	30.37	70.60
GS 5: <i>Analyze cultural issues within a global context.</i>	0.63	0.00	0.00	17.72	60.13	21.52	81.65
GS 6: <i>Evaluate in context significant concepts relating to democracy.</i>	0.00	2.53	0.97	12.67	65.30	18.52	83.82