July 25, 2012

Dear Deans and Chairs,

We write to update you on the status of the General Studies 2012 assessment plan. As you may remember, the General Studies Task Force drafted an assessment plan for inclusion in the summer 2010 report to the Higher Learning Commission. That draft was based on the General Studies 2012 student learning outcomes and course categories that were approved by the faculty in May 2010. Given the importance the faculty place on student success and improving student learning, it follows that many of them would be interested in assessing student achievement of the General Studies learning outcomes. In addition, the Higher Learning Commission visiting team asked for a progress report to be submitted in July 2012 that would include “evidence of a completed and agreed upon plan for general studies assessment.” We and the Faculty Senate General Studies Committee realized that the timeframe was such that completion of a fully agreed upon plan by the beginning of July was not feasible because course approval wrapped up in April.

However, in late spring the University’s proposal for participation in the AAC&U General Education and Assessment Institute was accepted. Participation is based on a competitive process where approximately 30 institutions are accepted out of almost 150 applicants. The proposal submitted focused on developing a comprehensive and meaningful General Studies 2012 assessment plan. The eight-member team (identified below) spent 6 intensive days building on the ideas generated by the General Studies Task Force and producing an overall approach and the attached list of tasks.

- Jane Chapman Vigil, Professor, Department of English, Senior Faculty Associate for Assessment
- Alex Padilla, Associate Professor, Department of Economics
- Mike Monsour, Assistant Professor, Department of Communication Arts and Sciences
- Kim Klimek, Assistant Professor, Department of History
- Richard Wagner, Associate Professor, Department of Earth and Atmospheric Sciences, 2012-13 Chair, General Studies Committee
- Nels Grevstad, Associate Professor, Department of Mathematics and Computer Science and Chair, General Studies Committee
- Ken Phillips, Associate Professor and Chair, Industrial Design, former member of General Studies Task Force
- Sheila Thompson, Associate Vice President, Curriculum and Academic Effectiveness

The overall approach developed by the AAC&U Institute team revolves around the rating of artifacts (papers, exam responses, projects, etc.) produced by students in General Studies courses using a common rubric for each General Studies category. The purpose of this assessment plan is to assess the General Studies program not individual faculty, courses or students. The common rubrics will be developed by teams comprised of faculty from the
academic programs that submitted courses within the particular category. The rubrics drafted by these groups will be shared with all programs with approved courses within the category and the feedback obtained used to modify the initial draft. The goal is completion of rubric development by the end of fall semester 2012.

Additional steps in the process include refining the rubrics using sample student work, training faculty to serve as evaluators, and piloting data collection in spring semester. Initial volunteer courses have already been identified from English, Speech Communication, and Meteorology, but additional volunteers are welcome across all General Studies categories. Data collection procedures are under development, as is a sampling cycle though an example does appear in the list of steps below. In the mean time, all faculty involved in teaching General Studies courses are encouraged to continue refining the student work product(s) proposed as assessment items in the curriculum packet submitted for the course.

We are just beginning this process, but as faculty are engaged in each of these steps, ongoing communication will occur through the Faculty Senate, the Council of Chairs and the General Studies web site http://www.mscd.edu/generalstudies/

Please join us in thanking the faculty who are already actively participating in this endeavor and encouraging involvement by additional faculty. Please also let us know what questions you have and we'll do our best to respond with complete and accurate information based on the stage of the process in which we are involved.

Regards,

Sheila S. Thompson
Associate Vice President, Curriculum and Academic Effectiveness

Jane Chapman Vigil
Senior Faculty Associate for Assessment, Professor of English

Nels Grevstad
Faculty Associate for General Studies Assessment, Associate Professor of Mathematics
**STEPS in DEVELOPING AND IMPLEMENTING General Studies 2012 ASSESSMENT PLAN**

*Metropolitan State University of Denver*

(Overarching communication process aligned with each step with Faculty Senate, Council of Chairs and other groups as applicable)

1. Establish overlapping SLO rubric development groups (SLO 1, 2, 3, 5, 6, 7, 10)
   - Materials include VALUE rubrics aligned with SLO, existing rubrics submitted with curriculum packets ([http://www.aacu.org/value/](http://www.aacu.org/value/))
   - Invite faculty from academic programs that submitted courses aligning with these SLOs, include members of AAC&U Institute team

2. Establish category rubric development groups to build on rubrics started in step 1
   - Materials include VALUE rubrics aligned with SLO, existing rubrics submitted with curriculum packets
   - Invite faculty from academic programs that submitted courses approved for each category, include members of AAC&U Institute team

3. Reach out to faculty in academic programs involved in each category to gather feedback about draft rubrics

4. Identify and train volunteers for artifact rating pool (ongoing), calibrate rubrics

5. Identify pilot data collection volunteers (English, Meteorology, Speech Communication)

6. Refine and clarify data collection cycle and rules/procedures

7. Begin first data collection cycle – fall 2013

**Data collection and analysis cycle example (Categories A-H refer to the 8 General Studies categories. The data collection sequence will be determined in spring 2013)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Collect data</th>
<th>Analyze and interpret data, draw conclusions</th>
<th>Implement improvements</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2013-14</td>
<td>Category A, Category B, Category C</td>
<td>Category A, Category B, Category C</td>
<td>Category A, Category B, Category C</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2014-15</td>
<td>Category D, Category E, Category F</td>
<td>Category A, Category B, Category C</td>
<td>Category A, Category B, Category C</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2015-16</td>
<td>Category G, Category H</td>
<td>Category A, Category B, Category C</td>
<td>Category A, Category B, Category C</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2016-17</td>
<td>Category A, Category B, Category C</td>
<td>Category A, Category B, Category C</td>
<td>Category A, Category B, Category C</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2017-18</td>
<td>Category D, Category E, Category F</td>
<td>Category A, Category B, Category C</td>
<td>Category A, Category B, Category C</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2018-19</td>
<td>Category G, Category H</td>
<td>Category A, Category B, Category C</td>
<td>Category A, Category B, Category C</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: Global diversity data will be collected when section data are submitted for category assessment, cumulative data analysis will occur in subsequent years when data are collected for overlapping SLOs