

General Education Outcomes Committee, Final Report, June 2007
Executive Summary

Following a recommendation by the Undergraduate Priorities Implementation Team of Vision Ohio, the Provost and the Chair of Faculty Senate established a committee to develop learning objectives and outcomes for the General Education Program of Ohio University. The committee was to work for a year and then turn over its recommendations to the University Curriculum Council (UCC) for implementation. This report contains those recommendations and completes the work of that committee. It should be noted that many other committees over the years have provided the foundation on which this committee has built its recommendations.

There are nine recommendations in the report:

1. UCC will require all general education courses to clearly identify in their syllabi those learning outcomes that are also general education outcomes associated with that course.
2. UCC should change the courses available for General Education credit in the Catalog to reflect what is still offered, and work with the Registrar to amend the DARS report.
3. In accordance with the recommendations of the Undergraduate Priorities of Vision Ohio, UCC should set up a review of General Education courses in the context of the outcomes listed below and, with the assistance of Institutional Research and others, begin assessing the General Education curriculum. A way for that to be done is for UCC to set up an Outcomes and Assessment committee formed from some members of each of the three existing committees of UCC. We recommend that members of this committee participate in the faculty interviews of students. In addition, this committee should include a representative from Institutional Research as an ex-officio staff member.
4. Because of the foundational assessment work already done by the Center for Writing Excellence (CWE), the Committee on Writing Across the Curriculum (CWAC), and the English Department's Composition Program, Tier I writing skills should be one of the first areas in which learning objectives and outcomes are assessed. We also recommend a review of Tier I Quantitative Skills to determine if the current courses fit the expected outcomes.
5. The general education curriculum is diffused throughout the entire University. It is therefore difficult to assign "ownership" for different components. Assessment within individual courses and programs can be done within existing academic units, but assessing institutional outcomes (e.g., overall learning objectives) and outcomes across programs becomes more difficult. In order for assessment to be done at the most appropriate level to affect improvements in teaching and learning, we recommend the creation of a collaborative of dedicated faculty who regularly teach general education courses to work with Institutional Research to implement the assessments. These faculty would work within their existing academic departments and schools to use assessment data gathered and develop recommendations from those departments to submit to UCC. Members of UCC should be included in this collaboration.

6. In writing the outcomes for Applied Sciences and Mathematics the committee considers that mathematics should not be included in this Tier II distribution, but UCC should review Applied Sciences and Mathematics and make any necessary recommendations to Faculty Senate should they consider that the current Tier II mathematics courses should be relocated to Tier I Quantitative Skills courses.

7. We recommend implementing the assessment methods previously recommended by the General Education Assessment Committee in 1995. Multiple methods including standardized tests (ACT Collegiate Assessment of Academic Proficiency), surveys (e.g., Survey of Alumni), and faculty-conducted structured interviews of students (similar to those done by Richard Light and colleagues at Harvard College) are most appropriate to Ohio University's needs at this time. We recommend that Institutional Research be funded with sufficient resources to support the recommended assessment methods (standardized tests, surveys, and structured faculty interviews of students). We believe these methods are essential for the successful use of learning objectives and outcomes in improving General Education at Ohio University.

8. We recommend that a campaign is undertaken by EPSA, UCC, Center for Teaching and Learning, Institutional Research, and others to increase faculty knowledge on assessment and how to make best use of learning objectives and outcomes.

9. The ninth recommendation is to assess the detailed the learning objectives identified by the committee.

In writing these recommendations for learning objectives and outcomes, which are to be used to improve General Education at Ohio University, the committee wants to stress that this is a beginning and not the end of a process. The academic departments and schools who deliver the general education instruction will be the primary units involved in assessing general education courses and programs and will work with UCC to implement changes they recommend. UCC is the body charged by the University with monitoring the quality of education at Ohio University. It is expected that UCC will eventually use assessment information to affect General Education program changes. UCC must make proposals to Faculty Senate for changes they discern are needed to the General Education program to improve the General Education outcomes of graduates of Ohio University. This entire process should be seen as an example of the process of continuous improvement in undergraduate education at Ohio University.

Charge:

1. Identify the expected learning outcomes associated with completion of an undergraduate degree at Ohio University;
2. consider the General Education Assessment Committee's (2004-05) assessment proposal and recommend assessment procedures including measurements for these learning outcomes;
3. consider available evidence to assess the extent to which the current General Education requirements fulfill the learning outcomes expectations of graduates;
4. given current evidence, identify the areas that may require attention and adjustment in the current General Education curriculum to align existing requirements with the expected learning outcomes; and
5. recommend an assessment plan with the expectation that it will be implemented immediately and carried out over the next several years.

Membership:

David Ingram, Physics & Astronomy, Chair
Michael Williford, Institutional Research, Assistant Chair
Dave Bower Teacher Education
David Descutner, Dean of University College
Tom Flynn, English (Eastern)
Jeff Gieseey, Electrical Engineering & Computer Science
Sherrie Gradin, English
David Keck, Mathematics
Mary Jane Kelley, Modern Languages
Christine Mattley, Sociology & Anthropology
Dave Matthews, Human & consumer Science
Ben Ogles, Dean of Arts & Sciences
Allyn Reilly, Music
Joni Schaller, Institutional Research
J.W. Smith, Communication Studies
Rebecca Thacker, Management Systems
David Thomas, Film
Patrick Heery, Student HTC Classics and A&S English
Chelsea Conley, Student Music
Micah Mitchell, Student HTC Communications

Context:

The Undergraduate Priorities Committee of Vision Ohio recommended that this committee be established and be charged to produce learning outcomes for General Education within one year, and that "UCC be will be the body charged with ensuring that these outcomes are assessed and met and be the body to recommend changes where necessary to either the outcomes or to the programmatic ways of achieving them. The recommended changes may require EPSA and Faculty Senate to make policy changes or may require the departments, offering particular courses, to change these courses to ensure that outcomes are met."

Nationally, there is increasing attention on demonstrating accountability through student assessment. The Commission on the Future of Higher Education (Spellings Commission) has made evidence-based higher education reform among its recommendations. Regional and specialized accrediting agencies are placing increasing emphasis on assessment. It is imperative for colleges and universities who want to retain their distinctiveness to respond to these calls with evidence of externally credible assessments of student learning.

The committee discussed the use of standardized testing in response to the Spellings Commission's recommendation in this area. Ohio University has had a long history with using an assessment similar to the Collegiate Learning Assessment (CLA), the College Outcomes Measures Program (COMP) test from ACT,

(<http://www.ohiou.edu/instres/assessments/genedoutcomes.pdf>). Ohio University's experience has been that a standardized test such as this, even when reviewed and adopted by the faculty, has minimal internal value for improving teaching and learning. Rather, nationally normed general education assessments (CLA, CAAP, MAPP, etc.) are typically more efficacious for making inter-institutional comparisons and demonstrating uniformity of broad-based student outcomes to external audiences (e.g., trustees, legislators). The committee approached its charge such that any recommendations for assessment activities should focus primarily on the internal purpose of improving teaching and learning. However, recommendations for assessment activities should not ignore the need for results of these activities to be credible to external audiences. As a result, the committee spent considerable time reviewing and discussing one such standardized test, the ACT CAAP.

Also, the Ohio Board of Regents is sponsoring a state-wide effort where all public and private colleges and universities will develop assessment plans called "Student Success Plans." The Student Success Plan are to be created using elements of student assessment, learning outcomes, and performance competencies that are already in place at many colleges and universities in Ohio. The Regents are asking each college and university to develop and implement its own Student Success Plan, which will allow the individual strengths of each institution to remain intact while all of Ohio's schools are linked by their commonalities.

Each Student Success Plan must consist of the following characteristics:

1. Learning outcomes in general education and reported student achievement relative to those outcomes;
2. Learning outcomes in undergraduate majors and reported student achievement relative to those outcomes;
3. Impact of special features of the undergraduate learning experience that occur in institution-wide programs.

Appendix I contains the complete Statement on Student Success Plans. It should be noted that Ohio University already has developed its Student Success Plan (<http://www.ohiou.edu/learningobjectives/>) and is working to fully implement it. The work of this Committee is being included in this Plan.

In addressing its charge the committee notes that "Not everything that can be counted

counts, and not everything that counts can be counted” (Albert Einstein). In establishing learning outcomes we are also cognizant of the maxim of Voltaire that “The perfect is the enemy of the good.” Thus what is provided here is a beginning of a process in which the learning outcomes for General Education at Ohio University will be continuously improved. It is anticipated that UCC will take these outcomes and, after using them, will revise them, continuously. It is also expected that preliminary data from the outcomes will be available after one year and that it will be several years before sufficient data can be established. Also, due to the limitations on faculty time and resources, and that the requirements for Tier II change in the Fall of 2008, it is anticipated that UCC will not have sufficient data on all areas of General Education for several years.

History of General Education at Ohio University:

In 1975 the Faculty began to discuss common expectations for all undergraduate students of Ohio University. A General Education program was adopted by Faculty Senate in May 1979. In 1986 a document was generated that summarized the General Education program at Ohio University.

Ohio University General Education Learning Objectives¹

Overall objectives:

The total undergraduate experience enables students to achieve minimal standards in advanced intellectual skills, breadth of knowledge, and integrative competencies.

Advanced intellectual skills.

Broad knowledge of the major fields of learning.

The development of a capacity for evaluation and synthesis that university graduates should possess in order to participate effectively in the society and culture in which they will live.

The ability to make independent judgments and to carry out constructive changes in existing systems.

The capacity for self-development, enjoyment of life, and personal fulfillment.

The ability to communicate effectively through the written word and the ability to use quantitative or symbolic reasoning

A capacity for evaluation and synthesis

Tier I Outcomes:

A capacity for logical thinking as well as some ability to use or understand the quantitative, mathematical, statistical, and computational techniques increasingly demanded by a complex technological society

The ability to communicate clearly, effectively, and with some sense of style.

Tier II Outcomes:

Substantive knowledge of the physical universe and life.

The individual and society.

Our own and other cultures, languages, literatures, and arts.

The historical forces that have shaped our present world and will condition our future.

¹ Extracted from “General Education at Ohio University,” 1986

The major philosophical and religious ideas that have influenced our attitudes, values and outlook.

A basic understanding and appreciation of the ways we gain knowledge and analyze natural, behavioral, and cultural phenomena.

A capacity for evaluation and synthesis.

Knowledge of the rapidly expanding fields of learning.

The development of a synoptic understanding, informed moral judgment, and heightened aesthetic appreciation

Applied Science and Technology (2A)

Students need to be aware of the nature of the technological revolution, its impact on society, and its application in the world of science.

Humanities and Fine Arts (2H)

Students need to be familiar with their own cultural heritage as well as those of other nations and continents.

Natural Sciences and Mathematics (2N)

Some acquaintance with the principal methods and achievements of science . . . understanding of the ways in which the scientist works by providing students with laboratory experiences . . .how, through painstaking observation, scientists discover certain uniformities and develop convenient ways of thinking about things

Social Sciences (2S)

Better understanding ourselves, our society, and the great economic, political, and moral issues which confront humankind

Third World Cultures (2T)

a liberation from narrow and rigid perspectives . . .aware of their own culture and its roots in the cultures of the East as well as the West.

Tier III Outcomes:

The ability to weave many complex strands into a fabric of definable issues, patterns and topics.

The ability to understand that problems and issues are often only successfully approached from a variety of perspectives

Recent Reports and Proposed Changes in General Education at Ohio University:

Since the establishment of the General Education program in 1979 a number of changes have been attempted and made. In 1991, a group of faculty attempted to introduce a new general education curriculum, which subsequently was not adopted by Faculty Senate. At the February 14th, 2005 meeting Faculty Senate turned down the radical changes proposed to reform the General Education program that had been initiated in 2001. It reaffirmed faculty support for the philosophy and basic design of the Tier System, (Tier I fundamental skills, Tier II breadth of learning, Tier III a culminating experience) and instructed EPSA to begin a review of possible adjustments to the Tier system. In particular, the motion called for a decision on what to do with

Tier III and to consider specifically why our current Tier II system requires so much less than the breadth of learning General Education requirements of our peer institutions. Finally, the motion called for a re-evaluation of the Tier II subject areas. In this, the Faculty Senate reaffirmed its responsibilities and rights as steward of the curriculum and of General Education at Ohio University.

At the next meeting of Faculty Senate, March 14th, 2005 EPSA proposed, in a motion for first reading, that certain “capstone” courses be allowed to fulfill the Tier III requirement since they, like the existing Tier III courses, included considerable synthesis of material across the discipline and often beyond it. For example, the Senior Design courses of the engineering programs require social and economic benefits and costs to be considered in a particular design project as well as all integrating material from the math, science and engineering courses that have preceded the project. The philosophy, not stated explicitly at the time but touched on in the discussions, was that the capstone courses, taken once the student became a senior, serve as a culminating experience that demonstrates the student’s ability to synthesize across multiple areas of knowledge. In addition the motion called for changes to the way the current Tier III courses were governed. The Tier III courses were no longer to be instructor specific and they would be administered by the department or school that taught them. This is in line with the new budget model and will mean that they will be seen as much more attractive to teach by those departments or schools that offer them. UCC was also instructed to develop a quicker process for approving Tier III courses. Faculty Senate further instructed UCC that approval of existing courses that met the requirements outlined in the motion, as Tier III equivalent courses, must be expedited in order to get as many as possible available by Fall 2006. The motion passed at its second reading at the Faculty Senate meeting of April 18th, 2005.

The expectation was that the Tier III equivalent capstone courses would boost the number of seats in Tier III classes by at least 10% during the 2006-07 academic year. This was based on surveys done by Associate Provost Tuck of departments and schools that had capstone courses. It turned out that these courses were much more popular than we expected and the 10% goal was reached during the fall quarter. By the spring quarter of 2006 there were so many Tier III equivalent classes that seats were still available in the conventional Tier III courses. Students can now fulfill their culminating experience with a course of their choice outside their discipline and, in many cases, with a course in their major that has many of the same characteristics. As of Spring quarter, 2006, there were no reports from Assistant Deans of students having difficulty satisfying the Tier III requirement.

As part of the EPSA review of the General Education course review and approval process, and at the request of UCC, Faculty Senate was presented at its October 17th, 2005 meeting with a resolution to return all review and approval of general education courses to UCC and to disband the General Education Council. This had the effect of removing one level of committee approval from the process of getting General Education courses approved and it gave the task of reviewing those courses, specifically to ensure they meet their desired outcomes, to the body at Ohio University responsible for academic review, UCC.

As noted above, the motion, that reconfirmed the three Tier approach to General Education, also instructed EPSA to review Tier II. EPSA members have spent a year doing so

and came to the conclusion that there were several problems with the current Tier II distributions. The principle problem they found was that since the system allowed students to take courses from 4 out of 5 areas, it was possible to graduate from Ohio University without taking a Natural Science course, or being exposed to Fine Arts, or Cross Cultural Perspectives. At the April 17th, 2006 meeting of Faculty Senate, EPSA proposed for a first reading a motion to change the categories of Tier II, expanding them to 6 in total and requiring students to take a course from all 6 areas. This was approved on second reading at the May 15th, 2006 meeting of Faculty Senate. The new areas are:

- Applied Science and Mathematics
- Cross-Cultural Perspectives
- Fine Arts
- Humanities and Literature
- Natural Sciences
- Social Sciences

Since the inception of the General Education program at Ohio University, the major changes to the Tier II structure are: Mathematics has been moved from Natural Science to Applied Science; Fine Arts have been separated from Humanities; and Literature has been explicitly included in with Humanities. In order to alleviate some concerns about the increase course load (4 to 6) and credit hours (from 30 to 32), the motion also allowed 3 hour courses to count toward the distribution requirement, and that up to 2 courses may be taken in the student's department/school or major concentration. This will bring the total hourly requirement for General Education at Ohio University to 49 hours. This is still significantly below the hourly requirements of our peers and OSU, which recently reduced its general education requirement from 85 to 60 hours for BA programs and 85 to 65 for BS programs.

EPSA and Faculty Senate have not been alone in acting on issues to do with General Education this year. UCC and the First Year Engagement (FYE) committee have both been looking at the courses most often taken by first year students, 8 out of 10 of which are General Education Tier I or II courses. Their input was received by the Undergraduate Priorities team of Vision Ohio (UPVO). UPVO made the recommend in its report to the Provost that a learning outcomes committee be established. This was based on the input from UCC and FYE and on the report from the General Education Assessment Committee, chaired by Phyllis Bernt, which was submitted to the Provost in June 2005. UPVO recommended that committee be constituted from Faculty Senators, predominantly EPSA members, be chaired by a Senator, include the Dean of Arts and Science and the Dean of University College, and also have student representation. It should have a limited life, probably one year, in which to make its report on what learning outcomes should be expected from each of the three Tiers of our General Education program and how to implement the process by which to assess the attainment of those outcomes. The UPVO that UCC be the body charged with ensuring that these outcomes are met and will recommend changes where necessary to either the outcomes or to the programmatic ways of achieving them. Thus, the recommended changes may require EPSA and Faculty Senate to make policy changes, or require the departments, offering particular courses, to change those courses to ensure that the outcomes are met, or they may lose approval to teach them as General Education courses.

The General Education Assessment Committee completed its work in 2005 and made several recommendations (see Appendix II). Those recommendations were reviewed by the present committee and adopted (below). In addition, the chair of that committee chaired another learning objectives committee, and the result of that work was the Learning Outcomes Pyramid (Appendix III), which incorporates the common learning objectives from all academic units.

In summary, Ohio University has gone through a process of renewal of its General Education program. It is now in a mode of building in methods of continuous improvement through the use of learning outcomes. For a large university it is not unusual that such an exercise takes a few years to accomplish or that it be contentious. It took Harvard College 15 years to accomplish a major revision of its General Education program. As many research universities do, we have a dispersed set of requirements that we place on our students. We have not chosen in any of our recent attempts at revising General Education at the University level to adopt a Core Curriculum. We are moving from a system that had a series of courses that had to be taken to a system that requires certain learning outcomes to be achieved. We will likely see further revision of our General Education program as thoughtful and continued review of General Education remains a priority for Faculty Senate, EPSA and UCC.

One of the major criticisms of the most recent move to revise the General Education program was the lack of data to support the changes, or to condemn the existing system. While the proposed revisions were making their way through Faculty Senate it was decided to establish a committee to develop learning outcomes for General Education that could be used in conjunction with the proposed system. This committee was chaired by Phyllis Bernt. While Faculty Senate voted down the program that generated Bernt's committee's outcomes, it remains that many of its recommendations have been used to guide those of this committee. A complete report from that committee is in Appendix II.

With regard to the third charge to the Committee, "consider available evidence to assess the extent to which the current General Education requirements fulfill the learning outcomes expectations of graduates," we reviewed documents, studies, and reports provided by Institutional Research. For example, the ongoing Survey of Alumni (http://www.ohiou.edu/instres/alumni/alum9899_rpt.pdf) provides Ohio University graduates' responses to questions about satisfaction with General Education courses and general education competencies needed about five years after graduating. Also, Ohio University administered the ACT College Outcomes Measures Program (COMP) test, which measures general education knowledge and skills (<http://www.ohiou.edu/instres/assessments/genedoutcomes.pdf>).

Process followed by this committee:

The committee met every other week to discuss issues of general concern and receive reports from subcommittees dealing with overall objectives and with each Tier I and Tier II area, and another subcommittee that prepared objectives and outcomes for Tier III. The committee reviewed books and background materials, such as Miller and Leskes's *Levels of Assessment*, Palomba and Banta's *Assessment Essentials* and Light's *Making the Most of College: Students Speak their Minds*. The committee monitored national and state assessment activities throughout the year, such as the release of the Spellings Commission report and Ohio's Student Success Plan initiative. Committee members participated in state and regional assessment meetings.

The committee reviewed the general education requirements at Ohio University's peer universities. Ohio University's requirement in terms of credit hours required is comparable to the requirement at peer universities. In addition, Ohio University's requirement in terms of content is similar to the content at peer universities.

In addition, the committee agreed to use the learning outcomes documented in *Liberal Education Outcomes*, published by the Association of American Colleges and Universities as a guide in describing learning outcomes and objectives for Ohio University's general education curriculum.

Recommendations:

UCC is the body charged by Faculty Senate to monitor the quality of General Education courses. The recommendations of this committee will be passed to UCC for implementation. Faculty Senate has already amended the Faculty Handbook to require learning outcomes to be in all syllabi. In the changes to the General Education Program in 2006 the membership of UCC was increased to enable UCC to monitor the General Education Program. In addition, we expect that the academic departments and schools who deliver the general education instruction will be the primary units involved in assessing general education courses and programs and will work with UCC to implement changes they recommend. Finally, we expect that the Office of Institutional Research be the administrative unit to lend assessment support to the academic units and to UCC.

Recommendation 1.

UCC will require all general education courses to clearly identify in their syllabi those learning outcomes that are also general education outcomes associated with that course.

Recommendation 2.

UCC should change the courses available for General Education credit in the Catalog to reflect what is still offered, and work with the Registrar to amend the DARS report.

Recommendation 3.

In accordance with the recommendations of the Undergraduate Priorities of Vision Ohio, UCC should set up a review of General Education courses in the context of the outcomes listed below and, with the assistance of Institutional Research and others, begin assessing the General Education curriculum. A way for that to be done is for UCC to set up an Outcomes and Assessment committee formed from some members of each of the three existing committees of UCC. We recommend that members of this committee participate in the faculty interviews of students. In addition, this committee should include a representative from Institutional Research as an ex-officio staff member.

Recommendation 4.

Because of the foundational assessment work already done by the Center for Writing Excellence, the Committee on Writing Across the Curriculum, and the English Department's Composition program, Tier I writing skills should be one the first areas in which learning objectives and outcomes are assessed. We also recommend a review of Tier I Quantitative Skills to determine if the current courses fit the expected outcomes.

Recommendation 5.

The general education curriculum is diffused throughout the entire University. It is therefore difficult to assign “ownership” for different components. Assessment within individual courses and programs can be done within existing academic units, but assessing institutional outcomes (e.g., overall learning objectives) and outcomes across programs becomes more difficult. In order for assessment to be done at the most appropriate level to affect improvements in teaching and learning, we recommend the creation of a collaborative of dedicated faculty who regularly teach general education courses to work with Institutional Research to implement the assessments. These faculty would work within their existing academic departments and schools to use assessment data gathered and develop recommendations from those departments to submit to UCC. Members of UCC should be included in this collaboration.

Recommendation 6.

In writing the outcomes for Applied Sciences and Mathematics the committee considers that mathematics should not be included in this Tier II distribution, but UCC should review Applied Sciences and Mathematics and make any necessary recommendations to Faculty Senate should they consider that the current Tier II mathematics courses should be relocated to Tier I Quantitative Skills courses.

Recommendation 7.

We recommend implementing the assessment methods previously recommended by the General Education Assessment Committee in 1995. Multiple methods including standardized tests (ACT Collegiate Assessment of Academic Proficiency), surveys (e.g., Survey of Alumni), and faculty-conducted structured interviews of students (similar to those done by Richard Light and colleagues at Harvard College) are most appropriate to Ohio University’s needs at this time. We recommend that Institutional Research be funded with sufficient resources to support the recommended assessment methods (standardized tests, surveys, and structured faculty interviews of students). We believe these methods are essential for the successful use of learning objectives and outcomes in improving General Education at Ohio University.

Recommendation 8.

We recommend that a campaign is undertaken by EPSA, UCC, the Center for Teaching and Learning, Institutional Research, and others to increase faculty knowledge on assessment and how to make best use of learning objectives and outcomes.

Recommendation 9.

The following are our detailed learning objectives and outcomes for Tiers I, II, and III:
A useful learning outcome is one that is measured, reviewed and used to improve learning.

Tier I Writing Skills

Tier I Writing Skills Learning Objectives				
Communicate effectively in writing to a variety of audiences and for a variety of purposes.	1			
Use writing as a tool for thinking and learning.		2		
Develop skill in planning writing and completing tasks			3	
Appropriately apply conventions of writing				4

Learning Outcomes that support the Learning Objectives					Method
Respond appropriately to diverse rhetorical situations	1				Writing sample/portfolio/interview
Understand how genres shape reading and writing	1				Interview
Write in several genres			3		writing sample/portfolio
Use writing and reading for inquiry, learning, thinking, and communicating		2			Writing sample/portfolio/interview
Integrate their own ideas with those of others	1				Writing sample/portfolio/interview
Understand writing as a series of tasks, including finding, evaluating, analyzing, and synthesizing primary and secondary sources			3		Portfolio
Understand the relationships among language, knowledge, and power	1		3	4	Interview
Be aware that it takes multiple drafts to create and complete a successful text			3		Portfolio/Interview
Develop flexible strategies for generating, revising, editing, and proof-reading			3		Portfolio/Interview
Learn to critique their own and others' works	1		3		Writing sample/portfolio/interview
Use a variety of strategies to address a range of audiences	1		3		Writing sample/portfolio/interview
Develop knowledge of genre conventions ranging from structure and paragraphing to tone and mechanics	1			4	Writing sample/portfolio
Practice appropriate means of documenting their work				4	Writing sample/portfolio

The Learning Objectives and Outcomes for Tier I Writing Skills, in the tables above, are drawn from the recommendations submitted to the committee by the Center for Writing Excellence, the Writing Across the Curriculum (CWAC), the English Department's Composition program, and the Tier I writing sub-committee of this committee and which are reproduced for reference here.

Desired General Student Learning Objective:

Use writing as a tool for thinking and learning as well as for communicating fluently and effectively in a variety of genres and contexts.

We recommend four approaches that would be applied at four different points: the first-year writing course, junior-level writing course, Tier 3 and Capstone course, and alumni survey. We believe that assessments at these levels can begin immediately but would require the support and cooperation of the English Department, the Committee on Writing Across the Curriculum, teachers of Tier 3 and Senior Capstones, and Institutional Research.

1. English Department conducts yearly or bi-yearly scoring of sample student work assessing for the English Department's rhetorical competencies of which many dovetail nicely with the outcomes we are recommending. A formal report of how many students are satisfactorily meeting those outcomes would be provided to the appropriate General Education committee.
2. CWAC organizes and leads a yearly or bi-yearly scoring of sample student work that would include one writing project and all of the work (brainstorming, multiple drafts, peer critique, final draft, etc.) from J-courses across the curriculum. This would require that the CWAC create a rubric. A formal report of how many students are satisfactorily meeting those outcomes would be provided to the appropriate General Education committee.
3. Somebody organizes and leads a yearly or bi-yearly scoring of sample student work that would include one writing project and all of the work (brainstorming, multiple drafts, peer critique, final draft, etc.) from Tier 3 and Capstones. This would require the creation of a rubric.
4. Additional questions regarding writing added to the alumni survey.

Costs associated with these assessments:

- Start up funds to English, CWAC, Tier 3 and Capstone leaders.
- Funds for readers.
- Funds for copy expenses.
- Funds for food.

Long-term Recommendations:

- Institute deep qualitative focus group and interviews as per the Light model.
- Institute cumulative e-portfolio as a requirement for students.

The following is a list of outcomes we believe could be assessed through reading student samples and applying scoring rubrics. (Note: occasionally you will see an outcome listed under more than one assessment heading.):

- *Focus on a purpose
- *Use conventions of format and structure appropriate to the rhetorical situation
- *Adopt appropriate voice, tone, and level of formality
- *Write in several genres (not for individuals, but across courses)
- *The uses of writing as a critical thinking method (if any drafting, brainstorming, informal writing is included)
- *Understand writing assignments as a series of tasks, including finding, evaluating, analyzing, and synthesizing appropriate primary and secondary sources
- *Integrate their own ideas with those of others
- *Learn to critique their own and others' works
- *Learn common formats for different kinds of texts
- *Develop knowledge of genre conventions ranging from structure and paragraphing to tone and mechanics
- *Practice appropriate means of documenting their work
- *Control such surface features as syntax, grammar, punctuation, and spelling
- *Control and understand the conventions of usage, specialized vocabulary, format, and documentation in their fields

The following is a list of outcomes we believe could be assessed through writing appropriate questions in survey format (or, in the longer term, to form as interview and focus group questions. Shaping these into survey questions and interview questions is outside our expertise and would require the help of IR or other qualified researchers.):

- *Respond to the needs of different audiences
- *Use writing and reading for inquiry, learning, thinking, and communicating
- *Understand the uses of writing as a critical thinking method
- *Be aware that it usually takes multiple drafts to create and complete a successful text of any kind
- *Develop flexible strategies for generating, revising, editing, and proofreading
- *Be aware that it usually takes multiple drafts to create and complete a successful text of any kind
- *Develop flexible strategies for generating, revising, editing, and proofreading
- *Understand writing as an open process that permits writers to use later invention and re-thinking to revise their work
- *Understand the collaborative and social aspects of writing processes

The following is a list of outcomes we believe are worthy and that we should expect students be able to meet but we are unsure as to how they would be assessed:

- *Understand how genres shape reading and writing
- *Understand the relationships among language, knowledge, and power in general
- *Understand the interactions among critical thinking, critical reading, and writing
- *Learn to balance the advantages of relying on others with the responsibility of doing their part

The following is a list of outcomes we deleted from the original matrix because we they are tied to the major and are beyond the scope of the current general education committee:

- *Recognize and apply main features of writing in their fields
- * Recognize and apply main uses of writing in their fields
- *Understand the expectations of readers in their fields
- *Understand the relationships among language, knowledge, and power in their fields
- *To apply the technologies commonly used to research and communicate within their fields

Tier I Quantitative Skills

Tier I Quantitative Skills Learning Objectives					
Reason clearly and use logic to support arguments and draw valid inferences.	1				
Correctly understand and interpret quantitative and logical statements and data.		2			
Develop sufficient computational skill to manipulate mathematical and graphical information useful in their discipline.			3		
Express quantitative and logical ideas clearly and accurately.				4	
Be competent in the use of appropriate technology in the learning process.					5

Learning Outcomes that support the Learning Objectives	Which Objectives?					Method
	1	2	3	4	5	
Interpret the output of a quantitative operation in their discipline	1	2	3			Program activity
Interpret quantitative data described in print and electronic media, including newspapers, magazines, television, and the internet	1	2		4		Interview
Correctly use ratios and percentages in everyday calculations		2				CAAP
Correctly interpret quantitative data from everyday settings, such house bills and budgets		2				CAAP
Correctly use appropriate technology.					5	Course Activity

Tier II Applied Science and Mathematics

Tier II Applied Science and Mathematics Learning Objectives					
Students will understand the process by which scientific knowledge is applied to meet the needs of individuals, society, and the environment.	1				
Students will understand the impact of technology upon society and the impact of society upon technology		2			

Learning Outcomes that support the Learning Objectives	Which Objectives?					Method
Students will demonstrate an understanding of the nature and uses of applied science.	1	2				Course work and interviews
Students will demonstrate an understanding of the process by which scientific knowledge is applied to individual, social, and environmental needs.	1					Course work and interviews
Students will demonstrate an understanding of how to critically analyze and evaluate the impact of technology upon individuals and society.		2				Course work and interviews

Tier II Cross-Cultural Perspectives

Tier II Cross-Cultural Perspectives Learning Objectives					
Students possess knowledge of a society other than their own.	1				
Students analyze and interpret cultural phenomena.		2			

Learning Outcomes that support the Learning Objectives	Which Objectives?					Method
Students demonstrate knowledge of various characteristics of another society (history, politics, everyday life, kinship, taboos vs. accepted behavior, religion, gender, etc.)	1					student work samples, outcomes identified in course syllabi
Students are able to recognize and weigh multiple perspectives regarding cultural phenomena.		2				student work samples, interviews
Students are able to apply knowledge to unfamiliar scenarios.		2				student work samples, interviews

Tier II Fine Arts

Tier II Fine Arts Learning Objectives					
Demonstrate an understanding of at least one principal form of artistic expression and the creative process inherent within.	1				
Be able to use the appropriate vocabulary to articulate a reflective, critical evaluation of examples in that art form.		2			
Create, collaborate, participate in, or interpret a work of art.			3		

Learning Outcomes that support the Learning Objectives	Which Objectives?					Suggested Method
Demonstrate the ability to perceive meanings and organizational systems in traditional and contemporary visual arts	1	2	3			Interview; essay; student work samples; course work.
Demonstrate an understanding of the concept of combining the elements of music to create art.	1		3			Interview; student work samples, course work.
Utilize the appropriate vocabulary to evaluate examples of art or the creative process.		2				Interview; student work samples, course work.
Integrate their ideas with those of others to create or interpret a work of art.	1	2	3			Student portfolio; course work; interview.
Identify differences between various musical forms and genres.		2				Course work; interview.
Understand historical aspects, compositional tenets or conventions of each style period.	1	2	3			Course work; interview; student work samples.
Have a strengthened sense of curiosity about the art form studied.	1					Interview; student portfolio
Demonstrate a knowledge of the vocabulary used to describe the art form		2				Interview; essay; student work samples; course work.
Participate in a theater production, concert, dance, etc.			3			Course work; interview.
Demonstrate an ability to read basic temporal and pitch notation in music	1		3			Course work.

Tier II Humanities and Literature

Tier II Humanities and Literature Learning Objectives				
Form strategies for critically reading both printed and visual texts	1			
Develop an appreciation and enjoyment of the humanities as well as analytical perspectives and vocabularies that are portable to a variety of professions and disciplines.		2		
Develop a respect for the richness and diversity of language and literature across cultures, ethnic groups, geographical regions, and social situations.			3	
Develop analytical writing skills, with an emphasis on the construction of cogent arguments and the marshalling of supporting evidence.				4

Learning Outcomes that measure the Learning Objectives	Which Objectives?				Method
Understand the fundamentals of literary analysis, with attention to the importance of genres and forms as well as the cultural contexts of literature	1				Student work/portfolios and interviews
Become familiar with and employ a variety of scholarly resources, including electronic and printed databases.	1		3	4	Student work/portfolios, interviews, and assessment in later courses.
Read widely across cultures, geographical regions, social contexts, and chronological periods		2			Interviews
Produce written, oral, electronic, or visual works that demonstrate interpretive skills		2		4	Class work/portfolios
Comprehend a variety of literary expressions from diverse cultures and social situations and be aware of the importance of gender, class, race, and/or geographical locations as categories for literary analysis	1		3		Class assessments/portfolios or interviews

Tier II Natural Science

Tier II Natural Science Learning Objectives				
Students will have a substantive knowledge of some portion of the physical universe and/or life. ²	1			
Students will have an understanding of the ways in which the scientist works. ³ (The document suggests that this would be obtained through the student's participation in laboratory experiences.)		2		
Students will have some acquaintance with the achievements of science. ⁴			3	
Students will have an understanding of the main concern of science - the discovery of certain uniformities and the development of convenient ways of thinking about things through painstaking observation. ⁵				4

Learning Outcomes that measure the Learning Objectives	Which Objectives?				Method
Students will be able to use an equation or analytic model to predict physical behavior.	1	2			Exit Exam, Interview, Student Work Samples, CAP, Following Course Instructor Survey
Students will be able to organize physical phenomena, species, ... into established categories.	1	2		4	Exit Exam, Interview, Student Work Samples, Following Course Instructor Survey
Students will be able to provide a scientific explanation of natural phenomenon.	1		3		Exit Exam, Interview, Student Work Samples.
Students will be able to describe (what, who, when and how) a historical scientific achievement that has led to an improvement in their life.	1	2	3	4	Exit Exam, Interview, Student Work Samples.
Students will be able to perform an experiment to test an hypothesis including the collection and analysis of data.		2		4	Exit Exam, Interview, Student Work Samples, Following Course Instructor Survey.
Students will have the background to be able to solve problems related to the natural	1			4	Exit Exam, Student Work Samples, Following Course

² "General Education at Ohio University," 1986, pp. 3.

³ "General Education at Ohio University," 1986, pp. 5.

⁴ "General Education at Ohio University," 1986, pp. 5.

⁵ "General Education at Ohio University," 1986, pp. 5.

sciences.					Instructor Survey
Students will have a broad understanding of basic (Jr. High and High School level) scientific principles.	1		3		Standardized test (OBOR, CAP, ...)
Students will demonstrate the use of key scientific principles	1	2	3	4	Course Activity, Interview

Tier II Social Science

Tier II Social Science Learning Objectives				
Students acquire a foundational knowledge of contemporary and historical social theories and issues along with an understanding of how critical application of these theories can contribute to informed citizenship.	1			
Students demonstrate the ability to apply the logic and methods of scientific inquiry within linguistic, psychological, social, cultural, economic, geographic, or political contexts.		2		
Students demonstrate an understanding of human differences and similarities and how they are manifest in interaction with social contexts and social processes.			3	

Learning Outcomes that support the Learning Objectives	Which Objectives?				Method
The students will be able to identify and apply information about development processes in the physical, cognitive, language, and social emotional domains of human growth and development.		2			In class assessment, interviews
Students will understand the nature and path of development of Social-Emotional, Physical, Cognitive, and Language Development in particular populations	1				In class assessment, interviews
Students will gain an understanding of at least one other culture and demonstrate the ability to analyze the impact of cultural differences on operating effectively in that culture.			3		In class assessment, interviews
Students will demonstrate awareness of the relative freedom of the individual in a given society			3		In class assessment, interviews
Students will demonstrate awareness of the citizen's role in an always evolving, interactive, world of individual rights, governmental responsibilities and entrepreneurial opportunities.			3		In class assessment, interviews
Students will acquire tools to understand and participate constructively in their family community, country, and/or the world			3		In class assessment, interviews

Tier III and Overall

Tier III and Overall Learning Objectives							
Students will have a “capacity for synthesis.” ⁶	1						
Students will have the ability to effectively present information orally.		2					
Students are able to appropriately utilize technology to present, acquire and analyze information.			3				
Students will have “the ability to work collaboratively.” ⁷				4			
“Students will be able to participate effectively in the society and culture in which they will live.” ⁸					5		
Students will have a “sense of personal responsibility.” ⁹						6	
Students will be able to live and participate effectively in a culture and society that is “multicultural, both nationally and internationally.” ¹⁰							7
Students will have the ability to “acquire increasingly complex intellectual skills.” ¹¹							8

⁶ “General Education at Ohio University,” 1986, pp. 6.

⁷ From “Vision Ohio, Undergraduate Education Goals”, URL: <http://www.ohio.edu/vision/AcademicPlan.cfm>.

⁸ “General Education at Ohio University,” 1986, pp. 3.

⁹ From “Vision Ohio, Undergraduate Education Goals”, URL: <http://www.ohio.edu/vision/AcademicPlan.cfm>.

¹⁰ “General Education at Ohio University,” 1986, pp. 3.

¹¹ “General Education at Ohio University,” 1986, pp. 3.

Learning Outcomes that measure the Learning Objectives	Which Objectives?							Method
	1						8	
Students will “understand that problems and issues are often only successfully approached from a variety of perspectives.” ¹²	1							8 Interview.
Students should have the ability to weave many complex strands into a fabric of definable issues, patterns and topics.” ¹³	1							Interview, Student Work Samples/Portfolios.
Students will have the ability to “make independent judgments and to carry out constructive changes in existing systems.” ¹⁴	1							Interview, Student Work Samples/Portfolios.
Students will have an “awareness of the values implicit on life, work, society and culture.” ¹⁵	1				5	6		Interview, Student Work Samples/Portfolios.
Students can function as part of a team containing “students from a variety of major disciplines.” ¹⁶	1			4				Interview, Student Work Samples/Portfolios, Student Involvement Survey.
Students will be “acquainted with the values associated with the public good”.	1				5	6		Interview, Student Work Samples/Portfolios.
Students are able to appropriately utilize technology to present information.		2	3					Interview, Student Work Samples/Portfolios..
Students will be able to acquire information from a variety of sources (internet, books, journals, ..)			3					8 Interview, Student Work Samples/Portfolios..
Students will be able to determine the validity of information.			3					8 Exit Exam, Interview, Student Work Samples/Portfolios.
Students will be able to learn how to use computer application programs.			3					8 Interview, Student Work Samples/Portfolios.
Students will have an understanding of ethics as they relate to their personal and professional lives.						6		Exit Exam, Interview.
Students will be able to apply an understanding of ethics in a manner that leads to ethical behavior.						6		Interview
Students will demonstrate ethical behavior.					5	6		Judiciaries.
Students will be able to present and explain a research finding or creative activity		2						Research Fair/Portfolios.
Students will have acquired “intercultural fluency”.							7	Interview, Student Involvement Survey.
Students consider perspectives outside their own experience to better understand society							7	Interview.

and culture.										
Students appreciate and seek out diversity in their every-day life.							7	8	Education Abroad, Student Involvement Survey.	
Students are globally conscientious.							7		Education Abroad, Student Involvement Survey.	
Students will have the ability to follow the process of gaining new knowledge and skills.								8	Interview.	
Students should have an appreciation for the process of gaining new knowledge and skills.								8	Interview.	
Students will participate in extra-curricular activities				4	5				Interview, Student Involvement Survey.	

¹² “General Education at Ohio University,” 1986, pp. 6.

¹³ “General Education at Ohio University,” 1986, pp. 6.

¹⁴ “General Education at Ohio University,” 1986, pp. 3.

¹⁵ “Study Group on General Education, “Discussion Document on General Education”, 1978, pp. 17.

¹⁶ “General Education at Ohio University,” 1986, pp. 6

Appendix I



Statement on Student Success Plans

Planning Committee on Higher Learning Accountability and Productivity

Ohio Board of Regents

January 11, 2007

Student Success Plan Defined

A Student Success Plan is a clear, public statement of the measurable learning outcomes expected of students attending an institution, published on the institution's own web site.

A complete Student Success Plan has these components. First, it defines learning outcomes in General Education and reports on student achievement relative to those outcomes. Second, it defines learning outcomes in undergraduate majors and reports on student achievement relative to those outcomes. Third, it identifies and measures the impact of special features of the undergraduate learning experience that occur in institution-wide programs (for example, first-year experience programs, residential learning communities, undergraduate research, study abroad, internships and co-ops, service learning). These components reflect attainment of student goals in professional and personal endeavors, a larger purpose of higher education.

The Planning Committee for Higher Learning Accountability and Productivity of the Ohio Board of Regents recommends strongly that all of Ohio's public two- and four-year institutions publish their Student Success Plans online and link them through a gateway website such as <http://regents.ohio.gov/studentssuccess>. The Committee also urges Ohio's independent colleges to share demonstrations of student success.

Rationale for Student Success Plans

Sensible measures of student success require evidence that students are learning the skills and strategies needed to contribute to societal needs and to compete in the global economy.

At present, however, the measures of student success are deficient. Also, employers express concerns about poorly prepared graduates. Grade point averages, certificates of completion, and graduation itself have become insufficient evidence of student success. Rankings and ratings of institutions tell incomplete and even misleading stories—reflecting the caliber of the students that are attracted, rather than the quality of their achievement shown in tangible products of student learning. Many typical measures fall short of providing meaningful information. For example,

- The SAT, ACT, high school GPA, and a variety of subjective criteria may determine an applicant's acceptance into an Ohio college or university, but these indicators do not measure progress or ultimate achievements.
- Measures such as faculty to student ratios, graduation rates, and post-graduation job placements tell Ohioans something about educational quality, but they pay little attention to what students can *do* after completing their educational programs.
- Indirect measures, such as surveys asking current students or graduates to report the quantity and quality of faculty-student interaction and the amount of homework, can provide useful information, but they measure reactions rather than learning.
- Even validated measures of student learning, such as the Collegiate Learning Assessment and the Measure of Academic Proficiency and Progress, cited in the report of the Commission on the Future of Higher Education, fail to measure the breadth and depth of collegiate learning. These measures focus narrowly on general education skills and abilities, while ignoring the content and abilities specific to the major area of study, the natural focus of the baccalaureate degree.

Student Success Plans signal a fundamental change toward more direct measurement of student learning in higher education. They present a practical alternative to the typical measures and also to “one-size-fits-all” standardized testing of college students.

Student Success Plans honor the distinctiveness of each individual institution by emphasizing its specific mission, unique programs, and learning outcomes—these strengths and assets remain intact.

Student Success Plans provide the framework for asking tough questions and demonstrating accountability for students' educational progress. The components of Student Success Plans defined above provide common definitions and measures in general education, specific programs and majors, and any special features of the college experience, including the critical thinking, analytical, and communication skills that all graduates should possess.

By making their Student Success Plan methods and results available online, Ohio's higher education institutions can lead the way in documenting educational accountability while maintaining a clear focus on what really counts, student learning.

This statement and other information and resources appear online at <http://regents.ohio.gov/accountability>.

For further information or to discuss this proposal, contact Milton D. Hakel, chair of the Planning Committee (voice: 419 372-8144, cell: 419 705-3843, email: mhakel@bgsu.edu) or Jon Tafel, Vice Chancellor, Ohio Board of Regents (voice: 614 466-3561, email: jtafel@regents.state.oh.us).

Appendix II

Proposed Assessment Plan for General Education

The General Education Assessment Committee was convened to develop an assessment plan for the proposed new General Education program and had its first meeting in March 2004. Although the proposed General Education program will not be implemented, the Committee has continued its work because the members agree that there is a need to develop an assessment plan for the current General Education program (the Tier system).

Need for a General Education Assessment Plan: A decade ago, the University embarked on a student outcomes assessment program in response to the findings of the North Central accreditation report. Each school and department on campus established a plan to assess the effectiveness of its undergraduate program(s) by focusing on student outcomes. Schools and departments instituted exit interviews with seniors; examined student performance on the COMP test; surveyed employers regarding the level of student preparation; and established other methods to gauge student learning. These efforts were focused on students' performance in their majors. Efforts to establish a student-outcomes-based assessment plan for the General Education program (i.e., the Tier system) were put off to a later time, primarily because the "ownership" of the General Education program was not clear. While it was relatively simple to assign responsibility for education in Music or Chemistry, it was not so easy to assign responsibility for General Education. Responsibility belonged to everyone, and therefore, to no one.

Despite the challenges, renewing an assessment plan for General Education is necessary, and long overdue. One reason cited for the collapse of the proposed General Education program is that many faculty members were not convinced that the current Tier system was ineffective. Absent a systematic assessment of the Tier system as a whole, little definitive data was available regarding its over-all effectiveness. While parts of the Tier system were assessed, no systematic effort was made to gauge the effectiveness of the entire program. Such a systematic assessment would be useful both in judging the efficacy of the current system and in considering changes to our current General Education program.

Assessment Options: With the help of Kristin Rice, a graduate student who worked with Valerie Conley in the College of Education, the Committee researched and examined assessment approaches at other institutions. The assessment approach adopted by a specific institution depends on the outcomes that the institution wishes to measure. While some institutions seek to measure the efficacy of their general education program as a whole, other institutions focus on assessing the effectiveness of specific general education courses. Institutions seeking to gauge the effectiveness of their over-all general education program use standardized examinations purchased from ETS or the ACT, locally developed tests or assignment, analyses of student portfolios, or interviews with students and/or faculty to measure students' command of basic skills or proficiency in specific subject areas. Institutions seeking to gauge the effectiveness of specific general education courses use course-embedded methods such as specifically tailored assignments or conduct interviews with students and/or faculty to measure students' mastery of the skills or content covered in the specific courses. Some assessment methods are purely

quantitative; others are qualitative; and still others are a blend of quantitative and qualitative. Some methods are labor-intensive and require the involvement of the general education course instructors (especially the course-embedded methods and the portfolio analyses); other methods are less labor-intensive and are relatively transparent to individual instructors (especially the standardized examinations).

Desirable Features of an Assessment Plan: After extensive analysis and discussion, the Committee concluded that a general education plan should have the following features:

- Multiple measures, both qualitative and quantitative, should be included.
- The process should be driven by faculty.
- The efficacy of the total General Education program should be the focus of assessment, rather than individual courses.
- An assessment plan must be adequately funded.
- Faculty development should be an intrinsic part of the assessment process. (see below)
- Results of the plan should be used to improve the General Education program.

Endorsement of Institutional Research Proposal: The Committee endorses the assessment plan proposed by Michael Williford and explained in the document titled “Proposed General Education Assessment Plan” (see attached). This plan recommends the use of three assessment techniques to gauge the effectiveness of the General Education program: 1) a standardized examination, specifically the CAAP; 2) alumni surveys; and 3) student interviews. The proposed plan contains the features identified as desirable by the Committee. It utilizes both quantitative and qualitative multiple measures; lends itself to extensive faculty involvement; and promises to yield meaningful results that can be used to monitor and improve the effectiveness of the General Education program.

An additional benefit is that the proposed approach is not tied to a specific General Education program. It is flexible enough to accommodate any changes in the General Education program. Specifically, if there are changes in the General Education program, the CAAP test would continue to be administered. The alumni questionnaires would continue to be mailed, with a few changes in the questions asked. The interviews would continue, with some changes in the interview protocols. The proposed approach could also, through the interview process, yield valuable information about the Ohio University experience beyond the General Education program. And the interview component of this approach provides the invaluable benefit of encouraging dialogue across campus among and between faculty and students.

Implementation Plan: One underlying theme of the Committee’s deliberations has been the need for the assessment plan to be regarded as legitimate and effective by faculty members; if it is not, it will be ignored and its results disregarded. The Committee recommends that the responsibility for assessment rest with the faculty and that the assessment plan fit into the existing faculty governance structure. An additional theme of the Committee’s deliberations has been the need to have broad faculty involvement in the process, and to reward and recognize that involvement. The assessment process, through the interview component, can become an excellent vehicle for faculty development. Workshops to prepare faculty to participate in the interview process can provide an opportunity for faculty across campus to discuss issues of

curriculum and pedagogy and to learn more about assessment. If graduate students and undergraduate students are to be involved as interviewers, they, too, can broaden their grasp of educational issues in such workshops.

To implement this plan, the following steps need to be taken:

- Endorsement of the plan should be sought from the Faculty Senate through a resolution sponsored by the Educational Policy and Student Affairs Committee (EPSA). Curricular policy originates with EPSA through resolutions which are approved by the Senate as a whole. Endorsement by the Faculty Senate will help assure that the assessment plan is regarded as a legitimate part of the curricular process. Because of EPSA's policy making role, EPSA should receive the results of the assessment process and use those results in its deliberations regarding any needed changes in the General Education program.
- An implementation team should be convened. Membership on this team should include faculty from EPSA, the Gen Ed Council, and the Individual Course Committee of UCC, as well as faculty with specific interest and background in assessment techniques. Institutional Research support will be critical to this implementation team effort. The implementation team will need to formulate a research plan which will clarify and finalize many outstanding questions:
 - Decisions about the specific steps in the assessment process, including:
 - Identification of exactly what it is that is being assessed. Desired outcomes of the General Education Program need to be carefully and thoroughly articulated.
 - To which students the CAAP will be administered and when.
 - What questions that are being asked regarding General Education on the alumni surveys sent out by Institutional Research should be kept, what questions should be eliminated and what questions should be added.
 - How the interviews will be conducted, specifically,
 - What students should be interviewed? Should the interviews involve students from the freshmen through the senior classes? How should the students be selected? What incentives will be offered to the students so they will participate? How many students should be interviewed?
 - Should faculty be interviewed as well, especially faculty who teach General Education courses? Should GA's be interviewed, especially GA's who teach General Education courses? Should faculty who don't teach General Education courses be interviewed regarding their perceptions of the General Education program?
 - Who will conduct the interviews? Should only faculty do the interviews? Should graduate students and undergraduates be trained as interviewers? Who will do the training of the interviewers? What incentives will be provided to the interviewers? How will faculty be prepared for the interviews? How will faculty be recognized for their participation?
 - What questions will be asked?
 - When will the interviews take place?

- Who will transcribe the interviews?
- Who will analyze the results of the assessment processes?
- How will findings be communicated within and outside the University?
 - The budget needed to implement and to maintain the assessment process. Once the above questions are determined, a budget can be formulated.
- Responsibility for the ongoing assessment process should be assigned once implementation has been completed. Assessment of the various components of the Tier system was conducted by UCC. To be effective, the assessment process should be part of the governance structure; this suggests that EPSA and the General Education Council should be responsible for assuring that assessment takes place, working with Institutional Research and with faculty who have an interest and expertise in assessment. Assessment will be effective only if the results of the assessment process are used to constantly refine the General Education program. It is up to the General Education Council and, ultimately, up to the Faculty Senate through EPSA to address needed refinements and to utilize the results of the assessment processes in their deliberations.

The General Education Assessment Committee has gained significant experience with the issues surrounding assessment methods and General Education learning outcomes. In the interests of continuity and of maintaining momentum for implementing this assessment proposal, the Committee members are willing to serve in an advisory capacity to the implementation team.

Implementation of the assessment plan should take about two years, after which the assessment process should proceed annually. Specifically:

- Year 1:
 - purchase and administer the CAAP
 - update the questions on the alumni surveys and administer the surveys
 - develop the implementation plan for the interviews
 - create and hold summer workshops for faculty to prepare them to be interviewers
- Year 2:
 - Continue the CAAP and the alumni surveys
 - Conduct the interviews
 - Transcribe interview results
 - Continue to hold workshops for interviewers
 - Analyze results and use these results in a consideration of the General Education program.
- Years 3 and thereafter
 - Administer the CAAP and the alumni surveys
 - Train interviewers
 - Conduct interviews
 - Transcribe interview results
 - Analyze results and use these results in a consideration of the General Education program.

Needed Funding: Adequate resources will be critical if this plan is to be successful. While it is not possible to formulate a final budget until specific decisions about the fine points of the plan are made (see discussion above), it is possible to identify categories of expenditures. Those categories include:

- Purchase of the CAAP. (Administering multiple tests to 500 students would cost about \$9500 annually.)
- Incentives for students to participate in the CAAP and to participate in the interviews
- Incentives for faculty to participate in the interviews, both as interviewers and as those interviewed
- Support for summer workshops
- Additional support for Institutional Research to cover administration and analysis of CAAP, as well as coordination, collection, transcription, and analysis of interviews. All of these activities will be added to IR's ongoing workload.

Respectfully Submitted by,

General Education Assessment Committee:

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Proposed General Education Assessment Plan

May 2005

The General Education Steering Committee's June 2001 proposal states that general education "needs to be assessed regularly and continually improved and revised. The program should be dynamic in helping to achieve goals for graduates." More specifically, a program of general education assessment needs to be developed that leads to improving teaching and learning and demonstrating accountability. This proposal suggests a multi-method plan to assess teaching and learning to inform Ohio University faculty and staff about the general education curriculum. A guiding principle of the assessments is that they yield practical information that reveals best practices and opportunities for improving teaching and learning.

Testing

Commercially-available, nationally-standardized tests are available to assess general education skills. The two best known such tests are the Academic Profile from ETS, and the Collegiate Assessment of Academic Proficiency (CAAP) from ACT. In 2003-04 the General Education Assessment Committee had already expressed interest in the CAAP. The CAAP subtests are reading, writing skills, mathematics, critical thinking, science, and writing (essay). Support can be provided in such areas as evaluating and ordering test materials, administering tests, returning completed tests for scoring by the publishers, disseminating test results, and training.

Surveys

Institutional Research regularly conducts two follow-up surveys of graduates, which provide perceptual ratings of academic majors and general education skills one or five years after graduation. Follow-up outcomes survey data can supplement other general education assessments. Departments involved in general education assessment can incorporate the employment and further education outcomes from follow-up surveys conducted regularly by Institutional Research. The Survey of Alumni of graduates 5 years after graduation includes ratings of each of the general education program components. Fifteen general knowledge and skill competencies are evaluated. Each academic college can include college-specific questions in the Survey of Alumni. Departments can create their own department-specific questions to be included in the Career & Further Education Survey. These college- and department-specific surveys provide opportunities to obtain not only graduates' general employment and further education outcomes but also graduates' ratings of faculty-defined objectives, such as specific skills developed, the quality of particular academic programs, etc. Institutional Research assists those who want to utilize the results from these surveys and create unit-specific questionnaire items.

Interviews

Richard Light's *Making the Most of College: Students Speak their Minds* describes the effective use of structured interviews at Harvard College. For over 10 years, Harvard faculty and students have conducted 1600 in-depth interviews with samples of undergraduates to assess teaching and learning. These interviews have helped answer questions such as, "How well do we teach now, and what changes will make it better? How well do we advise students now, and

what changes will make it better? Do our students write enough? How do we know? Can we improve this? Do we demand enough of our students? Do our faculty members help students to become more effective students? How can we do this even better?" More information is available on-line at:

<http://athome.harvard.edu/dh/light.html>.

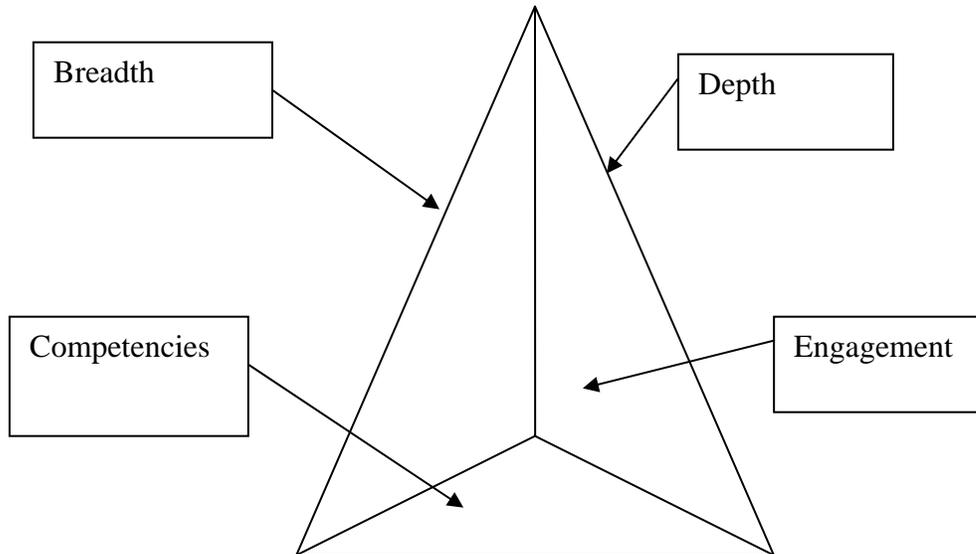
A similar research design could be adapted to Ohio University's general education assessment purposes. A university-wide project is proposed. A well-organized research design is suggested involving in-depth structured interviews of undergraduates, conducted by faculty. The plan would be for these interviews to be designed by a core group of faculty and students. Interviews would be ongoing over several years, but questions could be adapted as needed. Questions would be devised that would address general education program objectives identified by the General Education Assessment Committee. Careful and systematic analysis of interview content and themes would need to be done. The core group of faculty would meet regularly to discuss and disseminate results.

Proposed Uses

Each of these three methods offers a different perspective on general education. Testing is limited to basic skills and would occur at pre-defined points in the curriculum. The uses of such testing would be to ensure that students are demonstrating basic skills and to demonstrate external accountability. Surveys occur after students graduate and provide reflective information. The uses of survey results would be to provide student self-assessment information to faculty and staff and to demonstrate external accountability. Interviews could occur at varying points in the curriculum. The primary use of information gained from interviews would be to inform faculty about the impact of the general education curriculum on Ohio University students and provide information about how to improve teaching and learning. The General Education Assessment Committee would need to consider carefully how best to use the results of these different assessments to "achieve goals for graduates." Just as specific questions need to be devised for structured interviews, specific vehicles for improving teaching and learning need to be created.

Appendix III Ohio University Learning Outcomes Pyramid

The Learning Outcomes pyramid illustrates the inter-related nature of our University-wide outcomes. The university-wide outcomes recognize that depth of knowledge, breadth of understanding, and appreciation of values are equally critical to a student's education, and that all are dependent on the solid foundation of carefully and fully developed basic abilities.



Competencies:

Our students develop the abilities to:

- Write clearly
- Speak eloquently
- Reason mathematically
- Think logically and critically
- Work collaboratively
- Use technology appropriately

Depth:

Our students demonstrate knowledge of a discipline, including its:

- Content
- Theories
- Modes of inquiry
- Interpretations
- Communicative practices
- Ethical standards

Breadth:

Our students understand concepts within and applications among:

- The Humanities
- The Social Sciences
- The Physical Sciences
- The Applied Sciences
- The Arts

Engagement:

Our students appreciate the value of:

- Other cultures
- Diversity
- Civic participation and ethical responsibility
- Aesthetic sensibility
- Leadership
- Life-long learning
- The life of the mind