

Open Pathway

Quality Initiative Institutional Proposal

The enclosed Quality Initiative proposal represents the work that the institution will undertake to fulfill the Improvement Process of the Open Pathway.



Signature of Institution's President or Chancellor	12/9/13
Thomas J. Haas	Date
Printed/Typed Name and Title	
Grand Valley State University	
Name of Institution	
Allendale, MI	49401
City and State	

The institution completes the Quality Initiative proposal by responding to the questions in each category of the template. The institution may choose to include a brief implementation plan that addresses many of the questions below and replaces portions of the outline. Proposals should be no more than 4,500 words.

Overview of the Quality Initiative

1. Title: Implementing a New GVSU Assessment for General Education (INGAGE)

Description: The purpose of the INGAGE Quality Initiative is to launch a rigorous assessment of student learning in the 200 courses comprising GVSU's General Education (GE) Program. This assessment is designed to achieve:

- a) teaching of an expanded set of student learning outcomes (SLOs) in GE courses;
- b) GE faculty members' explicit incorporation of existing and new SLOs into their teaching and assessment activities;
- c) implementation of a new programmatic structure to deliver SLOs;
- d) incorporation of rubrics to assess student learning in GE courses;
- e) expansion of the number of students whose GE outcomes are assessed;
- f) increase in the proportion of faculty engaged in all aspects of outcome-based GE course assessment (including, but not limited to planning, teaching, assessing, reporting, and revising course outcomes and assessment instruments and strategies);
- g) translation of SLO assessment results into action steps to improve student learning;
- h) increased integration of students into the SLO assessment process; and,
- i) incorporation of assessment results to improve GVSU's GE curriculum.

The INGAGE Quality Initiative extends GVSU's previous work on assessing student learning in its General Education Program, representing the launch of the institution's second generation of assessment.

INGAGE increases the University's commitment to developing and documenting student proficiency in the knowledge and skills that society expects from college graduates.

Grand Valley State University's General Education Committee (GEC) – an elected faculty governance body – works in concert with the faculty director of the program to design and implement the GE Program. After five years of actively involving stakeholders, GVSU adopted a new General Education Program in February 2012. This new program, which changed both the student learning outcomes and the structure of the program, added a new two-course, upper-division requirement known as Issues. In addition, the learning outcomes of collaboration, ethical reasoning, problem solving and quantitative literacy were added to the program's existing outcomes of critical and creative thinking, information literacy, integration, oral communication, and written communication. The institution paused its collection of assessment data for one year while faculty developed new Course Assessment Plans that described how they would teach and assess the new SLOs. During that time the GEC developed a more robust assessment plan.

In the Fall 2013, GVSU began implementing the new upper-division component of its GE Program and the new assessment plan. The University will reach a key milestone in 2016, when it completes its first full three-year assessment cycle. In the early stages, the assessment plan will be evaluated and improved based on each semester's experiences and results and faculty will modify classes on an ongoing basis to attain additional improvements. By the end of 2016, GVSU expects to have a baseline of student performance in GE courses. At that point, the GEC and GE Director will comprehensively re-evaluate the assessment plan itself, to determine whether major changes are required before embarking on the next three-year cycle.

2. Explain why the proposed initiative is relevant and significant for the institution.

Liberal education is a core component of GVSU's mission. The institution provides a high quality liberal education through its majors, its General Education program, and its co-curricular offerings. Nevertheless, it is through its 200 GE courses that Grand Valley has the greatest opportunity to fulfill the liberal education portion of its stated mission, "educating students to shape their lives, their professions, and their societies." Nearly 25% of the undergraduate sections (13% of the courses) at GVSU are in the GE Program. Nothing is more relevant to or significant for the accomplishment of the University's mission than ensuring that its GE program helps students achieve proficiency in the key learning outcomes – and a robust, rigorous assessment is the key to knowing how well we have attained those results.

Further, the INGAQE Quality Initiative is an essential element of the University's overall assessment approach. It is intended to serve as an exemplar for the assessment of other undergraduate and graduate courses and high impact learning experiences. GVSU began in earnest to develop a campus culture of assessment in 2006-07. Prior to that, its professional schools (subject to regular review by outside accrediting bodies) tended to have well-developed processes of assessment, but the rest of GVSU generally did not. Seven years ago, the institution initiated assessments of learning incorporating student, faculty, and program outcomes for departments, service units, and the General Education Program. Now that a campus culture that supports assessment of student learning is well-established and widely accepted, GVSU is ready to take its assessment efforts to the next level, which the INGAQE Quality Initiative represents.

3. Explain the intended impact of the initiative on the institution and its academic quality.

Through benchmarking, the University has identified the student learning outcomes – both knowledge and skills - that society and employers expect from GVSU graduates. Implementing a rigorous GE assessment plan let the institution identify how its undergraduate students perform in terms of each

outcome. This outcome data will allow the University to make quality improvements to its GE courses and GE instructional strategies, which will improve academic quality and enhance future students' learning opportunities.

Although this initiative is focused on General Education, its impact is expected to extend beyond GE, reaching into other areas of instruction, because 42% of the faculty at GVSU will teach a General Education course in 2013-14. Since faculty constantly cycle in and out of teaching GE courses, INGAGE's assessment efforts will ultimately impact a very significant portion of faculty institution-wide, providing them with exposure to and practice in utilizing rigorous, measurable outcomes for measuring student learning. Furthermore, faculty engagement in the use of rigorous, outcome-focused assessment in INGAGE should positively influence faculty members' use of such assessment strategies in courses at all levels, across the University's curriculum, multiplying the initiative's impact.

Over time, INGAGE will increase faculty expertise and commitment to achieving all SLOs, assessing student learning with rubrics, and promoting - in an action oriented way - faculty members' use of assessment results to increase learning for all students.

An immediate impact of INGAGE will be the incorporation of an action-oriented step in student assessment. During one semester faculty will collect data; in the next, they will reflect on what their students learned and how they can modify their course to maximize student learning. The same semester, the GEC will review the faculty report; the following semester, faculty will submit a new Course Assessment Plan (CAP) for review by the GEC. GVSU is committed to ensuring all departments complete rigorous CAPs to ensure that their course is recertified as a GE course.

The action-oriented piece of the assessment - how faculty will modify their course in the future - is easier when only one faculty member teaches a course. In the case where a department is assessing multiple sections of the same course, the GEC has designed the reporting so all faculty teaching a course will collectively write a single report. This collective reporting will encourage faculty to share what did and didn't work, as well as course resources and strategies.

In the previous assessment cycle, the institution learned that faculty are accustomed to teaching and assessing student mastery of knowledge SLOs, but they are not as intentional about teaching skills-based SLOs. During this assessment cycle, GVSU will devote additional resources to increasing faculty expertise in this area.

The institution also learned from its previous assessments that faculty lacked a uniform way to assess student learning; the INGAGE QI will introduce the use of common rubrics in GE assessment to address this need. GVSU is also changing from a relative scale of student learning, which can be easily confused with grades, to an assessment process with an absolute scale that more clearly reflects four discrete levels of proficiency.

4. Describe the purposes and goals for the initiative

The purposes of the INGAGE QI are to:

- a) increase the number of students assessed (See Appendix 1 - GE Assessment Plan);
- b) increase the compliance rate of GE faculty who are assigned to collect assessment data;
- c) increase the compliance rate of GE faculty who need to complete an action-oriented Course Assessment Report;
- d) introduce the use of standardized rubrics to assess student learning (See Appendix 2 - Rubric for Ethical Reasoning);

- e) improve and increase teaching of skill-focused SLOs (see attachments – Course Assessment Plan and Course Assessment Report);
- f) develop and launch a re-certification process for GE courses that links re-certification to the assessment process;
- g) establish a baseline of students' proficiency for each SLO;
- h) increase student involvement in the assessment process; and,
- i) use results to improve the General Education curriculum.

5. Describe how the institution will evaluate progress, make adjustments, and determine what has been accomplished

The specifics of when GVSU will evaluate progress, make adjustments, and determine what has been accomplished are provided in the timeline under number 9 of this proposal. The General Education assessment process uses a shared governance process. Generally, the GEC makes policy and reviews documents that report curriculum and assessment, while the GE Director and staff implement the program. Most of the reporting is initiated by the Director; however, the GEC can also initiate requests for reports.

FACULTY DEVELOPMENT - TEACHING

Each semester before the semester begins the GE Director distribute information about how to teach each of the SLOs to all faculty (not just those do assessment). The GE Director is also compiling a database of methods that faculty have used to teach and assess SLOs based on what faculty have listed in their CAPs and CARs. Faculty provide suggestions about new resources that can be used to more effectively teach the SLOs. As such, we are continually revising the materials we distribute to faculty. Over the next three years, the refinement of the teaching materials will transition over to the Faculty Teaching and Learning Center.

FACULTY DEVELOPMENT - ASSESSMENT

The GE Director provides 30 minute workshops throughout the semester to faculty who are charged with assessing student learning. Feedback from the workshops, questions from faculty who do not attend the workshops, and comments on the CAR all cycle back into revising the directions to faculty collecting assessment data – both the written directions and the subsequent assessment workshops.

ASSESSMENT PROCESS – DATA COLLECTION

One third of the courses collect data each year. The GE Director reports to the GEC at the beginning of the next semester about how many of the faculty who were assigned to collect data actually did collect the data. If faculty did not collect data, then the GE Director talks with the Unit Head about ensuring that faculty collect the data the next semester or they risk losing recertification.

ASSESSMENT PROCESS – REPORTING (CAR)

Once faculty collect assessment data they need to develop a Course Assessment Report that summarizes how they assessed student learning, reflects on student learning, and then asks faculty to discuss how the results will feed back into their teaching in subsequent semesters. The GEC reviews each of the CARs and provides comments and suggestions to the CAR author and the unit head about their report. The GE Director will keep the GEC apprised as to whether all CARs have been completed and efforts that were made to get all of the CARs. (See Appendix 3)

ASSESSMENT PROCESS – COURSE ASSESSMENT PLAN (CAP)

The semester after faculty have written their CAR and reviewed the GEC report about the CAR, faculty will need to review and resubmit their CAP. The GEC reviewed the first round of CAPs (2012-13) and discovered that some of them were insufficient. As we go forward, the CAPs must be acceptable; faculty

will have to revise them to meet the standards or their course will not be recertified. All CAPs are posted on the GVSU Gen Ed website. (See Appendix 4)

ASSESSMENT – STUDENT LEARNING

Before the beginning of each semester, the GE Director will summarize student learning outcomes based on the assessment data that was collected for the prior term. The GEC will review this information on an ongoing basis to determine if any modifications to the assessment process need to be made. Summary results are posted on the GVSU Gen Ed website.

ASSESSMENT – DISTRIBUTION OF STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES

The GE Director will summarize the number of students who received at least one exposure to each of the SLOs. This information will be reviewed by the GEC to determine if the goal allocation between GE courses needs to be revisited.

REPORTING TO OTHER UNITS

The GEC Chair provides a report to the Executive Committee of the Senate at the conclusion of each year. It summarizes the GEC's efforts for the year. It includes a significant focus on the assessment results. The GE Director's summary of the student learning which is distributed to the GEC, is also distributed to the University Assessment Committee for their comments. The Director also provides an annual report to the Associate Vice President for Assessment, Accreditation and Planning on the state of the INGAGE Quality Initiative assessment process and results, including but not limited to: the number of GE courses in which SLOs were assessed; actions to get those who did not assess to complete the assessment; findings of what was learned; and survey results.

6. Describe the level of support for the initiative by internal or external stakeholders.

To date:

Faculty Governance

- Approval of the new SLOs and structure by GEC, Executive Committee of the Senate, and the University Academic Senate
- Annual reporting of GE's assessment efforts to the Executive Committee of the Senate
- Annual reporting of GE's assessment efforts to the University Assessment Committee

Student Governance

- Student Senate was instrumental in getting the new GE Program passed
- A member of the Student Senate serves on the GEC and the committee often asks the representative's perspective to gauge student support and recommendations

Provost Office

- Monetary support to initiate faculty development of new curriculum using the new SLOs
- Faculty development support by the Pew Faculty Teaching Learning Center
- Assignment of former Dean to develop curriculum materials for teaching the SLOs

BOT

- President explained the new GE to the Board of Trustees
- Board of Trustees received a report about the GE assessment

Deans of Colleges

- Ensure that their units complete the GE course assessments

7. Identify the groups and individuals that will lead or be directly involved in implementing the initiative.

Lead Groups:

General Education Committee
Consult with or report to the University Assessment Committee, University Curriculum Committee, Executive Committee of the Senate, and University Academic Senate as appropriate

Individuals:

General Education Director
Chair of General Education Committee
Associate Vice President for Accreditation, Assessment, and Planning
Associate Vice President for Academic Affairs with assessment and curriculum responsibilities
Associate Vice Provost of the Pew Faculty Teaching and Learning Center

8. List the human, financial, technological and other resources that the institution has committed to this initiative.

The General Education office is staffed by a $\frac{3}{4}$ time Director, full-time administrative assistant, and a graduate assistant.

- Other university support includes:
 - Faculty governance support for 16 elected faculty members to participate on the General Education Committee
 - Student governance support for 1 elected student member to participate on the General Education Committee
 - Database development and support by Information Technology
 - Data collection assistance and advice from Institutional Analysis
 - Assessment design and implementation assistance by the Associate Vice President for Academic Affairs with assessment responsibilities
 - Faculty development support by the Pew Faculty Teaching Learning Center
 - Consulting with the University Assessment Committee
 - From Provost office, \$1,000 stipends to faculty to develop courses
 - During the past 2 years, 3 credits of assigned time for the Chair of the GEC

9. Describe the primary activities of the initiative and timeline for implementing them.

Summer 2012 - COMPLETED

- GEC and GED – Coordinate with the Pew Faculty Teaching Learning Center and Associate Vice Presidents for Academic Affairs with assessment and curriculum responsibilities to organize and deliver workshops to develop new Issues courses and to help faculty learn how to teach the SLOs associated with the Issues courses

Winter 2013 - COMPLETED

- GEC and GED - Develop an assessment plan for General Education
- GEC - Develop definitions for each of the SLOs
- GEC - Develop assessment rubrics for each of the SLOs
- GEC -Review and respond to Course Assessment Plans (CAPs) for each general education course
- GED -Work with a former Dean to develop teaching materials for each of the SLOs

Summer 2013 - COMPLETED

- GEC - Work with Institutional Technology to develop an in-house database to house the assessment database
- GEC and GED - Work with Associate Vice President's for Academic Affairs with assessment and curriculum responsibilities and Pew Faculty Teaching Learning Center to organize and deliver workshops to develop new Issues courses and teach faculty how to teach and assess the SLOs associated with the Issues courses GEC and GED – Coordinate with the Pew Faculty Teaching Learning Center and Associate Vice Presidents for Academic Affairs with assessment and curriculum responsibilities to organize and deliver workshops to develop new Issues courses and to help faculty learn how to teach the SLOs associated with the Issues courses

Fall 2013 (Year 1 – course-based assessment)

- GED - Disseminate materials about how to teach the SLOS to all GE faculty (not just the ones being assessed)
- GED - Disseminate rubrics to faculty in all courses (not just the ones being assessed)
- GED - Workshops on how to do assessment
- GED - Begin assessment of 1/3 of the GE courses
- GEC - Continue to review, respond to, and approve CAPs for new or changed GE courses
- GEC - Develop a new Course Assessment Report (CAR)
- GEC - Develop a recertification process to maintain a course in the GE Program
- GED - Spot check of Syllabi check to how many faculty have the SLOs on their syllabus
- GEC and GED - Make changes to the assessment process as we go
- GEC and GED - Meet with Fall and Winter Issues courses to discuss share what went well and what could be changed

Winter 2014

- GED - Winter semester courses begin assessing
- GED - Report on fall assessment data efforts (% of faculty who collected data)
- Faculty who did not submit a CAR are sent a note warning them to collect assessment data this winter or be at risk of losing their certification to remain a GE course (Deans are copied)
- GEC - Develop a review process for the CAR
- CARs for Fall are submitted
- GEC - Review of completed CARs (report is sent to faculty and unit head)
- GED - Workshops on how to do assessment
- GEC - Develop common language to include on syllabi for GE objectives
- GEC Chair – Submit report to Executive Committee of the Senate

Summer 2014

- GED - Summarize student learning to date

Fall 2014 (Year 2 – course-based assessment)

- GEC - Review summary of student learning and determine what actions to take
- Repeat assessment process (from Fall 2013 – 1/3 of the courses assessed, GEC reviews, CARs are collected from Winter, GEC writes CAR reports)
- Courses that did assessment in Fall 2013 submit new CAPs; GEC reviews

Winter 2015

- Repeat assessment process (from Fall 2013 – 1/3 of the courses assessed, GEC reviews, CARs are collected from Winter, GEC writes CAR reports)
- Courses that did assessment in Winter 2014 submit new CAPs; GEC reviews

Fall 2015 (Year3 – course-based assessment)

- Repeat Fall 2013 and 2014 assessment activities
- Repeat assessment process (new courses assessed, GEC reviews CARs, etc.)

Winter 2016

- Repeat Winter 2014 and Winter 2014 assessment activities
- GEC - Develop a procedure to find out if the rubrics worked, revise them

Project ends summer 2016

- GED - Write QI report

Winter 2017

- GED - Submit report to HLC Feb. 2017

Institutional Contact for Quality Initiative Proposal

Include the name(s) of the primary contact(s) for the Quality Initiative.

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