GE SLO 1 – Effective Communication: SUMMARY AND REPORT

NARRATIVE

On November 17 2015, an inter-disciplinary team of 9 faculty and support staff convened to discuss GE-SLO 1 (effective communication). Every member of the group was, in the Fall 2015 semester, either teaching or providing a service, at least one of whose SLOs supports the GE-SLO for effective communication. The group included representation from:

- Instructional disciplines: Administration of Justice, Film, Communication Studies, History of Art, Biology, and English
- Academic services: the Writing Center/ENGL 800 Lab, and the Learning Center
- Support services: Admissions & Records

Workshop discussion

The team discussed why and how our particular courses or services supported the GE-SLO for effective communication. Some responses:

- Students need to be able to present information, in person, in an organized way, to small groups
- Students should be able to advocate for themselves, and express clearly what they want and need
- Students should think about their intended audience, and tailor their communication accordingly
- Students should consider also non-verbal communication, i.e., body language, or artistic representation
- Students need to be able to transmit as well as comment on information, and make clear to readers or listeners when they are presenting their own views, and when they are summarizing or explaining other people's views, or objective facts.

We also discussed how to disaggregate the data. The only way to do this is to associate each result with a G#.

Having established some common ground, we decided to assess as follows: Each participant would assess the SLO relevant to GE-SLO 1 in all sections of course he/she was teaching that semester, using whatever instrument is usually used to assess for that course-level SLO (i.e., quiz, survey, etc.) The data would be provided to the coordinator along with the G#s of the participating students, so that the data could ultimately be disaggregated.

RESULTS

COURSE	Relevant SLOs	# of sections assessed	#students	#results overall	success by SLO	overall success
ADMJ 120	1	1	38	38		31/38 = **81%**
LCTR 100	1	1	20	20		15/20 = **75%**
BIOL 100	1	3	55	55		41/55 = **74.5%**
ART 102	1	1	34	34		30/34 = **88.2%**
FILM 100	2	1	29	58	SLO 1: 18/29 = **62%** SLO 3: 28/29 = **96.5%**	46/58 = **79.3%**
COMM 110	2	1	19	38	SLO 1: 15/19 = **78.9%** SLO 2: 17/19 = **89.4%**	32/38 = **84.2%**
COMM 130	1	1	20	20		18/20 = **90%**
ENGL 110	3	2	53	159	SLO 1: 44/53 = **83%** SLO 2: 36/53 = **67.9%** SLO 3: 38/53 = **71.6%**	118/159 = **74.2%**
TOTALS	12	11	268	422		331/422 = **78.4%**

NOTES:

While the academic labs and Admissions & Records provided information, this is not included in the table above. Both the Writing Center labs and Admissions & Records do their assessments annually in the spring, and thus could not supply information for Fall 2015. Also, both survey students by means of an anonymous questionnaire, and thus could not provide data that could be disaggregated.

REMARKS

Observations:

- While our pool was relatively small, we still ended up with a lot of students. And the process of entering and re-entering G#s is extremely laborious.
- The numbers are skewed here by the fact that 53 students in 2 sections of English represent almost one-half of all the results.
- It's not clear what the take-away from this would be. Would it tell us much that we don't already know? Does it give our faculty a different perspective on student achievement in their classes? Also, we should consider associating the CRN number too, because we will likely want to run comparisons between students in night classes v. day classes, or online v. on-campus instruction, etc., all of which is conveyed in the CRN number.
- There really wasn't any way to fold the instructional labs into this; they don't collect data using a G-number. We need to work on this problem separately.
- Nor was there any way to fold the administrative outcomes into this. We should look into a different standard, and different assessment methods, for administration (service outcomes?)

Suggestions:

- Work on making a link between Banner (or G-numbers) and TracDat. Re-entering data for students takes forever, and it's very easy to get a digit wrong and mess up the record.
- Let's not use the outcomes we've already got in our courses. It just makes it too unclear: one outcome in a large class versus four outcomes in a smaller one? And we're comparing apples and oranges. Instead, each faculty group should try to forge a common assignment, or at least common parameters to an assignment, and assess our students using this special GE assignment. ALSO, each section should use maybe 10 or 20 students, so that one subject doesn't dwarf another.
- Look into alternative ways to assess labs and administration.

Follow-up discussion

Participating faculty met again on March 9th, 2016, to discuss the assessment and the suggestions above, which were provided in advance for review.

The following points were raised:

- Faculty found the initial interdisciplinary conversation very helpful. But we're not sure what to make of the data. It doesn't reveal much of a pattern, anything we can act on. (We have not yet been able to disaggregate it, though it is disaggregatable.)
- We discussed whether courses and services that support a GE-SLO directly should get more weight than courses or services which support it only indirectly. For instance, should the results in an English course, which is directly concerned with skills relevant to effective communication, play more of a role than results in the Biology course, where the "Effective Communication" alignment is less important to the course?
- Faculty discussed, by extension, how to think about course alignment. Should we include any outcomes that might help a student effectively communicate, or require him to effectively communicate (e.g., a presentation or exam)? Or should we only align course SLOs that directly promote effective communication?
- We discussed whether future groups should consider creating either a shared assessment, or at least, creating shared parameters for an assessment, so that the course- and service-level GE-SLOs should indeed be assessed differently from course SLOs. This makes sense, especially given that we will soon be able to use course alignment as a means to assess GE SLOs via course- and service-level SLOs using Tracdat.