

QCC GENERAL EDUCATION ASSESSMENT TASK FORCE

Progress Report to the Academic Senate: OVERVIEW

May 2015

Background:

QCC policy states that all graduates can demonstrate proficiency in the General Education Outcomes crafted by faculty and published in 2007 (<http://www.qcc.cuny.edu/gened>)

General Education Assessment Task Force Charge:

In order to provide evidence of student learning outcomes (college-wide) for each of the college's educational objectives, the task force will develop and recommend a process for regular, cross-disciplinary, anonymous review of student artifacts. This information will not be used to evaluate faculty; instead, it is a summative, cumulative assessment of the compilation of multiple courses, programs, extra-curricular events and enrichment experiences so as to determine student achievement of QCC General Education Student Learning Outcomes.

Summary of work so far:

- In June 2014, the General Education Assessment Task Force created and normed a rubric to measure Outcome #2 — Analytic Reasoning.
- During fall and spring semesters, 2014-15, the Task Force created and normed rubrics to measure Outcome #1 — Effective communication through reading, writing, listening, and speaking.
- In June 2015, the Task Force will assess anonymized student work (“artifacts”) provided voluntarily by faculty from courses in each department whose syllabi target one of these Outcomes.

Action plan, to be completed by May 2016:

1. Survey faculty to learn what assignments already in use target Outcomes #3 and #4
2. Develop and test rubrics for two more of the current Outcomes:
 - Outcome #3, Reason quantitatively as required in their fields of interest and in everyday life
 - Outcome #4, Use information management and technology skills effectively for academic research and lifelong learning
3. Disseminate rubrics to instructors
4. Continue large-scale assessments
5. Re-examine list of General Education Outcomes and submit any revisions to Senate for consideration

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Writing and Norming Rubrics

From the Fall of 2014 to early February 2015, the General Education Task Force prepared and tested rubrics for a second QCC Educational Outcome: #1 — Communicate effectively through reading, writing, listening, and speaking. (The rubric for Outcome #2 — Use analytic reasoning to identify issues or problems and evaluate evidence in order to make informed decisions — was completed in June 2014.)

The next phase of General Education Assessment will ask volunteer faculty to submit anonymized examples of student work (“artifacts”) that demonstrate students’ achievement of these Outcomes. Only courses whose syllabi explicitly target at least one of these Outcomes are appropriate for this assessment.

Collecting and Assessing Artifacts

The Task Force recommends that the assignments be a natural part of normal course requirements. All artifacts will have course section and the names of both student and faculty removed to ensure anonymity, and any students who are video-taped for assessment of speaking will sign permission forms. The Task Force created a process for collecting electronic artifacts from courses in each academic department via DropBox with help from the Academic Computing Center. Members of the Task Force will assess the artifacts over six days in June (8, 9, 11, 15, 16, and 18) from 1–4 PM.

Whether or not instructors have graded the submitted artifacts, the General Education assessment of the artifacts is limited to the designated General Education Outcome, and proceeds only according to the rubrics created by the Task Force: analytic reasoning, reading, writing, speaking, or listening. Every rubric includes between two and four component dimensions of the given Outcome; each dimension will be scored numerically by at least two Task Force members for achievement on the following scale:

0 Insufficient 1 Novice 2 Developing 3 Competent 4 Superior

Additional Outcomes for Future Assessment

The Task Force recommends that two additional Outcomes be assessed in Spring 2016: Outcome #3 — Quantitative Reasoning and Outcome #4 — Information Management. As stated on the college website:

Outcome #3 — Reason quantitatively as required in their fields of interest and in everyday life

Example components:

- Identify problems that need a mathematical solution, and use computational methods in the mathematics applicable in everyday life
- Use the language, notation, and inductive and deductive methods to formulate quantitative ideas and patterns
- Use mathematics appropriate to specific fields of study
- Estimate when doing mathematical calculations

- Employ technology to collect, process, and present mathematical information
- Describe mathematical, statistical and probabilistic models and methods, and identify how they are used to obtain knowledge
- Organize and interpret data and use the data to draw conclusions

Outcome #4 — Use information management and technology skills effectively for academic research and lifelong learning

Example components:

- Determine the extent of information needed for a research question problem, or issue
- Access needed information effectively and efficiently
- Evaluate information and its sources critically and assimilate selected information
- Use information effectively to accomplish a specific purpose
- Demonstrate an understanding of the economic, legal, social, and ethical issues surrounding the use of information and information technology
- Identify the role of technology and its impact on the individual, society, and the environment

The Task Force recommends prioritizing Outcome #3 to reflect the recent national emphasis on the importance of the STEM fields and on the Common Core curriculum; this Outcome is also one of the most straightforward to assess. The skills relevant to this Outcome apply to many academic fields and to everyday life, such as in personal finance and broad professional competence. Furthermore, it is an essential duty of an informed member of society to be capable of critical evaluation of the quality of alleged facts.

Outcome #4 merits timely assessment because it encompasses basic research skills needed both for everyday life and for successful transition to a four-year college. Targeting this Outcome addresses widely shared concerns about students losing their library skills in the digital age. This choice emphasizes the importance of recognizing and avoiding plagiarism, and of critical thinking. By highlighting this Outcome, the Task Force intends to increase students' awareness of the rich resources available at QCC, both digital and otherwise. Information-management is a vital professional skill transferable to many functions in the workplace, such as interacting with a corporate database. An emphasis on technological literacy may also help students to appreciate inevitable trade-offs between privacy and convenience.

To streamline the process of developing rubrics in Fall 2015, the Task Force suggests first drafting multiple versions of any rubric in small groups, then combining and revising the rubrics with the assembled cohort.

The Task Force recommends that the dissemination of the rubrics begin as early as possible in Spring 2016 by each member presenting the rubrics to other faculty in concert with the departmental chair. This format will allow ample time for discussion of any questions or concerns faculty may have regarding the process and requirements of fruitful assessment.

Possible Revision of Educational Outcomes

Several practical and philosophical questions arose during the work of the Task Force:

- What competencies and qualities ought QCC students be able to demonstrate upon graduation?
- What aspects of General Education are most relevant to our work as instructors?
- What aspects of General Education are most tractable for assessment?
- Why are some current General Education Outcomes very broad, while others appear so specific?
- What are the justifications for any recommended revisions of the College's General Education Outcomes?

The Task Force has found that clear, consistent, and concise Outcomes promote flexibility and academic freedom while also facilitating collection and assessment of a wide variety of artifacts. Reviewing other institutions' guidelines for General Education—in particular, *General Education Maps and Markers* from the AAC&U—provided guidance on current best practices in crafting appropriate Outcomes. The Task Force also considered several surveys of students and employers in drafting the attached General Education Mission Statement, Guiding Principles, and Core Components (Appendix 1). In the Fall of 2015, the Task Force will review QCC's current Outcomes and revise as needed to clarify and reorganize them in a way that reduces their number yet still mandates a robust General Education for all students.

GENERAL EDUCATION MISSION STATEMENT AND GUIDING PRINCIPLES

General Education Mission Statement

The goals of a General Education are to help students develop the knowledge, skills, attitudes, and habits of mind needed to live as informed citizens of the world. As part of each student's program of study, core components of a General Education include broad knowledge across disciplines; analytical reasoning and critical thinking; effective skills in communication and collaboration; and ethical reasoning and intercultural awareness. The design and delivery of the General Education stimulates students to see connections and integrate learning across disciplines.

Guiding Principles for Developing or Revising General Education Outcomes

The General Education Assessment Task Force plans to review, revise, and develop *Core Learning Outcomes* expected of students who graduate from Queensborough with an associate degree. The Task Force is also developing rubrics that seek to measure components of these Outcomes in order to:

- Help students understand the college's expectations
- Provide a resource to faculty as they design curricula and pedagogy through which students become proficient in each Outcome
- Assist faculty in determining how well students achieve each Outcome
- Inform the public as to how the college measures Learning Outcomes

Core Learning Outcomes

Intellectual skills:

- Analytic reasoning
- Effective communication (individual and group)
- Quantitative and scientific literacy
- Information literacy
- Collaborative learning (group)

Knowledge:

- Broad knowledge of the concepts and methodologies central to multiple fields

Attitudes, Habits, and Responsibilities:

- Reason and act ethically while recognizing multiple value systems
- Integrate and apply concepts, methods, knowledge, and skills in addressing significant problems and questions, both civic and global in context
- Appreciate or engage in creative work

Assessment

Outcomes must be stated in a way that allows measurement through examination of student work.

TIMELINE FOR REVIEW OF GENERAL EDUCATIONAL OUTCOMES

The sequence of remaining major steps needed to complete the initial review of General Education Outcomes, including a timeline, follows.

- Summarize the findings from the assessment of student artifacts for General Education Outcomes #1 and #2 — Communication Skills and Analytic Reasoning **June 2015**
- Report findings to faculty and Academic Senate **September 2015**
- Plan and implement assessment for next two Outcomes — Quantitative Reasoning and Information Literacy **Fall 2015–Spring 2016**
- Invite faculty for input on General Education Outcomes **Early Fall 2015 (Convocation, Campus Conversations, surveys, focus groups)**
- Send survey to several departmental advisory boards for input on General Education skills **mid-Fall 2015**
- Gather faculty input on review of General Education Outcomes and disseminate results to faculty **Fall 2015**
- Second round of discussion with faculty for further revision **Early Spring 2015**
- Create revised Outcomes based on college-wide feedback **February 2016**
- Disseminate revised Outcomes to Senate Curriculum Committee and Assessment and Institutional Effectiveness Committee **March 2016**
- Present proposed revision of General Education Outcomes to the Academic Senate **May 2016**

TIMELINE FOR DEVELOPMENT OF NEXT RUBRICS

Meeting 1 (September 2015)

- Draft Survey Monkey questions to ascertain the range and types of assignments targeting Learning Outcomes #3 and #4
- Collect sample assignments for Outcome #3
- Begin drafting the rubric for Outcome #3 in parallel small groups

Meeting 2 (September)

- Compare, revise, and unify draft rubric for Outcome #3

Meeting 3 (October)

- Discuss Survey Monkey results
- Draft a summary of the results and distribute it to the departments
- Norm rubric for Outcome #3 with selected assignments

Meeting 4 (October)

- Collect sample assignments for Outcome #4
- Begin drafting the rubric for Outcome #4 in parallel small groups

Meeting 5 (November)

- Compare, revise, and unify draft rubric for Outcome #4

Meeting 6 (November)

- Norm rubric for Outcome #4 with selected assignments

Meeting 7 (December)

- Draft report
- Develop plan for Spring 2016

2014-15 MEMBERS OF THE TASK FORCE

Karen Steele, Arthur Corradetti, Ian Beckford, representative from each academic department recommended by department chair, one representative from Senate Curriculum Committee and from Senate Assessment Committee

- Academic Literacy – Julia Carroll
- Art and Design – Pete Mauro
- Biological Sciences and Geology – Mangala Tawde
- Business – Shele Bannon
- Chemistry – Derek Bruzewicz
- Engineering Technology – Craig Weber
- English –Tanya Zhelezcheva
- Foreign Languages and Literatures – Monica Rossi-Miller
- Health, Physical Education and Dance – Anthony Monahan (Fall 2014)
- History – Ken Pearl (Fall 2014), Sarah Danielsson (Spring 2015)
- Library – Sheila Beck
- Mathematics and Computer Science – Kostas Stroumbakis
- Music – Neeraj Mehta
- Nursing – Kimberly Ambruso
- Physics – Todd Holden
- Social Sciences – Larisa Honey (fall 2014), John Gilleaudeau (Spring 2015)
- Speech Communication and Theatre Arts – Rosanne Vogel
- Senate Assessment Committee – Andrea Salis (HPED)
- Senate Curriculum Committee – Julia Carroll