

Assessment Cycle Plan

Academic Year 2016 – 2017

Bachelor of General Studies (BGS)

College: Arts and Sciences

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Northwestern Mission. Northwestern State University is a responsive, Student-oriented institution that is committed to the creation, dissemination, and acquisition of knowledge through teaching, research, and service. The University maintains as its highest priority excellence in teaching in graduate and undergraduate programs. *Northwestern State University prepares its Students to become productive members of society and promotes economic development and improvements in the quality of life of the citizens in its region.*

College of Arts and Sciences' Mission. College of Arts and Sciences' Mission. The College of Arts & Sciences, the largest college at Northwestern State University, is a diverse community of scholars, teachers, and students, working collaboratively to acquire, create, and disseminate knowledge through transformational, high-impact experiential learning practices, research, and service. The College strives to produce graduates who are productive members of society equipped with the capability to promote economic and social development and improve the overall quality of life in the region. The College provides an unequalled undergraduate education in the social and behavioral sciences, English, communication, journalism, media arts, biological and physical sciences, and the creative and performing arts, and at the graduate level in the creative and performing arts, English, TESOL, and Homeland Security. Uniquely, the College houses the Louisiana Scholars' College (the State's designated Honors College), the Louisiana Folklife Center, and the Creole Center, demonstrating its commitment to community service, research, and preservation of Louisiana's precious resources.

General Studies Program Mission Statement: Recognizing the value of special programs for students with unusual backgrounds and abilities, the General Studies program is responsive to today's student. It provides flexibility to allow the student's curriculum to adapt to particular interests, background, time limitations and career goals. It is especially appropriate for a mature person who has, as a result of various educational and work experiences, a clear focus and strong commitment to a particular course of study.

Methodology: The assessment process for the BGS program is as follows:

(1) Data from assessment tools (both direct – indirect, quantitative and qualitative) are collected and returned to the program coordinator;

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(2) The program coordinator will analyze the data to determine whether students have met measurable outcomes;

(3) Results from the assessment will be discussed with the professional staff advisors (we do not have program faculty). We do not 'own' many courses; therefore, we must assess our SLOs in collaboration with the program faculty/administrators in the following core disciplines: communications, English, mathematics and fine arts.

(4) The program coordinator, in consultation with the professional staff advisors, may propose changes to measurable outcomes, assessment tools for the next assessment period and where needed, curricula and program changes.

(5) Based on the low-count of students and/or courses attempted at NSU, students who are pursuing an Associate of General Studies (AGS) degree are factored into, where appropriate, the student learning-outcomes.

SLO 1. Students will demonstrate appropriate writing skills.

IDS 4020: Perspectives / Senior Seminar

Measure 1.1. (Direct – Skill)

Students will be required to create a chronological resume per the established rubric. The target is to have 100% of BGS students develop a resume that meets a score of 75% or above, based on the rubric guidelines.

Findings:

Target not met. Of the 99 students in the four sections, the following was found:

- 70 students scored at least 30/40 points;
- 26 students scored a 29 or below.
- 3 students did not submit.

$70/96 = \text{students equates to } 73\%$ (target equals 100%)

Analysis:

The target was not met. There were several students who had quality submissions, but omitted a required section or two and lost a good number of points, thus scoring below a 75%, although having a decent product.

Decision:

A professional advisor assisted the instructor during spring '17 B-term and added some clarification to the grading rubric and provided an example of a quality submission. For

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the 29 students in B-term of spring '17, the submissions improved (83% earned 75% or above). With the implementation of these directions and example to model from, the target of 100% for next academic year is realistic.

Measure 1.2. (Direct – Skill)

Spring '17, 100% of BGS students enrolled in IDS 4020, will demonstrate proficient writing skills by submitting a professional cover letter. A score of 72% (18/25) or above on the rubric will demonstrate proficient writing skills.

Findings:

Target not met. Of the 58 students submitting a cover letter in spring '17 (A-term & B-term), 56 students earned at least a score of 18/25 or higher. Thus, 56 out of 58 students equals to 93%.

Analysis:

The target was 100% and the class reached 93%.

Decision:

All BGS students graduating from NSU should be able to write a quality cover letter, per our guidelines and rubric. With a very detailed rubric and example, the goal for next academic year will be for all enrolled students (100%) to earn a minimum of 18/25 (or higher).

SLO 2. Students will demonstrate critical thinking skills.

IDS 4020: Perspectives / Senior Seminar

Measure 2.1. (Direct – Skill)

Each semester, 100% of students enrolled in IDS 4020 will demonstrate critical thinking skills by completing an assignment. A grading rubric will provide feedback and evaluation. A score of 75% or above on the rubric will demonstrate satisfactory critical thinking skills.

Findings:

Target not met. Of the 63 students submitting a critical thinking assignment (three sections, spring '17 A-term not included), the findings were:

- 52 earned a score of 75% (or above).

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- 11 did not earn a score of 75% (or above)
- 5 did not submit

52/63 = 82.5%

Analysis:

The target for this measure was not met. However, the majority of the students met 75% or more of the rubric.

Decision:

All BGS students enrolled in a senior-level seminar/perspectives class should be able to think critically and by responding to an exercise (in this case, an ethical work scenario). The goal for next academic year will be 100% of enrolled students to earn at least a 75% or above on this class exercise.

SLO 3. Students will identify potential career opportunities.

IDS 4020: Perspectives / Senior Seminar

Measure 3.1. (Direct – Knowledge)

Spring '17, BGS students enrolled in IDS 4020 will identify relevant career networking agencies. Students will identify an agency for further analysis via an informational interview. The target is to have 100% of the students meet 80% or more of the prescribed guidelines.

Findings:

Target not met. Of the 56 students submitting their assignment, the following was found:

- 43 students met 80% or more of the prescribed guidelines
- 13 students did not meet 80% or more of the prescribed guidelines
- 4 students did not submit the assignment

43/56 students = 77%

Analysis:

The target for this measure was not met.

Decision:

The goal will continue be set for 100% completion. This coming year (2017-2018) a more specific and detailed rubric will be developed, as opposed to established guidelines. An example will be provided to ensure students submit a quality product.

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Measure 3.2 (Direct – Knowledge)

Spring '17, all BGS students enrolled in IDS 4020 will complete an informational interview assignment. The target is to have 100% of the students meet 80% or more of the prescribed guidelines.

Findings:

Target not met. Of the 55 students submitting their assignment, the following was found:

- 54 students met 80% or more of the prescribed guidelines
- 1 student did not meet 80% or more of the prescribed guidelines
- 5 students did not submit the assignment

Analysis:

The target was not met; however, it was very close as 98% of the students who submitted their assignment met the prescribed guidelines.

Decisions:

The goal will continue to be set for 100% submission, with students earning an 80% or above on the newly created rubric. Consideration also that all student submissions will be shared in a discussion board format so classmates can learn from their fellow students' interviews. Additionally, a reflection component will be implemented and e-mail interviews will not be allowed. Only in-person and/or phone interviews with follow-up questions via e-mail.

Summary

IDS 4020 is the only required junior/senior level course in this curriculum. For this reason, all of the above findings come from this course. This course is relatively new, (2 years old) and the instructors are working to enhance its content. We will continue to use IDS 4020 to measure SLOs; however, program effectiveness cannot be based on one class. For the next assessment cycle, it is the intent to establish additional SLOs from fundamental core curriculum courses, which will expand our opportunities to measure learning outcomes for BGS students of all classifications. Additionally, we aim to survey students (indirect measure) to assess their academic progress and preparedness in their chosen area of study.