

General Education Task Force Subcommittee on Peer and NDUS Institutions
Additional Report
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Institutions reviewed

Peer Institutions

Ohio University
Southern Illinois University
SUNY at Buffalo
University of Louisville
University of Missouri-Kansas City
University of Nevada-Reno
University of South Carolina at Columbia
West Virginia University
Wright State University

NDUS Institutions

Dickinson State University
Mayville State University
Minot State University
North Dakota State University
Valley City State University

Program Structure

The better programs:

- There is an administrative structure, either within the office of the Provost or a particular college, with an identified position in charge of General Education.
- A faculty committee is in place for oversight, review, and/or improvement of existing program. This is closely tied to the assessment process and the person overseeing the Gen. Ed. program.
- It was observed that a program's effectiveness was closely tied to a clearly defined administrative structure, and the structure and person in charge was closely connected to the departments teaching Gen. Ed. courses.

Weaker programs:

- No administrative structure or person
- Just faculty driven committee, and in all cases, volunteer.
- In some programs we found too much administration and/or administrative structure in place resulting in a very complicated and top heavy program, especially in the area of assessment. e.g. Southern Illinois University & Ohio University

“Good” programs:

- The volunteer faculty committee that was overseeing the Gen. Ed. program had clearly defined and specific charge. e.g. NDSU, SUNY Buffalo

Resources

- We have NO resources at UND. It is entirely left to volunteer faculty and any associated costs, e.g. photo copies or secretarial support, are absorbed by the departments from which the faculty come.

Better programs:

- All had resources allocated for Gen. Ed., i.e. a budget, secretarial support.
- Some had resources for creating multi-level or core courses, e.g. SUNY Buffalo.
- There is a will and a commitment on the part of the institution for leadership in Gen. Ed.

Observations:

- Gen. Ed. courses generate a large amount of revenue for the institution, but little is allocated to Gen. Ed.
- A good, “early-in-a-student’s-college-experience” core course, or seminar, or learning community with a clear focus on academic content would serve as a significant tool for retention.

Assessment

- All over the place!

Better programs have:

- An assessment committee with a definite structure and charge
- Assessment tools that are clear, standardized and resources available to make happen. c.f. Southern Illinois University form that is standardized with clear rubrics; Gen. Ed. courses assessed every 4 years.
- Others have a structure in place, however the effectiveness of those structures has yet to be determined, e.g. NDSU, Mayville State, University of South Carolina at Columbia, Wright State.
- Some had standardized tests for the direct assessment of Gen. Ed. e.g. University of Nevada-Reno uses a standardized test for math.

Weak programs:

- No assessment plan in place, or very hard to find or access.
- “In Process”, i.e. no data to date to judge effectiveness
- No “teeth” to engage improvements especially in regards to courses not meeting assessment requirements.

Attachments:

1. Southern Illinois University assessment form
2. letter from SUNY Buffalo