Service Learning Assessment

General Education Committee

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Service Learning Assessment

• During the 2014-15 academic year the General Education Committee (GEC) examined the Supplemental Requirements (SR) of the General Education curriculum.
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• Supplemental Requirements
  – Tagged = Writing Intensive, Service Learning, Global Multicultural (two courses), FinL 100 and FinL 400
  – Within Majors = Information Literacy, Capstone Experience
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• This process began with a survey to determine faculty satisfaction with the SR, including the practice of tagging courses.
I would like to see the General Education Committee examine ways to streamline and/or modify the Supplemental Requirements.

N = 61
I am satisfied with the way Supplemental Requirements are currently managed with tags.

N = 61
I am satisfied with the current requirement of FinL 100 and FinL 400.

N = 61
• I am glad there is a face to face financial literacy class as students cheat currently to just get through them. Students agree the information is relevant, but hate the format.
• My advisees find the Fin. Lit classes to be unnecessary.
• Drop back to requiring just the FNL 100.
• FinLit -- These courses can be made part of the regular gen ed.
I am satisfied with the current requirement of two Global/Multicultural Studies (GMC) courses.

N = 61
• Ultimately, it would be great if every department had courses that were designated to meet the GMC and WI courses since both are such an integral part of the world today. Being able to apply GMC-related topics to all majors would likely be a valuable benefit to a student's education.
• More Global/Multicultural requirements More Writing-Intensive requirements Less all others
• Global/multicultural - The current requirement of two courses means that our students have to take an additional course outside our department, adding to an already big program. But Americans in general, and those from our part of the country in particular, typically have so little interaction with other cultures that I would support keeping the requirement as it stands.
• I appreciate the idea behind the GMC courses, but I think in order to have a "true" GMC experience with the limitations of our location, we have to brainstorm a wider group of possibilities for students.
• Two GMC courses aren't necessary.
• Encourage and equip departments to develop their own SL and/or GMC courses, as they do WI courses. Thanks for the work you are doing!
• GMC -- We can just make these regular gen ed requirements.
I am satisfied with the current requirement of at least one tagged Writing-Intensive (WI) course.

N = 61
• Ultimately, it would be great if every department had courses that were designated to meet the GMC and WI courses since both are such an integral part of the world today. Being able to apply GMC-related topics to all majors would likely be a valuable benefit to a student's education.

• I would prefer at least two writing intensive courses. Written communication is so valuable no matter what career path a student takes. The more experience they can get with this, the better.

• More Global/Multicultural requirements More Writing-Intensive requirements Less all others

• Writing intensive - I didn't want to implement this in my courses because it is so labor intensive, but it has led to a huge improvement in my students' ability to write good papers. Keep the requirement. Financial literacy - I think our students need this, but I don't know enough about our current system to know whether it is accomplishing its purpose.

• On the other hand, I would like to see more than one writing intensive course required. This would be easy to manage through each major. Our students' writing tends to be very poor (in my experience) and the extra help and attention to develop better skills would be beneficial.

• Writing - in general - is poor among many students. I believe it would be prudent to discuss requiring a specific English course of all students that is writing-intensive. As it stands now for many students, taking one writing-intensive course during the SR year does not do this requirement justice. I cannot correct poor research writing skills in one semester.

• More WI courses wouldn't be a bad thing for the students.

• WI -- Every department can be required to build writing experiences in their major courses. I would guess that this already happens.
I am satisfied with the current requirement of one Service-Learning (SL) course.

N = 60
• I would drop the Service Learning requirement in General Education and allow departments to set requirements for Service Learning within their own majors.
• Service-learning - Because this requirement can be fulfilled in a variety of courses, it isn't as detested among students as it used to be. Still, I'm not sure that students who do a service-learning course gain anything that they don't already have from the variety of service requirements placed on most young people since middle school. Like Prohibition, this has been a noble experiment, but one whose time has passed.
• As in the past, I do not believe that forcing service learning projects on students is an effective way of encouraging service, so I would really like to see that requirement eliminated.
• Eliminate the SL requirement. Allow the individual programs to determine what constitutes appropriate writing for ones discipline.
• I value the intention of the SL class, but it feels more like busywork. My advisees struggle to find a class that can be meaningful within their majors alongside the burden of other tasks they have to accomplish simultaneously. Many students who try to do this SL work in the summer suffer financially because they can't work or be paid for this work.
• SL should be encouraged, not required.
• Encourage and equip departments to develop their own SL and/or GMC courses, as they do WI courses. Thanks for the work you are doing!
• SL -- Making service required is artificial (and non-Lutheran). Some experiences may be life changing, but students in those experiences would probably take the classes even if SL were not required. I say eliminate this requirement but allow SL classes to still be run (and flagged if need be)
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• In attempting to streamline how the tagged SRs are dealt with, we could envision reasonable ways to deal with every requirement except SL:
  – FinL – move to main body of GE
  – Writing Intensive – move to the program level
  – GMC – no longer require or reduce to one course and move to main body of GE
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- Service Learning:
  - Option 1: Do nothing to change the SL requirement or how it is managed. This would defeat the purpose of streamlining and would leave SL sticking out like a sore thumb if we managed to move the other requirements around.
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- Service Learning:
  - Option 2: Require every major on campus to specify a SL experience, perhaps in a way similar to how the capstone experience is dealt with. For this to happen in an authentic way, it may be necessary to adopt a slightly wider view of the SL requirement.
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• Service Learning:
  – Option 3: Remove the SL requirement completely. This option would ignore the fact that many of our students are receiving meaningful experiences because of the SL requirement.
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• Service Learning:
  – Option 4: Replace the current SL requirement with a broader “High Impact Learning Experience” requirement which an SL experience could be used to satisfy.
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• A stated requirement of SL courses is a student reflection paper or presentation on the experience.
• Eighteen reflection papers were collected from four SL tagged courses (Sociology 331 – The Family, HHP 484 – Community Health, SL 370 – Leadership Lab, and Bio 377 – Conservation Biology) taught during the Spring 2015 semester.
How much evidence is there in the artifact that the student attempted to meet a recognized need in the community?
How much evidence is there in the artifact that the student achieved the curricular objectives?
How much evidence is there in the artifact that the student exhibits self knowledge and personal skills?
How much evidence is there in the artifact that the student worked with an existing non-profit or service organization?
How much evidence is there in the artifact that the student is responsible?
How much evidence is there in the artifact that the student reflected on the experience?

- No Evidence
- Little Evidence
- Significant Evidence
- Saturated with Evidence
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• The assessment data collected indicates that the student outcomes specified for SL classes seem to be addressed in these classes.

• However, in the process of performing this assessment and discussing the artifacts, we had some difficulties with the outcomes as listed. These include:
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1. The outcomes are not measurable. This makes effective assessment difficult.
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2. We questioned the requirement that a student must work with a non-profit organization. Many for-profit organizations perform a great deal of service. The requirement to avoid for-profit institutions and the current understanding that the SL experience cannot be a paid experience seems contrary to the notion that we serve our neighbors even through our jobs.
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3. Some of the artifacts describe valuable service experiences that are not necessarily reflected in the stated outcomes.
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Based on the survey, discussion, and assessment, we recommend that we investigate a “High Impact Learning Experience” requirement which could replace the SL requirement but which an SL experience could be used to satisfy. If such a requirement were instituted it should be done in such a way that it fits naturally within programs of study.
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• If that cannot happen, we recommend that at the very least we revise the SL student outcomes to:
  – be measureable.
  – broaden our SL definition to be more easily adapted to individual disciplines.
  – reflect a wider variety of experiences.