



WESTMONT

Program Review Committee

MEMORANDUM

Date: December 5, 2018
To: Paul Delaney (General Education Committee Chair)
From: David Vander Laan, Tim Wilson
Re: 2017-2018 Annual Assessment Report

Thank you for your commitment to the assessment process and your submission of the 2017-2018 Annual Assessment report. It is evident that the General Education Committee is supportive of assessment as a means to improve student learning.

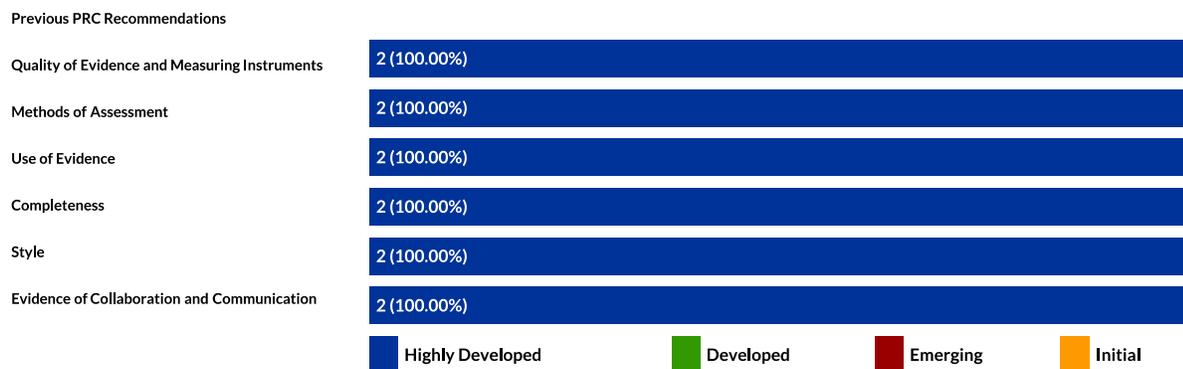
Tim Wilson and I evaluated your report using the Rubric for Evaluating Annual Assessment Reports [posted on the PRC website](#). While assessing your report, we sought to celebrate the good work of the General Education Committee, while providing feedback that would be helpful to your team.

Below is a visual display that reveals how Tim and I rated each of the seven categories listed on the annual report rubric. The blue bands indicate “Highly Developed” and the green “Developed.” It is our goal that all departments should reach the “Developed” level of achievement on all criteria. The General Education Committee’s report was strong and met this objective.

We commend the General Education Committee for the investment made to assessment in these specific areas:

- The Student Learning Outcomes Assessment Quiz was based on the National Science Foundation Quiz.
- The GE Senior Survey provided data from a large segment of the senior class (45% of the senior class).
- There was evidence of strong collaboration among a number of academic departments.
- A need to increase the awareness of the difference among the terms hypothesis, theory, and law was discovered.

Both evaluators rated the report as Highly Developed in every category except Previous PRC Recommendations, which did not apply as there were no previous recommendations. LiveText helpfully displays this information as a bar graph.



Previous PRC Recommendations:

- After reviewing the 2016-2017 General Education Annual Report, the PRC rated all criteria as Highly Developed and did not make any specific recommendations for this report other than to continue the excellent work demonstrated in past submissions.

Quality of Evidence and Measuring Instruments:

- A large sample of 377 students who completed the Student Learning Outcomes Assessment Quiz (Appendix 1) was a significant source of data to reflect upon. The sample appears to have had an adequate gender distribution. The data was collected from three different courses that fulfill the GE criteria for Exploring the Life Sciences (LS-012, CHN-005, and Psy-001).
- Another large sample (45% of all seniors) completed the GE Senior Survey (Appendix 2). It was also impressive that 11 of the college’s majors were represented in this sample.

Methods of Assessment:

- The direct assessment was the use of the Student Learning Outcomes Assessment Quiz (Appendix 1). Basing the quiz on the National Science Foundation Quiz added validity to this assessment. The description of why the questions were selected was especially strong.
- An indirect assessment method was also employed by using GE Senior Survey. This survey encouraged students to self-report on various aspects of the GE curriculum.

Use of Evidence:

- A review of the first five questions on the quiz revealed that some students misunderstand the terms ‘theory,’ ‘law,’ and ‘hypothesis.’ The report writers assumed that this conjecture would lead to “closing the loop” activities by the Life and Physical Science faculty to add clarity to the differences among the terms.
- Students seemed capable of interpreting scientific data presented in graphic form so there was no need of “closing the loop” curricular modifications.
- The students who provided negative feedback (7% on Question 4 and 10% on Question 5) were clearly the minority voice. We agree with the General Education Committee that the results of the survey did not reveal any glaring concerns.
- The report provided evidence that, in general, students were capable of reaching the General Education Learning Outcome to generalize how the scientific method can be used to investigate the physical and living world.

Completeness:

- The report was complete. It was especially helpful to include the data in the report itself.

Style:

- Overall, the report was well written and easy to follow. The data was presented using graphs that the reader could easily follow and the data presented supported the conclusions and "closing the loop" comments.

Evidence of Collaboration and Communication:

- The Student Learning Outcomes Assessment Quiz was selected in consultation with the department chairs of Biology, Chemistry, Kinesiology, and Psychology.
- The findings presented in the annual report were discussed by the faculty who teach courses that fulfill the GE requirement, and also were presented and discussed by the General Education Committee.

Summary Recommendations:

- The PRC shares the GE Committee's assumption that the Life and Physical Science faculty will make some curriculum adjustments to ensure that students know the definitions and use of the terms 'hypothesis,' 'theory,' and 'law.'
- We also agree that instructors in Physical and/or Life Sciences ought to follow some of the suggestions in the report to help students in their ability to understand and make use of arguments and conclusions in scientific articles.

Thank you again for your ongoing work to develop meaningful ways to assess and improve the impact of General Education on student learning. If we have not heard from you by January 15, 2019, we will consider this "draft" memo to be the permanent response to your 2017-2018 Annual Report.