UMD Liberal Education Program Assessment of Student Learning
Annual Report for 2016-17

Completed December 2017
by the Liberal Education Subcommittee

Three of the 10 Liberal Education Program (LEP) categories reported assessment results for the 2016-17 academic year: Logic and Quantitative Reasoning, Humanities, and Cultural Diversity in the U.S. Faculty teaching courses in these categories submitted course assessment reports, and course data was aggregated at the category level by the Liberal Education Program Assessment Liaison (PAL).

**Category Assessment Reports Summary:**

- Faculty teaching courses in the categories developed category rubrics Spring 2016. In the process, category student learning outcomes (SLOs) were reviewed and performance levels were defined for student satisfactory performance in introductory- and advanced-level courses (note: logic and quantitative reasoning courses use the same SLOs but developed distinct rubrics). Faculty identify their courses as either introductory or advanced, and conduct assessment using the related performance level from the rubric.

- For the initial year of assessment reporting, only courses in the three categories offered in 2016-17 were expected to submit assessment results. Rates of reporting per category:
  - **Logic and Quantitative Reasoning:** of the 20 courses in the category that were offered in the 2016-17 academic year, 3 course reports representing 16 of these courses were received by the Assessment PAL. These reports represented assessment data for 254 students in Logic courses and 1846 students in Quantitative Reasoning classes. All 5 Logic classes and 11 Quantitative Reasoning classes were identified as Introductory level courses and as such, reported data on the number of students who met or exceeded expectations at the Introductory/Level 1 performance level.
  - **Humanities:** of the 62 courses in the category that were offered in 2016-17, 56 course reports were received for 48 classes, 40 of which were identified as Introductory/Level 1 and 16 of which were identified as Advanced and as such, measured student performance at a higher proficiency level. Five of the Intro/Level 1 reports were submitted by College in the Schools classes. Intro/Level 1 reports represent assessment data for 2192 students; the Advanced/Level 3 reports represent data for 415 students.
  - **Cultural Diversity in the U.S.:** of the 40 courses that were offered in 2016-17, 20 course reports were received for 19 courses, 13 of which were reported as Introductory/Level 1 and 6 of which were reported as Advanced/Level 3. Intro/Level 1 reports represent assessment data for 924 students (although only 772 students’ data was reported for SLO 3); the Advanced/Level 3 reports represent data for 202 students.

- Category-level data represents the percentage of total student work assessed that meets or exceeds each performance level:
  - **Logic and Quantitative Reasoning:**
    - In Logic courses, the percentage of students who met or exceeded performance at the Introductory Level was 65.4% for Student Learning Objective (SLO) 1; 61% for SLO 2; and 63% for SLO 3.

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1 All SLOs can be found on the Liberal Education Assessment webpage at [http://www.d.umn.edu/liberal-education-program-assessment/category-slos](http://www.d.umn.edu/liberal-education-program-assessment/category-slos)
In Quantitative Reasoning courses, the percentage of students who met or exceeded performance at the Introductory Level was 71.5% for SLO 1; 70.2% for SLO 2; and 69.8% for SLO 3.

- **Humanities:**
  - At the Intro-Level 1 level, the percentage of students who met or exceeded performance was 87.3% for SLO 1; 86.4% for SLO 2; and 85.5% for SLO 3.
  - At the Advanced-Level 3 level, the percentage of students who met or exceeded performance was 92.8% for SLO 1; 91.3% for SLO 2; and 95.7% for SLO 3.

- **Cultural Diversity in the U.S.:**
  - At the Intro-Level 1 level, the percentage of students who met or exceeded performance was 91.2% for SLO 1; 90.8% for SLO 2; and 94.0% for SLO 3.
  - At the Advanced-Level 3 level, the percentage of students who met or exceeded performance was 94.1% for SLO 1; 94.1% for SLO 2; and 94.1% for SLO 3.

Category reports indicate faculty rely on direct measures of assessing student work, such as Quizzes/Exams (34%) and Written/Essay Assignments (25.4%) primarily, Term/Research Papers (9.7%) and Discussion Forums (9.1%) to a lesser extent, and other means of assessing student performance included Presentation (5.9%), Reflection Papers (2.1%), Discussion/Debate (1%), and Other Assignments (12.4%).

Within each category, faculty review course assessment data to determine ways to improve teaching and learning (95.9% of faculty responses) and discuss course assessment information within their departments (86.3% of faculty responses).

The Liberal Education PAL provided recommendations based on course assessment report observations and faculty input from category discussion sessions:
- Determine what to do for courses taught during the cycle that did not submit an assessment report.
- Identify and implement ways to increase faculty participation in category discussion sessions to more meaningfully consider learning across the category.
- Identify and implement ways in which the subcommittee will be involved in student learning assessment processes for the program now that the reporting cycle and practices are established.
- Revise the Cultural Diversity in the U.S. rubric to include the suggestions by faculty who teach in the category. Minor edits for SLO 1 include change “analyze” to “interpret,” and change “perception” to “perspective” in the performance level descriptions.

**Liberal Education Subcommittee Interpretations and Recommendations for LEP Assessment:**

- **Course assessment practices:** Overall, the Liberal Education Subcommittee is content with the assessment practices currently in place. We understand that changes to the assessment reporting process have improved since last year, and the process is recommended to continue in current form. The subcommittee should review the LEP assessment practices during or after Spring 2022, once all categories have completed full 3-year program assessment cycles.

- **Course assessment report submissions:** The subcommittee is relatively satisfied with the percentage of courses reporting assessment results for the categories for the first year the assessment reporting process was implemented. However, when these categories report in 2020 for the full 3-year program assessment cycle, we would expect a 100% course assessment report rate for courses in the category. Recognizing the departments and colleges benefit by offering LEP courses, the
subcommittee recommends that colleges and their departments work together to establish and document processes that will help to ensure LEP course assessment is conducted and reported.

Importantly, faculty may submit LEP course assessment reports at any time, which will facilitate completion rates. The Liberal Education Subcommittee will continue to monitor course assessment report submissions rates and respond accordingly once the full category assessment cycle is completed.

- **Category results and interpretations:** The Liberal Education Subcommittee reviewed the category results compiled from the scores reported by faculty teaching the courses. The subcommittee finds the results reported in the Humanities and Cultural Diversity in the U.S. categories to indicate satisfactory student performance overall. However, the subcommittee is concerned with the results reported in the Logic and Quantitative Reasoning category, specifically the results reported from Logic courses, as the percentages of students who met or exceeded the performance level were, across the board, noticeably lower than those of the other reporting categories (in some cases, as much as 20-25% lower). Based on the data, the subcommittee recommends further investigation by the Assessment Committee and the Campus Assessment Team, in consultation with instructors and PALs relevant to this Lib Ed category, to provide additional information regarding student performance in this category and potential causes. Then, based on more complete data, decisions may be made designed to improve student learning in the category beyond course-specific modifications stated by faculty.

**Faculty participation in category discussion sessions:** Although faculty reported course-level improvements, the Liberal Education Subcommittee will benefit from receiving more category-level learning information for evaluating the LEP program. Next year, the Liberal Education Subcommittee will work more closely with the Liberal Education PAL to prepare and communicate the faculty discussion sessions held in the fall semester (categories will include Writing and Information Literacy, Social Sciences, Fine Arts, and Sustainability).

Since the subcommittee also recognizes faculty may not be appropriately informed about our LEP or assessment practices, we recommend training be provided as part of new faculty orientation and other college- and department-level faculty onboarding processes. The Liberal Education PAL delivered 30-minute training sessions in September that could be integrated into orientation and should remain a continued practice for other faculty who will benefit from the information. We also recommend exploring other means of providing information about the LEP to the campus, such as adding more instructional material to our webpage.

In the meantime, this annual assessment report should be presented to Faculty Senate during the fall semester of 2017, with an opportunity to reflect and comment on student learning in the LEP categories.

- **Liberal Education Subcommittee involvement in LEP assessment processes:** The subcommittee acknowledges the group should take a more active role in facilitating program assessment work. As stated previously, the subcommittee will work more closely with the Liberal Education PAL to promote faculty discussion sessions. Subcommittee members will also be expected to attend one faculty discussion session to hear directly from the faculty teaching in the LEP.

The subcommittee is satisfied with the information on the Liberal Education PAL’s category assessment reports. Using the category reports, the Liberal Education Subcommittee will continue
to complete this annual assessment report for Faculty Senate, Faculty Assembly, the Assessment Subcommittee, and Academic Affairs administration. This report will be made available to campus members in the subcommittee’s shared governance folder and on the Liberal Education Assessment website.

- **Cultural Diversity in the U.S. rubric revisions:** The Liberal Education Subcommittee passed a motion during its November 6, 2017, meeting for the Liberal Education PAL to proceed with the process for revising the SLO and performance level wording. Faculty teaching the category will be invited to review the suggested revisions, and the rubric will come back to the Liberal Education Subcommittee in the near future for endorsement.

Lastly, the Liberal Education Subcommittee is currently working to identify a Liberal Education PAL to begin in 2018-19. The position is now filled by the interim associate vice chancellor responsible for assessment, who helped to establish the LEP assessment practices while serving as an elected faculty member on the Liberal Education Subcommittee in 2015-16. The subcommittee’s preference is for a faculty member who teaches in the LEP to serve as the PAL, as part of the individual’s campus service work. The Campus Assessment Team has assured the Liberal Education Subcommittee the new Liberal Education PAL will be well supported in continuing LEP assessment practices. In addition, the Liberal Education Subcommittee commits to being more involved in LEP assessment, as described above, and will also support the new Liberal Education PAL.