

GECIG Review Report of General Education Curriculum Goal
Goal Area 6: Humanities and the Arts
Period Reviewed: Fall 2017 – Fall 2018

Report Submission Date: May 7, 2019

Introduction

Arguments for the continuing importance of the humanities and the arts in an increasingly tech-centered and STEM-focused era have been a well-documented phenomenon—so much so, that commentators on the field itself have noted the elaboration of two overlapping schools of thought. Summarizing the writing of Alexander I. Jacobs, John McCumber outlined both in a 2016 *Chronicle of Higher Education* essay. One “points out that life is not simply a matter of careers, and that the humanities address the higher concerns that make it worth living,” while the second “cites the growing evidence that the skills taught in humanities courses — clear and critical thinking, knowledge of different cultures, and so on — are in fact very useful for careers, especially at the higher levels of business and politics” (McCumber).

These often-intertwined perspectives on the enduring value of a humanities and the arts education echo the balance of principled idealism and practical application at the heart of Minnesota State University, Mankato’s motto, “Big Ideas, Real-World Thinking.” To that end, one can find clear connections between the university’s Institutional Student Learning Outcomes and major ideas within commentary and research on the humanities and the arts’ relevance to broadly-defined student success.

Academic Achievement - Students will demonstrate competence in specific areas of academic disciplines that will directly impact their career endeavors.

The humanities and the arts offer a set of discernible and transferable skills that benefit students in the workforce. Contrary to public perception that a humanities and the arts degree does not offer concrete career paths post-graduation, a 2018 study by the Association of American Colleges & Universities (AAC&U) reports that both hiring managers and executives seek candidates with skill sets fostered by a humanities and the arts education: “oral communication, critical thinking, ethical judgment, working effectively in teams, working independently, self-motivation, written communication, and real-world application of skills and knowledge” (“Fulfilling the American Dream,” 3). This supports a broader 2014 study by the AAC&U that found prospective employers placed significant value on both the broad knowledge and specific skills developed within a liberal arts education (“Liberal Arts Graduates and Employment”).

Civic Engagement - Students will demonstrate the awareness, knowledge, and skills to actively participate individually or collectively on issues of societal concern.

The humanities and the arts’ emphasis on an active questioning of dominant social structures and ideologies instills within students the ability to engage in civic life with nuance and perspective. Conversely, not engaging in these kinds of questions can lead to a student body unmoored from

the contexts and consequences of contemporary social and political issues. McCumber cites on-campus incidents of anti-Semitism and racism from 2015. In both cases, students did not seem to grasp the effects of their actions on others or that their actions were linked to broader and long-standing historical prejudices. A humanities and the arts education helps instill in students a sense of common cause and social purpose. As McCumber notes, “the humanities are useful to individuals, to be sure, but indirectly: Rather than helping an individual to a more interesting and prosperous life, they first build a shared and — let’s call it ‘humane’ — world in which such lives can subsequently find a place” (McCumber).

Communication - Students will demonstrate the ability to effectively communicate verbally, in writing, and through digital and/or visual media.

In an era in which communication of all kinds has become dispersed across multimedia platforms, the humanities provide students with the ability to convey ideas with clarity, skill, and self-awareness. While written and oral expression have (rightly) long been seen as bedrocks of a humanities education, MSU, Mankato courses that fall within Goal Area 6 underscore the extent to which the humanities is fostering skill sets across various media: “Photography,” “Introduction to Film Production,” and “Principles of Visual Mass Media.” Such classes reflect the humanities’ enthusiastic-yet-principled relationship to more contemporary communicative platforms: “The humanities are neither opposed to technological progress nor indifferent to it; they are valuable partners in it, and must be adequately supported to perform that role” (Burish).

Critical Thinking - Students will demonstrate the ability to analyze situations and problems in order to identify and test solutions.

The ability of students to engage with a text in a sustained and critical manner has long been a cornerstone of humanities’ education. Drew Gilpin Faust, for instance, recalls the value of a Harvard art history professor who assigned her students to examine a single work of art for three consecutive hours, and the revelations of form and content such a practice produced in her students (Gilbert). Goal Area 6 courses ranging from “Art As Politics” to “Ethical Theory” provide students with the opportunity to study works and ideas in similar depth, applying concepts and testing ideas about their meaning and value. Humanities and the arts students can apply these skills to a range of pursuits, including those on the seemingly “opposite” end of the professional and cultural spectrum. As George Anders notes, “The more we automate the routine stuff, the more we create a constant low-level hum of digital connectivity, the more we get tangled up in the vastness and blind spots of big data, the more essential it is to bring human judgment into the junctions of our digital lives” (Anders quoted in Strauss).

Global Citizenship - Students will demonstrate an awareness and knowledge of international cultures and societies.

The humanities link a global perspective on world affairs with the empathy and nuance that accompanies a deep consideration of other countries’ artistic, cultural, and social practices. In an era increasingly marked by resurgent nationalism and the questioning of global institutions, such knowledge carries an added urgency. Martha C. Nussbaum illustrates this necessity when she writes that “the ability to think well about a wide range of cultures, groups, and nations in the

context of a grasp of the global economy and of the history of many national and group interactions is crucial in order to enable democracies to deal responsibly with the problems we currently face as members of an interdependent world” (Nussbaum, 10). Goal Area 6 courses such as “Perspectives in World Literature,” “International Cinema,” and “Music of the World” cultivate this crucial understanding of the achievements, challenges, and viewpoints from around the globe.

Multiculturalism/Diversity - Students will demonstrate an awareness and knowledge of social, cultural and personal values of others.

As with its effects on fostering global citizenship, the humanities and the arts promote a deeper understanding of multiculturalism and diversity through the valuing of various perspectives and the time and care devoted to works by minority artists and thinkers. “The humanities are such an important vehicle for widening the world ... for teaching empathy for people outside yourself,” Faust notes, adding that “in this time of increasing tribalism, this seems like such a critical role” (Faust quoted in Gilbert). Her words highlight the essential values of both cross-cultural connection and respect for cultural specificity that undergird the humanities—components seen in Goal Area 6 courses ranging from “Theatre of Diversity” to “Diverse Cultures in Literature and Film.” This area also highlights the extent to which the humanities and the arts have not only privileged the elevation of diverse voices but also have been responsive to said voices’ needs for institutional space and resources (as seen, for example, in the multiple Goal Area 6 courses within the Gender & Women’s Studies department).

Self-Directed Learning – Students will demonstrate the ability to autonomously acquire knowledge and develop skills.

The development of such aforementioned learning objectives as communication, civic engagement, and critical thinking supports the furthering of autonomous knowledge and skills acquisition. Furthermore, the oft-argued idea that the humanities and the arts promote intellectual and ethical engagement beyond the strict parameters of the professional world strengthens the possibilities of self-directed learning beyond graduation. As Gerald Greenberg observes, “Studying a humanities field involves moving beyond the search for the immediate and pragmatic; it opens one to the examination of the entirety of the human condition and encourages one to grapple with complex moral issues ever-present in life” (Greenberg quoted in Strauss). Yet even within a professional context, a humanities and the arts degree leads students to careers that result in generally high levels of job satisfaction (“The State of the Humanities 2018”). This, in turn, offers the greater chance of acquiring new knowledge and skills in a self-directed manner within a work environment.

The humanities are not the sole provenance of such learning outcomes. Even amongst the multitude of other essential disciplines within the academy, however, one finds the principles of humanities-inspired thought and expression. Nussbaum notes, for instance, that the pinnacles of achievement within the sciences “are infused by what we might call the spirit of the humanities: by searching critical thought, daring imagination, empathetic understanding of human

experiences of many different kinds, and understanding of the complexity of the world we live in” (Nussbaum, 7).

That said, this “spirit of the humanities” finds its purest and most innovative expression within the courses covered by Goal Area 6. They are essential to both the success of the university’s Institutional Student Learning Outcomes and the promotion of “a climate of responsible and watchful stewardship and a culture of creative innovation” within the State of Minnesota, the United States, and around the globe (Nussbaum, 10).

General Education Outcome Assessment: Background

The text below offers the background of the general education outcome assessment. This information was taken directly from here: <http://www.mnsu.edu/assessment/gened/geassessment.html>.

General Education

State agencies, governmental bodies, disciplinary accrediting groups, and national and regional accrediting groups all require information about the learning outcomes of students at Minnesota State Mankato. More importantly, faculty in departments offering general education courses need to know if students are learning what is being taught in the general education courses. Additionally, the University needs to know if the general education program (not individual faculty or individual courses) is meeting its stated objectives. Finally, as with all assessment, the over-arching purpose is to improve student learning.

The General Education Program and Student Learning Outcomes

The General Education program integrates a broad foundation of knowledge and skills with the study of contemporary concerns. The General Education curriculum goals are reflective of those capabilities essential for all college-educated adults facing the twenty-first century, including:

- Skills needed for effective understanding and communication of ideas through reading, listening, critical and integrative thinking, writing, speaking, and technological literacy;
- Exploration of various ways of knowing through study of the content, methods of inquiry and creative modes of a broad spectrum of disciplines;
- Our common membership in the human community, coupled with awareness that we live in a diverse world;
- The interrelatedness of human society and the natural environment and the ethical dimensions of political, social, and personal life; and
- Development of responsibility for lifelong learning.

The General Education curriculum at Minnesota State Mankato has a unique relationship with the Minnesota Transfer Curriculum in that the two are intricately tied together. The

completion of goal areas at Minnesota State Mankato is accepted as completion of the same goal areas within the Minnesota Transfer Curriculum. Students transferring from Minnesota State Mankato to another Minnesota public institution of higher education will have fulfilled the Minnesota Transfer Curriculum if they have completed 40 credits of required courses in the following ten goal areas of Minnesota State Mankato's General Education curriculum: Communication, Critical Thinking, Natural Science, Mathematical/ Logical Reasoning, History and the Social and Behavioral Sciences, Humanities and the Arts, Human Diversity, Global Perspective, Ethical and Civic Responsibility, and People and the Environment. The goal areas of Performance and Participation, First Year Experience, and Information Technology are part of the General Education curriculum at Minnesota State Mankato but not goal areas in the Minnesota Transfer Curriculum.

Assessment Process

The following text explains the assessment process. This information was taken directly from here: <https://www.mnsu.edu/assessment/gened/GEAssessIntro.html>.

Assessment Process

General education assessment is conducted through a joint effort of the General Education and Diversity Committee, departments offering general education courses, and General Education Curriculum Instructor Groups (GECIG's).

A department offering a general education course is responsible for determining the assignment(s) and/or activities within a general education course that best demonstrate the General Education Curriculum Goal being assessed. The department is responsible for using the identified assignment(s) and/or activities to assess the achievement of learning outcomes using the rubric(s) and sampling guidelines established by the General Education and Diversity Committee for the goal area being assessed.

It is recognized that a general education course is only required to address a majority of the general education outcomes established within a goal area. Therefore, it is not expected that all learning outcomes within a goal area will be assessed within each general education course, only the outcomes from the goal area that are relevant to the course.

A department may assess the General Education student learning outcomes within a General Education course at any point in time utilizing the rubric(s) and the sampling guidelines established by the General Education and Diversity Committee. However, a department is required to report assessment results (less than five years old) for each General Education course prior to the scheduled GECIG review of the General Education curriculum goal to which the course belongs.

A department offering a general education course is responsible for submitting the student learning assessment results via an online form to allow the results to be collected across all courses within a goal area. The student learning assessment results collected for all general education courses within a goal area using the rubric(s) established by the General Education and Diversity Committee is aggregated by learning outcome in preparation for General Education Curriculum goal review.

A GECIG is established for each General Education Curriculum goal being reviewed. Each GECIG will be comprised of five faculty members. The GECIGs primary function within the assessment process is to review and analyze the collected assessment results for each learning outcome for the General Education goal being reviewed. The GECIG is responsible for completing the General Education curriculum goal assessment process (review and analyze assessment results, provide interpretation of results, and establish recommendations) and submitting a report to the General Education and Diversity Committee.

The General Education and Diversity Committee is responsible for reviewing the GECIG report and preparing a response. The General Education and Diversity Committee will submit a copy of each GECIG's report and the Committee's response to the General Education and Diversity Sub-Meet, the Office of the Provost, Assessment and Evaluation Sub-Meet, Council of Deans, Departments with courses within the general education curriculum, and the University community. The General Education and Diversity Sub-Meet will convene a General Education Curriculum Goal Forum to discuss the review findings and recommendations with the Departments and respective Deans offering courses within the goal areas that was assessed.

The General Education and Diversity Sub-Meet will convene a General Education Curriculum Goal Forum to discuss the assessment findings and recommendations with the Departments and respective Deans offering courses within the General Education curriculum goal reviewed. As a part of the forum, strategies to advance student learning in light of the assessment findings will be discussed.

During the General Education Curriculum Goal Forum convened by the General Education and Diversity Sub-Meet, feedback on the goal area outcomes, the shared rubric(s) used to conduct the assessment, and the established sampling guidelines will be collected. At the completion of each five-year general education assessment cycle the General Education and Diversity Committee will review the assessment process.

As shown in Table A, General Education assessment is conducted through a joint effort by the General Education and Diversity Committee, departments offering General Education courses, and General Education Curriculum Instructor Groups (GECIGs).

Table A
General Education Assessment Process

When	What	Who
September	GECIG Established by General Education and Diversity Committee	General Education and Diversity Committee
By October 15	Final opportunity for Departments to submit assessment results for General Education Curriculum Goal under review	Departments with General Education courses from General Education Curriculum Goal under review
October	Assessment results submitted by Departments aggregated and prepared for GECIG	Institutional Research, Planning and Assessment; University Assessment Coordinator
November-February	GECIG reviews and analyzes assessment results submitted by Departments, interprets results, establishes recommendations, and submits report to the General Education and Diversity Committee	GECIG
March	General Education and Diversity Committee reviews GECIG report and prepares response	General Education and Diversity Committee
April-May	General Education Curriculum Goal Forum	Gen Ed and Diversity Committee with Departments and Deans

General Education Curriculum Instructor Groups (GECIG) Formation

The Goal Area 6 GECIG was formed by inviting volunteers for the assessment task. In fall 2018, Jonathan Hicks and Heather McIntosh volunteered to co-chair the GECIG for Goal Area 6. While forming the GECIG, preferences were given to faculty who teach general education goal area 6 courses or are from the department that has a course listed in this category. GECIG members were paid two duty days of salary for their work. The Goal Area 6 GECIG members are listed below.

GECIG Members

- Matt Connolly, English
- Jonathan Hicks, Recreation, Parks & Leisure Services, co-chair
- Heather McIntosh, Mass Media, co-chair

General Education Goal Area 6, Humanities and the Arts: Description

The following text was directly taken from the 2017-2018 undergraduate catalog:

(Requires two courses from different disciplines, 6 credits or more)

Goal:

To expand students' knowledge of the human condition and human cultures, especially in relation to behavior, ideas, and values expressed in works of human imagination and thought. Through study in disciplines such as literature, philosophy, and the fine arts, students will engage in critical analysis, form aesthetic judgments, and develop an appreciation of the arts and humanities as fundamental to the health and survival of any society. Students should have experiences in both the arts and humanities.

Students will be able to:

- demonstrate awareness of the scope and variety of works in the arts and humanities;
- understand those works as expressions of individual and human values within an historical and social context;
- respond critically to works in the arts and humanities;
- engage in the creative process or interpretive performance;
- articulate an informed personal reaction to works in the arts and humanities.

Courses(s) that satisfy this goal area include the following:

Course	Credits	Title, Goal Areas
ART 100	3	Elements and Principles of Art 6
ART 160P	3	Introduction to Visual Culture 6, 8
ART 231	3	Mixed Media 6
ART 260P	3	Art History Survey I 6, 8
ART 261	3	Art History Survey II 6, 8
ART 265W	3	Art as Politics 6, 8
ART 275	3	Photography 6
CMST 310	4	Performance of Literature 6, 11
CS 201W	4	Artificial Intelligence & Science Fiction 6,9

DANC 120	4	Introduction to Dance 6, 8
DANC 120W	4	Introduction to Dance 6, 8
EET 125P	3	Perspective on Technology 6, 8
ENG 110	4	Introduction to Literature 6
ENG 112W	4	Introduction to Poetry and Drama 6
ENG 113W	4	Introduction to Prose Literature 6
ENG 118P	4	Diverse Culture in Literature and Film 6, 7
ENG 125P	4	International Children's Literature 6, 8
ENG 146	4	Introduction to Shakespeare 6, 8
ENG 211WP	4	Perspectives in Literature and Human Diversity 6, 7
ENG 212W	4	Perspectives in World Literature 6, 8
ENG 213W	4	Perspectives: Ethics and Civic Responsibility 6, 9
ENG 215	2-4	Topics in Literature 6
FILM 110	4	Film Appreciation 6
FILM 114	4	Introduction to Film 6
FILM 210W	4	Film Genres 6
FILM 214	4	Topics in Film 6
FILM 216W	4	Writing About Film 6
FILM 217	4	Introduction to Film Production 6, 11
FILM 334WP	4	International Cinema 6, 8
GER 150WP	4	The German-Speaking Countries: An Interdisciplinary Introduction 6, 8
GWS 230P	4	Gender, Race & Pop Culture 2, 6
GWS 251P	4	Coming of Age: Gender & Culture 6, 7
GWS 251WP	4	Coming of Age: Gender & Culture 6, 7
HUM 101W	4	Introduction to the Humanities and the Search for Meanings 6, 8

HUM 150	4	Western Humanities I: Beginnings through the Renaissance 6
HUM 151	4	Western Humanities. II: Renaissance through Present 6
HUM 155	4	Global Humanities I 6, 8
HUM 156P	4	Global Humanities II 6, 8
HUM 250	2-4	Perspectives in Humanities 6
HUM 250W	4	Perspectives in Humanities 6
HUM 280	4	Humanities Traditions 6
HUM 280W	4	Humanities Traditions 6
HUM 281WP	4	Human Diversity and Humanities Traditions 6, 7
HUM 282WP	4	Global Perspectives & Humanities Traditions 6, 8
KSP 251	3	Coming of Age: Gender & Culture 6, 7
MASS 260P	4	Principles of Visual Mass Media 6, 7
MASS 280	4	Social Media and Society 6, 9
MUSC 101	3	Intro to Music 6
MUSC 102P	3	Pop Music USA: Jazz to Country to Blues 6, 7
MUSC 103P	3	Pop Music USA: R & B to MTV 6, 7
MUSC 120	3	Survey of American Popular Music 6
MUSC 209	3	Music Travel Tour 6
MUSC 250	1	Strumming and Drumming 6, 11
MUSC 307G	3	Music of the World 6, 8
MUSC 308	3	Women in Music 6
MUSC 309W	3	Music Travel Tour 6
PHIL 100W	3	Introduction to Philosophy 6
PHIL 101W	3	Philosophical Problem: The Mind-Body Problem 6
PHIL 115W	3	Phil of Race, Class & Gender 6, 7
PHIL 120W	3	Introduction to Ethics 6, 9

PHIL 205W	3	Culture, Identity & Diversity 6, 8
PHIL 222W	3	Medical Ethics 6, 9
PHIL 224	3	Business Ethics 6, 9
PHIL 224W	3	Business Ethics 6, 9
PHIL 240W	3	Law, Justice & Society 6, 9
PHIL 321W	3	Social and Political Philosophy 6, 9
PHIL 322W	3	Ethical Theory 6, 9
PHIL 323W	3	Philosophy of Economics 6, 9
PHIL 334W	3	History of Philosophy: Classical Philosophy 6
PHIL 336W	3	History of Philosophy: Renaissance & Modern Philosophy 6
PHIL 337	3	19th Century Philosophy 6
PHIL 358WP	3	Topics in Asian Philosophy 6, 8
SCAN 150WP	4	The Nordic Countries: Interdisciplinary Introduction 6, 8
SCAN 251WP	4	Scandinavian Cultures: The Sami 6, 8
SCAN 350	4	Vikings & Norse Mythology 6,8
THEA 100	3	Introduction to Theatre 6
THEA 101	3	Acting for Everyone 6
THEA 115	3	Experiencing Theatre 6, 11
THEA 285WP	3	Theatre of Diversity 6, 7
URBS 110	3	The City: Design and Architecture

Assessment Rubric

The assessment rubric used for data collection and review is as follows:

General Education Goal Area 6 – Arts and Humanities

	0 (Does not meet criteria for Beginning)	1 (beginning)	2(developing)	3 (proficient)	4 (advanced)
Demonstrate awareness of the scope and variety of works in the arts and humanities		Identifies scope and variety of works in the arts and humanities	Describes scope and variety of works in the arts and humanities	Compares scope and variety of works in the arts and humanities	Analyzes scope and variety of works in the arts and humanities
Understand those works as expressions of individual and human values within an historical and social context		Identifies works as expressions of individual and human values within an historical and social context	Describes works in terms of expressions of individual and human values within an historical and social context	Compares works in terms of expressions of individual and human values within an historical and social context	Analyzes works in terms of expressions of individual and human values within an historical and social context
Respond critically to works in the arts and humanities		Identifies works in the arts and humanities	Describes works in the arts and humanities	Compares works in the arts and humanities	Critiques works in the arts and humanities
Engage in the creative process or interpretive performance		Observes the creative process or interpretive performance	Describes the creative process or interpretive performance	Engages the creative process or interpretive performance	Self- evaluates the creative process or interpretive performance
Articulate an informed personal reaction to works in the arts and humanities		Articulates a personal reaction informed by minimal information to works in the arts and humanities	Articulates a personal reaction informed by some information to the works in the arts and humanities	Articulates a personal reaction informed by rounded information to the works in the arts and humanities	Articulates a personal reaction informed by in-depth information to the works in the arts and humanities

Data Collection

Based on the above rubric the data was collected for the courses offered during fall 2017 through fall 2018. As participation in the assessment process is voluntary, not all courses offered participated in the assessment process. Therefore, data is not available for all the courses offered during this time. The information was collected by institutional research and later submitted to the GECIG for review. The summary data was provided in a PDF. No other materials were provided to GECIG members during this review cycle.

Analysis and Results

Courses Offered/Assessed

Courses satisfying the General Education Goal Area 6 requirements are offered at levels accessible to students. The total number of sections offered during the assessment period was 285. Table B shows the section breakdown by semester:

Table B

Total Goal Area 6 Courses taught during assessment period

Fall 2017	Spring 2018	Summer 2018	Fall 2018
84	86	31	84

The total number of students enrolled in these sections was 9,653. Table C shows the student enrollment breakdown by semester:

Table C

Total students enrolled in Goal Area 6 courses during assessment period:

Fall 2017	Spring 2018	Summer 2018	Fall 2018
3205	2835	480	3133

Of these 9,653 students enrolled in Goal Area 6 courses during Fall 2017, Spring 2018, Summer 2018, and Fall 2018, 413 were evaluated for this assessment. This total represent 4.28% of the overall students enrolled in Goal Area 6 courses.

Table D offers a generalized summary of the courses evaluated for this assessment.

Table D

Total courses evaluated for this assessment:

Instructor(s)	Subject	Level	Section(s)
Multiple	ART	100	Multiple
One	ART	200	Multiple
One	ENG	100	One
One	FILM	100	One
One	FILM	200	One
One	HUM	200	One
One	PHIL	100	Multiple
One	PHIL	200	Multiple
One	PHIL	300	One
One	SCAN	100	One
One	THEA	100	One
One	URBS	100	One

Of the 16 departments and programs with courses in Goal Area 6, eight departments and programs participated in this assessment. The total number of courses evaluated was 18. These 18 represent 6.32% of the overall Goal Area 6 courses offered.

Additional data were available about the course offerings and their instructor types, locations, course types, and course delivery methods. Tables E, F, G, and H show these breakdowns.

Table E

Instructor types for this assessment

Tenured	Probationary	Fixed Term	Adjunct	TA
11	3	0	1	3

The instructor types for the courses in this assessment are predominantly tenured faculty, with a few probationary, adjunct, and teaching assistants.

Table F

Course locations for this assessment

Mankato	Edina	Normandale	Other	Online
17	0	0	0	1

The course locations for this assessment are overwhelmingly in Mankato, with one course offered online.

Table G

Course types for this assessment

Lab	Lecture	Lecture/Lab	Practicum	Seminar
0	14	4	0	0

The course types for this location are mostly lecture, with a handful of lecture / lab courses.

Table H

Course delivery methods for this assessment

Face-to-Face	Hybrid	Online
17	0	1

The course delivery methods for this assessment are overwhelmingly in Mankato, with one course offered online. These data parallel course locations data in Table F.

Summary Statistics

Average score by outcome for all courses:

Average Score by Outcome (All Courses):	
1. Demonstrate awareness of the scope and variety of works in the arts and humanities	3.03
2. Understand those works as expressions of individual and human values within an historical and social context	2.70
3. Respond critically to works in the arts and humanities	2.94
4. Engage in the creative process or interpretive performance	2.89
5. Articulate an informed personal reaction to works in the arts and humanities	2.80

Average score by outcome for face-to-face courses:

Average Score by Outcome (Mankato Face-to-Face Courses):

1. Demonstrate awareness of the scope and variety of works in the arts and humanities	3.01
2. Understand those works as expressions of individual and human values within an historical and social context	2.83
3. Respond critically to works in the arts and humanities	2.93
4. Engage in the creative process or interpretive performance	2.85
5. Articulate an informed personal reaction to works in the arts and humanities	2.76

Average score by outcome for online courses:

Average Score by Outcome (Online Courses):

1. Demonstrate awareness of the scope and variety of works in the arts and humanities	3.36
2. Understand those works as expressions of individual and human values within an historical and social context	3.36
3. Respond critically to works in the arts and humanities	3.36
4. Engage in the creative process or interpretive performance	3.36
5. Articulate an informed personal reaction to works in the arts and humanities	3.36

Frequency distribution by outcome for all courses:

Frequency Distribution by Outcome (All Courses):	Does not meet criteria for	Beginning 1	Developing 2	Proficient 3	Advanced 4
1. Demonstrate awareness of the scope and variety of works in the arts and humanities	16	8	84	100	159
2. Understand those works as expressions of individual and human values within an historical and social context	47	11	96	122	137
3. Respond critically to works in the arts and humanities	22	12	84	135	148
4. Engage in the creative process or interpretive performance	9	8	114	79	122
5. Articulate an informed personal reaction to works in the arts and humanities	24	10	120	117	133

Frequency distribution by outcome for face-to-face courses:

Frequency Distribution by Outcome (Mankato Face-to-Face Courses):	Does not meet criteria for	Beginning 1	Developing 2	Proficient 3	Advanced 4
1. Demonstrate awareness of the scope and variety of works in the arts and humanities	16	8	82	90	149
2. Understand those works as expressions of individual and human values within an historical and social context	25	11	93	110	129
3. Respond critically to works in the arts and humanities	22	12	81	120	143
4. Engage in the creative process or interpretive performance	9	8	114	67	112
5. Articulate an informed personal reaction to works in the arts and humanities	24	10	120	109	119

Frequency distribution by outcome for online courses:

Frequency Distribution by Outcome (Online Courses):	Does not meet criteria for	Beginning 1	Developing 2	Proficient 3	Advanced 4
1. Demonstrate awareness of the scope and variety of works in the arts and humanities	0	0	2	10	10
2. Understand those works as expressions of individual and human values within an historical and social context	0	0	2	10	10
3. Respond critically to works in the arts and humanities	0	0	2	10	10
4. Engage in the creative process or interpretive performance	0	0	2	10	10
5. Articulate an informed personal reaction to works in the arts and humanities	0	0	2	10	10

Discussion

Overall, the data show that students meet the criteria for Goal Area 6 assessments. For outcome 1, “Demonstrate awareness of the scope and variety of works in the arts and humanities,” the average score was 3.03. For outcome 2, “Understand those works as expressions of individual and human values within an historical and social context,” the average score was 2.70. For outcome 3, “Responding critically to works in the arts and humanities,” the average score was 2.94. For outcome 4, “Engage in the creative process or interpretive performance,” the average was 2.89. For outcome 5, “Articulate an informed personal reaction to works in the arts and humanities,” the average score was 2.80.

In general, these summary data run consistent for the level of these course offerings. Seventeen of the 18 courses assessed during this period were lower-division courses, and the summary data for all but one of the learning outcomes fall within the 2, or “developing,” range. In looking more closely at the frequency distribution, however, the scores leaned more toward the 3, or “proficient,” and 4, “advanced,” levels. For example, in learning outcome 1, “Demonstrate awareness of the scope and variety of works in the arts and humanities,” the “proficient” score was 100 and the “advanced” score was 159, while the “beginning” was 8 and the “developing” was 84. Learning outcomes 2 and 3 follow a similar pattern. Overall, scores trended toward “proficient” and “advanced” rather than “beginning” and “developing,” which would appear more appropriate for a general education course.

In the summary data across all courses, a small number do not meet the criteria, ranging from 9 for “engage in the create process or interpretive performance” to 47 for “understand those works as expressions of individual and human values within an historical and social context.” These numbers may not indicate lack of student preparation but may represent the course not fitting within the learning outcomes. For example, MASS 280: Social Media and Society, is a seminar that requires no creative application or interpretive performance as called for in learning outcome 4. Though course designers are strongly encouraged to do more, courses within offered in general education need to meet only 50 percent of learning outcomes in order to be included in a goal area.

The data include a report for one online class, making that delivery method not well represented in the same. With data present from only one online course, we have little confidence to be able to assert that the online curriculum is meeting General Education quality levels. In the future, additional data will be of great value if a legitimate assessment is to occur for online platforms as a separate point of consideration.

While these data representing overall courses and overall students assessed are higher than some recent GECIG evaluations of other goal areas, the overall percentages for courses (6.32%) and number of students (4.28%) remain low. As such, any conclusions based on this data must be read with those low percentages in mind.

Recommendations

These data and the discussions surrounding them brought forward recommendations from the committee.

Improvements in the data collection process toward encouraging greater breadth in results is one suggestion. While this year's data sets were much greater in quantity than the ones for 2016-2017, further data would be needed in order to assess a representative sample. The low overall percentage for courses at 6.32% and the low number of students 4.28% prohibit making definitive, actionable conclusions for data-driven decision-making.

This committee values academic freedom and would by no means advocate for standardized assessment tools. However, there may be some value in exploring alternative or additional methods for assessment data collection. Specifically, there may be merit to including student self-efficacy measures or some version of pre-post testing as a means to better understand the extent to which students meet General Education academic goals.

Greater participation among instructors also would help in meeting these goals. An increase in faculty buy-in would improve matters. A potential barrier here is that faculty may not understand the process and its value to their courses, departments and programs, colleges, and the university. Irregularities in the current data, for example, suggest that some faculty see the assessment as equivalent to the grades students receive, not at the appropriate levels at which students learn.

Though resources and training are available, faculty have little incentive to learn to learn about the assessment process. Participating in the data-gathering process is optional. There is the potential for faculty to have concerns regarding academic freedom as well as potential recourse for low assessment scores. Clarifying goals and expectations will be of vital importance if assessment procedures are to provide any genuinely valuable insight.

Related, the committee has identified an alternative assessment strategy that may be worthy of consideration. Since 1998, Winona State University has utilized a gamified strategy to increase student and faculty participation in assessment. Their "Assessment Day" events occur at both the university and department levels, and by all accounts appear to lead to valuable data points. This approach may warrant consideration at MSU. More information is available here: <https://www.winona.edu/ipar/assessmentday.asp>.

Report Submitted By

Matt Connolly, Jonathan Hicks, Heather McIntosh

Date: May 7, 2019

Works Cited

Burish, Thomas G., “Why We Should Spend More on Humanities Research in a High-Tech World,” *Chronicle of Higher Education*, April 17, 2018, <<https://www.chronicle.com/article/Why-We-Should-Spend-More-on/243144>>.

“Fulfilling the American Dream: Liberal Education and the Future of Work,” Association of American Colleges & Universities, July 2018, <<https://www.aacu.org/sites/default/files/files/LEAP/2018EmployerResearchReport.pdf>>.

Gilbert, Sophie, “Learning to Be Human,” *The Atlantic*, June 30, 2016, <<https://www.theatlantic.com/entertainment/archive/2016/06/learning-to-be-human/489659/>>.

“Liberal Arts Graduates and Employment: Setting the Record Straight,” Association of American Colleges & Universities, 2014, <<https://www.aacu.org/sites/default/files/files/LEAP/nchems.pdf>>.

McCumber, John, “How Humanities Can Help Fix the World,” *Chronicle of Higher Education*, October 2, 2016, <<https://www.chronicle.com/article/How-Humanities-Can-Help-Fix/237955>>.

Nussbaum, Martha C., *Not for Profit: Why Democracy Needs the Humanities*, rev. ed. (Princeton and Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2016).

“The State of the Humanities 2018: Graduates in the Workforce & Beyond,” American Academy of Arts & Sciences, <http://www.amacad.org/sites/default/files/academy/multimedia/pdfs/publications/researchpapersmonographs/HI_Workforce-2018.pdf>.

Strauss, Valerie, “Why We Still Need to Study the Humanities in a STEM World,” *Washington Post*, October 18, 2017, <https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/answer-sheet/wp/2017/10/18/why-we-still-need-to-study-the-humanities-in-a-stem-world/?utm_term=.8cc75988e573>.