



General Education Assessment

August 2019

A Framework to Support Student Success

General Education Assessment

A FRAMEWORK TO SUPPORT STUDENT SUCCESS

OVERVIEW

Student success is at the heart of [UWL's mission](#), which is grounded in the liberal arts and dedicated to promoting “curiosity and life-long learning through collaboration, innovation, and the discovery and dissemination of new knowledge.” As an institution of higher learning, UWL “prepares students to take their place in a constantly changing world community.” General Education (GE) is a core institutional strategy for providing this preparation. In what ways does UWL’s GE program prepare students for success? How successful is the GE program itself and where might improvements be made? Ongoing assessment efforts have not yet been able to answer either of these questions satisfactorily. This report offers a framework for the improvement of GE assessment processes that can lead to data-driven improvements to the GE program itself.

The goals of this framework are to

1. improve *programmatic assessment* of the GE program as it currently exists (that is, without changing the current program categories, credit requirements, etc.); and
2. support ongoing outcomes-driven, evidence-based *program revision* focused on student success.

These goals can be accomplished by making more explicit how UWL’s GE program aligns with [UW System Shared Learning Goals](#), which includes a commitment to the [AAC&U LEAP Initiative](#) and [Essential Learning Outcomes](#), and by taking advantage of nationally-validated assessment resources and tools such as [LEAP VALUE rubrics](#). This framework does not aim to work out the details of a solution, although sample models have been drafted, but rather to outline a process for faculty governance and the university community to work collectively toward these goals. This framework has seven components, each to be discussed below:

Rationale

- I. Evaluating the GE Program as a strategic priority
- II. Building on previous efforts to assess the GE program
- III. Aligning with the LEAP initiative and UW System requirements

Framework

- IV. Adopting LEAP Essential Learning Outcomes and VALUE rubrics
- V. Mapping outcomes and rubrics onto the GE program
- VI. Planning programmatic assessment of GE
- VII. Coordinating roles, responsibilities, and actions

Research and recommendations included in this report are provided for use by standing committees (principally, the General Education Committee, the General Education Assessment Committee, and Faculty Senate) as well as related working groups and other University stakeholders.

RATIONALE

I. EVALUATING THE GE PROGRAM AS A STRATEGIC PRIORITY

The [Advancing Transformational Education pillar of Sustaining Excellence, the UWL Strategic Plan](#), lists as one of its core goals to “evaluate and revise the General Education program.” As of Summer 2019, several changes have been made to the program, including the following:

- The adoption of a first-year seminar requirement for all new first-year and transfer students with fewer than 30 credits, piloted in fall 2019 and with full implementation in fall 2020;
- The reduction in required GE credits from 48 to 42 total, beginning in the 2020-21 catalog year, and
- The adoption in October 2018 of a revised [Mission Statement and Program Goals](#) for the GE program.

Programmatic assessment of student learning within the GE program has not yet been addressed.

Proposals to reform the GE program would be greatly enhanced if they were informed by programmatic assessment data related to student achievement and success, thus enabling evidence-based decision-making among university stakeholders. However, program-level evidence about the efficacy and impact of GE at UWL has been lacking, making it impossible to generate data-driven assessments of program strengths and weaknesses. The framework presented in this report could be used to generate such data, which could provide a solid foundation for broader, ongoing efforts to revise the GE program. By taking advantage of faculty governance in standing committees (that is, those currently charged with GE curriculum oversight which have representative committee memberships, transparent decision-making processes, and established reporting lines), this framework makes use of existing resources related to this strategic priority.

II. BUILDING ON PREVIOUS EFFORTS TO ASSESS THE GE PROGRAM

In May 2006, the Higher Learning Commission (HLC) identified UWL’s GE program as an area of concern. The [2006 HLC report](#) (cited here in a 2009 monitoring report submitted by UWL) indicated a need for HLC follow-up because “there is no plan for the systematic assessment of the learning goals associated with the GE curriculum, an essential first step toward determining the effectiveness of the general education program.” In fall of 2008, Faculty Senate formed the General Education Assessment Committee (GEAC), first as an ad-hoc but later as a standing committee, to implement a course-embedded [assessment process](#) and report results to the General Education Committee (GEC) and Faculty Senate. In 2011 HLC accepted and approved a [final Monitoring report](#) from UWL. Further, in 2009, Faculty Senate moved to [restructure GE learning outcomes](#) to better align with LEAP and [UW System Shared Learning Goals](#).

After more than a decade, it is time to review the extent to which the current approach to GE assessment is fulfilling its purposes. Namely, to what extent has GE assessment determined the effectiveness of the GE program as a whole and made systematic improvements? Instructors and departments across campus as well as members of GEAC have devoted considerable energy to the task of gathering, analyzing, and reporting course-level assessment data. According to the Faculty Senate [General Education assessment](#) website, “This data is then used as a source of information to facilitate both *programmatic* and course level improvements.” **To date, there have been no programmatic improvements based on GE assessment data although course-**

level improvements may be widespread. This makes it difficult to make assessment-driven changes to the GE program as a whole and could negatively affect UWL at future HLC site visits. This lack of programmatic assessment has been recognized by Faculty Senate with special charges for both [GEC](#) and [GEAC](#) in the 2018-2019 academic year.

Lack of Program-Level GE Assessment

The lack of program-level GE assessment is principally due to the design of the current GE assessment process (described in detail on the [UWL General Education Assessment website](#)). Each course within GE, with few exceptions, must be assessed at least once within each two-year cycle. The course-embedded process has four major steps:

1. Assessment planning survey	2. Assessment plan	3. Assessment findings and operational plan	4. Status report
Departments indicate when courses will be offered and which SLOs will be assessed.	Departments write course-specific SLOs that align with GE program-level SLOs, develop an assessment task, and create a rubric, all of which are reviewed and approved by GEAC.	Departments implement tasks and report results to GEAC, indicating whether changes to curricula, pedagogy, assessment task, or assessment rubric are warranted, including an operational plan for implementing these changes.	Departments document changes that were actually made to curricula, pedagogy, assessment task, or assessment rubric.

Within this model, departments take primary responsibility for the design of assessment measures, the analysis of results, and the implementation of action steps. GEAC plays largely a supportive role, coordinating department-level work and monitoring compliance. Though the work done by GEAC since 2009 has helped significantly in improving the understanding of assessment for many instructors across campus (particularly the use of rubrics), the course-embedded process is relatively time-consuming and labor-intensive, creating workload concerns for both instructors and members of GEAC. There exists a lack of consistency among departments as to who is responsible for assessment task and rubric creation, which, when combined with difficulties of timeline and general turnover of instructors, makes it impossible for GEAC to provide proper training in designing assessment measures. **Rubrics created are therefore inconsistent, leading to concerns about the reliability and validity of results.** Additionally, because GEAC members spend most of their efforts on assisting with rubric creation, instructors frequently express concerns that they are designing these assessment measures solely to satisfy GEAC *rubric requirements* and that the end results are not necessarily meaningful or useful.

GEAC's focus on support and accountability would be time well spent with regards to program-level assessment if collected data yielded information about achievement of student learning outcomes across the program, but the current process instead suggests to many instructors that GEAC's purpose is to monitor teaching efficacy or ability within individual courses, contributing further to a negative perception of the value of GE assessment.

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With persistent problems related to the aggregation and utility of assessment data, the time has come for UWL to move to the next phase by coordinating intentional programmatic assessment of GE. Without programmatic assessment, it is difficult to understand how students' learning progresses from the beginning to the end of the GE program with no opportunities to close the assessment loop. No substantive data has been collected that would provide support for making changes to the program.

It should be noted that the course-embedded assessment process has been supplemented by two other data streams: the [National Survey on Student Engagement \(NSSE\)](#) and [Collegiate Learning Assessment \(CLA\)](#)¹. These nationally validated instruments have generated institution-level data and remain essential for understanding student success in the GE program. The primary focus of GEAC assessment processes should aim to supplement indirect measures such as NSSE with direct measures.

Lack of Documented Assessment of All GE SLOs

Another challenge with current GE assessment is that not all SLOs are assessed in a way to ensure balanced student contact with each SLO. There are currently six [SLOs in UWL's GE program](#).

Students will demonstrate knowledge and abilities relating to:

1. human cultures and the natural world;
2. critical and creative thinking;
3. aesthetic perspectives and meaning;
4. effective communication;
5. interaction in intercultural contexts;
6. individual, social, and environmental responsibility.

In the 2015-2016 school year, the UWL Office of Institutional Research, Assessment, and Planning (IRAP) examined the coverage of GE SLOs against course enrollment patterns of graduating students in order to determine if graduating students have been enrolled in a class which assessed each GE SLO. The [study](#) found 90% or greater coverage of the SLOs in the program for the student population studied; however, only 65% of students had been enrolled in a class that assessed "Knowledge of Human Cultures and the Natural World." (To be clear, this did not mean students had not been exposed to the *content*; it only showed that we do not have evidence of *assessment* taking place.) Because faculty teaching in GE choose the SLO they plan to

¹ UWL used to participate more consistently in the Collegiate Learning Assessment (CLA+) when UW System funded our participation as part of the Voluntary System for Accountability. GEC adopted the CLA in 2006-07, and it has been administered twice since that time to first-year students and seniors. "The test is designed to measure the institution's "value added" to the development of students' analysis and problem solving skills; scientific and quantitative reasoning; critical reading and evaluation; and ability to critique an argument" ([About CLA+](#)). UWL will next participate in Fall 2019, as we have not participated since Fall 2011. A plan for administration by UW System in the 2015-16 school year did not come to pass; thus, UWL must pay for future administrations. Despite the challenges of time and sampling, we still recommend participation in CLA+.

[Past results from the CLA+](#) placed UWL in the 96th percentile for value-added estimates of performance; meaning, learning gains of UWL students exceeded the gains of students at 96 percent of the institutions that participated in the CLA.

assess in each semester, gaps are likely to persist, resulting in incomplete coverage. While charge letters to subsequent GE committees have suggested addressing this concern (see, as examples, the most recent [GEC](#) and [GEAC](#) charge letters, dated August 9th, 2018), to date this has not been resolved. As a program we have no means of comparing findings across SLOs or developmentally (based on student academic rank).

Faculty Perceptions of the Current Assessment Process

In May 2019, a survey was administered to all faculty across campus to ascertain perceptions of the current assessment process (see Appendix A). The survey, which yielded 76 responses, suggests areas of high-need as identified by faculty respondents. While there was **no broad call for a radical re-envisioning of the current SLOs or a complete overhaul of our GE program**, there were serious concerns that **students are not aware of, nor able to articulate, the value of the current GE program**. The question, “Students completing the GE program are aware they are achieving these outcomes,” yielded the following responses:

Answer	%	Count
Strongly agree	0.00%	0
Agree	2.63%	2
Somewhat agree	13.16%	10
Neither agree nor disagree	17.11%	13
Somewhat disagree	17.11%	13
Disagree	32.89%	25
Strongly disagree	17.11%	13

Faculty tend to see GE SLOs as course-specific outcomes, not program-level outcomes. This is due to the practice of assessments focusing on course-specific SLOs that align with program outcomes rather than focusing on the program outcomes themselves. Designing a new program-level assessment process would be a first step to address this deficiency.

III. ALIGNING WITH THE LEAP INITIATIVE AND UW SYSTEM REQUIREMENTS

The LEAP Initiative

[LEAP \(Liberal Education and America’s Promise\)](#) is an initiative of the [American Association of Colleges and Universities \(AAC&U\)](#), started in 2005 to promote the importance of liberal education through advocacy and campus action. According to AAC&U’s website, “Through LEAP, hundreds of campuses are making far-reaching educational changes to help all their students—whatever their chosen field of study—acquire the broad knowledge, higher-order capacities, and real-world experience they need to thrive both in the economy and in a globally engaged democracy.” **The UW System joined LEAP at its inception in 2005 and made Wisconsin the first LEAP state.** Two of several LEAP initiatives are [Essential Learning Outcomes](#) and [VALUE \(Valid Assessment of Learning in Undergraduate Education\) rubrics](#).

As part of the UW System, UWL is already committed to the LEAP initiative. Clear evidence of this can be found in the current SLO structure, which was meant to align with the [UW System Shared Learning Goals for baccalaureate students](#). Linked to LEAP’s Essential Learning Outcomes, these shared goals were adopted by the UW System Board of Regents as a framework that each UW system institution is expected to embrace.

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The current UWL SLO structure uses the UW System five Shared Learning Goals while adding a sixth SLO related to aesthetic perspective.

UW System Shared Learning Goals for Baccalaureate Students

- **Knowledge of Human Cultures and the Natural World**, including breadth of knowledge and the ability to think beyond one's discipline, major, or area of concentration. This knowledge can be gained through the study of the arts, humanities, languages, sciences, and social sciences.
- **Critical and Creative Thinking Skills**, including inquiry, problem solving, and higher order qualitative and quantitative reasoning.
- **Effective Communication Skills**, including listening, speaking, reading, writing, and information literacy.
- **Intercultural knowledge and competence**, including the ability to interact and work with people from diverse backgrounds and cultures; to lead or contribute support to those who lead; and to empathize with and understand those who are different than they are.
- **Individual, Social and Environmental Responsibility**, including civic knowledge and engagement (both local and global), ethical reasoning, and action.

Past revisions of UWL's SLO structure in 2014 have retained the structure of the UW System Shared Goals but have eliminated wording that improves comprehensibility—and hence program-level assessability—of these outcomes. By explicitly adopting LEAP's Essential Learning Outcomes, which are an updated version of the UW system Shared Learning Goals, UWL can reaffirm its alignment with the UW System and LEAP simultaneously. In so doing, UWL will be participating in a national response to contemporary demands for more college-educated workers and more engaged and informed citizens. **Adopting the Essential Learning Outcomes in full or modified form will be a “leap” forward because UWL will (1) have a more clearly articulated value of the GE program and (2) gain access to well-vetted assessment models, resources, and tools to assist with program-level assessment.**

UW System Transferability Requirements

Revision of the GE program is limited by the need for UWL to stay within UW System transferability requirements (see Appendix C for a comparison of GE programs within the UW system), which align with UW Shared Learning Goals and the LEAP Essential Learning Outcomes. The UW System has largely been structured around this model, and any programmatic assessment will thus need to align itself closely to the LEAP Essential Learning Outcomes—all of which have evidence-based VALUE rubrics that frame their assessment.

FRAMEWORK

IV. ADOPTING LEAP ESSENTIAL LEARNING OUTCOMES AND VALUE RUBRICS

The LEAP initiative is focused on and organized around [Essential Learning Outcomes](#) that are described in [College Learning for the New Global Century](#) in accordance with a set of [Principles of Excellence](#). They provide a framework to guide assessment of students' cumulative progress through college. These outcomes communicate to students, instructors, administrators and external audiences the value of GE and how it contributes to student success.

The LEAP Essential Learning Outcomes are defined as follows:

LEAP Essential Learning Outcomes

Beginning in school, and continuing at successively higher levels across their college studies, students should prepare for twenty-first-century challenges by gaining:

Knowledge of Human Cultures and the Physical and Natural World

- Through study in the sciences and mathematics, social sciences, humanities, histories, languages, and the arts

Focused by engagement with big questions, both contemporary and enduring

Intellectual and Practical Skills, Including

- Inquiry and analysis
- Critical and creative thinking
- Written and oral communication
- Quantitative literacy
- Information literacy
- Teamwork and problem solving

Practiced extensively, across the curriculum, in the context of progressively more challenging problems, projects, and standards for performance

Personal and Social Responsibility, Including

- Civic knowledge and engagement—local and global
- Intercultural knowledge and competence
- Ethical reasoning and action
- Foundations and skills for lifelong learning

Anchored through active involvement with diverse communities and real-world challenges

Integrative and Applied Learning, Including

- Synthesis and advanced accomplishment across general and specialized studies

Demonstrated through the application of knowledge, skills, and responsibilities to new settings and complex problems

UWL can move toward programmatic assessment and clarify how GE fulfills the mission of the University by adopting, in whole or part, the LEAP Essential Learning Outcomes. If adopted, UWL will be able to use

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[VALUE \(Valid Assessment of Learning in Undergraduate Education\)](#) rubrics associated with the Essential Learning Outcomes. The VALUE rubrics, which were released in the fall of 2009, were developed by teams of faculty and other education professionals from over 100 higher education institutions of varying sizes and types from across the country. These rubrics were developed specifically for the LEAP Essential Learning Outcomes. According to AAC&U's VALUE website, "Each rubric was developed from the most frequently identified characteristics or criteria of learning for each of the 16 learning outcomes. Drafts of each rubric were then tested by faculty with their own students' work on over 100 college campuses." The VALUE rubrics have been approved for use in meeting national standards for accountability and can be used for self-study reports and accreditation reviews. There are [16 VALUE rubrics](#) which have been [validated](#) and [vetted](#) to align with the Essential Learning Outcomes with multiple published [case studies](#) which illustrate their effectiveness. The use of these rubrics will allow for assessment across disciplines and provide a richer picture of GE SLOs.

Unlike the rubrics that instructors create as part of the current GE assessment process, VALUE rubrics are programmatic by design. They include general descriptors which are applicable to a wide range of disciplines and capture students' performance at "benchmark," "milestone" and "capstone" levels. Using these rubrics would permit the aggregation of data across courses, student levels, as well as GE categories, enabling program-level assessment and systematic improvement of GE.

It is a tall order to expect a GE program *alone* to implement and evaluate all aspects of the LEAP Essential Learning Outcomes. In [College Learning for the New Global Century](#), the document originating LEAP in January 2007, the authors write, "General education plays a role, but it is not possible to squeeze all these important aims into the general education program alone. The majors must address them as well."

A weakness of our current GE program is the ability to measure *integrative and applied learning*. A possible starting point for gathering data will exist with the implementation of the first-year seminar; an end point of capstone (supplemented by CLA+) exists for seniors in many majors across campus. It is best to leverage the work in the major capstone to help measure student learning over time. By consulting with UWL college Academic Service Directors, it was determined that 83% of current students already require a capstone-like experience for their major (see Appendix D) which could be leveraged for GE assessment purposes.

V. MAPPING OUTCOMES AND RUBRICS ONTO THE GE PROGRAM

GE at UWL is defined in the [Undergraduate Catalog](#) in three principal ways: program goals, SLOs, and language used to describe requirements in different categories. The current assessment process asks departments and instructors to self-identify which SLOs match the courses that are listed within each category. This results in numerous issues. A course listed under "Literacy: tools for skilled communication (GE 01)" need not be assessed on the outcome related to "effective communication" and a course under "Self and society: understanding oneself and the social world (GE 06)" may be not assessed for "individual, social, and environmental responsibility," both possibly opting for "critical and creative thinking" instead. **While a one-to-one correspondence between SLOs and categories is not necessary, UWL needs to clarify how SLOs and categories are related in order to produce meaningful programmatic assessment results.** In some cases, SLOs may map onto several categories and, in others, only in one. If individual departments select outcomes based on choice alone, then some outcomes may be neglected. On the other hand, if faculty are told which outcomes they must assess, they may resent not having a choice. A blend of these two approaches may be

ideal. A course may well achieve multiple SLOs but inasmuch as it counts within a category it contributes to the GE as a program as a whole, which must be assessed as such.

Programmatic assessment requires coordination and planning in order to generate aggregable results. Moreover, it is clearly reasonable for students and faculty and external stakeholders to expect an explanation of how particular categories contribute to student success more generally. Discussions about mapping focus on these questions, which may be answered in different ways. A sample model of how LEAP Essential Learning Outcomes and VALUE rubrics may be mapped onto UWL’s existing GE program is attached (see Appendix E). This model is shared as a proof of concept. Alternative models should be generated and reviewed alongside it as part of a broader effort to update GE assessment.

VI. PLANNING PROGRAMMATIC ASSESSMENT OF GE

As stated above, program-level assessment of GE has been lacking. To remedy this situation, once LEAP Essential Learning Outcomes and corresponding VALUE rubrics are selected, UWL can update assessment procedures as follows. This model comes as a result of the interview process with peer and aspirant institutions (see Appendix B) as well as a review of published VALUE rubric case studies.

1. GEC and GEAC identify SLOs to target for a given year based on a predetermined mapping/rotation schedule.
2. Individual departments identify a course-embedded task (a “signature assignment”) that aligns with targeted GE program SLOs and associated VALUE rubrics.
3. Student artifacts are uploaded to campus assessment software (currently Taskstream) before the end of the academic year.
4. GEAC coordinates an annual assessment workshop. A group of instructors is assembled (with appropriate representation given the targeted SLOs) and trained to use the VALUE rubrics and campus assessment software reviewer tools to assess a sample of student artifacts.
5. GEAC analyzes results from the annual assessment workshop, indicating the percentage of students who have achieved benchmark, milestone, and capstone performance levels. Based on findings, GEAC makes recommendations to GEC on whether changes to GE curricula, assessment tasks, or assessment rubrics may be warranted.
6. GEAC prepares and disseminates a report that summarizes programmatic results and makes programmatic recommendations for improvement. This report is reviewed by GEC at the beginning of fall semester so that results may inform decision making.
7. Results lead to program-level improvements because SLOs and rubrics are themselves programmatic by design.

A comparison with the existing GE assessment approach is included in the following table:

Current Process	Updated Process
<i>1. Selection of Student Learning Outcomes to be Assessed</i>	
Based on a department assessment plan, individual programs/instructors select a GE program outcome and then articulate associated course-specific outcomes. Some program SLOs are less frequently chosen, leading to uneven coverage.	GEC and GEAC identify GE program SLOs to target for a given year based on category mapping and rotation schedule and then coordinates programmatic assessment efforts in accordance with best practices recommended by AAC&U.

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<i>2. Identify Task</i>	
Individual programs/instructors develop a course-embedded assessment instrument. Tasks, which vary significantly, may be completed at any point in the semester. Instruments must be submitted to and approved by GEAC, which works to improve compliance across programs.	Individual programs/instructors identify a course-embedded task (a “signature assignment”) that aligns with targeted GE program SLOs and associated rubrics. GEAC reviews and approves tasks. GEAC uses AAC&U resources to create and distribute guidelines for selecting and embedding tasks.
<i>3. Identify Rubric</i>	
Individual programs/instructors create analytic rubrics using five performance levels to evaluate student work. Rubric traits/evaluation criteria are “homegrown” and therefore all different. Rubrics are rarely field tested for reliability and validity.	AAC&U VALUE rubrics associated with targeted GE program SLOs are used to assess student work. These program-level rubrics were field tested on over 150 campuses and are supported by a growing research base that documents reliability and validity.
<i>4. Gather Student Artifacts</i>	
Individual programs/instructors collect student artifacts from course-embedded tasks in various ways. Artifacts are not archived, shared, or submitted for programmatic review.	Student artifacts are uploaded to campus assessment software (currently Taskstream) before the end of the academic year. GEAC develops a timeline, shares instructions, and communicates with departments about the process.
<i>5. Review Student Artifacts</i>	
Individual programs/instructors assess student artifacts using custom rubrics. Rater bias may be present. No efforts to ensure reliability are required or documented.	GEAC coordinates annual assessment workshops. A group of instructors is assembled (with appropriate representation given the targeted SLOs) and trained to use the VALUE rubrics and campus assessment software reviewer tools. A norming session is held prior to assessment to improve reliability.
<i>6. Analyze and Report Results</i>	
Individual programs/instructors report the numbers of students achieving each performance level (results). Departments also report on whether changes to curricula, pedagogy, assessment tasks, or assessment rubrics are warranted (operational plan) and implemented (status report).	GEAC analyzes results from the annual assessment reviews, indicating the percentage of students who have achieved benchmark, milestone, and capstone performance levels. Based on findings, GEAC makes recommendations to GEC on whether changes to GE curricula, assessment tasks, SLOs, or assessment rubrics may be warranted.
<i>7. Aggregate and Share Programmatic Results</i>	
Given variations in rubrics and assessment processes, aggregated results have limited usefulness. Programmatic reports have focused on compliance (see for example GEAC 2018 year end report) and SLO coverage. Reports are typically submitted at the end of the spring semester and therefore rarely used by instructors or by GEC to inform decision making.	GEAC prepares and disseminates a report that summarizes programmatic results and makes programmatic recommendations for improvement. This report is reviewed by GEC at the beginning of fall semester so that results may inform decision making.

8. Make Programmatic Improvements	
No programmatic improvements have been made based on programmatic assessment data.	Results lead to program-level improvements because SLOs and rubrics are themselves programmatic by design. Instructors across campus play an active role in selecting assignments and reviewing student artifacts, which over time may lead to greater investment in—and coherence within—GE as a program.

Anticipated Benefits

Below is a summary of the benefits of updating GE assessment processes as described above:

- *Based on a well-established and vetted structure from AAC&U that aligns with UW System Shared Learning Goals and Transfer Requirements* (See “Adopting LEAP Essential Learning Outcomes and VALUE rubrics” above.)
- *Aligns with UWL Mission, Vision, and Values.* The spirit of LEAP closely aligns with the UWL values and vision because it focuses on student success and preparation.
- *Designed for program level assessment.* Using standardized VALUE rubrics for assessment (rather than individual course-level rubrics) allows for comparison of courses within a category as well as comparison across categories. SLO achievement can be tracked across time, making it easier to identify where improvement is needed. Further, LEAP learning outcomes are more specific than current GE SLOs, allowing for a more detailed insight into student learning.
- *Aligns with current UWL GE program.* Because the LEAP structure influenced prior revisions to the GE program, LEAP learning outcomes match GE category structure and language. Consequently, no changes to the current GE program are needed although programmatic assessment is likely to lead to systematic improvements.
- *Allows for future modifications of UWL GE program.* Because LEAP Essential Learning Outcomes are designed to be general and to fit a wide range of GE programs, these outcomes can be mapped onto any future changes to the UWL GE program.
- *Less work and increased value for GE faculty.* Course level assessment of the current UWL GE program (as implemented by GEAC) required multiple steps from faculty teaching GE courses (selection of task, approval of rubric, assessment, submission of results, reporting on future steps). The updated model will reduce this work by standardizing rubrics across SLOs via VALUE rubrics and having assessment activities performed once a year by a subset of faculty on a sample of student artifacts. Further, because the same VALUE rubric will be used to assess multiple GE courses, faculty will see how their individual course fits into the broader GE program.
- *Improves coherence and communicability of current program.* Updated catalog language will help students, instructors, administrators, parents, and other external audiences understand how GE contributes to student success.
- *Makes use of existing UWL faculty governance.* The actual modification, approval, and implementation of this updated framework will be accomplished via Faculty Senate, GEC, GEAC, etc. See “Coordinating roles, responsibilities, and actions” below.

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Anticipated Costs

Costs would be minimal because this updated assessment process relies on existing resources. However, the following costs may be expected:

- *Compensation for faculty participating in assessment review retreats.* This assessment activity will be organized as a regular duty of GEAC. However, GE faculty who participate in annual assessment retreats will require compensation to perform these additional duties.
- *Training for faculty participating in assessment review retreats.* Assessors will require some training on the LEAP Essential Learning Outcomes, VALUE rubrics, and how to use assessment software. CATL and/or the University Assessment Coordinator may be able to provide this support.

VII. COORDINATING ROLES, RESPONSIBILITIES, AND ACTIONS

This framework requires review by relevant faculty governance bodies with input from the campus community. In order to coordinate this work and ensure timely progress, the following timeline is recommended:

Timeline

- **August 2019:** Initial share with Assessment Advisory Board for feedback and endorsement.
- **August 2019:** Share with SEC and broad campus. Meet with SEC to present framework and develop plan for sharing with campus.
- **Fall 2019-Spring 2020:** SEC charge GEC and GEAC with review of this framework, collection of campus feedback, possible revisions, and potential approval.
- **Spring 2020:** GEC and GEAC submit final framework for Faculty Senate approval.
- **Fall 2020:** GEC and GEAC implement changes and begin programmatic assessment of GE.

Roles and Responsibilities

GE assessment at UWL is executed by GEAC under the direction of GEC. The [Faculty Senate website assigns these roles and responsibilities:](#)

- **General Education Committee.** GEC coordinates the General Education Program and all policies related to program level assessment. The General Education Committee uses assessment data when fulfilling its obligation to regularly review the program. (refer to Faculty Senate By-Laws, Part II, Section J)
- **General Education Assessment Committee.** GEAC reports to GEC and executes the assessment policies established by GE. (refer to Faculty Senate By-Laws, Part II, Section I)
- **Departments/Programs.** Departments and Programs are responsible for complying with the assessment policies established by GE. Departments/Programs are responsible for the design, implementation, and use of their assessment instruments.
- **University Assessment Coordinator.** The Assessment Coordinator serves as consultant to both GE and GEAC. The Assessment Coordinator also serves as a resource for Departments seeking to comply with the assessment policies established by GE.

Maintaining these roles, GEC and GEAC should work *collaboratively* on the following *draft* charges, each of which should be formally modified, approved, and distributed by Faculty Senate.

GEC

GEC is currently charged by Faculty Senate with “Evaluating general education proposals within the established program structure, taking into consideration the needs of students and of society, the mission of the university, the necessity for quality general education, and the goals of the program (charge 4).” As part of this evaluative work, GEC should work on the following special charges:

- Review this framework, the LEAP Essential Learning Outcomes, and corresponding VALUE rubrics.
- Adopt or modify LEAP Essential Learning Outcomes and VALUE rubrics for UWL’s GE program (faculty/staff input needed).
- Map SLOs onto existing GE categories, using faculty/staff input to ensure balanced coverage of SLOs.
- Update GE language on the UWL website and in the Undergraduate Catalog and communicate changes to faculty/staff and students (faculty/staff input needed).

GEAC

A standing Faculty Senate charge for this committee is “Coordinating and monitoring the assessment of General Education courses (charge 2).” As part of that work, GEAC should work on the following special charges:

- Review this framework, the LEAP Essential Learning Outcomes, and corresponding VALUE rubrics and provide feedback to GEC.
- Create a rotation cycle to ensure all selected program SLOs are assessed.
- Develop a plan for coordinating assessment review workshops, including how to select, train, and support participants and use campus assessment software to gather and review student artifacts. It is recommended that GEAC consult with peer institutions which already implement such assessment workshops.
- Create a communications timeline to coordinate programmatic assessment and design materials for informing university faculty and staff of changes to GE assessment.

REFERENCES

1. UWL

- a. [UWL's mission](#)
- b. [Advancing Transformational Education pillar of Sustaining Excellence, the UWL Strategic Plan](#)
- c. [GE Program Mission Statement and Program Goals](#)
- d. [2006 HLC report](#)
- e. [GEAC assessment process](#)
- f. [2011 HLC final monitoring report](#)
- g. [2009 restructured GE learning outcomes](#)
- h. [General Education assessment](#)
- i. [2018-19 GEC charges](#)
- j. [2018-19 GEAC charges](#)
- k. [National Survey on Student Engagement \(NSSE\) and Collegiate Learning Assessment \(CLA\)](#)
- l. [GE program SLOs](#)
- m. [2015-16 IRAP SLO coverage study](#)
- n. [2014 UWL SLO structure revision](#)
- o. [GEAC 2018 year end report](#)

2. UW System

- a. [UW System transferability requirements](#)
- b. [UW System shared learning goals for baccalaureate students](#)

3. LEAP

- a. [American Association of Colleges and Universities \(AAC&U\)](#)
- b. [AAC&U LEAP \(Liberal Education and America's Promise\) initiative](#)
- c. [Essential Learning Outcomes](#)
- d. [VALUE \(Valid Assessment of Learning in Undergraduate Education\)](#)
- e. [VALUE rubrics](#)
- f. [VALUE rubric research](#)
- g. [VALUE case studies](#)
- h. [Wisconsin as first LEAP state](#)
- i. [College Learning for the New Global Century description of LEAP essential learning outcomes](#)
- j. [Principles of excellence](#)

APPENDICES

Appendix A: [General Education Program Learning Outcomes Survey](#)

Appendix B: [AAWG Peer and Aspirant Institution Phone Interview Notes](#)

Appendix C: [UW System Comparison of GE Programs and Final Transfer Model and Policy Review Report](#)

Appendix D: [UWL current capstone requirements June 2019](#)

Appendix E: [Sample mapping of LEAP Essential Learning Outcomes and VALUE rubrics](#)