

### **Part I: Program Improvements**

The overall finding of the general education assessment report for the 2015 Global Interdependencies (G) is as follows:

*General student performance could be improved. Some G courses challenge students to move beyond mere knowledge and grapple with issues having to do with interdependencies and interactions on a global scale.*

*It is recommended that faculty work to integrate assignments into their classes that encourage students to think reflectively on the G outcomes, and correlate the course assessment with the G student learning outcomes. It was not always clear what the course assessments and methods used to assess the student progress towards the learning outcomes had to do with the G learning outcomes.*

### **Part II: Procedure**

Binghamton University utilizes a system of assessment, through its Faculty Senates' University Undergraduate Curriculum Committee (UUCC), respective of each general education content area. Through the general education coordinator, instructors are randomly selected and asked to submit course portfolios containing syllabi, instructor statements about the degree to which instructors felt students had met student learning outcomes, and an estimation regarding the percentage of student who exceeded, met/fulfilled, approached and did not meet the expectation indicated by the general education student learning outcome(s) relevant to their courses. These are stored electronically over a three year period. At the end of the three year period, the UUCC members meet with the Assistant Provost for the Institutional Research & Assessment to discuss the student learning outcome(s), methods of reviewing the portfolio, and request for various information, such as information from the National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE), ad hoc faculty surveys from faculty who teach in designated general education area, and other surveys. Therefore, the only deviations have to do with the facilitation of information gathering, such as the storing of information, and the enabling of the UUCC's to request additional information should they desire it.

These deviations are insignificant, but reflect a need to articulate the process to members of UUCC, and offer the data to the UUCC if they request it. For the purpose of this assessment, the members of the UUCC that worked on this assessment only looked at the provided portfolios.

### **Part III: Student Learning Outcomes**

The following is the Student Learning Outcome for the Global Interdependencies Courses as of April 2015:

*Students in G courses will demonstrate knowledge of how two or more distinctive world regions have influenced and interacted with one another and how such interactives have been informed by their respective cultures or civilizations.*

## Part IV: Findings

The team reviewed the randomly selected portfolios and met to discuss the following questions:

1. Do the course syllabi and other materials found in the general education course portfolios address the student learning outcomes for global interdependencies? What are some strength and weaknesses?
2. What are some strength and weaknesses with regard to the student learning outcomes in the global interdependencies, as demonstrated through student work samples in the portfolios, as well as the survey data found in the supplemental packet?
3. What are some recommendations they would make to enhance student learning outcomes?

We address each of these questions below.

### *Course syllabi*

A review of the course syllabi contained in the course portfolios indicates a variation with respect to how effectively syllabi addresses the student learning outcomes at all, much less explicitly for global Interdependencies. Only 50% of the syllabi mentioned the G student learning outcomes either explicitly, by stating the G learning outcome from Part III, or by paraphrasing them in their course learning outcomes. Out of the remaining classes, two failed to mention the “G” designation at all. We recognize that faculty have been receiving reminders to include learning outcomes in their syllabi in the last few years, but could not find earlier data to measure if there has been an improvement in this number.

The team also noted, as in previous years, that the even if the student learning outcomes are addressed in the syllabi, it was not clear those outcomes were actually covered substantively. Suggestions for dealing with this problem are found in the *Recommendations* section.

### *Student Learning Strengths and Weaknesses*

Student progress in the “G” requirement is not as steady as the team would hope, with a drop in the number of students “exceeding,” or “fulfilling/meeting” the requirements from the 2008 level. It should be noted that not all instructors provided data for this area.

Year	Meets/Fulfill
2008	69%
2011	75%
2015	68%

As was the case in 2008 and 2011, the portfolios reveal that some courses challenge students to move beyond mere knowledge, and that faculty in these courses want students to critically engage and grapple with issues related to interdependencies and interactions on a global scale as reflected in the global interdependencies learning outcomes. A concern noted by several instructors in the self-assessment section of the portfolios is that students often seem to lack the critical thinking and information management skills needed to engage at this level.

### *Recommendations*

1. That faculty continue to receive regular reminders to include the appropriate Gen Ed learning outcomes in their syllabi.
2. The engagement level necessary for the G requirement makes the SUNY General Education competencies of information management and critical thinking foundational. Courses should be taught with assessment of and pedagogical techniques for these competencies in mind.
3. Faculty should be encouraged to integrate an assignment format into their course that encourages students to engage with and reflect upon the G requirement.
4. Faculty must be able to draw a direct line between the student learning outcomes for the G and course assessment, rather than general descriptions of course content and assessments. Examples of successful assessments should be made available for all faculty to view.
5. A revision of the assessment process should be considered with the goal of making it more inclusive and streamlined. The instructor portfolio should include the syllabi, the 1-2 page instructor assessment of how the course fulfills the general education requirement and outcomes, and the outcome assessment report. Copies of student work and assignments are not necessary for the UCC review. With faculty permission, examples of strong portfolios could be provided for faculty to view as they prepare to submit their own portfolios.