
Faculty Engagement and a Successful General Education Program

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Institutional Profile

Florida Agricultural and Mechanical University is:

- ❖ A public land-grant, comprehensive historically black university.
 - ❖ Student population is around 12,000.
 - ❖ The 3rd oldest institution in the Florida State University System (SUS).
 - ❖ Offers undergraduate, graduate, research and professional programs.
 - ❖ Outstanding programs include, Architecture, Engineering and Pharmacy.
 - ❖ Carnegie Classification = Doctoral/Professional
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Expected Learning Outcomes

Participants will

- ❖ Review the accomplishments of General Education Assessment Committee (GEAC).
 - ❖ Identify strategies that work in engaging the faculty to develop a successful Gen Ed assessment program.
 - ❖ Become aware of challenges to anticipate at their own settings by engaging the faculty to lead an assessment effort.
 - ❖ Apply lessons learned in overcoming faculty resistance to assessment on their campuses
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PREAMBLE (1)

A popular perception is that of General Education (Gen Ed.) is:

- ❖ a smorgasbord of courses from which students may select a certain number of courses in various disciplines.
 - ❖ To successfully assess the Gen Ed outcomes, an institution needs to change this perception to one that explicitly focuses on what students should be able to do as a result of their general education experience.
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PREAMBLE (2)

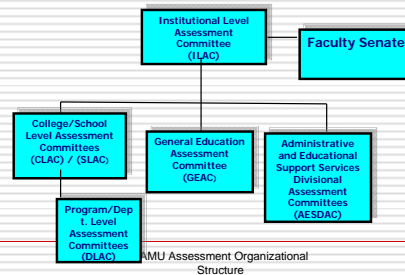
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- ❖ Successful assessment requires everybody's collaboration and especially the faculty.
 - ❖ Such collaboration is necessary to sustain assessment and ensure long-term improvement.
 - ❖ Faculty need to actively learn how to do assessment, and engage themselves in the scholarship of assessment.
 - ❖ *Assessment provides the opportunity to improve the program, curricular structure, and teaching practices in order to thereby enhance student performance and learning outcomes.*
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Key Questions Addressed

This presentation answers the following key questions.

1. How did FAMU engage faculty and what strategies were used to promote shared responsibility in installing a successful Gen Ed assessment system?
2. What implementation approach was adopted by this public institution for its assessment planning and documentation?
3. What were the critical accomplishments in this faculty – led assessment initiative?
4. What challenges were faced in engaging the faculty to lead the Gen Ed assessment effort?
5. What lessons were learned from this effort?

FAMU Assessment Structure



FAMU Assessment Structure

- ❖ The Office of University Assessment
 - ❖ Two key assessment committees
1. Institutional Level Assessment Committee (ILAC)
 2. General Education Assessment Committee (GEAC)

Organizing for General Education Assessment at FAMU

The GEAC is a 14-member committee comprised of representatives from :

- ❖ Arts and Sciences (Biology, English, Math, and Philosophy)
- ❖ Business
- ❖ Journalism
- ❖ Nursing
- ❖ Pharmacy
- ❖ Two undergraduate students
- ❖ Two Faculty Senate members.

Organizing for General Education Assessment at FAMU

The General Education Assessment Committee (GEAC)

- ❖ Is a subcommittee to the Institutional Level Assessment Committee (ILAC)
- ❖ Was responsible for the development and monitoring of the implementation of General Education assessment processes.

Specific Charges to the GEAC

- ❖ Establishing and streamlining a systematic process for the assessment of the general education program.
- ❖ Identifying college-level knowledge and competencies for the general education program that are linked to FAMU's mission and goals and Florida State accountability systems.
- ❖ Developing an assessment plan for the general education program.
- ❖ Monitoring the implementation of the planned general education assessment activities.

Specific Charges to the GEAC

- ❖ Furnishing the Institutional Level Assessment Committee with the results of general education assessments.
 - ❖ Documenting that the assessment results have been used for the improvement of the general education program.
 - ❖ Recommending strategies for strengthening the outcomes of the general education program.
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Strategies Used to Engage the Faculty

What strategies did FAMU use to engage faculty and to promote shared responsibility in installing a successful Gen Ed assessment system?

Strategies Used to Engage Faculty (1)

- Faculty Planning Conference themes reflect the importance of assessment.
 - General Education Assessment Forums:
 - *Faculty Discussion & Work Sessions* on such topics as *"The Role of General Education at Florida A&M University."*
 - *Training Sessions (2 hour sessions)*
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Strategies Used to Engage Faculty (2)

- ❖ Establishment of an oversight Committee
 - ❖ Care in Faculty Selection
 - ❖ *"Faculty Questionnaire on the Expected Learning Outcomes of General Education"*
 - ❖ Voluntary Recruitment of other faculty colleagues by Committee Members
 - ❖ Comprehensive professional development activities
 - ❖ GEAC Retreats
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Strategies Used to Engage Faculty (3)

- ❖ Opportunities for input from all faculty
 - ❖ Shifting faculty perception of assessment as beneficial to their work.
 - ❖ Sponsorship of faculty to participate in external assessment conferences, institutes, and workshops.
 - ❖ Faculty Assessment Scoring Team (FAST):
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Strategies Used to Engage Faculty (4)

- Voluntary participation and cooperation of the faculty to implement the "Institutional General Education Portfolio".
 - ❖ Orientation Workshops for General Education Portfolio Assessment.
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Strategies Used to Engage Faculty (5)

The use of Faculty Assessment Scoring Teams (FAST) to score artifacts:

Approximately 763 artifacts were received from 17 faculty members in 8 programs:

English	Philosophy
History	Physics
Humanities	Psychology
Mathematics	Theatre

Strategies Used to Engage Faculty (6)

Financial Incentives

- ❖ Faculty Honorarium to serve as assessors and/or coordinators for the GEN ED Portfolio.
 - ❖ Faculty Release Time for Coordinator (i.e., Adjunct Faculty)
 - ❖ Faculty Assessment Research Grants
 - ❖ Provost's Award for the Most Improved Academic Program.
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Strategies Used to Engage Faculty (7)

Faculty Incentives for serving on FAST:

- ❖ Five (5) Teams, each consisting of three (3) members (15 X \$1,500 per faculty member X 2 semesters = \$45,000)
 - ❖ One Team Coordinator @ \$3,000 per semester for two (2) semesters = \$6,000 &
 - ❖ One (1) alternate per team (5 X \$1,500 per faculty member X two (2) semesters = \$15,000)
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Strategies Used to Engage Faculty (8)

F.A.S.T. MEMBERS Expectations:

- ❖ Attend University Assessment Workshops as appropriate
 - ❖ Attend Orientation Workshops for GEN ED Portfolio Assessment
 - ❖ Attend planning and regular meetings as determined by the GEAC
 - ❖ Review six-hundred (600) artifacts per outcome each year (300 per semester)
 - ❖ Provide feedback to be used for the General Education Assessment Planning Form (GE)
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Strategies Used to Engage Faculty (9)

Ongoing Communication channels

- ❖ Planning conference themes and updates
 - ❖ Assessment Roundtables
 - ❖ Newsletter (FAMU Assessment Digest)
 - ❖ Deans Council briefings
 - ❖ Chairs briefings and training
 - ❖ Periodic Status Reports of Submissions
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Strategies Used to Engage Faculty (10)

Common assessment planning and documentation Templates

- ❖ Assessment approach = F.A.M.O.U.S.
 - IP
 - ADESU
 - Gen Ed.
 - Course
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The "FAMOUS" Assessment Approach

- F**ormulate statements of outcomes/objectives aligned to institutional mission/goals
 - A**scertain criteria for success
 - M**easure performance using qualitative and quantitative methods
 - O**bserve and analyze results for congruence between expected and actual results
 - U**se result to effect improvement of programs and services
 - S**trengthen programs and services by continuously evaluating, planning, allocating resources, and implementing new approaches
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Critical Accomplishments by GEAC

What were the critical accomplishments in this faculty – led assessment initiative?

Critical Accomplishments by GEAC (1)

- ❖ Identification and adoption of eight core outcomes.
 - ❖ Production of an institutional General Education assessment plan approved by the Faculty Senate.
 - ❖ Identification and use of three major Methods of Assessment
 - ❖ Development and completion of an institutional Gen Ed portfolio
 - ❖ "GEAC Matrix of General Educational Courses"
 - ❖ Installation of a successful general education assessment system.
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Activity #3 – Brainstorming on appropriate Gen Ed Outcomes?

What general education outcomes has your institution identified and are assessing?

Critical Accomplishments by GEAC (1)

Identification of General Education Core (or Institutional) Learning Outcomes (C3EQ TLC)

1. Communication
 2. Critical Thinking
 3. Collaboration
 4. Ethical Values
 5. Quantitative Reasoning
 6. Technology Literacy
 7. Life Long Learning
 8. Cultural Diversity
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Critical Accomplishments by GEAC (2)

SPEARHEADED MOTIVATION FOR A NECESSARY INTEGRATION

The major disciplines have incorporated each of the eight (8) General Education outcomes into their curriculum.

- ❖ Communication is incorporated in 91 of the 106 degree programs
 - ❖ Critical Thinking in 90
 - ❖ Cultural Diversity in 41
 - ❖ Ethical Value in 39
 - ❖ Quantitative Reasoning in 28
 - ❖ Technology Literacy in 40
 - ❖ Life-Long Learning in 12
 - ❖ Collaboration in 18
 - ❖ Content Knowledge in 81
 - ❖ Professional Development in 32
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Critical Accomplishments (3)

GEAC Recommended **General Education Assessment Methods**

- ❖ ETS Measures of Academic Performance and Progress (MAPP) Test
 - ❖ General Education Portfolio scored with in-house designed Rubrics by the F.A.S.T.
 - ❖ Student Focus Group Interviews
 - ❖ National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE)
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Critical Accomplishments (4)

GEAC Recommendations: **The General Education Institutional Portfolio Process**

- ❑ **Twelve English faculty members**
 - ❑ **117 students enrolled in ENC 1101, ENC 1102, SPC 1050 and SPC 2600 classes**
 - ❑ **318 artifacts (expository essays, literary papers, and speeches) were collected.**
 - ❑ **Goal: Obtain and score a minimum of 150 artifacts per learning outcome during both Fall and Spring semesters.**
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Critical Accomplishments (5)

Analysis of Portfolio Results Suggest Improvements in Student Achievement

Compared to the previous year, a notable improvement was recorded in student achievements in :

- ❖ Critical Thinking with the passing rate improving from 73% to 80%
 - ❖ Ethical Values with the passing rate improving from 60% to 76%.
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Critical Accomplishments (6)

GEAC Recommendations: **Gen Ed Program Improvement**

- ❖ Include the general education outcomes on all course syllabi.
 - ❖ By Fall 2008, reduce and maintain maximum enrollment in ENC 1101 and ENC 1102 and in all Math classes to 22 students per class. ()
 - ❖ Hold special discussion session on cultural diversity.
 - ❖ Engage students in more in-depth discussions or debates about ethical issues.
 - ❖ Establish a University-funded/budgeted writing center. (Fall 2009).
 - ❖ Establish a multi-disciplinary Laboratory.
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SUCCESS FACTORS

What factors contributed to the success of this faculty engagement?

SUCCESS FACTORS (1)

- ❖ Skilled Committee Leadership
 - ❖ Administrative Support at the initial stage
 - ❖ Continuous delivery of series of workshops
 - ❖ Regular Discussion Forums about the expectations and progress
 - ❖ Opportunities for faculty participation in external professional development
 - ❖ Hand-holding support and guidance from Office of University Assessment
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SUCCESS FACTORS (2)

- ❖ Faculty motivation (AOR adjustment for release time)
- ❖ Voluntary faculty involvement
- ❖ Availability of a Manual from another Institution* for use by the Committee
- ❖ Publication of a Schedule of Deliverables for the annual assessment activities
- ❖ Early development of an Assessment website as a resource repository.

*The Institutional Portfolio: A Performance model for Assessment of General Education" by Jeff Seybert, Johnson County Community College, KS

SUCCESS FACTORS (3)

- ❖ Faculty enthusiasm, collaboration and dedication to make a difference
- ❖ Frequent campus-wide communication soliciting faculty input and participation to ensure that the assessment process would generate data for multiple purposes:
 - ✓ Student learning and achievement
 - ✓ curricular revision
 - ✓ teaching improvement
 - ✓ accreditation expectations
 - ✓ public accountability.

Challenges

What challenges were faced in engaging FAMU faculty to lead this assessment effort?

Challenges (1)

- ❖ Fear of the impact of assessment on faculty job performance and continued employment.
- ❖ A pronounced lack or limited knowledge of what assessment really means.
- ❖ Mobilizing relevant resources under tight time-constraints and unstable top administration.

Challenges (2)

- ❖ Frequent turnover of Institutional Leadership that impacted availability of promised faculty incentives and follow-up on GEAC recommendations.
- ❖ Continued faculty motivation and ownership over the process.
- ❖ The immediacy of implementation deadlines was uncomfortable to some faculty.

Challenges (3)

Workload issues related to:

- ❖ Instrument development
- ❖ Managing artifact collection, scoring and tabulating the results
- ❖ Analysis of results
- ❖ Documenting and reporting of results
- ❖ Implementation of recommended changes
- ❖ Conducting focus groups, transcribing and reporting the feedback from students.

Lessons Learned (1)

- ❖ Identify your allies from the outset. With minimal motivation, they will become your champions in recruiting other faculty to embrace assessment as a helpful tool.
 - ❖ Success in engaging the faculty promoted perception of assessment as a collective academic responsibility.
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Lessons Learned (2)

- ❖ Early faculty involvement in the decision-making through assessment committees spurs ownership of the process.
 - ❖ Faculty input must be taken seriously and their contributions acknowledged frequently.
 - ❖ Rewarding people for their contributions stimulates dedication .
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Lessons Learned (3)

- ❖ Frequent communication to keep the faculty in the loop is crucial to their successful engagement.
 - ❖ Be committed to enhancing faculty expertise in assessment through hand-holding training sessions, local training and workshops as well as external professional development activities .
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Lessons Learned (4)

- ❖ Making assessment relevant to what the faculty does professionally is key to it's success.
 - ❖ Closing-the-loop on assessment takes at least three cycles.
 - ❖ No assessment initiative goes completely without challenges.
 - ❖ Assessment succeeds when it is everybody's business!
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Summing Up

- ❖ Ample opportunities were provided for input from all faculty thro frequent campus-wide communication and regular discussion forums.
 - ❖ GEAC was led by respected, skilled, self-motivated and dedicated faculty colleagues
 - ❖ Comprehensive training and hand-holding was indispensable to motivating and equipping the faculty for the task.
 - ❖ The process was facilitated by the adoption of a uniform assessment approach - "FAMOUS".
 - ❖ Success in the production of an institutional Gen Ed plan and portfolio is attributable to faculty ownership of the process.
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Post Script

"Assessment, too, will be adopted and internalized only when it becomes useful to faculty members as part of their everyday practice and reinforced in widespread and meaningful ways by the institutions they inhabit." Peter T. Ewel

Peter T. Ewel. *Change: The Magazine of Higher Learning*, "Assessing Responsibility", January/February, Volume 35, Number 1, 2003 p.5.

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Workshop Evaluation

AN IMPORTANT REQUEST!

PLEASE TAKE A FEW MINUTES TO COMPLETE THE WORKSHOP EVALUATION AND LEAVE IT AT YOUR DESK.

YOUR PARTICIPATION AT THIS WORKSHOP IS GREATLY VALUED. THANK YOU!

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