

Drake Curriculum Assessment Committee (DCAC)
Summary Report for 2014-15
Submitted to Senate Exec: 29 April 2014

Membership: Bruce Gilbert (Chair), Chuck Phillips, Ronald S Bakari, Carrie E Dunham-LaGree, Jerome A Hilscher, Tonia Land, Kathleen Richardson, Amy G Vaughan, Eric Manley. Ex officio members: Art Sanders, Kevin Saunders.

- I. **Overview:** DCAC met formally five times (September, October, December, February, April). Members also contributed significantly to two other important University processes: They served as important input for the Assessment Coordinator recruitment process when that position became vacant (the Chair served on the Search Committee, and various members attended all of the “public” candidate sessions). Second, three members (Dunham-LaGree, Saunders, and the Chair) served on the Ad Hoc Curricular Reform group, an ad hoc Faculty Senate committee that was charged with exploring the viability of potential alternative General Education models for the University (see below)

II. Recommendations:

1. **DCAC recommends that the Faculty Senate review the committee’s charge to increase integration with the efforts of the University Curriculum Committee and any other curricular reform groups.**
2. **DCAC intends to carry forward an assessment process concerning Written Communication this Summer. Steps will include a preliminary “norming” of rubrics, followed by direct assessment of samples of student work (provided by FYS and Written Communication instructors.) This is in line with the ongoing work that DCAC and UCC have been doing to periodically review various AOIs. The results of this project will be shared with DCAC and then the full Senate in Fall 2015.**
3. **In Fall 2014, DCAC reviewed a fairly comprehensive spreadsheet of all the AOI outcomes, and discovered gaps in some areas, especially having to do with direct measurements of student achievement. Kevin Saunders (hopefully, soon to be aided by a new Assessment Coordinator) has begun collecting college-by-college (and, in some cases, unit-by-unit) assessment data as a first step in plugging those gaps. We encourage all units to aid in this important process.**
4. **DCAC membership expresses a willingness to continue to bring their expertise and viewpoints to bear on the ongoing Senate discussions concerning General Education Curricular Reform. We feel this conversation is particularly important in light of ongoing HLC processes.**

III. DCAC contribution to “Understandings and Precepts” for ‘Ad Hoc Committee on General Education Curricular Reform’s’ final report:

Although, as headings, these concepts made it into the “final report,” the explication of those items (which arose from DCAC’s discussions at the December meeting) is worthy of notice:

Based on review of Integrative and Direct-Indirect measures, these are primary areas that any new curriculum should address (note that these areas DEFINITELY overlap!)

1) Communication Skills - Writing, Speaking, Presenting - This area is of perennial concern, and includes the mechanics and format of various modes of communication, as well as defining an audience, choosing correct voice, etc. Also should include elements of technical/digital literacy as "presenting" is an increasingly important skill.

2) Analyzing Information Critically - Being able to address the authority and accuracy of information, and then being able to interpret and apply that information into an argument or critical statement - subsumes such areas as Critical Thinking, Information Literacy, and the ability to do research.

3) Social Perspectives / Engagement - Many students struggle to understand other's perspectives and experiences, or even to realize that such differing perspectives matter. The importance of cultural immersion and direct experience is also important.

4) Creativity / Problem-Solving / Content Creation - This concept arose out of our discussion of “what's missing,” i.e., many DCAC members felt that the three items above are represented fairly well in the current curriculum AND that there was nothing "distinctively Drake" about any of the first three. DCAC recommends that decision-makers consider a more distinctive approach as a future focus for the Gen Ed curriculum.

[IV. Summary of Critical Thinking, Writing, and Info Lit assessment to date \(reviewed Sep 2014; shared with Ad Hoc Curricular Reform Cmte\)](#)

[V. Overview of ALL Outcomes for AOIs - Direct and Indirect measurement \(reviewed Sep. 2014\)](#)

VI. Foregrounding the Upcoming HLC Visit

Kevin **Saunders** attended the March HLC Conference in Chicago; findings were summarily discussed at April DCAC meeting.. Below is his summary of lessons learned:

- 1) HLC conducted a review of 109 Team reports from institutions using the new criteria for accreditation. The most cited items include:
 - 4B - The institution demonstrates a commitment to educational achievement and improvement through ongoing assessment of student learning

5A - The institution's resource base supports its current educational programs and its plan for maintaining and strengthening their quality in the future

5C - The institution engages in systematic and integrated planning

4C - The institution demonstrates a commitment to educational improvement through ongoing attention to retention, persistence, and completion rates in its degree and certificate programs

4A - The institution demonstrates responsibility for the quality of its educational programs

2) Common concerns with Criterion 4 - Teaching and Learning: Evaluation and Improvement

A - Assessment planning and implementation is consistent across departments and programs

B - Collect data, analyze, and use for improvement

C - Balance direct and indirect methods

D - Linkages between assessment, planning, and budget

E - Program review process developed and ongoing across institution

3) Common concerns with Criterion 3 - Teaching and Learning: Quality, Resources, and Support

A - Distinction between learning outcomes at undergraduate and graduate levels

B - Regular review of general education

C - Ensure general education understood across the curriculum

D - Program level and institution level learning objectives

E - Linkages across modality and locations (quality, resources, and support)

4) What type of evidence is required for the Assurance Review (replaces self-study)?

The peer reviewers are trained to ask questions using evidence; and will search for evidence that supports conclusions. The team discusses the criteria and core components, gathers facts, explores the interrelation of core components, and analyzes data - How do the presented facts relate to core components. Strong evidence promotes the team analysis while the assurance argument is persuasive narrative. Evidence drives conclusions – teams can only write to evidence; have team engage with evidence you want them to write about.

5) Evaluation outcomes

The peer reviewers will evaluate the criteria using the core components. The evaluation is either "met," "met with concerns," or "not met." If a core component is not met or met with concerns, then the criterion is not met or met with concerns. If a criterion is met with concerns, then there is automatic monitoring (interim report, follow-up focused visit). If a criterion is not met, then there are sanctions.