CAL GE ASSESSMENT PROJECT 2013
REPORT ABSTRACT

During Spring Semester 2013, a three-member team facilitated a series of faculty workshops to create, test, and finalize rubrics assessing General Education (GE) courses within the College of Arts and Letters (CAL). Workshop participants included more than twenty faculty members representing different departments/programs within CAL. At the final workshop, faculty members used the rubrics refined over the course of the semester to evaluate student work. Participants read 297 papers, of which 262 were read by a second reader. Student work was gathered from GE courses in Communication and Critical Thinking (23 papers), Humanities (166 papers), and Social and Behavioral Sciences (108 papers) for both the GE Foundations (120 papers) and Explorations (177 papers) levels. Below are some key findings related to the data analysis:

- Overall, 26% scored Proficient or Advanced (score 3 to 4) on the Foundations level and 43% scored Proficient or Advanced on the Explorations level (Communication and Critical Thinking: 21% Foundations and 50% Explorations; Humanities: 22% Foundations and 44% Explorations; Social and Behavioral Sciences: 35% Foundations and 35% Explorations).
- Scores varied in each GE area for the two different levels (Foundations and Explorations) for each of the Goals. However, the scores were consistently higher on the Explorations level. The results suggest that students are refining their GE-related skills on the Explorations level. Further training on using the same rubric for two different levels is suggested.
- Scores of N/A (Not Applicable) suggest the need for closer alignment of GE assignments and GE goals/rubric.

Other important outcomes include the following:
- Rubrics for Communication and Critical Thinking, Humanities, and Social and Behavioral Sciences were developed, tested, and refined.
- The data gathered for this pilot study, together with the rubrics developed and participant input, could inform our decision-making at a later date to set our benchmark goals. At this time, we are hesitant to set actual benchmark percentages for student performance at the various performance levels (Beginning through Advanced) until we have undertaken a second reading using these more finalized rubrics, a larger number of papers (in classes taught with these rubrics known to faculty), anchor papers identified in advance, and readers trained to use the rubrics.
- This pilot study fostered potential future collaborations on assessment activities among colleagues within CAL and with other constituents on campus. Most particularly, we will collaborate with the Division of Undergraduate Studies in the future, whose administrators are interested in GE assessment, given the upcoming review by the Western Association of Schools and Colleges (WASC).
- The workshops added significant impetus to programmatic assessment and faculty participation in WEAVE data entry. Nearly every CAL program was represented in the process, and program representatives updated their materials on WEAVE.

Based on these outcomes, the assessment team developed short- and long-term plans. The short-term proposal calls for the collection and analysis of student work next year, using the piloted rubrics. The long-term plan addresses some of the questions that emerged related to assessment of Natural Sciences and Quantitative Reasoning. Among other items discussed, the proposal also calls for the development and analysis of multiple-choice questions that could be used to assess GE courses across disciplines.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>GOAL 1</th>
<th>GOAL 2</th>
<th>GOAL 3</th>
<th>GOAL 4</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Proficiency level / Goals</td>
<td>Craft well-reasoned arguments for specific audiences. (Although arguments may contain characteristics of content, structure, evidence, audience awareness, and language representing more than one level of proficiency, classification should be based on the preponderance of the characteristics.)</td>
<td>Analyze a variety of texts commonly encountered in the academic setting.</td>
<td>Situate discourse within social, generic, cultural, and historical contexts.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Content: Provides a basic or largely incoherent case, focused on a single issue or no discernible issues. Structure: Organizes argument in a rudimentary or confusing fashion. Evidence: Marshals minimal support, with few quotations and specific examples from appropriate texts. Audience: Demonstrates a lack of awareness of audience. Language: Communicates in an inappropriate register or with frequent errors or distractions that obscure meaning.</td>
<td>Attempts rudimentary analysis and mentions rhetorical concepts, but primarily summarizes and paraphrases.</td>
<td>Begins to explore the relationship between texts (and the arguments they make) and contexts (whether social, generic, cultural, historical, or issue- or controversy-based).</td>
<td>Mentions arguments and evidence, but not to a clear or useful purpose.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Content: Provides an elementary or minimal case, perhaps with significant inconsistencies, that is narrowly or over generally focused. Structure: Organizes argument in a mechanical and/or occasionally unclear fashion. Evidence: Marshals incomplete support, providing insufficient and/or mismanaged quotations and examples. Audience: Addresses a general audience or misconstrues the specific audience. Language: Communicates with frequent errors and distractions.</td>
<td>Applies concepts and models in order to support analytic passages, but relies more heavily on summary, paraphrase, and perhaps repetition.</td>
<td>Locates texts (and the arguments they make) within specific contexts, minimally addressing ways texts are shaped by and shape other variables.</td>
<td>Marshals relevant evidence to support one position, but without careful assessment or consideration of multiple positions.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Content: Presents a coherent case addressing multiple issues Structure: Organizes argument clearly and appropriately. Evidence: Marshals sufficient support, integrating specific quotations and examples from appropriate texts into analysis of their own making. Audience: Demonstrates an awareness of the audience’s specific expectations and values. Language: Communicates competently, with minimal significant errors or distractions.</td>
<td>Competently analyzes arguments, applying concepts and models to answer relevant “how” and “why” questions.</td>
<td>Locates texts (and the arguments they make) within a variety of specific contexts, demonstrating significant ways texts are shaped by and shape other variables.</td>
<td>Assesses the relationships among multiple positions (including strengths and weakness) in order to make a credible argument, but may weigh some evidence incompletely or unpersuasively.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Content: Presents a solid case addressing a range of relevant issues and considerations. Structure: Organizes argument to meet the specific needs of the content. Evidence: Marshals ample support, successfully integrating specific quotations and examples from appropriate texts into analysis of their own making. Audience: Accommodates multiple expectations and premises of the audience. Language: Communicates effectively, with relatively few errors or distractions.</td>
<td>Successfully analyzes arguments, applying specific concepts and models in order to produce significant insights.</td>
<td>Successfully locates texts (and the arguments they make) within a variety of contexts, demonstrating complex ways texts are shaped by and shape other variables.</td>
<td>Successfully assesses the relationships among multiple positions (including strengths and weakness), avoiding simplistic judgments and demonstrating, where appropriate, how the preponderance of the evidence supports specific positions over others.</td>
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</table>

Total Score:
## GOAL 1
Analyze written, visual, or performed texts in the humanities and fine arts with sensitivity to their diverse cultural contexts and historical moments.

- **Beginning**
  - Recognizes key terms and cultural contexts at a **basic level**.
- **Developing**
  - Articulates key terms and cultural contexts with some errors and limited details.
- **Proficient**
  - Analyzes key terms in diverse contexts through presentation of sufficient details and concepts.
- **Advanced**
  - Synthesizes key terms in diverse contexts incorporating a complex array of details and concepts.

## GOAL 2
Develop a familiarity with various aesthetic and other value systems and the ways they are communicated across time and cultures.

- **Beginning**
  - Identifies varying aesthetic/value systems and recognizes that they change over time.
- **Developing**
  - Explores the basis for different aesthetic/value systems and how they change over time.
- **Proficient**
  - Evaluates the reasons for, and impacts of, diverse aesthetic/value systems and why they change over time.
- **Advanced**
  - Negotiates a diverse range of aesthetic/value systems in order to construct an argument about the culture- and time-bound situatedness of these systems.

## GOAL 3
Argue from multiple perspectives about issues in the humanities that have personal and global relevance.

- **Beginning**
  - Articulates his/her own argument from a limited perspective (e.g., his/her own subjective experience).
- **Developing**
  - Identifies the impact of subjective experience on arguments relevant to the humanities.
- **Proficient**
  - Differentiates among various perspectives, articulating connections and differences, in order to construct an argument with sensitivity to multiple points of view.
- **Advanced**
  - Effectively deploys various perspectives to synthesize an argument that has both personal and global relevance.

## GOAL 4
Demonstrate the ability to approach complex problems and ask complex questions drawing upon knowledge of the humanities.

- **Beginning**
  - Recognizes the diversity and complexity of human problems.
- **Developing**
  - Describes and questions patterns in complex human problems.
- **Proficient**
  - Articulates the complexity of a problem, begins to question and to formulate interpretations.
- **Advanced**
  - Synthesizes and develops original insights into complex problems and formulates meaningful interpretations.

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**Score (1-4)**

**Total score:** ____________________
### GOAL 1
Explore and recognize basic terms, concepts, and domains of the social and behavioral sciences.

### GOAL 2
Comprehend diverse theories and methods of the social and behavioral sciences.

### GOAL 3
Identify human behavioral patterns across space and time and discuss their interrelatedness and distinctiveness.

### GOAL 4
Enhance understanding of the social world through the application of conceptual frameworks from the social and behavioral sciences to the first-hand engagement with contemporary issues.

<table>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Beginning</strong></td>
<td>Recognizes basic terms/concepts at a beginning level.</td>
<td>Explains basic theories and methods exhibiting basic-level understanding and with some accuracy.</td>
<td>Recognizes basic human behavioral patterns at a beginning level.</td>
<td>Provides evidence of some engagement with contemporary issues.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Recognizes abstract concepts and complex domains with substantial difficulty and with substantial error.</td>
<td></td>
<td>Describes patterns with some errors.</td>
<td>Presents evidence in isolation from conceptual frameworks.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Developing</strong></td>
<td>Defines basic terms/concepts at a developing level.</td>
<td>Identifies the core premises and assumptions of theories and methods.</td>
<td>Distinguishes among patterns yet provides limited details.</td>
<td>Distinguishes among contemporary issues.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Defines abstract concepts and complex domains with some difficulty and with some error.</td>
<td>Describes varying theories and methods with accuracy.</td>
<td>Gives examples of patterns in human behavior with minimal comparison and contrast across time and space.</td>
<td>Selects contemporary issues that fit a conceptual framework but presents weak evidence or analysis.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Exemplifies basic concepts somewhat effectively by making connections between the concepts and real-life situations.</td>
<td>Explains the differences among theories and methods with substantial accuracy.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Proficient</strong></td>
<td>Explains novel situations effectively through appropriate terms/concepts.</td>
<td>Applies theories to phenomena and illustrates them effectively.</td>
<td>Relates human behavioral patterns to each other.</td>
<td>Applies distinct conceptual frameworks to contemporary issues effectively.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Links together terms, concepts, and domains with some error.</td>
<td></td>
<td>Connects human behavioral patterns to each other and to space and time providing substantial evidence.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Advanced</strong></td>
<td>Clearly separates and thoroughly distinguishes among concepts, terms, and domains with limited or no error.</td>
<td>Critiques theories and methods coherently.</td>
<td>Draws complex connections.</td>
<td>Constructs valid arguments about contemporary issues using conceptual frameworks.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Describes applications of concepts to the real world clearly and effectively.</td>
<td>Evaluates alternatives effectively.</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

**Score (1-4)**

Total score: _____________
ACTION PLAN FOR CAL GE

Short-term actions (AY 2013-2014):

- Fall 2013: Make widely available (via web, e-mail, and chairs and departmental meetings) the three rubrics developed as a result of this project.
- Fall 2013: Encourage department/program chairs to hold workshops (or to devote a faculty meeting) to sharing these rubrics and reviewing their own GE syllabi and assignments against the GE goals and rubrics.
- Fall 2013/Spring 2014: Run a full-scale data-collection and analysis using these piloted rubrics in CAL GE courses in Communication and Critical Thinking, Humanities & Fine Arts, and Social and Behavioral Sciences.
- Develop methods of assessing GE effectiveness in areas for which we did not develop rubrics (Natural Sciences and Quantitative Reasoning).

Long-term actions:

- Develop sets of multiple-choice questions that might be deployed in GE courses across disciplines and that would gauge student performance at the varied levels of our rubrics.
- Run CAL-wide mini-workshops focused on separate areas of the GE, which GE instructors (T/T faculty and lecturers) are encouraged to attend. Workshops might include orientation to the rubrics and GE-program in general and activities to help align discipline-related course goals and assignments with GE-related goals.
- Collect all GE syllabi in CAL and review for alignment with GE goals. Make recommendation to programs as to which courses/instructors might need attention to their GE compliance.
- Make suggestions to University-wide GE task force for revision of the current articulation of GE goals to account for the actual student performance we are documenting with our CAL-related GE courses.