Introduction

The General Education Assessment Task Force, constituted in April 2014, is an assembly of administrators and faculty from diverse disciplines that are charged with developing and implementing general education assessment practices for the institution. The original charge was: *to develop and recommend a process for regular, cross-disciplinary, anonymous review of student artifacts as evidence of student learning outcomes (college-wide) for each of the college's educational objectives.* This charge was expanded in fall 2014 to include: *review Queensborough's existing Educational Outcomes and recommend possible modifications to the Academic Senate.*

Student Learning Outcomes describe learning on three levels of specificity: general education, program, and course. Each academic program review includes assessment of both General Education and Program Outcomes. Evidence of student learning for both General Education and Program outcomes is most frequently drawn from students' work in their classes, i.e., "artifacts." Scoring authentic student work according to commonly agreed standards (rubrics) gives faculty and the college a reasonable measure of how well students are achieving all of the agreed General Education and Program Outcomes.

Over the past two years faculty participants in the General Education Task Force have constructed and tested four rubrics based on the first four QCC General Education Outcomes approved in 2007. Two of those outcomes were assessed in spring 2015 and all four were assessed in spring 2016. *Every outcome must be informed by curriculum, measurable and assessed on a regular cycle*.

Task Force membership have prepared an annual report to the Academic Senate and the campus community which includes the status of the General Education Outcomes, recommendations for better implementation of assessment practices, and procedures for improving student achievement.

What We've Learned So Far: Writing Rubrics and Revising the Outcomes

Task Force experience with writing rubrics for cross disciplinary use

As the Task Force wrote, normed, and tested rubrics for the first four of QCC's 2007 General Education outcomes, the membership found some outcomes were difficult to understand, difficult to measure, and/or too discipline-specific to be assessed across disciplines. The Task Force surveyed the faculty and held several forums to determine faculty views of the importance of each outcome for all students and where and how each outcome could be productively assessed.

Recommendations for revising and assessing the General Education Outcomes

After two faculty forums, two faculty surveys, and discussion with the Curriculum Committee, the Task Force has reviewed and revised the general education outcomes. *The Task Force recommends dividing Queenborough's General Education Outcomes into two categories: those assessed college wide as General Education Outcomes and those assessed by academic programs as Program Outcomes*. We determined that several outcomes were difficult to assess across disciplines and would be more accurately and effectively assessed in the specific program and/or discipline. We recommend that each program designate at least one course where these outcomes will be assessed at least once every five years. Assessment results will be included in Program Review reports.

What We've Learned So Far: Assessment results and assignments

Findings from cross-disciplinary assessments of four outcomes, spring 2015 and spring 2016

In June 2015 faculty scored 858 student artifacts against the rubrics for General Education Outcomes 1 (communication) and 2 (analytical reasoning). In June 2016, faculty scored 225 artifacts using rubrics for Outcomes 1, 2, 3 (quantitative reasoning), and 4 (information management). Many of the spring 2016 artifacts were scored against two or more rubrics. However, to have sufficient evidence of student learning outcome assessment, many more usable student artifacts are needed going forward.

The rubrics use a four point scale* calibrated to baccalaureate achievement. The overall scores in spring 2016 for Outcomes 1 and 2 were higher than for spring 2015, and fell in the *mid to upper Developing range. Scores for Outcomes 3 and 4 were below the middle of the Developing range. Information Management scores were lowest overall, and the two dimensions on Use of Evidence and Sources were at the bottom of the Developing range.

Each rubric has several dimensions, each scored on a four-point scale: Superior (4), Competent (3), Developing (2), Novice (1), and Insufficient (0). A composite score of 2.2 would be lower Developing, while 2. 8 would be upper Developing. All Task Force reports are accessible online at http://www.qcc.cuny.edu/assessment/geatf.html

Faculty scorers' experience with student artifacts and assignments

Task force and other faculty scorers observed that many student artifacts scored low on some rubrics in part because the course assignments did not ask students to show or include all the components in the rubrics. Thus the task force and faculty scorers have recommended careful selection of class assignments that elicit all the dimensions of the rubric being used. Such assignments help make explicit to students the kind of learning the college expects, as stated in the General Education Outcomes. The Task Force recommends that CETL provide faculty development in creating example assignments that can be posted online for faculty reference.

QCC Outcomes 2007	Findings	Recommendation	Rationale
1. Communicate effectively through reading, writing, listening, and speaking	One of two highest priority (*importance and required for all*) in surveys and at each forum, for college-wide annual assessment; slightly less frequent assessment for oral. Reading rubric difficult to use and reading proficiency is probably best assessed through other outcomes.	Revise outcome to: **Communicate effectively through written and oral forms**	"Oral" can be assessed and covers both listening and speaking.

QCC Outcomes 2007	Findings	Recommendation	Rationale
2. Use analytical reasoning to identify issues or problems and evaluate evidence in order to make informed decisions	One of two highest priority (*importance and required for all*) in surveys and at each forum, for college-wide annual assessment.	Recommend: **No change to original**, but recognize that assignments focused on critical thinking or ethical reasoning can be appropriate for this outcome.	Analytical reasoning is the most general mode: identify the problem, assemble evidence, and propose a solution or conclusion.

QCC Outcomes 2007	Findings	Recommendation	Rationale
3. Reason quantitatively and mathematically as required in their fields of interest and in everyday life	Third highest priority in surveys and at each forum, for college-wide annual assessment. It was difficult to find appropriate assignments for June 2016. If assignments are mathematics-specific it is hard for non-mathematics faculty to score.	Recommend dropping "and mathematically" so the outcome is not discipline-specific: **Reason <u>quantitatively as</u> required in <u>the</u> fields of interest and in everyday life**	Revising the outcome makes it less discipline-specific and emphasizes the importance of quantitative reasoning *across* disciplines.

QCC Outcomes 2007	Findings	Recommendation	Rationale
4. Use information management and technology skills effectively for academic research and lifelong learning	Mid-range importance as required for all students; important in forum, especially in context of using technology to access, organize, evaluate and present information. Due to program specific technologies – technological skills would be best assessed at program level with rubrics specific to the program; the Information Management rubric will need to be revised to incorporate digital technology.	Revise as: **Apply information management and <u>digital</u> technology skills <u>useful for</u> academic research and lifelong learning**	Adding "digital" makes original intent clearer and corresponds to current expectations for student outcomes. Information management and digital technology skills may be used more broadly than for academic research.

QCC Outcomes 2007	Findings	Recommendation	Rationale
5. Integrate knowledge and skills in their program of study	Mid to lower level importance in surveys; may be best assessed as part of program review, as in capstone course or experience.	**Assess within Academic Program Review**. Revise as: **Integrate knowledge and skills in the program of study**. Should be added to program outcomes explicitly. Rubric and Assessment process can be determined by each academic program to see that integrative thinking is the emphasis.	This is an essential outcome, but it is best assessed on a program level.
QCC Outcomes 2007	Findings	Recommendation	Rationale
6. Differentiate and make informed decisions about issues based on multiple value systems	Top *highly important* in one survey, mid-range in another; important but less frequent assessment in forum; this is challenging to assess, but could assess ethical **reasoning** as a skill.	The Task Force concluded this important outcome is **best assessed within Academic Program review.** Recommend revision to: **Make ethical judgments while recognizing multiple perspectives, as appropriate to the program of study**.	The original phrasing is difficult to understand and very challenging to assess. The revision attempts to highlight elements of ethical reasoning (recognizing multiple perspectives or value systems) that faculty have reported as high priorities for successful academic and professional life.

QCC Outcomes 2007	Findings	Recommendation	Rationale
7. Work collaboratively in diverse groups directed at accomplishing learning objectives	Surveys: mid- to lower- range importance as a requirement for all students; higher importance at forum, noting this competency is one of top-rated by employers; May be best assessed as part of academic program review.	**Assess within Academic Program Review**. Revise as: **Work collaboratively <u>to accomplish</u> learning objectives**	Due to the difficulty of assessing college-wide, and to the fact that some programs already include this as a program outcome, it would be best assessed in program review.

QCC Outcomes 2007	Findings	Recommendation	Rationale
8. Use historical or social sciences perspectives to examine formation of ideas, human behavior, social institutions, or social processes	Surveys – low to mid-level importance; third level importance at forum; May be too discipline-specific for general education outcomes assessment. Could be assessed as part of academic program review	Recommend revision: **<u>Apply concepts and</u> perspectives from history or the social sciences to examine the formation of ideas, human behavior, social institutions, or social processes <u>and to make informed judgments</u>.** See below.	**See below**
QCC Outcomes 2007	Findings	Recommendation	Rationale
9. Employ concepts and methods of the natural and physical sciences to make informed judgments	Surveys – low to mid-level importance; third level importance at forum; May be too discipline-specific for general education outcomes assessment. Could be assessed as part of academic program review	Recommend revision: **<u>Apply</u> concepts and methods of the natural and physical sciences <u>to examine natural phenomena</u> and to make informed <u>decisions</u>.** See below.	See below
QCC Outcomes 2007	Findings	Recommendation	Rationale
10. Apply aesthetic and intellectual criteria in the evaluation or creation of works in the humanities or the arts	Surveys – low to mid-level importance; third level importance at forum; May be too discipline-specific for general education outcomes assessment and logistically difficult to assess on a college-wide basis. Could be assessed as part of academic program review.	Recommend revision: **Apply aesthetic and intellectual criteria <u>to examine or create</u> works in the humanities and the arts <u>and to make informed judgments</u>.** See below.	See below

Recommendation for Outcomes 8-10:

Include discipline-specific outcomes under a fifth General Education Outcome, Disciplinary faculty groups should create rubrics and participate in scoring.

Rationale for revised Outcomes 8-10

These changes attempt to overcome concerns that the previous statements of these Outcomes may have been excessively discipline-specific. The proposed revisions are largely parallel in language and may have the advantage of applying to courses throughout a students' progress. The Task Force affirms that any robust general education includes a great deal of discipline-specific knowledge and concepts from a variety of fields. Emphasizing that students must draw on their knowledge from the social sciences, natural sciences, and the humanities towards the goal of making informed judgments helps to link discipline-specific material across different fields and to life beyond the classroom. This revision may also help indicate what sorts of assignments best capture students' achievement of these Learning Outcomes.

SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS

GENERAL EDUCATION OUTCOMES TO BE ASSESSED ACROSS DISCIPLINES

1. *Communicate effectively through written and oral forms*
2. *Use analytical reasoning to identify issues or problems and evaluate evidence in order to make informed decisions.*
3. *Reason quantitatively as required in various fields of interest and in everyday life*
4. *Apply information management and digital technology skills useful for academic research and lifelong learning*

5. Discipline-specific Outcomes

   A robust general education is founded on the knowledge, concepts, methods and perspectives that students gain through study of the social sciences and history, the natural sciences, the arts and the humanities. These disciplinary studies stimulate intellectual inquiry, global awareness, and cultural and artistic appreciation; they equip students to make informed judgments and engage with life beyond the classroom.

   5A. Apply concepts and perspectives from history or the social sciences to examine the formation of ideas, human behavior, social institutions, or social processes and to make informed judgments
   5B. Apply concepts and methods of the natural and physical sciences to examine natural phenomena and to make informed decisions.
   5C. Apply aesthetic and intellectual criteria to examine or create works in the humanities and the arts and to make informed judgments.

ASSESSMENT PROCESS:

Outcomes 1, 2, 3, and 4: Assess student artifacts from courses across the disciplines using the rubrics created by the Task Force. Assignments, artifacts, and aggregated scores to be kept in electronic repository so results can be reviewed over multiple years.

Outcomes 5.A, 5.B., and 5.C.: Rubrics for these more discipline-specific outcomes will be written in disciplinary clusters and assessed through collection and scoring of student artifacts from designated courses across the disciplinary clusters (by disciplinary scorers using same methods as for Outcomes that are assessed across disciplines college-wide). Courses should be selected from those which students most frequently take to fulfill common core requirements.

OUTCOMES SUPPORTING GENERAL EDUCATION BUT ASSESSED IN PROGRAM REVIEW

- ➢ *Integrate knowledge and skills in <u>the</u> program of study*
- ➢ *<u>Make ethical judgments while recognizing</u> multiple <u>perspectives, as appropriate in the program of study</u>.*
- ➢ *Work collaboratively <u>to accomplish</u> learning objectives*

ASSESSMENT PROCESS:

Assess as part of Academic Program Review, incorporated in program outcomes; each program will designate at least one course where each of these outcomes will be assessed at least once every five years.

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