

02/03/2020

WOU General Education Update

*If you don't know
where you are going,
you'll end up
someplace else.*

- Yogi Berra

Don't forget about the upcoming Congress to Campus Events:

There are a variety of open events for students to attend during their visit:

<https://wou.edu/publicpolicy/congress-to-campus-public-events/>



Continuous Improvement in General Education

When the General Education taskforce brought forward the revised program to Faculty Senate, they presented a program that was designed to evolve. We are already seeing this evolution in several areas as we strive for continuous improvement and effectiveness.

Petition process

Hundreds of General Education exceptions have been reviewed and processed. In addition to identifying commonly requested substitutions and exceptions, we also found there are common request errors that can delay requests. Student Success and Advising has helped with the crafting of a new, easier-to-use online petition form:

www.wou.edu/gened/petitions-form.

Course proposal process

The General Education Committee recognized that for the program to succeed, individual courses need to be set up for success too. Updates to the course proposal forms and the development of course proposal guides (<https://wou.edu/gened/proposalguides/>) are meant to help busy faculty document that they have been intentional about planning to offer a General Education course and effectively articulate the information required by the committee to effectively review course proposals.

First Year Seminar enrollment

Thanks to the valuable institutional research data provided by Max Chartier in UCS, calibrating the First Year Seminar schedule has been a deliberate exercise. FYS Coordinator Shaun Huston builds a proposed schedule responsive to instructors' scheduling requests while still ensuring that the FYS offerings remain diverse across topics and representative units, that there is a reasonable balance between FYS 107 and 207 and that the schedule is responsive to enrollment needs.

Assessment instruments

A key charge of the General Education Committee is to oversee an integrated curriculum where courses and requirements are reviewed at in relation to one another and not in isolation. Refining assessment practice is inevitable as we figure how the program does and does not work, for both faculty and students. In the first round of formal assessment we are realizing that assessment of learning outcomes may require, or at least be improved by, developing some assessment rubrics and tools which are tailored and specific to the program.

New to FYS instruction?

Keep an eye out for regular FYS instructor workshops and gatherings led by FYS coordinator Dr. Shaun Huston and enroll yourself in the Moodle course.

The next FYS instructors meeting is Wednesday Feb. 4 at 4 pm in the Santiam room.

<https://moodle.wou.edu/course/view.php?id=1350>

Evidence – Based Approach in FYS

First Year Seminars are the newest component of the General Education Program and this year, is the focus of our program assessment plan. To answer these questions, we are using a holistic approach, which we hope will serve as an effective pilot for all General Education assessment.

How aware are students of the General Education Learning Outcomes (GELOs)?

The value of student practice with the GELOs is enhanced if students are aware of it and thus more likely to actually apply and transfer what they are learning and doing to other contexts. Assessment surveys help us gauge student perceptions of what they are doing and consider how we can make the GELOs more transparent to students in the design of the FYS course as a whole.

What are instructor expectations for student achievement of GELOs and what are students accomplishing?

The General Education Professional Learning Community (PLC) is in the process of exploring FYS submissions that include activity instructions, student work samples, and overviews of student performance on the activities. The PLC is collecting information on the kinds of opportunities instructors are providing and what students are accomplishing in their FYS experience.

What are the elements of the FYS experience that students find beneficial and what kinds of supports do instructors want for those elements?

Student surveys are employed holistically to get a sense for the kinds of experiences and expectations students bring with them to inform how we can provide a supportive and engaging first year experience. We also want to know what elements of their FYS experience students find helpful and would like to see more often. Faculty surveys are also being employed to gain a sense for what faculty are finding helpful in supporting students. By examining the alignment between student and faculty perceptions in the program as a whole we can prioritize needed resources to support the program.

Are FYS benefiting retention goals?

The use of institutional research data can help us explore when and how students complete their FYS requirements and how that might impact their likelihood to continue at WOU, and to successfully complete a degree. It is obviously early in the process of answering these questions, but we've begun establishing the reporting structures to track student retention.

Don't forget about the upcoming catalog deadline for General Education courses that are not FYS topics. Proposals need to be through Division curriculum queue and to the General Education committee by the second Tuesday in February.