

UH Mānoa Foundations Board Annual Report for 2007-2008
Stephen Canham, Chair, UHM Foundations Board
April 8, 2008

1. Policies

During Fall 07 the UHM Foundations Board was engaged with the campus-wide imperative for General Education Course Assessment and Student Learning Outcomes in preparation for WASC review. The Board drafted an unsolicited general preamble concerning assessment procedures, issues and safeguards and forwarded it to the GEC for review. This proposal was modified by the GEC and returned to the F Board for approval, which the F Board did, and returned it to the GEC in February 08. It is the Board's understanding that this preamble will be a standing document agreed upon by all parties engaged in the process of course assessment at UHM. See Appendix 1.

In March the Board approved the GEC's emergency proposal for a one-time FW equivalence to clear the backlog of students waiting to fulfill the FW requirement. The Board noted three concerns regarding the equivalence:

1. It must be a one-time emergency action, not a convenient fall-back solution to a systemic problem.
2. The Chancellor must provide adequate funding for instructional staff and program development in order to prevent the backlog from recurring.
3. The situation suggests a need or offers an opportunity for an overall review of first-year requirements, procedures, and curricular offerings.

The Board also clarified language on its request forms for new courses and renewals, especially in terms of electronic submission and length of documents.

2. New Course Proposals

The Board received only one request for a new Foundation designation: WS 176 (FGB), History of Gender, Sex, and Sexuality in Global Perspective 1500 CE to Present. The Board accepted the proposal, but with concern that "multiple perspectives" be applied, per the Hallmarks and Notes.

3. Course Designation Removals

ECON 301 & 301A: FS designations were removed, per the department's request.

4. Five-Year Designation Renewals

FG: AMST 150 (FGB), with concern that “multiple perspectives” be applied, per the Hallmarks and Notes
HIST 155 (FGC from FGB), pending as of this writing.
HIST 161 (FGA) & 162 (FGB)

FS: MATH 215, 241-251A
NREM 203

4. Multi-campus Foundations Board

The multi-campus 07-08 Foundations Board was composed of representatives from UH Mānoa, Honolulu Community College, Kapi‘olani Community College, Leeward Community College, and Windward Community College. In Fall, it considered Maui Community College’s request to join the multi-campus agreement, and after on-line discussion and revision by MCC, the proposal was accepted in January. In Fall the Board also discussed problems of articulation, particularly that of HCC’s Math 135 with UHM Math 100.

At its Spring meeting on April 8, the Board reviewed each campus’ annual Foundations Report, received a preliminary proposal from West Oahu to join the multi-campus agreement, and discussed the Math 135 articulation issue. The Board agreed that the Math 135 issue should be reviewed at some level at UHM and asked the General Education Office for advice in finding the appropriate body to do so.

5. Ongoing Concerns and Issues

The UHM F Board is concerned about the backlog of FW students identified by the GEC in its equivalency proposal of March 2008. It recognizes the GEC’s review of first-year students’ “experiences” and looks forward to possibilities for improvement.

Articulation issues among UH campuses remain troubling, whether a campus is or is not a member of the multi-campus agreement. It is in the best interests of all concerned, and especially the students, that equivalences be streamlined without undermining the professional integrity of courses at either end of the process. If the University of California system can do it, surely we can.

Finally, a thought from the Chair. For continuity and efficiency, the Foundation Board Chair should serve a two-year term, rather than a one-year term. The learning curve is too steep and annual new Chairs must reinvent too many wheels to get up to speed. But a two-year sentence to the Chair should be accompanied by formal release time of one course per year to compensate. Tom Hilgers once mentioned to me that the original GEC curricular revision stipulated release time for a *one-year* F Board Chair, but this has never been supported by the administration. It should be. I suggest that the two-year term for UHM F Board Chairs begin in Fall 09 and that the 08-09 F Board make this an early priority next year.

Appendix 1. GEC Assessment Preamble as approved by the F Board 2/15/08

Assessment of the University of Hawai'i at Mānoa's General Education Program: A Preamble (Second Version February 13, 2008)

The primary goal of General Education assessment is to improve student learning. Effective assessment can provide useful feedback on student performance as it relates to General Education's goals. Successful academic assessments typically involve identifying appropriate student learning outcomes and/or objectives; collecting evidence (e.g., samples of student work); evaluating and interpreting evidence; and using results to guide student-learning initiatives (e.g., initiatives to improve the quality of what is taught and how it is taught; initiatives to improve the effectiveness of assignments). To be effective, student-learning assessment requires extensive faculty involvement in all of assessment's phases, including use of results. Thus, at UHM, assessment of the General Education Program will be faculty initiated, driven, and supervised.

A. Assessment of the General Education Program will be used to determine the institutional effectiveness of the Program and, more importantly, to guide efforts to improve student learning through that Program. Assessments of General Education will not be used to evaluate the performance of an individual student, faculty member, department, or instructional unit.

B. In order to interpret and use assessment results, the educational circumstances of students involved with the assessment research often need to be known. At the same time, it is absolutely necessary for educational assessment to be conducted with scrupulous attention to the confidential use of collected evidence. At UHM, all personal identifying information will be removed before any evaluation of evidence. All reports of results will scrupulously maintain the confidentiality of the individuals involved.

C. Faculty members from departments that offer General Education courses will be engaged at all stages of General Education assessments. Faculty members will

a. participate in the development of both student learning outcomes and assessment rubrics;

b. assist with the selection and development of methods to gather evidence of student learning;

c. contribute to the interpretation of the data that are collected; and

d. participate in using the results to improve the quality of the General Education program.

D. Courses in different departments may share the same General Education outcomes. However, the assessment methods or rubrics used to analyze evidence may vary because of differences in the methods and structures of individual courses. Faculty members will

work to ensure that the assignments and questions used in such assessments are tailored to specific course content, especially when they are integrated into courses or final exams.

E. The desired outcomes of the General Education Program include developing an appreciation of the complexities and potentialities of human experience and encouraging an understanding of imagination and creativity. Assessment goals and procedures may be developed to find out how well the General Education Program achieves these less tangible outcomes.