

Assessment Plan -2011

School of Continuing Studies: General Studies Program

I. Mission Statements and Program Goals for Students

Campus Mission Statement

Indiana University South Bend is the comprehensive undergraduate and postgraduate campus that serves North Central Indiana and is a regional campus of Indiana University. The campus values excellence in teaching, student-faculty interaction, research and creative activity, diversity and inclusivity, a global perspective, and collaboration in life-long learning. IU South Bend develops engaged citizens prepared to build strong communities.

General Studies Mission Statement

The mission of the General Studies Program is to assist each student to design and implement a coherent, focused and comprehensive plan of study leading to a bachelor's degree that achieves the traditional objectives of a university education and meets the student's personal and professional goals.

Program Goals for Students

- Personal development and career preparation
- Basic academic success skills
- Academic values
- Higher-order thinking skills
- Discipline-specific knowledge and skills

II. Methodology for Assessing Program Goals for Students

A. Degree Requirements

Degree Requirements: Introduction to General Studies Course

A one-credit introductory course is required for students entering the General Studies Program with less than 86 credit hours. The course discusses degree requirements, how courses transfer from other schools in Indiana University and from other colleges and universities, and various ways that students can earn credit (e.g., online courses, testing for credit, self-acquired competency). Students are required to submit a plan for completing their degree which includes specific courses, an estimate of the cost and a timetable. Students are also required to complete the Focus2 assessments at the Career Services Offices. A minimum grade of C is required to complete this course successfully.

Degree Requirements: Capstone Course

In the capstone course, each student writes a structured reflection of at least 1800 words. In the first section, the student describes his/her academic story, from high school graduation to the present. The student addresses the reasons for choosing each major along the way. In the second section, the student addresses at least three goals of a good degree, as described in articles by Thomas Ehrlich, John Newman, Nancy Vickers and

others. For each chosen goal, the student describes how a specific course or instructor has helped to achieve the goal. In the third section, the student selects at least 3 goals from the Teaching Goals Inventory of Thomas Angelo and Patricia Cross. For each goal, the student describes how a specific course or instructor has helped to achieve the goal. In the fourth section, the student shows how the BGS degree fits into the student's occupational and/or post-graduate educational plans. A minimum grade of C is required to complete this course successfully.

Degree Requirements Related to Personal Development and Career Preparation

Our introductory course requires each student to prepare a plan for completing their degree. Because students have considerable flexibility in selecting courses, they meet with advisors to make sure course selections meet their own goals as well as BGS degree requirements. Students are also required to complete the Focus2 assessments at the Career Services Offices. This requirement reinforces our admonition to "begin with the end in mind" in designing each plan of study.

The third and fourth sections of the senior capstone paper require students to explain how their coursework and degree have helped them to achieve program and personal goals, including personal development and career preparation.

Degree Requirements Related to Basic Academic Success Skills (Fundamental Literacies)

All general studies students must meet general education requirements by completing courses with a C or better.

Degree Requirements Related to Academic Values

General studies majors must meet the IU South Bend general education requirements and they must take a total of 69 hours of arts and sciences courses (because a few course substitutions are permissible, in some cases the total might be less than 69). We believe these requirements ensure that our majors are exposed to academic values.

The second section ("University Goals") of the senior capstone paper requires students to explain how their coursework has met the traditional goals of a university education, as expressed in articles about higher education.

Degree Requirements Related to Higher-Order Thinking Skills

Students are required to complete a minimum of 30 hours of 300- and 400-level courses. This ensures that they are acquiring higher-order thinking skills.

Degree Requirements Related to Discipline-Specific Knowledge and Skills

Each general studies major must take a minimum of 12 hours in each of three liberal arts and sciences areas: arts and humanities, science and mathematics, and social and behavioral sciences. In addition, each student must select a Concentration area from among these three clusters and complete 18 additional hours in that area. As a result, each general studies student must complete at least 30 hours in one of these three areas. The courses meeting these requirements must have minimum grades of C-minus. These requirements ensure that each general studies major learns discipline-specific knowledge and skills. Approximately one third of BGS graduates have also earned one or more minors or certificates, which also reflect discipline-specific knowledge and skills.

B. Questionnaires and Other Methods

Faculty Assessment of Capstone Papers

In the third section of their capstone papers, students are required to choose 3 goals from the Educational Objectives Cluster Survey and, for each goal, describe a specific course/instructor that has helped them to achieve the goal. Every other year, members of the Senate General Studies Committee will review a random sample of capstone papers and assess the distribution of achieved goals in terms of our five program goals (personal development and career preparation, basic academic success skills, academic values, higher-order thinking skills, discipline-specific knowledge and skills). The Committee is finalizing a rubric for this assessment.

Senior Survey

Seniors will be asked to evaluate the General Studies program, using the IU-Eval system at the end of the capstone course. Questions will assess student satisfaction in terms of the mission and program goals of General Studies, as well as asking for suggestions to improve the program. The Senate General Studies Committee will update the survey questions this spring. Because we graduate about 100 BGS students each year, we will have a large number of responses.

Alumni Survey

In September, 2010, the IU School of Continuing Studies surveyed all BGS graduates from 2007-2010 who had provided e-mail addresses to the IU Alumni Association and granted permission to be contacted. The survey included questions about job status, impressions of the BGS degree and future plans for additional education. Dean Callison provided a summary of overall results and copies of individuals' responses to the directors of respective campuses.

III. Process for Using Assessment Information to Improve Programs

The Director will collect and analyze the assessment data and report the results along with recommendations for changes to the Senate General Studies Committee every two years. The Director will work with the Committee to prepare the Third Year Review and Revised Assessment Plan.

IV. Participation of All Constituencies

Faculty

The Senate General Studies Committee will review the assessment report submitted by the Director and approve any suggested changes in curriculum or advising. The Committee will participate in the preparation of the Third Year Review and the Revised Assessment Plan.

Students

Advising sessions provide students to comment and make suggestions regarding curriculum, advising or other issues. The capstone course evaluation of the program offers another avenue for student input. In some years, the student member of the Senate General Studies Committee is also an active participant.

Alumni

General Studies has a very active Alumni Board which meets five times a year with the Director and Assistant Director. Each year, several educational events and/or receptions bring alumni to campus. Changes in the program are regularly communicated to alumni and they are encouraged to comment and to make suggestions. The alumni survey also gives alumni the opportunity to evaluate, comment and make suggestions regarding the program.

V. Record Keeping Activities

The Director compiles, writes and files the Annual Reports, and compiles, writes and submits draft Third Year Reviews and Revised Assessment Plans to the Senate General Studies Committee. After Committee approval, the Director submits the reviews and plans to the Senate Assessment Committee. Copies of the Annual Reports, Third Year Reviews and Assessment Plans will be kept on file. Capstone papers are kept on file for possible review by members of the Faculty Advisory Committee and members of the Assessment Committee.