

## Assessment Plan Structure for SMSU's Liberal Education Program

Assessing SMSU's Liberal Education Program (LEP) requires the active cooperation of every department that teaches courses in the LEP, along with the Liberal Education Committee (LEC) and the Committee for Institutional Assessment (CIA). The LEP exists at one level to introduce students to a range of academic areas broad enough to help form a liberal education. At another level, the LEP represents SMSU's commitment to helping students make real progress in essential skills such as written and oral communication, critical thinking, information literacy and creative thinking. This combination of introduction and achievement complicates assessment efforts for the LEP.

SMSU's Faculty Assembly has identified 10 learning outcomes and a set of sub-goals for each outcome which will form the basis for assessing the Liberal Education Program. The learning outcomes will be assessed on a rotating three-year schedule established by the LEC. Each outcome will be assessed at least once in each three-year cycle, but may be assessed more frequently if necessary. Because of their special roles in the Liberal Education Program, both LEP 100 and LEP 400 will be assessed by the LEC each time they are taught.

By March 31 of each academic year, SMSUFA will establish three or four Ad Hoc Assessment Teams (AHA Teams) of four to six members each to carry out LEP assessment during the following academic year. These teams will include one member each from the LEC and the CIA, at least one of whom will be a SMSUFA faculty member and will chair the team, as well as one member from Student Affairs. Additional membership will come from among faculty members who teach courses in the outcome area to be assessed or from the faculty at large.

By April 30 of each academic year, each AHA Team will decide which of the sub-goals identified for their assigned LEP learning outcome they will assess during the following academic year. Teams will make these decisions based on previous assessment results and other available information. Teams may elect to assess every sub-goal or to assess a subset of the sub-goals. Because both the LEC and the CIA will be represented on each AHA Team, these decisions will be informed by the assessment history for each learning outcome.

After deciding which sub-goals to assess, each AHA Team will further identify the specific courses from which it will collect data for the fall semester. Each Team will similarly identify spring semester courses for assessment before the end of each fall semester. It is impractical for the Team to assess every course offered under the outcome area in one semester. The Team will select a representative sample of the courses offered and collect assessment data only from those courses.

Finally, before the end of the academic year, each AHA Team will identify the specific class activities, tests and other assessment methods from courses, which the Team will use as data during the following academic year. To prepare this plan, each Team will work with instructors in the relevant academic

areas to select the sub-objectives to assess, determine the appropriate assessment tools and choose the courses that will provide data during the next semester. A similar process will be implemented during the fall semester for the selected spring semester courses. This will allow instructors to prepare appropriately.

During the fall and spring semesters of each academic year, each AHA Team will oversee the collection of data from the sources and methods they have previously identified. The collection of data should be coordinated with the instructors of the affected courses.

As Teams collect data, they will take adequate steps to protect student confidentiality by using class-level results, removing student names from papers and other submitted student work or through other relevant methods. Data and summaries forwarded to the LEC should not identify, or allow the identification of, particular students.

Each AHA Team will prepare a summary report on their assigned student learning outcome by the end of September in the following academic year. These reports will be delivered to the LEC and the CIA and will describe both the processes for data collection and the implications of the data.

By the end of October, the LEC will prepare a summary report based on the work of all of the previous year's AHA Teams and deliver this report to the SMSU Faculty Assembly, after which the individual reports and the summary will be distributed to the campus community and posted online. Both the LEC and individual programs will use assessment results to propose adjustments to their respective curricula.

**AHA Team Calendar:**

- Mar. 31 SMSUFA names members of each AHA Team
- Apr. 30 Each AHA Team identifies outcomes, courses and methods
- Fall Teams collect data and identify courses for Spring
- Spring Teams collect data
- Sep. 30 Each AHA Team reports to the LEC
- Oct. 31 LEC reports to SMSUFA

**Sources consulted and used in preparation of this document:**

Mankato State University. "GE Assessment Intro."  
<http://www.mnsu.edu/assessment/gened/GEAssessIntro.html>.

**Planned Schedule for Outcome Assessment:**

Academic Year	LEC Outcomes to be Assessed
2013-14	5. Physical and Social World; 6. Diversity; 8. Citizenship
2014-15	2. Communication; 3. Creative Thinking; 4. Critical Thinking
2015-16	1. Disciplines; 7. Moral; 9. Life-long Learning; 10. Mind, Body, Spirit