



Program Improvement & Accountability

SUNY GENERAL EDUCATION ASSESSMENT CONFERENCE

**"Campus-Based Assessment of
General Education:
A Collaborative Dialogue"**

June 4 - 5, 2001

Embassy Suites Hotel, Syracuse, New York

- Welcome from Provost Peter D. Salins -

Dear SUNY Assessment Conference Participants:

I am pleased to join with President Judson H. Taylor of the College at Cortland, President Gregory L. Eastwood of the Health Science Center at Syracuse, the University Faculty Senate, the Faculty Council of Community Colleges, and the General Education Assessment Review (GEAR) group in welcoming you to the State University of New York General Education Assessment Conference, "Campus-Based Assessment of General Education: A Collaborative Dialogue."



As you know, one of the key points made by the Provost's Advisory Task Force on the Assessment of Student Learning Outcomes is that the State University should pursue vigorous assessment of our academic programs, both in General Education and the Major, with a particular focus on the student learning outcomes those programs are producing. In particular, the Task Force believes that campus-based assessment of General Education will enable institutions to improve their programs, instructional practices, and student learning.

In implementing campus-based assessment of General Education, we recognize and respect the fact that each campus is responsible for determining the particular structure and content of its campus-based assessment plan, following existing governance processes. As faculty and as members of professional staffs and administration, you will play a key role in the planning, implementation, and reporting of General Education assessment. Along the way, the GEAR group will work supportively and collegially with you as you develop your plans.

I believe that the SUNY Assessment Initiative will make a real difference in the quality of undergraduate education in the State University and I trust that this conference will provide you with a valuable forum to share information, questions, and best practices and to engage in a productive exchange of ideas and experiences.

I look forward to your participation in this important event.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Peter D. Salins".

*Peter D. Salins
Provost and Vice Chancellor
for Academic Affairs*

General Education Assessment Review (GEAR) Group Membership

Dr. Pat Belanoff	Associate Professor of English, University at Stony Brook
Ms. Naniette H. Coleman	Student, University at Buffalo
Ms. Frances Dearing	Assistant Professor of Visual and Performing Arts and Assessment Coordinator, Monroe Community College
Dr. Mary Jane Feldman	Professor, Director of Institutional Research, Niagara County Community College
Dr. Joseph Flynn	SUNY Distinguished Professor of English, President, University Faculty Senate, Alfred State College
Dr. Patricia Francis	Professor of Psychology, Executive Assistant to the President, College at Cortland (co-chair)
Mr. Sean Grady	Student, Hudson Valley Community College
Dr. Cathleen McColgin	Professor of Nursing, Director of Assessment, Cayuga Community College
Dr. Jack Meacham	SUNY Distinguished Teaching Professor, Chair, Department of Psychology, University at Buffalo
Dr. Herbert Merrill II	Professor of Psychology, President, Faculty Council of Community Colleges, Erie Community College
Dr. Thomas Moran	Professor of Education, Director, Institute for Ethics in Public Life, SUNY Plattsburgh
Dr. Robert Ploutz-Snyder	Director of Institutional Research and Assessment, College at Cortland
Dr. David Rule	Interim Vice President for Academic Affairs, Orange County Community College
Dr. Donald Steven	Associate Provost, Office of Academic Affairs, System Administration (co-chair)
Dr. Gary Waller	Professor of Literature and Cultural Studies, Vice President, Academic Affairs, Purchase College

CONFERENCE PROGRAM

- MONDAY, JUNE 4, 2001 -

10:00 a.m. - 1:00 p.m.	Conference Registration (outside Onondaga Rooms 1-3)
1:00 - 1:15 p.m.	Welcome: Dr. Kenneth L. Barker, Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs, Health Science Center at Syracuse
1:15 - 1:30 p.m.	Introductions and Conference Overview: Dr. Donald Steven and Dr. Patricia Francis, Co-Chairs, General Education Assessment Review (GEAR) Group
1:30 - 2:30 p.m.	Conference Session #1: "Establishing Programmatic General Education Goals and Objectives by Faculty for the Improvement of Teaching and Learning." Dr. Susan Bello, Director of Institutional Research, and Dr. Thomas Fernandez, Professor Emeritus of Engineering, Physics, and Technology, Nassau Community College
2:30 - 2:45 p.m.	Coffee Break
2:45 - 4:00 p.m.	Conference Session #2: "Strategies for Identifying Program Activities that Address General Education Goals and Objectives." Dr. Patricia Francis, Professor of Psychology and Executive Assistant to the President, SUNY Cortland
4:00 - 5:15 p.m.	Panel Discussion: "Engaging Faculty and Student Participation in the Assessment Process: Issues in Ownership and Motivation." Moderated by Dr. Melanie Vainder, Professor of Technical Communications and Director of General Education, SUNY Farmingdale, and Ms. Frances Dearing, Assistant Professor of Visual and Performing Arts and Assessment Coordinator, Monroe Community College
6:00 - 7:00 p.m.	Reception (Pavilion)
7:15 p.m.	Remarks: Provost Peter D. Salins. Dinner and discussion

- TUESDAY, JUNE 5, 2001 -

8:00 - 8:15 a.m.	Welcome: President Judson H. Taylor, SUNY Cortland
8:15 - 10:00 a.m.	Conference Session #3: "The Assessment of Student Learning: Challenges and Opportunities." Dr. Candace Young, Professor of Political Science, Truman State University
10:00 - 10:15 a.m.	Coffee Break
10:15 - 12:00 p.m.	Conference Session #4: "Using Assessment Results to Improve General Education and the Assessment Process." Dr. Minda Rae Amiran, Professor Emerita of English, SUNY Fredonia
12:00 - 1:00 p.m.	Lunch (Atrium)
1:00 - 2:30 p.m.	Conference Session #5: "Getting Started on an Assessment Plan: Case Study and Critique," Dr. Mary Jane Feldman, Professor and Director of Institutional Research, Niagara County Community College; Dr. Rosalyn Lindner, Professor of Sociology and Senior Advisor to the Provost for Assessment, Buffalo State College; and Dr. Candace Young, Professor of Political Science, Truman State University
2:30 p.m.	Concluding Remarks and Assessing the Conference, Dr. Donald Steven and Dr. Patricia Francis, Co-Chairs, GEAR Group

All sessions will be held in the Onondaga Rooms 1-3, unless indicated otherwise.

CONFERENCE LEARNING OBJECTIVES

In planning this conference, the GEAR Group identified a set of learning objectives for participants. Specifically, at the conclusion of the conference, participants will be able to:

- *Construct student learning objectives (outcomes) that can be assessed;*
- *Develop strategies for identifying program activities that appropriately address programmatic goals and objectives;*
- *Develop strategies for increasing involvement by faculty, students, and staff in the assessment of student learning outcomes;*
- *Identify criteria for selection of assessment measures and indices;*
- *Identify methodological considerations in administration of assessment measures;*
- *Describe ways that assessment results can be used to improve educational programs and the assessment process; and,*
- *Understand how assessment can help foster faculty dialogue and community-building.*

- ABSTRACTS -

Conference Session #1: "Establishing Programmatic General Education Goals and Objectives by Faculty for the Improvement of Teaching and Learning." Dr. Susan Bello, Director of Institutional Research, and Dr. Thomas Fernandez, Professor Emeritus of Engineering, Physics, and Technology, Nassau Community College.

This session will describe the course, program and institutional-level assessment work done at Nassau Community College, focusing on the development and implementation processes. Nassau will also share how it plans to accommodate the assessment of the SUNY Student Learning Outcomes, as delineated in the Implementation Guidelines, into its current assessment activities. Opportunity will be provided for discussion of how to implement a successful assessment program and how to form measurable objectives for the Student Learning Outcomes.

Conference Session #2: "Strategies for Identifying Program Activities that Address General Education Goals and Objectives." Dr. Patricia Francis, Professor of Psychology and Executive Assistant to the President, SUNY Cortland.

This session focuses on methods of determining the extent to which general education curricula are covering programmatic goals and objectives. These methods vary from a simple matrix approach to more complex curriculum mapping, which enables programs to track objectives developmentally and identify how student achievement of objectives are being measured in different courses, thereby enhancing the assessment process overall. Throughout, emphasis is placed on these methods as a form of community-building for faculty teaching in the program.

- ABSTRACTS (cont.) -

Panel Discussion: "Engaging Faculty and Student Participation in the Assessment Process: Issues in Ownership and Motivation." Moderated by Dr. Melanie Vaider, Professor of Technical Communications and Director of General Education, SUNY Farmingdale, and Ms. Frances Dearing, Assistant Professor of Visual and Performing Arts and Assessment Coordinator, Monroe Community College.

Faculty and student involvement is vital to general education assessment. In an effort to reinforce its importance, a panel of professors, administrators, and students will assemble to review and discuss strategies to increase faculty and student participation in the assessment process. Identifying and resolving involvement anxieties will be a major focus of the discussion. A question and answer session will follow.

Conference Session #3: "The Assessment of Student Learning: Challenges and Opportunities." Dr. Candace Young, Professor of Political Science, Truman State University.

Through a combination of outstanding leadership and an innovative assessment program, Truman State University consciously transformed the institution from a traditional comprehensive regional university to a selective, liberal arts and sciences university. Dr. Young will share how Truman State established and used a comprehensive assessment system to focus faculty discussion and energy and to improve student learning. The advantages of adopting multiple assessment measures, of embedding assessment in the fundamental processes of the university, and of involving faculty and students will be discussed along with the ongoing challenges of successfully assessing student learning and utilizing the data gathered.

Conference Session #4: "Using Assessment Results to Improve General Education and the Assessment Process." Dr. Minda Rae Amiran, Professor Emerita of English, SUNY Fredonia.

In the 1980's, SUNY Fredonia developed a series of paper-and-pencil tasks that aimed to assess students' "deep learning" in general education. For these tasks, faculty and staff designed scoring systems to guide in the revision of the general education curriculum and instruction. This session will describe methods and findings, actions taken in response to the findings, and their real-world results. The session will include several sets of small-group discussions of other ways a campus might respond to similar findings, including changes it might make in its assessment process to address gaps or possible distortions in the resulting information.

Conference Session #5: "Getting Started on an Assessment Plan: Case Study and Critique." Dr. Mary Jane Feldman, Professor and Director of Institutional Research, Niagara County Community College, Dr. Rosalyn Lindner, Professor of Sociology and Senior Advisor to the Provost for Assessment, Buffalo State College, and Dr. Candace Young, Professor of Political Science, Truman State University.

This session will describe the efforts begun at Niagara County Community College to prepare a plan for the assessment of the SUNY General Education Requirement, following student learning outcomes delineated in the Implementation Guidelines. After an initial description of the components of the plan by Dr. Feldman, Dr. Lindner and Dr. Young will react to the plan. Through their experiences in working with campus-based assessment initiatives, they will discuss the strengths, weaknesses, and possible pitfalls, suggesting alternative strategies to the plan.