General Education Assessment Review (GEAR) Group

Second Meeting: April 24, 2001, Cayuga County Community College

Present: Naniette Coleman, Frances Dearing, Mary Jane Feldman, Patricia Francis (co-chair), Sean Grady, Herbert Merrill, Cathleen McColgin, Jack Meacham, Donald Steven (co-chair), Gary Waller

Regrets: Joseph Flynn, Paul Grover, Robert Ploutz-Snyder, David Rule, Melanie Vainder

Dr. Alfred Hanley, Dean of Academic and Student Affairs, graciously welcomed the GEAR Group to Cayuga County Community College.

I. Conference Organization

Planning for the SUNY GENERAL EDUCATION ASSESSMENT CONFERENCE, “Campus-Based Assessment of General Education: A Collaborative Dialogue” continued. Revisions were made to the proposed program and the following ongoing responsibilities assigned:

- The group agreed that it is important that objectives for the conference be established and assessed. Responsibility: Patricia Francis and Donald Steven, building on Jack Meacham’s ideas. *(DS: This was completed May 1.) Patty Francis will follow-up with presenters to ensure that these objectives will be addressed. *(DS: This was completed May 15.)*

- Donald Steven will arrange for an information packet to be sent to all those registered for the conference. *(DS: This was mailed May 4.)* He will also arrange for videotaping of the conference presentations. *(In progress.)*

- Melanie Vainder, Frances Dearing, and Patty Francis will finalize the program and program booklet. *(DS: This was completed May 10.)*

- Frances Dearing and Melanie Vainder will develop (identify participants, etc.) a panel discussion for “motivating faculty and student participation with the assessment process.” This will replace the “General Education transfer and assessment” panel discussion. *(DS: This has been done.)*

Registration for the conference is now complete (as of 5/14/01) and totals more than 130 participants from every SUNY institution (except the statutory colleges at Cornell).

Update: University Provost Peter D. Salins will attend the conference and speak at dinner on June 4.

II. Dialogue with campuses during the planning process

Members felt that it is important to address campus concerns about the assessment planning process early on and that GEAR members should be accessible and available to visit (in groups of two or more) as many campuses as express an interest in such a visit. Further discussion on this point is needed.

III. Assessment Cycle

The group is agreed that, given the complexity of this initiative and the workload involved, assessment of all General Education learning outcomes should take place over a three-year cycle and that campus plans should indicate how this will take place. *(DS: The University Provost has agreed with this position.)*

IV. Assessment Seed Grants

The group continued its discussion of assessment seed grants.
**Background**

System Administration has agreed to provide $70,000 in seed money (in the first year) to be awarded in competitive grants to “best practice” institutions that are engaging in especially innovative assessment practices.

**Recommendations**

1. These grants should support projects that:

   - are innovative (i.e., do not replicate what has already been done), focus on problems that are particularly hard to solve, and hold the promise of a concrete result;
   - indicate how the campus intends to continue and institutionalize this process beyond seed support;
   - have the potential to be a model that could be successfully replicated by other campuses;

2. Grants applications that address the issue of student motivation and faculty buy-in should be particularly welcome.

3. Successful grant recipients should provide a summary report with recommendations for other campuses that might wish to continue and/or further explore their approach.

4. Implementation schedule:

   - **June conference:** Announcement, with handout
   - **October 1:** Submission of proposals
   - **November 1:** Announcement of awards

5. The grant panel should consist of members of GEAR (with no connections to campuses submitting proposals) and other persons with experience in assessment.

**V. GEAR Web page**

The GEAR Web page is now up and running (see URL below). Further discussion about this site and its potential will take place at a future meeting.

**VI. Next Meeting**

GEAR will meet again on Thursday, May 24 at the Embassy Suites Hotel in Syracuse. The agenda will be:

- Updates
- Spring conference program and organization matters. The group will meet with Carol Sheridan, Sales Manager, re hotel and conference arrangements.
- Components of a "good" General Education assessment plan: initial focused discussion. Mary Jane Feldman and Patty Francis to lead.

If there is time:


This meeting summary will be posted on GEAR’s Web page: (http://cortland.edu/oir/gear/) and sent to campus Chief Academic Officers and subscribers to the assessment listserv (ASSESS-L@ls.sysadm.suny.edu).