The General Education Program and SACS Reaffirmation

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Goals for this Session

- Discuss the requirements of Comprehensive Standard 3.5.1 and Core Requirement 2.7.3.
- Show how the two are connected and why the success in CR 2.7.3 does not necessarily mean success in CS 3.5.1.
- Highlight the primary reasons for Non-compliance in CR 2.7.3 and CS 3.5.1.

Review a recent case where GE requirements were under review.
What should be the goal of General Education Coursework?

The goal of General Education (GE) coursework should be to give students a broad sampling of different academic areas. This sampling should be designed to expose them to varied disciplines, which should increase the value and breadth of their total undergraduate education. General education coursework allows students to discover new interests that may open a whole new range of opportunities for further study or career choice.
CS 3.5.1 – General Education Core Competencies

Requirement:

The institution identifies college-level general education competencies and the extent to which students have attained them.

(College-level competencies)

** No longer to the extent *graduates* have attained them.
Reasons for Non-compliance: CS 3.5.1

1. The evidence provided by the institution did not demonstrated that students had attained the competencies.

2. In the professional judgment of the committee, grades alone are not enough to accurately assess general education competencies.

3. While the institution provides data on students who transfer, evidence of comparable data relative to students who do not transfer is not provided. [Level1]
Core Requirement 2.7.3

In each undergraduate degree program the institution requires the successful completion of a general education component at the collegiate level that (1) is a substantial component of each undergraduate degree, (2) ensures breadth of knowledge, and (3) is based on a coherent rationale.
How to we ensure the GE Component provides adequate breadth of knowledge and a Coherent Rationale?

1. Documentation that courses are taught by Faculty qualified within the appropriate discipline.
2. Demonstration of the breadth of knowledge and coherent rationale for each general education course is further ascertained through approved Comprehensive Articulation Agreements between the your institution and other institutions, and/or state education systems.
Must have a minimum of nine credits in these areas

At least one course must be from each of the following areas:

- humanities/fine arts,
- social/behavioral sciences, and,
- natural sciences/mathematics.

Degree programs must also contain a minimum of 6 semester hours of communications.
Special Interpretation

Courses in basic composition that do not contain a literature component, courses in oral communication, and introductory foreign language courses are skill courses and not pure humanities courses. Therefore, for purposes of meeting this standard, none of the above may be the *one* course designated to fulfill the humanities/fine arts requirement in CR 2.7.3.
CR 2.7.3 is for Undergraduate Programs Only

- Course requirements must be other than skill-oriented or occupational specific. For example, Composition 1, technical writing, etc. will NOT satisfy humanities requirement. Nor will a language skills course. Community & Technical Colleges tend to have the most difficulty meeting this standard.
Linkage of CR 2.7.3 and CS 3.5.1

• The same standards in the rest of your IE program is expected when assessing GE Competencies.

• Assessment of outcomes in CS 3.5.1 must correspond to the identified competencies in CR 2.7.3.

• Most of us rely too much on grades in our GE core courses to make our case.

• We fail to realize that reviewers expect to see direct evidence of outcomes such as, rubrics developed and used, test results and analysis of the results, results from using imbedded exam questions, etc.
Caveat

Indirect measures can be helpful, but rarely accepted as the sole criteria [e.g., clear curriculum maps between competencies and core courses, special oversight of instruction in core courses, satisfaction surveys, alumni surveys]

It is not uncommon to have problems in CR 2.5, CS 3.3.1, CS 3.4.1, and CS 3.5.1.
Most-cited off-site non-compliance findings

3.7.1 Faculty-Qualifications 88%
3.3.1 Institutional effectiveness 62%
3.5.1 General education competencies 61%
3.4.1 Programs approved by faculty/learning outcomes 58%
2.11 Resources 55%
3.2.10 Evaluation of administrators 50%

* On-site reduced to 42%
Discussion

- What are we trying to establish in CR 2.7.3? (Where are we coming from with respect to the three points we discussed in CR 2.7.3?)
- How do we make our case in CS 3.5.1?
General Discussion

Are general education competencies taught only in general education core curriculum courses?

Should general education competencies be assessed only through general education courses?
Review of a Recent Case

Northern Kentucky University
Discussion and Questions