

AY20 GEC Improvement Report: Civic Engagement

Composite Report

AY20

n = 70

AY19 Recommendation for Improvement: Programs were asked to follow through on improvements identified in the AY19 GEC Assessment: Civic Engagement. Improvement Reports were submitted for three classes, in three disciplines, from two colleges, with a student n of 70: The College of Arts, Humanities, and Social Sciences—ANTH 201 (n = 20) and POLS 101 (n = 37)—and the College of Science, Technology, Mathematics, and Health Sciences—BIOL 211Labs (n = 19). An Improvement Report for one course, Music 195/395, was not available because of a change in instructor. These were the 4 courses assessed in AY19. The n of 70 students from across the disciplines constitutes a solid sampling.

The EOU General Education Learning Outcomes benchmark is a median of 85% of students scoring a 2 or 3 on a 3-point scale for the total number of students being assessed. The AY19 GEC Assessment for Civic Engagement reported a 95% median. Although so many students did well on that assessment, which is not uncommon at EOU, faculty conducting the assessments nonetheless identified areas to improve. However, the improvements are not easily quantified since they are usually conceptual or procedural in nature. As a result, the reports are qualitative or narrative in form rather than the having the quantitative focus of the original assessments.

Improvements

In the AY20 GEC Improvement Reports for Civic Engagement, faculty focused on procedural improvements to increase the number of students performing at the Proficient level (scoring 3s), not being satisfied with the number of students performing at the Satisfactory level (scoring 2s). In ANTH 201, the faculty member refocused the Civic Engagement assignment on experiential learning, which had the desired effect of increasing student engagement and performance. In POLS 101, the faculty member decided to poll alumni in the future to gauge the overall effect of the program's commitment to Civic Engagement, which is absolutely central to Politics and Economics, reinforced throughout its curriculum in order to prepare students for lifelong learning. In BIOL 211, the faculty member, with consultation with the program faculty, developed a rubric to encourage students to see what was needed in order to demonstrate Proficiency in Civic Engagement. The success of that effort means that faculty are looking at using the rubric in

all the BIOL 211 Labs, a significant programmatic improvement. In each case, the participating faculty shared the results of the assessments with program faculty in order to support continual improvements to teaching and learning at the program level. In addition, these are precisely the kinds of procedural and conceptual changes that make important improvements in teaching and learning, even in the case of exceeding the General Education benchmark.

Program Civic Engagement Verticality

Civic Engagement must be reinforced throughout each program's curriculum after the lower division General Education foundations are established, if it is going to be effectively strengthened for student proficiency and, indeed, mastery. It is important for deans to map how their programs support continuous learning in Civic Engagement in order to focus on areas of improvement or to highlight best practices for other programs needing a model. Anthropology, with its emphasis on Archeology, considers Civic Engagement to be central to its discipline and reinforces this focus in its lower division offerings, in its upper division offerings, and its capstone. This constitutes its commitment to verticality in the interest of deep student learning. Political Science and Economics identifies 3 upper division courses that taken together build on the lower division Civic Engagement foundation in order to immerse students in experiential learning related to state and local government, public policy, and legislative politics. Biology likewise builds on its lower division Civic Engagement foundation in its upper division courses in Ornithology and Forest Ecology, with a heavy emphasis on experiential learning. In each case, these programs, which have Civic Engagement as a Program Learning Outcome, demonstrate thoughtful design in constructing curricula that demonstrate for students the centrality of Civic Engagement to their disciplines. They build student proficiency through improvements targeted by assessments of Program Learning Outcomes.