

2014-04

Resolution in Support of the General Education Council's Work on Student Learning Outcomes Assessment

Approved by the UNC Faculty Assembly

April 04, 2014

Whereas, a major goal of the UNC 2013-2018 strategic plan "Our Time, Our Future: The UNC Compact with North Carolina" is to make the University of North Carolina a national leader in learning outcomes assessment by "supporting faculty in developing methods . . . to demonstrate student learning in ways that respect the depth and complexity of the knowledge we expect our students to master;" and

Whereas, the strategic plan defines mastery of critical thinking and communication skills, as well as faculty scholarship and teaching that meets the highest intellectual standards, as central to the University's compact with the people of North Carolina; and

Whereas, the strategic plan, the UNC Faculty Advisory Council's "Our University, Our Future," and the research of nationally acknowledged experts all recognize that there is no national consensus about assessment methodology, sample design, or any single assessment instrument and that effective assessment of learning is best conducted by faculty and requires both discipline-specific and interdisciplinary (programmatic) expertise, as well as multiple approaches that cannot "be limited by any one measure that attempts to capture all of the complexity of the desired outcomes;" and

Whereas, there is no evidence of the educational effectiveness and validity of global assessment of student learning; and

Whereas, the UNC General Education Council (GEC) has by its thoughtful, comprehensive, and innovative work determined that the goal of making North Carolina a national leader in learning outcomes assessment can only be met if the University develops its own instruments for system-wide assessment of student learning outcomes; and

Whereas, the GEC has enumerated Principles of Good Assessment to guide the development of the assessment instruments; and

Whereas, the GEC has defined the primary functions of these instruments to be the demonstration of student achievement of core competencies at the institutional level and the use of assessment results to improve the curriculum with respect to the core competencies; and

Whereas, the conceptualization, design, and implementation of student learning outcomes assessments, and the interpretation and formative use of the results of student learning assessments, are curricular concerns requiring faculty expertise and responsibility; and

Whereas, the GEC will have primary responsibility for the development of these instruments, with the goal of University of North Carolina becoming a national leader in assessment;

Therefore, Be It Resolved That, the Faculty Assembly expresses its appreciation for the work of the GEC; and

Be It Further Resolved That, to obtain the benefits of effective assessments, the Faculty Assembly endorses the GEC's recommendation that the University of North Carolina develop its own assessment instruments, following the Principles of Good Assessment, for the purposes of demonstrating student achievement and producing results to be used for formative improvements in the curriculum; and

Be It Further Resolved That, because the development, implementation and interpretation of assessment instruments, as well as their formative use in revising both curriculum and assessment tools, are central to the curricular responsibilities of faculty, the faculties of the University are responsible for all such matters.