Response Report to the Visiting Committee

Recommendation Regarding Principle 8.2.b

Stephen F. Austin State University
September 1, 2021

SECTION 8: Student Achievement (p. 20)

2. The institution identifies expected outcomes, assesses the extent to which it achieves these outcomes, and provides evidence of seeking improvement based on analysis of the results in the areas below:

b. Student learning outcomes for collegiate-level general education competencies of its undergraduate degree programs. (Student outcomes: general education)

On-site Reaffirmation Committee Findings:

Recommendation 1: The Committee recommends that the institution demonstrates that it assesses the extent to which it achieves its identified student learning outcomes for collegiate level General Education competencies and provides evidence of seeking improvement based on the analysis of assessment results.

Institutional Response

Stephen F. Austin State University (SFA) remains in compliance with Principle 8.2.b. Annually, SFA assesses attainment of student learning outcomes for collegiate level General Education competencies and seeks improvement based on analysis of assessment results.

Assessment of General Education Competencies

Our approach to student achievement related to general education competencies is not narrowly focused on a sample of artifacts from a subset of courses. Our assessment is informed by two separate direct assessments of students, as well as indirect assessments from SFA students, themselves. The On-site Reaffirmation Committee observes that we did not demonstrate with sufficient evidence how our assessment model will directly assess the extent to which it achieves the general education student learning outcomes *within the general education program curriculum*. Our assessment model does not address a general education program curriculum. This is because Standard 8.2.b. specifically states that general education assessment should be focused on general education *competencies* of its undergraduate degree programs. In fact, the

On-site Reaffirmation Committee refers to "general education program curriculum," and "general education curriculum courses," as well as three (3) mentions of "general education curriculum." Our model provides assessment of a rich set of data focused on "*attainment of general education competencies within our undergraduate degree programs*."

As the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on College's Resource Manual for *The Principles of Accreditation: Foundations for Quality Enhancement* cautions:

> Different institutions use widely different approaches to determine expected general education outcomes for their students, and they may also use very different means to deliver general education. Some institutions have a very prescriptive set of courses, while others offer a smorgasbord of courses. Some institutions augment basic core courses with additional general education outcomes within the major (e.g., writing across the curriculum or discipline-specific critical learning skills). Some institutions collect the bulk of their assessment data regarding general education early in the student's studies, while others rely on assessments closer to the time of graduation. Larger institutions may have multiple approaches across different colleges and schools. Community colleges may have different general education expectations for students earning technical degrees than for those seeking transfer degrees. Some institutions will utilize embedded assignments within broad general education core courses as part of its set of assessments, others will utilize upper-level courses or external evaluations to capture these outcomes, and still others will turn to their alumni for some of their assessments. **Because of these variations, reviewers must be even more mindful of the dangers of a "one size fits all" approach for general education than for student learning outcomes within defined majors**. [Emphasis added]

With that in mind, we believe SFA's approach to assessing general education competencies fully complies with both the letter and the spirit of SACSCOC Standard 8.2.b.

Evidence of Seeking Improvement

SFA seeks improvement based on analysis of assessment results. In January 2021, during an open university level town hall meeting in which data was reviewed, it was determined that of the six General Education competencies required by the state of Texas and assessed by SFA, attainment of critical thinking (CT) and empirical and quantitative (EQ) reasoning outcomes need improvement. As a result, each of our undergraduate academic programs developed program specific objectives for CT and/or EQ. Each of these plans include how the improvement will be sought in addition to how the outcomes will be assessed.

Introduction

Through SFA's general education assessment processes, we are charting a straightforward, direct approach to collegiate-level competencies of general education. The targets for student learning

improvements were determined through campus-wide discussions. Significantly, the SFA faculty (as a whole) reached full consensus regarding the foci of improvement we seek: Critical Thinking and Empirical & Quantitative Skills. Further, these two general education competencies are broken down into tangible, meaningful, measurable actions within individual undergraduate degree programs. These improvement objectives—and departmental plans for improvement—are found in Appendix **1**. *Every department/degree program at SFA is seeking improvement in either Critical Thinking or Empirical & Quantitative Skills right now*. We anticipate changes in improvement objectives over time based on the results of our ongoing analysis of assessment results of our six general education competencies, which in Texas, are called core objectives.

As stated in the *Resource Manual for the Principles of Accreditation: Foundations for Quality Enhancement*, "The [general education assessment] approach is up to the institution, consistent with principles of good practice, the role general education plays in that institution's curricula, and the organizational structure of the institution."[1]

Brief Overview of SFA's General Education Assessment Journey

SFA's general education component is a statewide mandate named the Texas Core Curriculum (TCC). The TCC is codified in the Texas Administrative Code, and administered through the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board (THECB). A copy of the relevant sections of the Code is attached as Appendix **2**.[2] The six (6) Core Objectives (i.e., general education competencies) in the TCC are as follows:

- Critical thinking
- Communication
- Empirical & Quantitative Skills
- Personal Responsibility
- Social Responsibility
- Teamwork

Each objective is assigned to multiple disciplines found in the TCC. Each core course must instruct students on 3-4 of the six components. In this system, each objective is taught in multiple courses across multiple disciplines. Thus, objectives are not tied to nor derived from any specific core course or discipline. A radio button chart with TCC Objectives tied to TCC Component Areas (disciplines) can be found as Appendix **3**.

The THECB holds that the "purpose of TCC assessment is to improve student attainment of the TCC core objectives."[3] Furthermore, we are not assessing only to comply with outside requirements; we are assessing to foster and inform actual improvements regarding student

[1] P. 70
[2]https://texreg.sos.state.tx.us/public/readtac$ext.TacPage?sl=T&app=9&p_dir=P&p_rloc=204502&p_tloc=&p_ploc=1&pg=12&p_tac=&ti=19&pt=1&ch=4&rl=21
[3] https://www.highered.texas.gov/institutional-resources-programs/public-universities-health-related-institutions/transfer-resources/texas-core-curriculum-tcc/

attainment levels of general education competencies across the curriculum and the student's career at SFA. **We see this approach as innovative and bold.** It supersedes a former, more standard general education assessment approach that produced little real value or improvement, and our new plan was passed and commended by the THECB this year. A copy of SFA's report to the THECB can be found as Appendix **4**. A copy of the THECB response can be found as Appendix **5**.

From 2014 until 2019, SFA followed standard practice, assessing specific "signature assignments" using modified versions of AACU's LEAP-VALUE rubrics. In general, our general education assessment efforts proved fruitless for multiple reasons:

1. In theory, General Education is assumed to take place in the first two years of college and is comprised of certain courses that teach these principles. In practice, these courses can take place in high schools, community colleges, and other higher education institutions as evidenced by the average 2,001 general education courses that are transferred to SFA annually. This results in many of the general education courses being taught outside of SFA's sphere of influence. Moreover,
2. Our core has some overlap with typical curriculum structures. Empirical & Quantitative Skills could be directly addressed in required mathematics courses. In contrast, the Texas Core Curriculum requires many objectives that function like soft skills. We do not have a course specific to Personal Responsibility, nor do we offer a Critical Thinking course at the 1000 or 2000 levels. Instead, we are assessing each competency as a unique whole as delivery of this subject matter is distributed, by design, across multiple courses. This is in keeping with the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board rule, as well as SACSCOC requirements.
3. Students have flexibility to choose courses from an institution's core curriculum. However, that flexibility may be limited by the student's major.[4]
4. A sizable number of core course students are upperclassmen (jr./sr.).

Our previous plan, while well intentioned, did not clearly indicate any specific areas to focus our improvement efforts. This forced the Core Curriculum Committee (CCC) to reexamine general education assessment processes and resulted in the development of our new general education assessment model, which was named the Faculty Trust Model (FTM).

Assessment Evolved

FTM consists of three components:

1. Assessments of graduating seniors from upper-level course faculty, collected at the end of each semester;
2. Results from the Senior Exit Survey, which is sent to every student who applies for graduation;

[4] https://reportcenter.highered.texas.gov/agency-publication/miscellaneous/elements-of-the-texas-core-curriculum/

3. Course grades from designated general education courses, as determined by the Texas Core Curriculum.

Each year's Senior Exit Survey results are triangulated[5] with competency-specific, upper-level course faculty assessments and student performance in general education courses where the core objectives are introduced. These results are considered by the entire SFA academic community through a Town Hall style meeting held in January of each year. Instead of a single data set from rubrics, we have three (3) distinct sets regarding each competency.

This model maintains high confidence across campus. Trust in our general education assessment, which had been lacking, has been built up, and meaningful decisions are being made because of the new resultant data. Our assessment process is helping SFA make better decisions towards improving general education. In short, our general education competency assessment model works for us.

SFA's Faculty Trust Model meets four key criteria:

1. It has buy-in from faculty who will be tasked with assessing students directly.
2. It is easy to implement and maintain.
3. It provides opportunity for meaningful dialogue regarding SFA's general education component as it relates to our lower-level undergraduates and our graduating seniors.
4. It lends itself to both formative and summative assessment, whereas the former model did not in practice result in formative assessment geared to improving student learning.

There are additional benefits to this approach:

1. The vast majority of the upper-level course instructors who assess students are not the instructors teaching the core courses. Thus, two key faculty constituencies can indicate overall core effectiveness.
2. It gives SFA a legitimate means of determining—by its own standards—how things turned out, as well as what to do about the results.

Results of the FTM

The Town Hall for AY 2020-21 was held on January 12, 2021. Faculty were briefed by the CCC, with the assistance from the OIE, on the results of the assessments performed in the first iteration of the FTM. After considering the data, the faculty were split regarding which of two TCC objectives needed focus. The consensus was for each program to choose which of the two they wanted to improve, culminating in a campus-wide, comprehensive effort to improve both Critical

[5] Triangulation constitutes a rigorous scientific approach to compensate for weaknesses in the study methodology by application of different approaches for measuring the same characteristic. See Jytte Brender, in Handbook of Evaluation Methods for Health Informatics, 2006

Thinking and Empirical & Quantitative Skills. All departments are focusing on improvement in one of these two areas.

The Case for Compliance by Each Element of 8.2.b

SFA has a strong case for compliance for each component of Standard 8.2.b.

The institution identifies expected outcomes

Our outcomes derive from the Texas Core Curriculum. The six outcomes are Communication, Critical Thinking, Empirical & Quantitative Skills, Personal Responsibility, Social Responsibility, and Teamwork. SFA's outcomes are mandated through state code and shared among all public institutions in Texas.

Assesses the extent to which it achieves these outcomes

SFA uses data that consider (a) students' overall general education record in the early years of their collegiate career; (b) a summary professional evaluation of their competence in each skill at the end of their coursework; and (c) a self-report from graduates regarding their perceived progress in each of the six components listed above. The three sets of data are considered by *the entire campus community* at SFA. In a campus-wide Town Hall style meeting, faculty members of the CCC receive feedback from Town Hall participants. On the day following the Town Hall, the CCC determines what, if any, action should be taken on a specific component or components of the TCC.

Provides evidence of seeking improvement based on analysis

We began by seeking improvement to the general education assessment process. Now, we are using new and meaningful assessment results to enact changes across the campus as we seek to improve learning and related outcomes. The effort to improve is all-inclusive. *Every baccalaureate degree program at SFA is seeking improvement in either Critical Thinking or Empirical & Quantitative Skills right now*. This was not true in the previous approach; almost no meaningful change emanated from the former process.

Regarding the Concerns of the On-site Committee

In our discussions of general education compliance with the On-site Reaffirmation Committee, the committee pointed to the novelty of our approach, the divergence from typical practice, and our use of end-of-course grades. The On-Site Reaffirmation Committee Report states, "The newly developed Faculty Trust Model describes the assessment of general education learning outcomes achievement in the upper-level and capstone courses, whereas the previous rubric-based assessment model focused primarily on student work from the general education

curriculum courses." SFA is one of very few institutions that does not use some form of the AACU's LEAP-VALUE rubrics or standardized test. Our departure from standard approaches is significant; we understand that. However, rubrics should not be a mandated for an approach. We have found flaws with the rubrics, both theoretically and functionally. Further, there was no confidence in an Artifact & Rubric approach from the faculty. We saw this as a problem that needed correcting, even if that meant a tougher path to compliance.

The On-site Committee report further states, "While learning outcomes have been established at SFASU, consistent with the State System requirement, and there is documentation of 'plans' to identify, analyze, assess, and demonstrate improvement in the area of general education outcomes for its undergraduate degree programs through a new assessment model, the Committee was unable to find evidence that the institution has fully implemented the new plan." The Faculty Trust Model is new, but it is fully operational at this point. We have run a Proof of Concept, and over two long semesters we have been fully operational. We held our first Town Hall in January of 2021, and our next Town Hall is scheduled for January 20, 2022. We are seeking improvement via Improvement Objectives from each academic unit related to one of two Core Objectives (competencies). Based on those results, we will either continue with the same two objectives or move to others.

To address the On-site Committee's concern that "the institution has not demonstrated with sufficient evidence how the FTM will directly assess the extent to which it achieves the general education student learning outcomes within the general education program curriculum," we present the rationale behind core objective attainment within the Texas Core Curriculm. The purpose of our Core Objective assessment is to determine the attainment level of the Core Objectives themselves, not the entire general education program (which was instituted by the state and which we must follow). That is, SFA focuses holistically on these six objectives' attainment over the full course of a student's tenure at SFA, not simply how they are developed in isolation in our core curriculum courses. These objectives, by definition and rule, are to be assessed with the full transformative college experience in mind. For instance, many students learn personal responsibility while participating in co-curricular and extracurricular activities. The objectives are developed through four years of a transformative experience, not in 45 contact hours with a professor in a core course. We are assessing our students on the whole, not on the basis of a select number of lower-level courses. This isn't an achievement situation; it's an attainment situation. This approach informs our use of all three data sets and the expertise of our faculty to interpret these data.

The use of end-of-course grades in the process was concerning to the committee. But grades *are* assessments, and multiple grades in multiple courses are used to inform the SFA community regarding lower-level core attainment. As David Eubanks has summarized,

> So in the absolute best case, where every program assesses every outcome all the time, we still only have 10% of the data that grades are giving us, and moreover the individual pools of data from assessment are impossible to analyze comprehensively; we're stuck with small samples, analyzed in a hurry . . . with poor controls on quality, if there are any at all.[6]

[6] https://highered.blogspot.com/2019/11/course-grades-as-data.html

Eubanks illuminatingly delineates the data qualities of standard assessment practices when compared to grades:

> First, let's take an inventory of what we have. It's useful to compare the usual data from program assessments to course grades.
>
> - Assessment data
> - many small sets of unique data types
> - large variation in how the classifications of student work were made
> - large variation in the nominal encodings of the classifications (e.g. test scores, rubric ratings, etc.)
> - usually anonymous (not tied to student ID)
> - often gathered only in upper-level courses, maybe only in a capstone experience
> - Course grades
> - large historical set of records stretching back years
> - large variation in how classifications were made (different grading practices)
> - common scoring encodings: usually A, B, C, etc.
> - grades are linked to student IDs, so they can be studied in context
> - grades are captured during a students' entire history, including transfer-in credit[7]

Rubrics provide ordinal data. That is, a 4 is higher than a 3, but we do not know that the difference is equal between numbers. This issue is further complicated by the human judgments used in assigning rubric scores. Statistically, rubrics are noisy, and results are germane to a single assignment from a single student. While grades can also be considered ordinal, long-time practice has used Grade Point Average as a meaningful statistic. Previously, we were making decisions on specific *assignments*; we can make decisions regarding *students* with the FTM.

THE FTM uses both types of data—assessments and grades—making it a stronger, more reliable model. Further, we triangulate these data with the self-reporting from our graduates, who likely know better than any others whether they have actually obtained a competency. All of these data are compared and interpreted by experts: the full faculty at Stephen F. Austin State University. The fact that the data sets tend to agree with each other (as well as faculty experience) has made the improvement steps fairly straightforward.

[7] Ibid

Conclusion

Stephen F. Austin State University remains in compliance with Principle 8.2.b. We comply with this standard through the Faculty Trust Model, which is the product of multi-year deliberations and bold decision-making. We found consensus for a significant, campus-wide commitment to improve two core competencies across and throughout the campus. We see this as both remarkable and fully sufficient to demonstrate that we are using data, collected on collegiate-level general education competencies, to make meaningful change and improvement at SFA. If you allow, we could start to revolutionize the way academia considers general education competencies, moving to a more direct consideration from faculty.

Linda Suskie, in one of her most cited blog posts, speaks to legitimizing the assessment process quite simply.[8] According to Suskie, assessment should be focused on making better decisions; otherwise, the author declares assessment a waste of time. Further, she offers a measuring stick to determine if the assessment results have acceptable quality. She calls it the "money bet." The question is pretty simple:

> Are you confident enough in the decision you're making, based on assessment results, that you'd be willing to make a money bet that the decision is the right one?

General education at SFA previously has focused on process, and the product was not worth a "money bet," so for many years, the answer to this question was negative. Today, SFA faculty have found a way to determine whether students are developing general education competencies, and we have made a "money bet" on our data—both in terms of our campus-wide efforts to improve and our case for compliance. SFA, as a whole, turned from an approach that easily met the compliance standards check box, but that did not improve student learning. Instead, we chose to create a path forward that would lead to meaningful change in the lives of our students.

[8] https://lindasuskie.com/apps/blog/show/44560748-how-to-assess-anything-without-killing-yourself-really-

Appendix 1: Seeking Improvement - Stephen F. Austin State University General Education Improvement Objectives

Unit Name	Objective Name	Objective Description	How	Assessment Method Type	Assessment Method Narrative	Criterion
PROGRAM - APPLIED ARTS AND SCIENCES BAAS 30.9999.40	Critical Thinking	Improve critical thinking skills of BAAS graduates	We will incorporate assessment of critical thinking more explicitly into BAAS 4398	Capstone Assignment	Students in BAAS 4398 will demonstrate critical thinking and the ability to integrate multiple areas of study within a final capstone a paper. (Active)	70 % of students will achieve a rating of satisfactory or above according to rubric
Program - ART BA/BFA	Critical Thinking	Students will improve their critical thinking abilities	Students in undergraduate studio seminar and select studio art courses will receive direct instruction in the application of critical thinking through the critique of art. Students will be instructed on the proper application of critical thinking skills surrounding constructive critique. The textbook: CRITS, A Student Manual by renowned Art Educator, Terry Barrett, will be used to teach the critical thinking skills as they apply to art criticism. Focus will be given to the three areas of description, interpretation and judgment as outlined in chapters four, five and six of the text.	Critique	Sudents in undergraduate studio seminar and select studio art courses will critique the work of peers, in addition to the face-to-face interaction, will be supplemented online with a Brightspace D2L discussion group where students will post a visual document of their work and other students will engage in critical commentary	All students will be assessed based on how their feedback incorporates communication, interpretation, and judgement.
PROGRAM - BBA FOUNDATION	Critical Thinking	In a simulated business setting, students will use critical thinking and decision-making skills to identify and resolve business problems.	Students utilize critical thinking in multiple classes throughout the business curriculum.	Capstone Assignment	All BBA students participate in the CAPSIM simulation and COMP-XM examination related thereto in the MGMT 4363 (business strategy) course, which effectively serves as a capstone course for BBA students. This exam includes questions related to critical thinking and decision-making.	SFA students will perform within two percent of the national average of "All Capstone Undergrads" on the COMP-XM questions related to critical thinking and decision-making.
PROGRAM - BIOCHEMISTRY BS 26.0202.00	Critical Thinking	Students will demonstrate ability to integrate subject knowledge, laboratory skills, analytical & problem-solving skills, critical thinking skills, & communication skills in a senior capstone research project.	Performance of undergraduate students in research will be assessed by their advisor during the spring semester of each year.	Capstone Assignment	Each undergraduate student participating in research work will be assessed by their faculty advisor using the SFASU Chemistry & Biochemistry Research Assessment Rubric. The rubric assesses students in the following areas: Subject Knowledge, Laboratory Skills, Analytical & Problem-Solving Skills, Critical Thinking Skills, & Communication Skills. Each area is scored on a 0-20 point basis with the following subdivisions: Excellent (19-20), Good (16-18), Satisfactory (13-15), Needs Improvement (10-15), and Unacceptable (0-9).	At least 75% of the students assessed will score at least 70/100 on the SFASU Chemistry Research Assessment Rubric.
PROGRAM - BIOCHEMISTRY BS 26.0202.00	BS Biochemistry-EQS Improvement	Students pursuing a BS in Biochemistry will demonstrate a mastery in the area of Empirical & Quantitative Skills.	Student performance in Empirical & Quantitative Skills for Biochemistry majors will be assessed as part of the curriculum in CHEM 4354 (Biochemical Techniques), which is a required course for students pursuing a BS degree in Biochemistry. This course is normally offered in the spring semester.	Embedded Course Assignment	Student performance in Empirical & Quantitative Skills for Biochemistry majors will be assessed as part of the curriculum in CHEM 4354 (Biochemical Techniques), which is a required course for students pursuing a BS degree in Biochemistry. This course is normally offered in the spring semester. An enzyme kinetics laboratory activity will be used to collect the EQS assessment data. Student lab reports will be scored by the faculty member assigned to teach the class using a rubric developed in the SFASU Dept. of Chemistry & Biochemistry. This rubric uses a 4-level scoring system (3 = Proficient, 2 = Adequate, 1 = Developing, & 0 = Absent) to score seven different rubric elements, which are listed below: 1.) Problem-solving strategy 2.) Identification of variables, constants, & controls 3.) Evidence of thought process & work 4.) Correct use of information 5.) Completeness of answer 6.) Reasonableness of answer 7.) Explanation/conclusion These data will then be mapped to the official SFASU Empirical & Quantitative Skills Rubric, as shown below: 1.) Problem-solving strategy [Define Problem/Topic] 2.) Identification of variables, constants, & controls [Devise/Formulate a Plan] 3.) Evidence of thought process & work [Data/information collection and/r selection] 4.) Correct use of information [Data/information collection and/r selection] 5.) Completeness of answer [Analysis] 6.) Reasonableness of answer [Analysis] 7.) Explanation/conclusion [Conclusion]	The criterion for satisfactory fulfillment of this area is that 70% or more of the total cohort of Biochemistry majors assessed in CHEM 4354 during the 3-year assessment period will achieve a score of 3 or 4 for each element in the SFASU Empirical & Quantitative Skills Rubric.
PROGRAM - BIOLOGY BS 26.0101.00	Critical Thinking	Students graduating with a BS from the Biology Program will be able think scientifically; this includes critical thinking or reasoning and explaining biological principles as well as analyzing and interpreting quantitative data.	Two aspects of scientific critical thinking will be evaluated for each assessment period: Quantitative reasoning where students analyze and interpret a quantitative data set and qualitative reasoning where students, when presented with qualitative or descriptive scientific information, must draw and clearly explain conclusions based on that information	Embedded Course Assignment	Assessment Method 1 - Analysis Of Qualitative Data. Qualitative scientific critical thinking will be assessed for all students in one selected course per year. Courses that may be assessed include (but are not limited to) Plant Form & Function (Biol 2361/2061), animal Form & function (Biol 2371/2071), Genetics (Biol 3453/3053), and General Ecology (Biol 3381/3081). For a selected assignment or laboratory exercise students will be presented with qualitative data observations or experimental results and asked to draw supportable conclusions based on that information. The Instructor of the course will assess the quality of the assignment for each student using the rubric below.	70% of students should score (3-Acceptable) or greater when all evaluations are averaged.
PROGRAM - BIOLOGY BS 26.0101.00	Critical Thinking	Students graduating with a BS from the Biology Program will be able think scientifically; this includes critical thinking or reasoning and explaining biological principles as well as analyzing and interpreting quantitative data.	Two aspects of scientific critical thinking will be evaluated for each assessment period: Quantitative reasoning where students analyze and interpret a quantitative data set and qualitative reasoning where students, when presented with qualitative or descriptive scientific information, must draw and clearly explain conclusions based on that information	Embedded Course Assignment	Assessment Method 2 - Analysis of Quantitative Data. Quantitative scientific critical thinking will be assessed for all students in one selected course per year. Courses that may be assessed include (but are not limited to) Plant Form & Function (Biol 2361/2061), animal Form & function (Biol 2371/2071), Genetics (Biol 3453/3053), and General Ecology (Biol 3381/3081). For a selected assignment or laboratory exercise students will be presented with or obtain through sampling or experimentation a quantitative data set that they will be required to analyze using the appropriate mathematical tools and draw supportable conclusions from the analysis results. The Instructor of the course will assess the quality of the assignment for each student using the rubric below.	70% of students should average (3-Acceptable) or greater when all evaluations are averaged.
PROGRAM - BIOLOGY BS 26.0101.00	Knowledge	Students graduating with a B.S. in Biology will be able to demonstrate a good knowledge base in biological concepts and an ability to integrate knowledge with critical thinking skills to become problem solvers. Knowledge base will include: levels of complexity (molecular/cellular through population/communities/ecosystems), biological principles and processes.	The Major Field Exam (MFE) will be required during the during the capstone course BIOL 4199 “Senior Seminar”.	Standardized Test	The Major Field Exam (MFE) will be required during the during the capstone course BIOL 4199 “Senior Seminar”. A standing Biology sub-committee will be responsible for analyzing each academic year’s data. In order to increase the number of students to be evaluated for each assessment period a 2-year (4 semesters) rolling average of student performance will be conducted and analyzed. The PLO#1 coordinator will organize assembling a report of the data, allowing the department to pinpoint specific items to address. Each year students will be grouped into quartiles based upon their score as the published statistics for the MFE (published by ETS). • Students in the top quartile will be rated "excellent" • Students in the second quartile will be rated "good" • Students in the third quartile will be rated poor • Students in the bottom quartile will be rated “unacceptable".	Over a 2- year rolling average (4 academic semesters) 50% of students who take the MFAT should be rated either "good" or "excellent".
PROGRAM - CHEMISTRY BS 40.0501.00	Critical Thinking	Students will demonstrate ability to integrate subject knowledge, laboratory skills, analytical & problem-solving skills, critical thinking skills, & communication skills in a senior capstone research project.	Performance of undergraduate students in research will be assessed by their advisor during the spring semester of each year.	Capstone Assignment	Each undergraduate student participating in research work will be assessed by their faculty advisor using the SFASU Chemistry Research Assessment Rubric. The rubric assesses students in the following areas: Subject Knowledge, Laboratory Skills, Analytical & Problem-Solving Skills, Critical Thinking Skills, & Communication Skills. Each area is scored on a 0-20 point basis with the following subdivisions: Excellent (19-20), Good (16-18), Satisfactory (13-15), Needs Improvement (10-15), and Unacceptable (0-9).	At least 75% of the students assessed will score at least 70/100 on the SFASU Chemistry Research Assessment Rubric.

Appendix 1: Seeking Improvement - Stephen F. Austin State University General Education Improvement Objectives

Unit Name	Objective Name	Objective Description	How	Assessment Method Type	Assessment Method Narrative	Criterion
PROGRAM - CHEMISTRY BS 40.0501.00	Empirical & Quantitative Reasoning	Students pursuing a BS in Chemistry will demonstrate a mastery in the area of Empirical & Quantitative Skills.	Student performance in Empirical & Quantitative Skills for Chemistry majors will be assessed as part of the curriculum in CHEM 3021 (Quantitative Analysis Lab), which is a required course for students pursuing a BS degree in Chemistry. This course is normally offered in the spring semester.	Embedded Course Assignment	Student performance in Empirical & Quantitative Skills for Chemistry majors will be assessed as part of the curriculum in CHEM 3021 (Quantitative Analysis Lab), which is a required course for students pursuing a BS degree in Chemistry. This course is normally offered in the spring semester. A laboratory activity in which the abosrbances of food dyes are measured using UV-Visible spectrophotometry will be used to collect the EQS assessment data. Students will be directed to prepare samples of food dyes at varying concentrations. The UV-Visible spectrum for each sample will then be measured using a UV-Visible spectrophotometer. Students then analyze their data to prepare a Beer's Law plot of absorbance vs. concentration. The plotted data are then used to extrapolate various physical properties of each type of dye. Each student will then present his/her results in a lab report, which will be used to assess the individual student's EQS performance. Student lab reports will be scored by the faculty member assigned to teach the class using a rubric developed in the SFASU Dept. of Chemistry & Biochemistry. This rubric uses a 4-level scoring system (3 = Proficient, 2 = Adequate, 1 = Developing, & 0 = Absent) to score seven different rubric elements, which are listed below: 1.) Problem-solving strategy [Define Problem/Topic] 2.) Identification of variables, constants, & controls [Devise/Formulate a Plan] 3.) Evidence of thought process & work [Data/information collection and/r selection] 4.) Correct use of information [Data/information collection and/r selection] 5.) Completeness of answer [Analysis] 6.) Reasonableness of answer [Analysis] 7.) Explanation/conclusion [Conclusion]	The criterion for satisfactory fulfillment of this area is that 70% or more of the total cohort of Chemistry majors assessed in CHEM 3021 during the 3-year assessment period will achieve a score of 3 or 4 for each element in the SFASU Empirical & Quantitative Skills Rubric.
PROGRAM - COMMUNICATION STUDIES BA/BS 23.1304.00	Critical Thinking	Students majoring in Communication Studies will be able to demonstrate written competence in logical and critical thinking within communicative contexts.	Students in COMM 3300, 3311, and 3375 will receive direct instruction in the application of critical thinking. Students will curate an e-portfolio of assignments as they complete their Communication Studies Major coursework that satisfies the six objectives.	Portfolio	Students will submit their curated works through Brightspace D2L each semester as they complete their course. Each faculty member in the program will assess the submitted assignments for one of the above objectives and, at the end of the academic year, all faculty will come together to exchange their assessment report with each other, discuss findings and set actions for the next academic year. Students will submit any one of short term paper, long term paper, short question answers (minimum 3), long question answers (minimum 2), applied project, for this objective. This objective can be assessed in these five courses COMM 3300, 3311, 3355, 3375, 4335. Faculty members will designate which course and which semester the objective will be assessed.	80% of students will achieve a score of 3 (1-4 scale) or above on each criterion of the rubric.
PROGRAM - COMPUTER INFORMATION SYSTEMS BS-11.0101.00	Critical Thinking	Students will attain an ability to analyze a complex computing problem and to apply principles of computing and other relevant disciplines to identify solutions.	This will be accomplished by analyzing metrics from current and graduating students in addition to alumni. In particular the department will assess critical thinking through: 1) Embedded assignments within a common junior level CS course required of the major. 2) Exit interviews of graduating students which includes a self-study on mastery of specific program outcomes. 3) Survey of alumni (employers) to analyze their perception of our graduates' critical thinking skills in the workplace.	Embedded Exam Questions	The course instructor will assess all Computer Information Systems majors enrolled in CSCI 3302 during the Fall semester of odd years. The assessment will consist of embedded components of an exam requiring the development and/or modification of software solutions. Students are assessed on their ability to develop an appropriate solution to the given problem. The questions are open ended and will be assessed using a faculty developed rubric.	60% of the students completing the exam will achieve at least Acceptable on each of the questions.
PROGRAM - COMPUTER INFORMATION SYSTEMS BS-11.0101.00	Critical Thinking	Students will attain an ability to analyze a complex computing problem and to apply principles of computing and other relevant disciplines to identify solutions.	This will be accomplished by analyzing metrics from current and graduating students in addition to alumni. In particular the department will assess critical thinking through: 1) Embedded assignments within a common junior level CS course required of the major. 2) Exit interviews of graduating students which includes a self-study on mastery of specific program outcomes. 3) Survey of alumni (employers) to analyze their perception of our graduates' critical thinking skills in the workplace.	Self Assessment Study	Exit Interviews are given to graduating seniors where they are asked to assess their mastery of a specific outcome (objective), based on their self-assessment of their ability to achieve the outcome (objective). During the Spring semester of even years, the Department of Computer Science Chair will administer a self-assessment survey to all graduating seniors enrolled in CSCI 4270. The survey questions use a 5-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (I do not feel I have the skill or ability) to 5 (I feel I have fully mastered the ability or skill).	60% of graduating seniors completing the assessment will responds with a rating of 3 (I feel I have minimally achieved this outcome) or higher for a specific outcome).
PROGRAM - COMPUTER INFORMATION SYSTEMS BS-11.0101.00	Critical Thinking	Students will attain an ability to analyze a complex computing problem and to apply principles of computing and other relevant disciplines to identify solutions.	This will be accomplished by analyzing metrics from current and graduating students in addition to alumni. In particular the department will assess critical thinking through: 1) Embedded assignments within a common junior level CS course required of the major. 2) Exit interviews of graduating students which includes a self-study on mastery of specific program outcomes. 3) Survey of alumni (employers) to analyze their perception of our graduates' critical thinking skills in the workplace.	Survey	The Computer Science Advisory Council is composed of members who are graduates of our program(s) and/or hire graduates of our program(s). At the Fall Computer Science Advisory Council meeting during even years, all CS Advisory Council members will respond to a survey, administered by the Assessment Coordinator, which focuses on our graduates' mastery of a specific outcome, based on their observation of our graduates in the workplace. The survey questions use a 5-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (Strongly Disagree) to 5 (Strongly Agree).	60% of Advisory Council members will respond with a rating of 4 (Agree) or higher for a specific outcome.
PROGRAM - COMPUTER SCIENCE BS - 11.0101	Critical Thinking	Students will attain an ability to analyze a complex computing problem and to apply principles of computing and other relevant disciplines to identify solutions.	This will be accomplished by analyzing metrics from current students and alumni. In particular the department will assess critical thinking through: 1) Exit interviews of graduating students which includes a self-study on mastery of specific program outcomes. 2) Survey of alumni (employers) to analyze their perception of our graduates' critical thinking skills in the workplace.	Self Assessment Study	Exit Interviews are given to graduating seniors where they are asked to assess their mastery of a specific outcome (objective), based on their self-assessment of their ability to achieve the outcome (objective). During the Spring semester of even years, the Department of Computer Science Chair will administer a self-assessment survey to all graduating seniors enrolled in CSCI 4270. The survey questions use a 5-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (I do not feel I have the skill or ability) to 5 (I feel I have fully mastered the ability or skill).	60% of graduating seniors completing the assessment will responds with a rating of 3 (I feel I have minimally achieved this outcome) or higher for a specific outcome).
PROGRAM - COMPUTER SCIENCE BS - 11.0101	Critical Thinking	Students will attain an ability to analyze a complex computing problem and to apply principles of computing and other relevant disciplines to identify solutions.	This will be accomplished by analyzing metrics from current students and alumni. In particular the department will assess critical thinking through: 1) Exit interviews of graduating students which includes a self-study on mastery of specific program outcomes. 2) Survey of alumni (employers) to analyze their perception of our graduates' critical thinking skills in the workplace.	Survey	The Computer Science Advisory Council is composed of members who are graduates of our program(s) and/or hire graduates of our program(s). At the Fall Computer Science Advisory Council meeting during even years, all CS Advisory Council members will respond to a survey, administered by the Assessment Coordinator, which focuses on our graduates' mastery of a specific outcome, based on their observation of our graduates in the workplace. The survey questions use a 5-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (Strongly Disagree) to 5 (Strongly Agree).	60% of Advisory Council members will respond with a rating of 4 (Agree) or higher for a specific outcome.
PROGRAM - CONSTRUCTION MANAGEMENT - 52.2001.00 (BS)	Critical Thinking	The goal of this objective is to have the students achieve their critical thinking skill after completing AGET 1320/1120 and then being assest at the end of the CMGT 3114/3214.	Students will apply the construction problem solving skills of framing and building a framed structure.	Course Project	Assessment method may include additional exhibited structures, assignments in which students are evaluated by faculty and advisory board.	75% of the students will achieve the critical thinking / problem solving assessment rubric
PROGRAM - CREATIVE WRITING BFA 23.1302.00	Critical Thinking	Critical Thinking through Craft Analysis in ENGL 4363	Craft analysis will be addressed as a key component of the BFA. We set the goal for scores on the accompanying rubric at 4.	Embedded Course Assignment	Rubric is attached.	80% will score at least a 4 on the rubric.
PROGRAM - CRIMINAL JUSTICE BA/BS 43.0104.00	Critical Thinking	Students will demonstrate critical thinking and analytic skills appropriate to the criminal justice practice and scholarship.	Students will receive direct instruction on application of critical thinking in CRIJ 4342	Comprehensive Exam	Students taking CRIJ 4342 will demonstrate critical thinking skills through written reporting of statistical analysis throughout the semester.	80% of students taking CRIJ 4342 will earn an overall grade of at least 70% on a comprehensive final exam.
PROGRAM - CRIMINAL JUSTICE BA/BS 43.0104.00	Critical Thinking	Students will demonstrate critical thinking and analytic skills appropriate to the criminal justice practice and scholarship.	Students will receive direct instruction on application of critical thinking in CRIJ 3380	Embedded Exam Questions	Students taking CRIJ 3380 will demonstrate critical thinking through the application of criminological theory to the practice of criminal justice on items in the course's mid-term and final exams.	80% of students taking CRIJ 3380 will earn an average grade of at least 70% on exam items requiring them to apply criminological theory to the practice of criminal justice.

Appendix 1: Seeking Improvement - Stephen F. Austin State University General Education Improvement Objectives

Unit Name	Objective Name	Objective Description	How	Assessment Method Type	Assessment Method Narrative	Criterion
PROGRAM - CRIMINAL JUSTICE BA/BS 43.0104.00	Critical Thinking	Students will demonstrate critical thinking and analytic skills appropriate to the criminal justice practice and scholarship.	Students will receive direct instruction on application of critical thinking in CRIJ 3315.	Other	Students taking CRIJ 4341 will write a research proposal as the culmination of a written project begun in CRIJ 3315.	80% of students taking CRIJ 4341 will earn a grade of at least 70% on a research proposal project.
PROGRAM - DANCE BS 50.0301.00	Critical Thinking	Students will improve their critical thinking abilities	Students in DANC 3201 will receive direct instruction on creative thinking and innovation.	Examination	Students will be tested on the application of creative thinking and innovation in dance.	85% of students will receive a B or higher on the examination
PROGRAM - DATA ANALYTICS BS 11.0401.00	Critical Thinking	Students will attain an ability to analyze a complex computing problem and to apply principles of computing and other relevant disciplines to identify solutions.	This will be accomplished by analyzing metrics from current students and alumni. In particular the department will assess critical thinking through: 1) Embedded assignments within a common junior level CS course required of the major. 2) Exit interviews of graduating students which includes a self-study on mastery of specific program outcomes. 3) Survey of alumni (employers) to analyze their perception of our graduates' critical thinking skills in the workplace.	Embedded Exam Questions	The course instructor will assess all Data Analytics majors enrolled in CSCI 3302 during the Fall semester of odd years. The assessment will consist of embedded components of an exam requiring the development and/or modification of software solutions. Students are assessed on their ability to develop an appropriate solution to the given problem. The questions are open ended and will be assessed using a faculty developed rubric.	60% of the students completing the exam will achieve at least Acceptable on each of the questions.
PROGRAM - DATA ANALYTICS BS 11.0401.00	Critical Thinking	Students will attain an ability to analyze a complex computing problem and to apply principles of computing and other relevant disciplines to identify solutions.	This will be accomplished by analyzing metrics from current students and alumni. In particular the department will assess critical thinking through: 1) Embedded assignments within a common junior level CS course required of the major. 2) Exit interviews of graduating students which includes a self-study on mastery of specific program outcomes. 3) Survey of alumni (employers) to analyze their perception of our graduates' critical thinking skills in the workplace.	Self Assessment Study	Exit Interviews are given to graduating seniors where they are asked to assess their mastery of a specific outcome (objective), based on their self-assessment of their ability to achieve the outcome (objective). During the Spring semester of even years, the Department of Computer Science Chair will administer a self-assessment survey to all graduating seniors enrolled in CSCI 4365. The survey questions use a 5-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (I do not feel I have the skill or ability) to 5 (I feel I have fully mastered the ability or skill).	60% of graduating seniors completing the assessment will responds with a rating of 3 (I feel I have minimally achieved this outcome) or higher for a specific outcome).
PROGRAM - DATA ANALYTICS BS 11.0401.00	Critical Thinking	Students will attain an ability to analyze a complex computing problem and to apply principles of computing and other relevant disciplines to identify solutions.	This will be accomplished by analyzing metrics from current students and alumni. In particular the department will assess critical thinking through: 1) Embedded assignments within a common junior level CS course required of the major. 2) Exit interviews of graduating students which includes a self-study on mastery of specific program outcomes. 3) Survey of alumni (employers) to analyze their perception of our graduates' critical thinking skills in the workplace.	Survey	The Computer Science Advisory Council is composed of members who are graduates of our program(s) and/or hire graduates of our program(s). At the Fall Computer Science Advisory Council meeting during even years, all CS Advisory Council members will respond to a survey, administered by the Assessment Coordinator, which focuses on our graduates' mastery of a specific outcome, based on their observation of our graduates in the workplace. The survey questions use a 5-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (Strongly Disagree) to 5 (Strongly Agree).	60% of Advisory Council members will respond with a rating of 4 (Agree) or higher for a specific outcome.
PROGRAM - DEAF AND HARD OF HEARING BS 51.0202.00	Critical Thinking	The educator candidate will be able to demonstrate the knowledge and skills expected of beginning teachers during clinical teaching. The criteria for teaching are based on the Program Learning Outcomes for the Deaf and Hard-of-Hearing Educator Preparation Program.	Knowledge and skills will be demonstrated through candidates teaching a lesson during the candidate's coursework and evaluated via field experience observation rubrics completed by the educator candidates' mentor teacher(s) and/or university field supervisors/course instructors.	Embedded Course Assignment	During coursework, educator candidates will generate lesson plans and teach a lesson specifically tailored to the needs of students who are Deaf and Hard-of-Hearing.	Individual educator candidates will be considered successful if the overall score for a lesson plan is "Proficient" or better. The program will be considered successful if 80% or more of candidates score "Proficient" or better.
PROGRAM - DEAF AND HARD OF HEARING BS 51.0202.00	Critical Thinking	The educator candidate will be able to demonstrate the knowledge and skills expected of beginning teachers during clinical teaching. The criteria for teaching are based on the Program Learning Outcomes for the Deaf and Hard-of-Hearing Educator Preparation Program.	Knowledge and skills will be demonstrated through candidates teaching a lesson during the candidate's coursework and evaluated via field experience observation rubrics completed by the educator candidates' mentor teacher(s) and/or university field supervisors/course instructors.	Field Observation	During student teaching, teacher candidates are evaluated using a comprehensive summative form. The summative form reflects formative evaluations, using the same categories of skills. The summative form is included in the related document titled "FieldExperienceSummative".	Individual teacher candidates will be considered successful if the overall score for a lesson plan is "Acceptable" or better. The program will be considered successful if 70% or more of candidates score "Acceptable" or better. Note: As of Spring 2014, the previous designation of "Acceptable" has been changed to "Proficient". The new ratings follow: Exceeds Expectations (occurs Almost All of the Time) Proficient (Occurs Most of the Time) Basic (Occurs some of the time)
PROGRAM - DIETETICS AND NUTRITIONAL SCIENCES BS 51.3101.00 (DPD ACCREDITED)	Critical Thinking	Students will improve their critical thinking abilities	Students in NUTR 3339 will receive direct instrution on critical thinking.	Written assignment	Students will submit papers and essays that incoporate Observation, Analysis,Inference, Communication, and Problem solving.	80% of students will score a satisfactory or above on all areas of the instructor rubric
PROGRAM - DIETETICS AND NUTRITIONAL SCIENCES BS 51.3101.00 (DPD ACCREDITED)	Critical Thinking	Apply critical thinking skills (KRDN 1.3).	Direct Instruction	Written Assignr	Students will complete a research paper critically investigating the validity of nutrition information in the popular press through use of professional resources to refute the nutritional claim. This assignment is found in HMS 339 - Nutrition.	80% of students will score a satisfactory or better on all elements of the instructor rubric.
PROGRAM - ENGINEERING PHYSICS BS 14.1201.00	Critical Thinking	Students will attain an ability to identify, formulate, and solve complex engineering problems by applying principles of engineering, science, and mathematics. This was Outcome (e) prior to Fall 2018.	This will be assessed through embedded course assignments in ENGR 3343 and exam questions in ENGR 2401.	Embedded Course Assignment	The course instructor will assess students enrolled in ENGR 3343 (Digital Systems). Problems from homework assignments are used in the assessment and demonstrate problem solving skills using a faculty-developed scoring rubric.	The department expects that 70% of the students will achieve at least level 3 on the rubric.
PROGRAM - ENGINEERING PHYSICS BS 14.1201.00	Critical Thinking	Students will attain an ability to identify, formulate, and solve complex engineering problems by applying principles of engineering, science, and mathematics. This was Outcome (e) prior to Fall 2018.	This will be assessed through embedded course assignments in ENGR 3343 and exam questions in ENGR 2401.	Embedded Exam Questions	The course instructor will assess students enrolled in ENGR 2401 (Engineering Statics) during the Fall semester every third year beginning in Fall 2017. Problems from the first exam are used in the assessment and demonstrate knowledge of equilibrium conditions for forces and torques. The questions are problem solving and will be assessed using a five level scoring rubric.	The department expects that 70% of the students will achieve at least level 3 on the rubric.
PROGRAM - ENGLISH BA 23.0101.00	Critical Thinking	Critical Thinking Through Close Reading in ENGL 3381	Close reading will be addressed as a key component of the BA. We set the goal for scores on the accompanying rubric at 4.	Embedded Course Assignment	Rubric is attached.	80% will score at least a 4 on the rubric.
PROGRAM - ENVIRONMENTAL SCIENCE BS 03.0104.00	Critical Thinking	1. Students understand and are able to produce written reports with appropriate scientific format, evidence of critical thinking, clarity of discussion, and professional presentation. 2. Students understand and are able to produce oral presentations with appropriate scientific format, evidence of critical thinking, clarity of discussion, professional presentation, and ability to effectively answer questions.	Students in the Environmental Science BS degree program take multiple required courses in the curriculum that involve data interpretation and scientific report writing. Final assessment of their competency in both oral and written presentation of such information is made in the capstone course's semester-long final project.	Capstone Assignment	The capstone course, ENV 415 Environmental Assessment and Management, senior project report will be evaluated to determine student skills in producing scientific writing with appropriate scientific format, evidence of critical thinking, clarity of discussion, and professional presentation. The report will be scored in these components in a standardized rubric (Table 7) as: exceeds standard, meets standard, or standard not met.	Exceeds standard: Student demonstrates exceptional understanding in the measured aspect of scientific oral presentation. Meets standard: Student demonstrates basic understanding of the measured aspect of scientific oral presentation. Standard not met: Student does not demonstrate basic understanding of the measured aspect of scientific oral presentation. Eighty percent of the students will meet or exceed the standard in each of the performance areas.

Appendix 1: Seeking Improvement - Stephen F. Austin State University General Education Improvement Objectives

Unit Name	Objective Name	Objective Description	How	Assessment Method Type	Assessment Method Narrative	Criterion
PROGRAM - FOOD AND NUTRITION BS 19.0501.00 (NON-ACCRED. PROGRAM)	Critical Thinking	Students will improve their critical thinking abilities	Students in NUTR 3339 will receive direct instrution on critical thinking.	Written assignment	Students will submit papers and essays that incoporate Observation, Analysis,Inference, Communication, and Problem solving.	80% of students will score a satisfactory or above on all areas of the instructor rubric
PROGRAM - FOOD AND NUTRITION BS 19.0501.00 (NON-ACCRED. PROGRAM)	Critical Thinking	Apply critical thinking skills	Direct Instruction	Written Assignr	Students will complete a research paper critically investigating the validity of nutrition information in the popular press through use of professional resources to refute the nutritional claim. The assignment is in HMS 339 - Nutrition.	80% of students will score a satisfactory or better on all elements of the instructor rubric.
PROGRAM - FORESTRY BSF 03.0501.00	Critical Thinking	Demonstrate understanding and competency in the management of forest resources.	Forestry students are required in the senior capstone forestry course to prepare up to 3 management plans that address the desired objectives for different landowner and forest resources scenarios. Completing the plans require students to communicate with the landowners, measure the forest resources, analyze the data, and prescribe long-term forestland management operations that will meet the landowner objectives. The plans are communicated to the landowners.	Capstone Assignment	An assessment rubric will be utilized in the capstone course Forest Resource Management – FORS 4458 that will measure the degree to which students in the BSF program have developed their critical thinking skills as applied to forest management.	Eighty percent (80 %) of the students majoring in Forestry will achieve a rating of 2 or better on each item on the rubric, on a scale of 1 to 3 with 3 being above standard, 2 being meets standard, and 1 being below standard on the rubric designed to assess the exam questions. Rubric shown as Table 6. See Rubric in BSF PLO related document.
PROGRAM - General Agriculture BSAG	Empirical & Quantitative skills	The student will exhibit problem solving skills based on emperical & quantitative analytical reasoning.	Emperical and quantitative analytical skills will be introduces in HORT 1231/1131, Cultivating Plants after mid-semester using an embedded assignment related to calculating fertilizer requirments for plants. This assignment will be used to collect baseline data for the assessment method. Calculating fertilizer requirments based on plant/forage needs and soil type will be reinforced in AGRI 3341/3141, Soil Science. An embedded assignment will be graded and utilized for the assessment method.	Embedded Course Assignments	Grades for embedded fertilizer requirement calculations will be collected in HORT 1231/1131 and in AGRI 3341/3141. The ability to calculate fertilizer requirements based on information provided will be used to assess the students skills for emperical and quantitative analysis. The data from HORT 1231/1131 and AGRI 3341/3141 will be compared to evaluate the students development of emperical and quantitative analytical reasoning.	Students will score 70 percent or higher on the embedded fertilizer calculation questions to meet or exceed the standard. HORT 1231/1131 and AGRI 3341/3141 data will be compared to determine if students improve their emperical and quantitative analysis skills over their time in the program.
PROGRAM - GENERAL AGRICULTURE BSAG 01.0000.00	Empirical & Quantitative skills	Students will improve their emprical and quantitiative reasoning skills	Students in AGRI 3341 and AGRI 3141 will receive direct instrution on empirical and quantitative reasoning skills.	Written assignment	Students will submit papers and essays that require the inclusion of mathematical calculations and interpretation of the results.	Students will score 70% or higher on embeded calculations and results interpretation.
PROGRAM - GENERAL STUDIES 30.9999.01	Critical Thinking	Improve Critical Thinking Skills of General Studies Majors	We will incorporate assessment of critical thinking more explicitly into BAAS 4398	Capstone Assignment	Students in BAAS 4398 will demonstrate critical thinking and the ability to integrate multiple areas of study within a final capstone a paper.	At least 70% of students will meet or exceed expectations according to the rubric.
PROGRAM - GEOGRAPHY BA/BS 45.0701.00	Critical Thinking	Critical Thinking in Geography	All geographers teach about rivers in World Regional Geography (GEOG 1303). World Regional Geography will assess critical thinking as our program learning outcomes through course material that addresses the development of public policy and regulation of world rivers. Critical thinking will be taught with lectures and other class materials describing rational and scientific decision-making processes. These could include, but are not limited to, weighing advantages and disadvantages, risk assessment strategies, or cost benefit analysis.	Testing	Critical thinking will be measured with this exam question administered in sections of World Regional Geography. "Dam building is good for the environment because it provides clean electricity." a. True b. False c. None of the above Typically, students answer either true or false when administered the first time. The answer is none of the above. Discussions will follow that detail critical thinking tools. The use of river resources always has positive and negative outcomes. Critical thinking must be used to develop public policy for rivers when there is no clear or direct answer. Students will be taught critical thinking in analysis of dam building within world river basins such as the Paraná River of South America, the Nile River of Africa and the Yangtze River of China. An understanding of critical thinking will be measured on the final exam with the same question. The percentage of correct answers from all respondents will be submitted as a demonstration of mastery of the program learning outcome.	75% of all tested students who complete GEOG 1303 (World Regional Geography) master critical thinking through lecture, discussion, and then testing of mastery.
PROGRAM - GEOLOGY BS 40.0601.00	Critical Thinking	Students will demonstrate competency in using geologic literature, methods, tools, and technology to formulate, present, and solve problems.	Students will be given opportunities to interpret scientific literature associated with coursework and research. Upper-level courses will provide opportunities for students to interpret and present geologic information to their peers and faculty members associated with coursework. They will also be given opportunities to present their findings to the scientific community at local and regional conferences, and encouraged to publish their findings in scientific literature. Apply concepts, skills, and scientific communication to identify, analyze, and interpret geoscience phenomena. (	Embedded Course Assignment	Students will be asked to interpret water chemistry data sets in GEOL 4320 Geochemistry. Students will use modeling software to transform the data and write a technical laboratory report interpreting their results.	Students will be evaluated on the appropriate use of technology, data interpretation, and quality of their technical report. If 80% of the students score 70% or better, this will be considered "Acceptable". If 90% of the students score 70% or better, this will be considered "Excellent". Student work will be evaluated using the Senior Capstone Technical Report Rubric.
PROGRAM - GEOLOGY BS 40.0601.00	Critical Thinking	Students will demonstrate competency in using geologic literature, methods, tools, and technology to formulate, present, and solve problems.	Students will be encouraged to participate in undergraduate research associated with coursework, and faculty/student research opportunities. Our new Geoscience Concentration incorporates research as a vital component, providing a mechanism for student participation in faculty-led undergraduate research.	Embedded Course Assignment	Students will present and defend orally their geologic data and technical report produced in the capstone courses Geophysics (GEOL 4335) or Hydrogeology (GEOL 4349), to the faculty, staff, and students involved with the associated class. Students will be assessed on the basis of their ability to develop, present, and defend their geologic interpretation.	Students will be evaluated on the quality of their oral presentation and the appropriate use of technology. If 80% of the students score 70% or better, this will be considered "Acceptable". If 90% of the students score 70% or better, this will be considered "Excellent". Student work will be evaluated using the Senior Capstone Oral Presentation Rubric and the Senior Capstone Technical Report Rubric.
PROGRAM - GEOSPATIAL SCIENCE BS 45.0702.00	Quantitative and Empirical Reasoning	The student will demonstrate proficiency in GIS cartography. Map products produced in GISC 3390 by students majoring in spatial science will be critiqued using a rubric designed in the context of course objectives.	Students are required to develop a project that requires using geospatial analysis techniques to support solving natural or cultural resouce related issues. Issues and solutions are depicted using maps derived from geographic information systems hardware and software. Map scales and units must be accurately presented on the maps.	Embedded Course Assignment	Students enrolling in GISC 2324 are administered an exam with embedded questions to assess their empirical understanding. In addition, students in GISC 3390 are required to produce a course project that requires them to apply quantitative skills in developing map scales and units and accurately measure objects.	Eighty percent (80%) of the students majoring in spatial science will achieve a "meets standard" rating based the map assessment rubric.
PROGRAM - HEALTH SCIENCE BS 51.0000.00	Critical Thinking	Students will improve their critical thinking abilities	Students in HLTH 2335 will receive direct instruction in the application of critical thinking.	Direct Observation	Students will deliver a presentation on a health related topic that will be assessed using the critical thinking rubric.	75% of the students will attain a developing or higher level on the LEAP VALUE rubric for critical thinking.
PROGRAM - HISTORY BA 54.0101.00	Critical Thinking	Improve the critical thinking skills of history majors	HIST 3300 and HIS 4370 instructors will emphasize critical thinking skills in analyzing primary sources and evaluating the merits and limitations of arguments in secondary literature. >The Assessment Coordinator will develop a rubric by which assessors will assess the critical thinking demonstrated by students in the existing HIST 3300 and 4370 samples for the AY 2021-2022 assessment cycle to establish a baseline measure on which we can improve.	Written Assignr	HIST 3300 and HIS 4370 instructors will emphasize critical thinking skills in analyzing primary sources and evaluating the merits and limitations of arguments in secondary literature. >The Assessment Coordinator will develop a rubric by which assessors will assess the critical thinking demonstrated by students in the existing HIST 3300 and 4370 samples for the AY 2021-2022 assessment cycle to establish a baseline measure on which we can improve.	At least 70% of students will meet or exceed a 3 on the rubric.
PROGRAM - HOSPITALITY ADMINISTRATION	Empirical and Quantitative Skills	The student will calculate, interpret and understand key ratios, financial statements and budgets, related to the hospitality industry.	Students will be taught how to calculate, interpret, understand and apply key ratios, financial statements and budgets, related to the hospitality industry.		Each student would take the NRAEF Cost Control Examination as a culminating assessment in RSTO 2301	75% of students will receive at least 75% on the NRAEF Cost Control Examination
PROGRAM - HUMAN SCIENCES (FAMILY AND CONSUMER)	Critical Thinking	The students will use critical thinking to evaluate the strengths and weaknesses of family relationships. (HDFS 4315)	Students will complete an assignment asking them to answer researched reflection questions. This questions will have them evaluate families by choosing a topic from a list including family risk factors, consequences of family actions, life satisfaction, implications of education and socio-economic status, and implications of single family parenting.	Embedded Course Assignment	Students will respond to a writing prompt question that requires the student to use critical thinking skills to identify & explain issues, research the topic, apply context to the issue and draw conclusions about how family life professionals could help families navigate a variety of life events.	Faculty in this course will evaluate critical thinking on the assignment using the SFASU Critical Thinking Rubric. At least 80% of the students will have a score of 3 (Accomplished) or 4 (Capstone) on the assignment.
PROGRAM - HUMAN SCIENCES (HUMAN DEV & FAMILY STUDIES)	Critical Thinking	The students will use critical thinking to evaluate the strengths and weaknesses of family relationships. (HDFS 4315)	Students will complete an assignment asking them to answer researched reflection questions. This questions will have them evaluate families by choosing a topic from a list including family risk factors, consequences of family actions, life satisfaction, implications of education and socio-economic status, and implications of single family parenting.	Embedded Course Assignment	Students will respond to a writing prompt question that requires the student to use critical thinking skills to identify & explain issues, research the topic, apply context to the issue and draw conclusions about how family life professionals could help families navigate a variety of life events.	Faculty in this course will evaluate critical thinking on the assignment using the SFASU Critical Thinking Rubric. At least 80% of the students will have a score of 3 (Accomplished) or 4 (Capstone) on the assignment.
PROGRAM - HUMAN SERVICES BS 44.0000.00	Critical Thinking	The student will respect and use critical and creative thinking, skeptical inquiry, and, when possible, the scientific approach to solve problems related to human behavior.	Critical and creative thinking, skeptical inquiry, and problem solving will be introduced through the human services curriculum.	Embedded Course Assignment	in HSRV 4398 and 4199 (Capstone Portfolio) students will demonstrate knowledge of the use of standardized measure scores in career decision-making. b. Students demonstrate knowledge of appropriate structure and content of professional resumes. c. Students demonstrate knowledge of appropriate structure and content of application for employment coverletters. d. Students demonstrate knowledge of effective employment/graduate school search strategies. e. Students demonstrate knowledge of effective professional poise and communication in job/graduate school interview process.	85% of students will achieve an accomplished rating or better on the career decision-making rubric.

Appendix 1: Seeking Improvement - Stephen F. Austin State University General Education Improvement Objectives

Unit Name	Objective Name	Objective Description	How	Assessment Method Type	Assessment Method Narrative	Criterion
PROGRAM - INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY BA 11.0103.00	Critical Thinking	Students will attain an ability to analyze a complex computing problem and to apply principles of computing and other relevant disciplines to identify solutions.	This will be accomplished by analyzing metrics from current students and alumni. In particular the department will assess critical thinking through: 1) Embedded assignments within a common junior level IT course required of the major. 2) Exit interviews of graduating students which includes a self-study on mastery of specific program outcomes. 3) Survey of alumni (employers) to analyze their perception of our graduates' critical thinking skills in the workplace.	Embedded Course Assignment	The course instructor will assess all Information Technology majors enrolled in CSIT 3350 during the Spring semester of odd years. The assessment will consist of a course project, assessed as part of the final exam, requiring the analysis and design of requirements for problem solution. Students are assessed on their ability to develop the computing requirements for an appropriate solution to the given problem. The programming assignment(s) will be assessed using a faculty developed rubric.	60% of the students completing the project exam will score at least Acceptable on the project.
PROGRAM - INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY BA 11.0103.00	Critical Thinking	Students will attain an ability to analyze a complex computing problem and to apply principles of computing and other relevant disciplines to identify solutions.	This will be accomplished by analyzing metrics from current students and alumni. In particular the department will assess critical thinking through: 1) Embedded assignments within a common junior level IT course required of the major. 2) Exit interviews of graduating students which includes a self-study on mastery of specific program outcomes. 3) Survey of alumni (employers) to analyze their perception of our graduates' critical thinking skills in the workplace.	Self Assessment Study	Exit Interviews are given to graduating seniors where they are asked to assess their mastery of a specific outcome (objective), based on their self-assessment of their ability to achieve the outcome (objective). During the Spring semester of even years, the Department of Computer Science Chair will administer a self-assessment survey to all graduating seniors enrolled in CSCI 4111. The survey questions use a 5-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (I do not feel I have the skill or ability) to 5 (I feel I have fully mastered the ability or skill).	60% of graduating seniors completing the assessment will responds with a rating of 3 (I feel I have minimally achieved this outcome) or higher for a specific outcome).
PROGRAM - INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY BA 11.0103.00	Critical Thinking	Students will attain an ability to analyze a complex computing problem and to apply principles of computing and other relevant disciplines to identify solutions.	This will be accomplished by analyzing metrics from current students and alumni. In particular the department will assess critical thinking through: 1) Embedded assignments within a common junior level IT course required of the major. 2) Exit interviews of graduating students which includes a self-study on mastery of specific program outcomes. 3) Survey of alumni (employers) to analyze their perception of our graduates' critical thinking skills in the workplace.	Survey	The Computer Science Advisory Council is composed of members who are graduates of our program(s) and/or hire graduates of our program(s). At the Fall Computer Science Advisory Council meeting during even years, all CS Advisory Council members will respond to a survey, administered by the Assessment Coordinator, which focuses on our graduates' mastery of a specific outcome, based on their observation of our graduates in the workplace. The survey questions use a 5-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (Strongly Disagree) to 5 (Strongly Agree).	60% of Advisory Council members will respond with a rating of 4 (Agree) or higher for a specific outcome.
Program - INTERDISCIPLINARY STUDIES BSIS 30.9999.01 MLG	Critical Thinking	Students will improve their critical thinking abilities	BSIS MLG students will receive direct instruction in the application of critical thinking.	Portfolio	Students will be assess on their ability to make instructional decisions based on their analysis of informal assessment data collected during their practicum placement	80% of students will attain an acceptable rating.
PROGRAM - INTERDISCIPLINARY STUDIES BSIS 30.9999.01 MLG	Critical Thinking	Use of Informal Assessment Data for Change	Direct Instruction	Portfolio	Teacher candidates learn to plan lessons and assessments in MLGE 3210. They practice these skills in MLGE 4201/4111 and 4250/4251. MLG professors will provide greater emphasize using data to make instructional decisions throughout all courses. The goal will be assessed by the work sample in MLGE 4250.	95% of middle level teaching candidates use informal assessment data to make instructional decisions as demonstrated through their work sample project.
Program - INTERDISCIPLINARY STUDIES BSIS 30.9999.01 MLG CMPLTR	Critical Thinking	Students will improve their critical thinking abilities	BSIS MLG students will receive direct instruction in the application of critical thinking.	Portfolio	Students will be assess on their ability to make instructional decisions based on their analysis of informal assessment data collected during their practicum placement	80% of students will attain an acceptable rating.
PROGRAM - INTERDISCIPLINARY STUDIES BSIS 30.9999.01 MLG COMPL	Critical Thinking	Use of Informal Assessment Data for Change	Direct Instruction	Portfolio	Teacher candidates learn to plan lessons and assessments in MLGE 3210. They practice these skills in MLGE 4201/4111 and 4250/4251. MLG professors will provide greater emphasize using data to make instructional decisions throughout all courses. The goal will be assessed by the work sample in MLGE 4250.	95% of middle level teacher candidates will use informal assessment to make instructional decisions.
PROGRAM - INTERDISCIPLINARY STUDIES BSIS 30.9999.01 W/GEN EC-6	Critical Thinking	Candidates demonstrate and apply understandings of major concepts, skills, and practices, as they interpret disciplinary curricular standards and related expectations within and across literacy, mathematics, science, and social studies.	BSIS field experience courses have testing pathways that support candidates in preparing for, gaining clearance, and passing the TExES Core Content Exam. Beginning in ECED 3300, candidates will begin learning edTPA language and rubrics and will continue study and application throughout ECED 3320, ELED 4330, and ELED 4143. Candidates in ECED 3301, ECED 3320, and ELED 4330 will design and teach lessons based on content area TEKS and best practices. Each of these three assessment tasks require candidates to synthesize learning from courses and use critical thinking skills to plan and teach lessons that are developmentally appropriate and differentiated/individualized for all students.	Embedded Course Assignment	The Curriculum Content Assessment consists of a lesson plan assessment by faculty of 1 science lesson, 1 social studies lesson, 1 math lesson, and 1 English/Language Arts lesson as embedded assignments in the Field Experience I and Field Experience II semesters. Candidates are rated across all criteria using a 3 (exemplary), 2 (acceptable), and 1 (not acceptable) score. Results are calculated for each category to ascertain areas that need addressing in the program. Data is reviewed to locate trends. Scores are collected, maintained and analyzed by faculty.	It is the goal of the department that 90% of the candidates assessed will score 2 (acceptable) in all categories of the Curriculum Content assessment.
PROGRAM - INTERDISCIPLINARY STUDIES BSIS 30.9999.01 W/GEN EC-6	Critical Thinking	Candidates demonstrate and apply understandings of major concepts, skills, and practices, as they interpret disciplinary curricular standards and related expectations within and across literacy, mathematics, science, and social studies.	BSIS field experience courses have testing pathways that support candidates in preparing for, gaining clearance, and passing the TExES Core Content Exam. Beginning in ECED 3300, candidates will begin learning edTPA language and rubrics and will continue study and application throughout ECED 3320, ELED 4330, and ELED 4143. Candidates in ECED 3301, ECED 3320, and ELED 4330 will design and teach lessons based on content area TEKS and best practices. Each of these three assessment tasks require candidates to synthesize learning from courses and use critical thinking skills to plan and teach lessons that are developmentally appropriate and differentiated/individualized for all students.	Portfolio	Candidates participate in clinical teaching during their final semester, during which candidates submit an edTPA portfolio. edTPA is a subject-specific assessment in the areas of literacy and mathematics. The assessment features a common architecture focused on three tasks: Planning (Task 1), Instruction (Task 2), and Assessment (Task 3) in the area of Literacy. Candidates also complete an Assessment (Task 4) related to mathematics. Each task is evaluated by educators who work for edTPA. Texas, including SFA piloted the edTPA portfolio in Fall 2020. There is not set pass/fail standard for edTPA in Texas, due to the pilot being newly implemented. Data over time is reviewed to locate trends. (Active)	80% of BSIS candidates will receive no more than 1 condition code on their first attempt of their edTPA portfolio.
PROGRAM - INTERDISCIPLINARY STUDIES BSIS 30.9999.01 W/GEN EC-6	Critical Thinking	Candidates demonstrate and apply understandings of major concepts, skills, and practices, as they interpret disciplinary curricular standards and related expectations within and across literacy, mathematics, science, and social studies.	BSIS field experience courses have testing pathways that support candidates in preparing for, gaining clearance, and passing the TExES Core Content Exam. Beginning in ECED 3300, candidates will begin learning edTPA language and rubrics and will continue study and application throughout ECED 3320, ELED 4330, and ELED 4143. Candidates in ECED 3301, ECED 3320, and ELED 4330 will design and teach lessons based on content area TEKS and best practices. Each of these three assessment tasks require candidates to synthesize learning from courses and use critical thinking skills to plan and teach lessons that are developmentally appropriate and differentiated/individualized for all students.	Standardized Test	Candidates participate in the Core Subjects EC-6 (test 291) each semester. The Core Subjects assessed include English language arts, mathematics, science, and social studies. The department assessment coordinator retrieves the scores from the state of Texas and maintains the scores by candidate name and test date. Data is reviewed annually to show current trends in candidate performance in the areas of English language arts, mathematics, science, and social studies.	Candidates are rated across all criteria using a 3 (exemplary), 2 (acceptable), and 1 (not acceptable) score. Results are calculated for each category to ascertain areas that need addressing in the program. Data is reviewed to locate trends. Scores are collected, maintained and analyzed by faculty.
PROGRAM - INTERDISCIPLINARY STUDIES BSIS 30.9999.01 W/SPEC ED EC-12	Critical Thnking	Using Knowledge/Data to Inform Instruction - Core Critical Thinking	Candidates use knowledge of individuals' development, learning needs, and assessment data to inform decisions about effective instruction. Candidates use explicit instructional strategies and employ strategies to promote active engagement and increased motivation to individualize instruction to support each individual. Candidates use whole group instruction, flexible grouping, small group instruction, and individual instruction. Candidates teach individuals to use meta-/cognitive strategies.	Written examination work sample	Teacher candidates learn to plan lessons and assessments in MLGE 3210. They practice these skills in MLGE 4201/4111 and 4250/4251. MLG professors will provide greater emphasize using data to make instructional decisions throughout all courses. The goal will be assessed by the work sample in MLGE 4250.	80% of BSIS candidates will receive no condition codes on their first attempt of the edTPA critical thinking component..
PROGRAM - INTERIOR DESIGN	Critical Thinking	Students' interior design work will be assessed by faculty to determine if students are successfully applying critical thinking skills.	Critical thinking skills as they relate to interior design will be incorporated throughout the curriculum.	Portfolio	Students will complete a portfolio review focusing on Creative Thinking, Manual Drafting, Volumetric Thinking, Color Application, and Historical Awareness, The portfolio will be assessed based on the application of critical thinking in the assembly of the portfolio.	80% of students will successfully demonstrate critical thinking in the portfolio review.
PROGRAM - INTERNATIONAL AND INTERCULTURAL COMMUNICATION BA 09.0907.00	Critical Thinking	Students will analyze language and other cultural products and practices by applying concepts, correlating and synthesizing information and demonstrating competence in logical and critical thinking within communicative contexts.	In all 4000 level language courses students will write a paper in the target language that will be assessed for critical thinking. This does not include 4000 level translation and interpretation courses.	Embedded Course Assignment	In all 4000 level language courses students will write a paper in the target language that will be assessed for critical thinking. This does not include 4000 level translation and interpretation courses.	Students will achieve a Satisfactory score (70%) or better on the assessed area.
PROGRAM - KINESIOLOGY BS 31.0505.00	Empirical & Quantitative skills	Students will improve their emprical and quantitiative reasoning skills	Students in KINE 1338 will be introduced to various critical thinking models	Written assignment	Students will submit a written assignment on the incorporation of heart rate data into physical exercise programs.	90% of the students will able to identify their resting heart rate, their maximum training heart rate, their heart rate reserve, their training intensity heart rate and use this data to design an exercise program.
PROGRAM - KINESIOLOGY BS 31.0505.00	Empirical & Quantitative skills	Kinesiology majors will improve their empirical and quantitative reasoning ability	Students will be instructed in how to analyze and apply empirical and quantitative calculations into a structured exercise plan	Written assignment	90% of the students will able to identify their resting heart rate, their maximum training heart rate, their heart rate reserve, and their training intensity heart rate and appropriately incorporated these values into a personal exercise program.	90% of the students will correctly calculate and apply the various heart rate values within their exercise programs.
PROGRAM - LIBERAL STUDIES BA 24.0101.00	Critical Thinking	Improve Critical thinking skills of liberal studies graduates	Within students' capstone seminar, we will link writing and critical thinking in overall assessment	Capstone Assignment	Method 1: Students enrolled in the capstone seminar will compile a portfolio of written work in which they apply critical thinking skills to integrate their three areas of study. In terms of students enrolled in the teaching sequence, the portfolio will consist of three writing samples from the area(s) of concentration. In terms of student in LBA 398, the portfolio will consist of three writing samples (an analysis/definition of interdisciplinary learning, a seminar paper interweaving three areas of study, and a final self analysis on interdisciplinary education). (Active)	At least 70% of students will achieve ratings of satisfactory or above on rubric.

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Unit Name	Objective Name	Objective Description	How	Assessment Method Type	Assessment Method Narrative	Criterion
PROGRAM - MASS COMMUNICATION BA/BS 09.0102.00	Critical Thinking	Students will demonstrate an understanding of the role of media in society.	Throughout the program, in all sequences, students will be exposed to discussions and projects that demonstrate the role, function, and impact of media in contemporary society.	Standardized Test	An exam assessing the student's understanding of the role and responsibilities of media in contemporary society will be given early in the semester in MCOM 1307 Survey of Mass Communication. The same exam will be given to in MCOM 4306 Media Ethics late in the semester.	We will seek an overall improvement of at least 30% in the mean score.
PROGRAM - MATHEMATICS BS 27.0101.00	Empirical & Quantitative skills	SFA Mathematics majors grow from a computational understanding of mathematics to an integrated approach which includes critical thinking proficiency, computational facility, conceptual understanding, and problem-solving persistence.	In all mathematics majors courses, mathematics faculty will incorporate activities that will encourage the development of computational facility and critical thinking proficiency, and will incorporate opportunities to observe, encourage and critique the development of these skills.	Embedded Course Assignment	Students in sophomore and senior seminars will investigate and present a problem, approved by the instructor, that requires persistence in problem solving. The presentation should include a statement of the problem, motivation, and relevant definitions at a level appropriate to an audience of their peers and other non-experts. The importance and mathematical content of the problem should be made clear in the presentation.	Senior seminar students demonstrate more advanced critical thinking skills, computational facility, conceptual understanding, and problem solving persistence than their sophomore seminar peers.
PROGRAM - MEDICAL HUMANITIES	Critical Thinking	Students will be able to analyze and synthesize information in a coherent, critical manner.	We will incorporate assessment of critical thinking more explicitly into MEHU 3300	Capstone Assignment	Students in MEHU 3300, Introduction to Medical Humanities, will write a common essay that demands critical thinking about the interdisciplinary field of medical humanities. (Active)	At least 75% of students will receive a rating of "meets expectations" or higher on task.
PROGRAM - MERCHANDISING	Critical Thnking	Students should be able to identify global issues and trends in the field of merchandising	Critical thinking skills will be introduced in MRCH 2301 and reinforced thought the Merchandising program of study.	Embedded Course Assignments	In MRCH 2301, students will be assessed on their knowledge of global issues in the field of merchandising through a research assignment about the global cotton industry and in MRCH 4319, students will be assessed on their knowledge of global issues in merchandising related to consumer mega-trends through a comprehensive research assignment.	70% of studetnts will attain a developing or better rating using the critical thinking rubric for the MRCH 2301 assignment and 80% of students will attain an accomplished or higher rating on the MRCH 4319 assignment.
PROGRAM - MODERN LANGUAGES BA 16.0101.00	Critical Thinking and Expression	Students will analyze language, literary texts, and other cultural products and practices by applying concepts, correlating and synthesizing information.	Students will analyze language, literary texts, and other cultural products and practices by applying concepts, correlating and synthesizing information.	Embedded Course Assignment	In all 4000 level courses students will write a paper in the target language that will be assessed for critical thinking. This does not include 4000 level translation and interpretation courses.	Students will achieve a Satisfactory score (70%) or better on the assessed area.
PROGRAM - MUSIC BM 50.0901.00	Critical Thinking	Students will improve their critical thinking abilities	The music curriculum presents several unique elements of critical thinking that can be analyzed and assessed throughout a students academic career. The academic music core curriculum includes Music Theory, Aural Skills and Musicology, while the interpretive nature of the performance requirements of a written piece of music provides the student with an additional opportunity to display critical thinking skills. A capstone project presented in MUTC 4361 - Form & Analysis combines the skills acquired in Music Theory/Aural Skills and Musicology will demonstrate the students ability to comprehend, analyze, and express in an extensive written form for assessment. The attached rubric outlines the assessment criteria. In addition, the final performance project presented in MUAP 4095 - Senior Recital will provide the student to display their interpretative skills on published, commissioned, or improvised music based on a set chord structure. The attached Senior Recital form with performance rubric outlines the assessment criteria.	Capstone Assignment	MUTC 4361 - Capstone Project Assessment. The academic music core curriculum includes Music Theory, Aural Skills and Musicology, while the interpretive nature of the performance requirements of a written piece of music provides the student with an additional opportunity to display critical thinking skills. A capstone project presented in MUTC 4361 - Form & Analysis combines the skills acquired in Music Theory/Aural Skills and Musicology will demonstrate the students ability to comprehend, analyze, and express in an extensive written form for assessment. The attached rubric outlines the assessment criteria.	70 percent of the students will meet or exceed the standard. Exceeds standard: Excellent analysis that demonstrates original thought and command of relevant theory and history. Examples and figures are amply annotated and thoroughly discussed. Meets standard: Good analysis that sheds light on some aspects of the piece despite the occasional small misunderstanding of relevant theory and/or history. Examples and figures lack sufficient Standard not met: Analysis is flawed due to significant misunderstandings of relevant theory and/or history. Examples and figures lack sufficient annotations and discussion.
PROGRAM - MUSIC BM 50.0901.00	Critical Thinking	Students will understand, analyze, and perform music with appropriate evidence of critical thinking.	The music curriculum presents several unique elements of critical thinking that can be analyzed and assessed throughout a students academic career. The academic music core curriculum includes Music Theory, Aural Skills and Musicology, while the interpretive nature of the performance requirements of a written piece of music provides the student with an additional opportunity to display critical thinking skills. A capstone project presented in MUTC 4361 - Form & Analysis combines the skills acquired in Music Theory/Aural Skills and Musicology will demonstrate the students ability to comprehend, analyze, and express in an extensive written form for assessment. The attached rubric outlines the assessment criteria. In addition, the final performance project presented in MUAP 4095 - Senior Recital will provide the student to display their interpretative skills on published, commissioned, or improvised music based on a set chord structure. The attached Senior Recital form with performance rubric outlines the assessment criteria.	Performance/Exhibit	MUAP 4095/4096 Senior Recital.	70 percent of the students will meet or exceed the standard. Exceeds standard: Student demonstrates exceptional understanding in the application of critical thinking in musical performance of rhythm, tone production, intonation, phrasing or diction, and dynamics. Meets standard: Student demonstrates basic understanding in the application of critical thinking in musical performance including rhythm, tone production, intonation, phrasing or diction, and dynamics. There are some minor inconsistencies with the musical interpretation, but the basic musical elements are met. Standard not met: Student does not demonstrate basic understanding in the application of critical thinking in the musical performance elements.
PROGRAM - NURSING (POST RN) BSN 51.3801.00	Critical Thinking	Apply knowledge of the physical, social, and behavioral sciences in the provision of nursing care based on theory and evidence-based practice	Teaching students critical thinking starts the first day of nursing school. We require students to apply the sciences they have learned such as Anatomy and Physiology, Chemistry, Microbiology, and Pathophysiology to their nursing courses. Students are taught the nursing process, a systematic, rational method of planning and providing specialized nursing, during their first few weeks of class and must continually apply it on care plans, concept maps, documentation, exams, simulations, and clinical throughout their nursing school career, on NCLEX-RN, and throughout their nursing career. Reflection, another form of critical thinking, is the process of thinking about concerns associated with an experience and giving insight into personal behavior, thoughts, and decisions. Nursing students are also taught this practice through reflective journals and debriefing after simulation and clinicals. It is also used throughout nursing school and into the nursing career. The traditional RN-BSN student has already passed NCLEX-RN and some have been nurses for a number of years and have been practicing critical thinking during that time. The RN-BSN program teaches these students to further develop and apply critical thinking in the areas of leadership and evidence-based practice.	Capstone Assignment	The RN-BSN Coordinator will evaluate the Capstone ePortfolio Project that the students submit the term of graduation. The student showcases their critical thinking by supporting the Program Learning Outcomes with the work they have submitted over the course of their time in the RN-BSN program. The ePortfolio is evaluated using a rubric. The rubric requires the student to provide high level commentary with evidence of critical thinking and analysis expected of a college student. The student must provide a clear explanation and supporting documentation for all seven of the End of Program Student Learning Outcomes to receive an exemplary score.	90% of the students will make an 80% or higher score on their Capstone ePortfolio Project.
PROGRAM - NURSING BSN 51.3801.00	Critical Thinking	Apply knowledge of the physical, social, and behavioral sciences in the provision of nursing care based on theory and evidence-based practice	Teaching students critical thinking starts the first day of nursing school. We require students to apply the sciences they have learned such as Anatomy and Physiology, Chemistry, Microbiology, and Pathophysiology to their nursing courses. Students are taught the nursing process, a systematic, rational method of planning and providing specialized nursing, during their first few weeks of class and must continually apply it on care plans, concept maps, documentation, exams, simulations, and clinical throughout their nursing school career, on NCLEX-RN, and throughout their nursing career. Reflection, another form of critical thinking, is the process of thinking about concerns associated with an experience and giving insight into personal behavior, thoughts, and decisions. Nursing students are also taught this practice through reflective journals and debriefing after simulation and clinicals. It is also used throughout nursing school and into the nursing career.	Standardized Test	Upon graduation from the DeWitt School of Nursing (SON) with a Bachelor of Science in Nursing (BSN), the graduate nurse must test to obtain licensure to practice as a Registered Nurse (RN). This is achieved by successfully passing the National Council Licensure Examination for Registered Nurses (NCLEX-RN). According to the National Council of State Boards of Nursing (NCSBN) that administers the examination, the NCLEX-RN assesses the graduate nurses' understanding and application of four major categories: 1) safe, effective care environment, 2) health promotion and maintenance, 3) psychosocial integrity, and 4) physiological integrity. The 2019 RN Test Plan states, "All task statements in the 2019 NCLEX-RN Test Plan require the nurse to apply the fundamental principles of clinical decision-making and critical thinking to nursing practice. The test plan also assumes that the nurse integrates concepts from the following bodies of knowledge: social sciences (psychology and sociology); biological sciences (anatomy, physiology, biology, and microbiology); and physical sciences (chemistry and physics)." Examples from the NCLEX-RN Test plan include using clinical decision making/critical thinking 1) in situations related to security planning, 2) for emergency response plan, 3) when calculating dosages, and 4) when addressing expected effects/outcomes of medications. NCSBN administers the examination through an approved Texas Board of Nursing (TxBON) secured testing organization. The NCLEX-RN is a computerized adaptive test (CAT) with multiple choice and alternate item format questions, such as multiple response, fill in the blank, pictures, and audio questions. The graduate nurse receives a result of pass or fail. The NCLEX-RN first time pass rate from NCSBN is reported twice a year from October to March and from April to September.	85% of graduates will pass NCLEX-RN exam on the first attempt
PROGRAM - PHILOSOPHY BA 38.0101.00	Critical Thinking	Students will explore critical thinking skill approaches through Small Group Work in PHIL 1301	Students in PHIL 1301 will receive direct instruction in the application of critical thinking and participate in group work projects.	Discussion Assignment	Students present their ideas clearly with supporting evidence, and respond to one another thoughtfully and collegially.	80% of the students will attain a meets expectations or higher on the Critical Thinking rubric.
PROGRAM - PHYSICS BS 40.0801.00	Critical Thinking	The student will demonstrate proficiency in physics by developing critical thinking and problem-solving skills.	The department will embed exam questions into PHYS 2325, PHYS 3333, and PHYS 4340. This provides a longitudinal sample stratified by year. A problem-solving rubric is utilized for exam questions. The department expects that 70% will achieve a level 2 (acceptable) or higher on the problem solving rubric at each developmental stage.	Embedded Exam Questions	The course instructor will assess all physics majors enrolled in PHYS 2325 Technical Physics I during the Fall semester. The assessment will consist of embedded components in the final examination. Students are assessed on their ability to: 1) identify essential knowns and unknowns 2) Provide a diagram or visual relation between knowns and unknowns 3) Identify a mathematical relationship between knowns and unknowns 4) Provide a solution with appropriate physical interpretation The questions are open-ended and will be assessed using a faculty developed rubric.	70% of assessed students will achieve an average of adequate rating in each of the four categories.

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Unit Name	Objective Name	Objective Description	How	Assessment Method Type	Assessment Method Narrative	Criterion
PROGRAM - PHYSICS BS 40.0801.00	Critical Thinking	The student will demonstrate proficiency in physics by developing critical thinking and problem-solving skills.	The department will embed exam questions into PHYS 2325, PHYS 3333, and PHYS 4340. This provides a longitudinal sample stratified by year. A problem-solving rubric is utilized for exam questions. The department expects that 70% will achieve a level 2 (acceptable) or higher on the problem solving rubric at each developmental stage.	Embedded Exam Questions	The course instructor will assess all physics majors enrolled in PHYS 3333 Modern Physics during the Fall semester. The assessment will consist of embedded components in the final examination. Students are assessed on their ability to: 1) identify essential knowns and unknowns 2) Provide a diagram or visual relation between knowns and unknowns 3) Identify a mathematical relationship between knowns and unknowns 4) Provide a solution with appropriate physical interpretation The questions are open-ended and will be assessed using a faculty developed rubric.	70% of assessed students will achieve an average of adequate rating in each of the four categories.
PROGRAM - PHYSICS BS 40.0801.00	Critical Thinking	The student will demonstrate proficiency in physics by developing critical thinking and problem-solving skills.	The department will embed exam questions into PHYS 2325, PHYS 3333, and PHYS 4340. This provides a longitudinal sample stratified by year. A problem-solving rubric is utilized for exam questions. The department expects that 70% will achieve a level 2 (acceptable) or higher on the problem solving rubric at each developmental stage.	Embedded Exam Questions	The course instructor will assess all physics majors enrolled in PHYS 4340 Electricity & Magnetism during the Spring semester. The assessment will consist of embedded components in the final examination. Students are assessed on their ability to: 1) identify essential knowns and unknowns 2) Provide a diagram or visual relation between knowns and unknowns 3) Identify a mathematical relationship between knowns and unknowns 4) Provide a solution with appropriate physical interpretation The questions are open-ended and will be assessed using a faculty developed rubric. (Active)	70% of assessed students will achieve an average of adequate rating in each of the four categories.
PROGRAM - PHYSICS BS 40.0801.00	Critical Thinking	The student will demonstrate proficiency in physics by developing critical thinking and problem-solving skills.	The department will embed exam questions into PHYS 2325, PHYS 3333, and PHYS 4340. This provides a longitudinal sample stratified by year. A problem-solving rubric is utilized for exam questions. The department expects that 70% will achieve a level 2 (acceptable) or higher on the problem solving rubric at each developmental stage.	External Review	The Physics Major Field test will be completed by students within the required PHYS 4170 Practicum in Physics course. A three-year running average of aggregated scores will be used for assessment. The assessment stratifies between basic and advanced physics.	The department expects the three-year running average to meet or exceed the 50th percentile and average scores overall and in the categories of basic and advanced physics.
PROGRAM - POLITICAL SCIENCE	Critical Thinking	The student will critically analyze and critique political institutions and/or complex political issues	Critical Thinking will be introduced in GOVT 2306 and reinforced in all political science courses.	Written assignment	Student will produce an analytical paper analyzing and critically discussing political institutions and issues. These hypotheses will be assessed using the "Analytical Skill Rubric."	At least 75% of students in the senior capstone seminar will achieve a score of "minimal" on all measures of success in the Analytical Skill Rubric for the analytical paper assignment.
PROGRAM - PRE-AUDIOLOGY	Empirical and Quantitative Skills	Student will anlayze, interpret, and synthesize audiometric data in the ID and management of hearing disorders.	Use of data to indentify and manage hearing disorders will be introduced in CSDS 2300.	Examination	Students enrolled in CSDS 2340 will analyze, interpret and synthesize the identification of hearing disorders. Pre-Audiology students will demonstrate this by answering 5 embedded exam questions within the test section titled Identification of hearing disorders	90% of the students will achieve this goal by scoring 70% or better on the 5 exam questions in the section titled Identification and management of hearing disorders
PROGRAM - PSYCHOLOGY BA / BS 42.0101.00	Empirical and Quantitative Skills	The student will respect and use critical and creative thinking, skeptical inquiry, and, when possible, the scientific approach to solve problems related to behavior and mental processes. The student will effectively understand and interpret statistical information presented in various formats.	A pre-test to measure students initial understanding of empirical and quantitative concepts will be administered upon entering the psychology department research sequence in the course PSYH 3300: Scientific Literacy. This pre-test will consist of questions covering concepts that will taught throughout the research sequence. Upon completion of the research sequence with the course PSYH 3341: Research Methods, the measure will again be administered and student improvement will be assessed and an action plan developed from the results.	Comprehensive Exam	A quiz covering elements of quantitative and empirical skill (for example, understanding p-value, understanding conditional probability, identifying independent and dependent variables, understanding correlations) will be administered pre (in PSYC 3300: Scientific Literacy) and post (PSYC 3341: Research Methods) to assess student learning.	Post test scores will show improvement in understanding (more correct) for 90% of students. In addition, 75% of students will show at least 70% correct on the post-exam.
PROGRAM - PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION BS - 44.0401	Critical Thinking	The student will demonstrate critical reasoning, problem solving abilities, and ethical considerations relating to public responsibility.	Students will be introduced to critical thinking models through course lectures and readings	Written assignment	All students enrolled in PBA 400 for the spring semester are assessed. During the course, students are required to complete a 10-15 page term paper. The term paper is assigned at the beginning of the semester and students have the semester to complete the paper. An assessment rubric will be used to determine whether the research papers demonstrate effective critical reasoning, problem solving, and ethical considerations. Each item is rated on a scale from 0=No evidence 1=Poor 2=Average 3=Good 4=Excellent. (Active)	70% of students receiving an average of 3 on the critical reasoning component of the paper.
PROGRAM - REHABILITATION SERVICES BSRHB 51.2314.00	Critical Thnking	Students will learn to differentiate empirically supported rehabilitation practices from unsupported practices. Students will also develop awareness of the differences between practices that require the administration by trained professionals from practices that do not.	The critical thinking framework developed by Lewis, King, Pitt, Setachew, and Shamburger will be introduced in RHAB 2324 and reinforced thoughout the curriculum	Written assignment	Students will prepare a written report on the types of rehabilitation practices. Will be evaluated utilizing an instructor created rubric with a four point scale of above average, average, below average, and unsatisfactory.	Students must achieve a minimum score of 3 in all areas of the rubric.
PROGRAM - SOCIAL WORK BSW 44.0701.00	Critical Thinking	Students will demonstrate critical thinking skills by applying their knowledge, values, skills and cognitive and affective processes with a case situation during their internship placements.	Students in their internship placements will be evaluate with a case in their internship on their ability to apply their knowledge, values, skills and cognitive and affective functioning while engaging in diversity and difference.	Field Observation	Senior Field Performance Evaluation will be used.	Students will be able to articulate and apply critical thinking skills to a specific case situation in their assigned agencies.
PROGRAM - SOCIOLOGY BA/BS 45.1101.00	Critical Thinking	Our objective is to increase critical thinking skills among our sociology majors.	The sociology faculty will teach critical thinking in required and elective courses in our program. These courses included, but are not limited to, SOCI 3378, SOCI 3379, SOCI 4371, and SOCI 4395. All majors are required to complete SOCI 4395, which is offered once annually.	Standardized Test	During the course, all students will be administrated the ETS Major Field Test for Sociology. The department pays for the test for each student. The test is administered by the faculty member. Upon completion of the test, students' tests are scored and we receive summary reports for students individually and as a group. The ETS Major Field Test for Sociology consists of 140 multiple-choice questions. Most of the questions require specific sociological knowledge, but many questions test students ability to interpret data, to apply concepts and ideas, and to analyze sociological data, theories and relationships. Students are also asked to think deductively and inductively. Critical thinking is assessed through a sub-set of questions, comprising about 25% of all questions. This test is given by many sociology programs across the United States and therefore we can assess our students' performance against other sociology students from many other sociology programs.	Sociology students will average in at least the 50th percentile for all students completing the test during a year.
PROGRAM - SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT	Critical thinking	Students will demonstrate the application of critical thinking through analysis of the factors that can contribute to a sustainable future (economic, social, environmental).	Students in the Sustainable Community Development program will be introduced to critical thought in the SUST course sequence.	Written assignment	Students will write research papers in SUST 3330 and SUST 3350 about the factors that can contribute to a sustainable future. These papers will become part of their permanent portfolio.	On a scale that assesses the student's presentation or paper, the ability to synthesize information from readings, and the ability of the student to draw conclusions from primary sources, each item is rated using four items: (1) Unsatisfactory, (2) Satisfactory, (3) Good, and (4) Excellent. Students collectively need a mean of at least 62.5% (7.5/12, or 2.5 avg., on the rubric) to meet the criterion. This demonstrates a good mastery of the information.
PROGRAM - THEATRE BA/BFA 50.0501.00	Empirical and Quantitative Skills	The School of Theatre will focus in on where these skills are being addressed or in need of improvement	By looking at production, presentation, projects and written assignments	Other	Junior and senior students will be assessed through embedded course assignments in advanced level courses in Theatre History, Directing, and Design.	By the time of graduation, at least 80% of students will achieve ratings of 4=good or 5=superior for the quality of work in question on at least two evaluations of the same type of responsibility/task, an area of the student's specialization.
PROGRAM - COMMUNICATION SCIENCE AND DISORDERS	Critical Thnking	The student will analyze, interpret, and synthesize evidence-based procedures in the treatment of communication disorders.	Use of data to indentify and manage hearing disorders will be introduced in CSDS 2300 and reinforced throughout the curriculum.	Embedded Course Assignments	In CSDS 3300, students will select an intervention method for treating communication disorders. Students will explore peer-reviewed articles over the selected intervention and analyze its effectiveness. Students will complete a teacher made protocol to demonstrate understanding of the analysis process.	Protocols will be evaluated with the EBP Protocol Rubric. 80% of students will score a minimum of 39 points out of a possible 50 points.

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Texas Administrative Code

TITLE 19	EDUCATION
PART 1	TEXAS HIGHER EDUCATION COORDINATING BOARD
CHAPTER 4	RULES APPLYING TO ALL PUBLIC INSTITUTIONS OF HIGHER EDUCATION IN TEXAS
SUBCHAPTER B	TRANSFER OF CREDIT, CORE CURRICULUM AND FIELD OF STUDY CURRICULA
RULE §4.28	Core Curriculum

(a) General.

(1) In accordance with Texas Education Code, §§61.821 - 61.832, each institution of higher education that offers an undergraduate academic degree program shall design and implement a core curriculum, including specific courses composing the curriculum, of no less than 42 lower-division semester credit hours.

(2) No upper-division course shall be approved to fulfill a foundational component area requirement in the core curriculum if it is substantially comparable in content or depth of study to a lower-division course listed in the Lower-Division Academic Course Guide Manual.

(3) Medical or dental units that admit undergraduate transfer students should encourage those students to complete their core curriculum requirement at a general academic teaching institution or public junior college.

(b) Texas Core Curriculum. Each institution of higher education that offers an undergraduate academic degree program shall develop its core curriculum by using the Board-approved purpose, core objectives, and foundational component areas of the Texas Core Curriculum.

(1) Statement of Purpose. Through the Texas Core Curriculum, students will gain a foundation of knowledge of human cultures and the physical and natural world, develop principles of personal and social responsibility for living in a diverse world, and advance intellectual and practical skills that are essential for all learning.

(2) Core Objectives. Through the Texas Core Curriculum, students will prepare for contemporary challenges by developing and demonstrating the following core objectives:

(A) Critical Thinking Skills: to include creative thinking, innovation, inquiry, and analysis, evaluation and synthesis of information;

(B) Communication Skills: to include effective development, interpretation and expression of ideas through written, oral and visual communication;

(C) Empirical and Quantitative Skills: to include the manipulation and analysis of numerical data or observable facts resulting in informed conclusions;

(D) Teamwork: to include the ability to consider different points of view and to work effectively with others to support a shared purpose or goal;

(E) Personal Responsibility: to include the ability to connect choices, actions and consequences to ethical decision-making; and

(F) Social Responsibility: to include intercultural competence, knowledge of civic responsibility, and the ability to engage effectively in regional, national, and global communities.

(3) Foundational Component Areas with Content Descriptions, Core Objectives and Semester Credit Hour (SCH) Requirements. Each institution's core curriculum will be composed of courses that adhere to the content description, core objectives, and semester credit hour requirements for a specific component area. The foundational component areas are:

(A) Communication (6 SCH).

(i) Courses in this category focus on developing ideas and expressing them clearly, considering the effect of the message, fostering understanding, and building the skills needed to communicate persuasively.

(ii) Courses involve the command of oral, aural, written, and visual literacy skills that enable people to exchange messages appropriate to the subject, occasion, and audience.

(iii) The following four Core Objectives must be addressed in each course approved to fulfill this category requirement: Critical Thinking Skills, Communication Skills, Teamwork, and Personal Responsibility.

(B) Mathematics (3 SCH).

(i) Courses in this category focus on quantitative literacy in logic, patterns, and relationships.

(ii) Courses involve the understanding of key mathematical concepts and the application of appropriate quantitative tools to everyday experience.

(iii) The following three Core Objectives must be addressed in each course approved to fulfill this category requirement: Critical Thinking Skills, Communication Skills, and Empirical and Quantitative Skills.

(C) Life and Physical Sciences (6 SCH).

(i) Courses in this category focus on describing, explaining, and predicting natural phenomena using the scientific method.

(ii) Courses involve the understanding of interactions among natural phenomena and the implications of scientific principles on the physical world and on human experiences.

(iii) The following four Core Objectives must be addressed in each course approved to fulfill this category requirement: Critical Thinking Skills, Communication Skills, Empirical and Quantitative Skills, and Teamwork.

(D) Language, Philosophy, and Culture (3 SCH).

(i) Courses in this category focus on how ideas, values, beliefs, and other aspects of culture express and affect human experience.

(ii) Courses involve the exploration of ideas that foster aesthetic and intellectual creation in order to understand the human condition across cultures.

(iii) The following four Core Objectives must be addressed in each course approved to fulfill this category requirement: Critical Thinking Skills, Communication Skills, Personal Responsibility, and Social Responsibility.

(E) Creative Arts (3 SCH).

(i) Courses in this category focus on the appreciation and analysis of creative artifacts and works of the human imagination.

(ii) Courses involve the synthesis and interpretation of artistic expression and enable critical, creative, and innovative communication about works of art.

(iii) The following four Core Objectives must be addressed in each course approved to fulfill this category requirement: Critical Thinking Skills, Communication Skills, Teamwork, and Social Responsibility.

(F) American History (6 SCH).

(i) Courses in this category focus on the consideration of past events and ideas relative to the United States, with the option of including Texas History for a portion of this component area.

(ii) Courses involve the interaction among individuals, communities, states, the nation, and the world, considering how these interactions have contributed to the development of the United States and its global role.

(iii) The following four Core Objectives must be addressed in each course approved to fulfill this category requirement: Critical Thinking Skills, Communication Skills, Personal Responsibility, and Social Responsibility.

(G) Government/Political Science (6 SCH).

(i) Courses in this category focus on consideration of the Constitution of the United States and the constitutions of the states, with special emphasis on that of Texas.

(ii) Courses involve the analysis of governmental institutions, political behavior, civic engagement, and their political and philosophical foundations.

(iii) The following four Core Objectives must be addressed in each course approved to fulfill this category requirement: Critical Thinking Skills, Communication Skills, Personal Responsibility, and Social Responsibility.

(H) Social and Behavioral Sciences (3 SCH).

(i) Courses in this category focus on the application of empirical and scientific methods that contribute to the understanding of what makes us human.

(ii) Courses involve the exploration of behavior and interactions among individuals, groups, institutions, and events, examining their impact on the individual, society, and culture.

(iii) The following four Core Objectives must be addressed in each course approved to fulfill this category requirement: Critical Thinking Skills, Communication Skills, Empirical and Quantitative Skills, and Social Responsibility.

(4) Component Area Option (6 SCH).

(A) Except as provided in subparagraph (B) of this paragraph, each course designated to complete the Component Area Option must meet the definition and Core Objectives specified in one of the foundational component areas outlined in paragraph (3)(A) - (H) of this subsection.

(B) As an option for up to three (3) semester credit hours of the Component Area Option, an institution may certify that the course(s):

(i) Meet(s) the definition specified for one or more of the foundational component areas; and

(ii) Include(s) a minimum of three Core Objectives, including Critical Thinking Skills, Communication Skills, and one of the remaining Core Objectives of the institution's choice.

(C) For the purposes of gaining approval for or reporting a Component Area Option course under subparagraph (B) of this paragraph, an institution is not required to notify the Board of the specific foundational component area(s) and Core Objectives associated with the course(s).

(5) Applicability of Texas Core Curriculum.

(A) Any student who first enrolls in an institution of higher education following high school graduation in fall 2014 or later shall be subject to the current Texas Core Curriculum requirements.

(B) Any student who is admitted under the terms of the Academic Fresh Start program and who first enrolls under that admission in fall 2014 or later shall be subject to the current Texas Core Curriculum requirements.

(C) Any student who first enrolled in an institution of higher education prior to fall 2014 shall, after consultation with an academic advisor, have the choice to:

(i) complete the core curriculum requirements in effect in summer 2014; or

(ii) transition to the current core curriculum requirements, in which case, previously completed core curriculum courses shall be applied to the current core curriculum requirements under the same terms as those that apply to a student who transfers from one institution to another. The student shall then complete the remaining requirements under the current core curriculum.

(c) Transfer of Credit--Completed Core Curriculum. If a student successfully completes the 42 semester credit hour core curriculum at a Texas public institution of higher education, that block of courses must be substituted in transfer to any other Texas public institution of higher education for the receiving institution's core curriculum. A student shall receive academic credit for each of the courses transferred and may not be required to take additional core curriculum courses at the receiving institution.

(d) Concurrent Enrollment.

(1) A student concurrently enrolled at more than one institution of higher education shall follow the core curriculum requirements in effect for the institution at which the student is classified as a degree-seeking student.

(2) A student who is concurrently enrolled at more than one institution of higher education may be classified as a degree-seeking student at only one institution.

(3) If a student maintains continuous enrollment from a spring semester to the subsequent fall semester at an institution at which the student has declared to be seeking a degree, the student remains a degree-seeking student at that institution regardless of the student's enrollment during the intervening summer session(s) at another institution.

(e) Transfer of Credit--Core Curriculum Not Completed. Except as specified in subsection (f) of this section, a student who transfers from one institution of higher education to another without completing the core curriculum of the sending institution must receive academic credit within the core curriculum of the receiving institution for each of the courses that the student has successfully completed in the core curriculum of the sending institution. Following receipt of credit for these courses, the student may be required to satisfy the remaining course requirements in the core curriculum of the receiving institution.

(f) Satisfaction of Foundational Component Areas. Each student must meet the number of semester credit hours in each foundational component area; however, an institution receiving a student in transfer is not required to apply to the fulfillment of a foundational component area requirement semester credit hours beyond the number of semester credit hours specified in a foundational component area.

(g) A course may only apply to a single foundational component area. If the SCH for a course in a foundational component exceed the number of SCH allotted in that foundational component area, the excess SCH must either be applied to the Component Area Option or as part of the specific degree requirements, such that the additional SCH will not increase the number of required SCH to complete the degree.

(h) Transcripts. All undergraduate student transcripts should indicate whether a student has completed the core curriculum satisfactorily, and which courses satisfied a requirement of the institution's core curriculum. Identifying numbers recommended by the Texas Association of Collegiate Registrars and Admissions Officers (TACRAO) must identify each completed core curriculum course on students' transcripts, in order to indicate courses utilized to satisfy core curriculum foundational component area requirements as follows:

(1) Communication = 010;

(2) Mathematics = 020;

(3) Life and Physical Sciences = 030;

(4) Language, Philosophy and Culture = 040;

(5) Creative Arts = 050;

Cont'd...

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Appendix 3: Objective to Component Mapping

		● Required Core Objectives			○ Optional Core Objectives		
Foundational Component Area	**SCH**	**CT**	**COM**	**EQS**	**TW**	**SR**	**PR**
Communication	6	●	●	○	●	○	●
Courses in this category focus on developing ideas and expressing them clearly, considering the effect of the message, fostering understanding, and building the skills needed to communicate persuasively. Courses involve the command of oral, aural, written, and visual literacy skills that enable people to exchange messages appropriate to the subject, occasion, and audience.							
Mathematics	3	●	●	●	○	○	○
Courses in this category focus on quantitative literacy in logic, patterns, and relationships. Courses involve the understanding of key mathematical concepts and the application of appropriate quantitative tools to everyday experience.							
Life and Physical Sciences	6	●	●	●	●	○	○
Courses in this category focus on describing, explaining, and predicting natural phenomena using the scientific method. Courses involve the understanding of interactions among natural phenomena and the implications of scientific principles on the physical world and on human experiences.							
Language, Philosophy & Culture	3	●	●	○	○	●	●
Courses in this category focus on how ideas, values, beliefs, and other aspects of culture express and affect human experience. Courses involve the exploration of ideas that foster aesthetic and intellectual creation in order to understand the human condition across cultures.							
Creative Arts	3	●	●	○	●	●	○
Courses in this category focus on the appreciation and analysis of creative artifacts and works of the human imagination. Courses involve the synthesis and interpretation of artistic expression and enable critical, creative, and innovative communication about works of art.							
American History	6	●	●	○	○	●	●
Courses in this category focus on the consideration of past events and ideas relative to the United States, with the option of including Texas History for a portion of this component area. Courses involve the interaction among individuals, communities, states, the nation, and the world, considering how these interactions have contributed to the development of the United States and its global role.							
Government/Political Science	6	●	●	○	○	●	●
Courses in this category focus on consideration of the Constitution of the United States and the constitutions of the states, with special emphasis on that of Texas. Courses involve the analysis of governmental institutions, political behavior, civic engagement, and their political and philosophical foundations.							
Social and Behavioral Sciences	3	●	●	●	○	●	○
Courses in this category focus on the application of empirical and scientific methods that contribute to the understanding of what makes us human. Courses involve the exploration of behavior and interactions among individuals, groups, institutions, and events, examining their impact on the individual, society, and culture.							
Component Area Option	6	●	●	○	○	○	○
a. A minimum of 3 SCH must meet the definition and corresponding Core Objectives specified in one of the foundational component areas b. As an option for up to 3 semester credit hours of the Component Area Option, an institution may select course(s) that: (i) Meet(s) the definition specified for one or more of the foundational component areas; and (ii) Include(s) a minimum of three Core Objectives, including Critical Thinking Skills, Communication Skills, and one of the remaining Core Objectives of the institution's choice.							

Stephen F. Austin State University

Texas Core Curriculum Objective Attainment

A Report to the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board

Report prepared by the Office of Institutional Effectiveness,
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Report Date: September 8, 2020

Assessment Period 2014-2020

Stephen F. Austin State University
Texas Core Curriculum Objective Attainment Report

Executive Summary

This document outlines Stephen F. Austin State University's assessment of the Texas Core Curriculum (TCC) objective attainment. Our efforts in crafting this document are presented to illustrate the conscientious efforts of the entire SFA campus community as we endeavor toward meaningful, actionable data from our Texas Core Curriculum assessment.

Stephen F. Austin State University (SFA) began a program of continuous assessment of the core curriculum in 2006, in compliance with state regulations. Since then, the university has employed a faculty committee, headed by an assistant dean, to direct the assessment of SFA's general education core. Prior to the revision of the Texas Core Curriculum in 2011, SFA's core assessment process, based on assessment of the Exemplary Educational Outcomes at the course level, provided uneven results and was unsuccessful in yielding the kind of information needed to draw institutional level conclusions on student success.

As a result and in response to the revision of the Core Curriculum in 2011, SFA faculty created, led, and implemented a revised approach to general education according to the parameters of the TCC. This plan developed baseline benchmarks through the assessment of assignments in core courses. These benchmarks would be used to gauge additional student growth across the core objectives by assessing student work from upper-level capstone courses. The first iteration under this new assessment plan (Appendix 1) began in 2014 and continued until 2019. After considered review of the core assessment results in the summer of 2019, it was determined that our lower-level undergraduates were performing where we expected, at the developing level. However, anomalies and discrepancies clouded the overall picture when comparing capstone performance against our lower-level benchmarks. Despite considerable time, effort, and analysis, we had not put ourselves in a position to demonstrate improvement regarding the core objectives. The students were fine; our process was not.

Multiple process issues affect assessment professionals as they try collecting meaningful, actionable data. In this case, the resultant data were questionable, easily discreditable, and contrary to what faculty and staff were observing. This left no potential for meaningful improvement. In five years, no major changes in SFA's approach occurred, nor were they justified by any of the data produced by this system.

Over the past decade, SFA has continuously retooled its approach to general education assessment and meeting the Core Objectives. The changes have come about through input from the faculty population at SFA and support from administration. The new approach, the Faculty Trust Model, took three years' of discussion and development and was implemented in the spring 2020 term. We look forward to new, more actionable information from the process.

The following report discusses the design, results, and analysis of SFA's 2014 Core Assessment Plan and subsequent revision and implementation of the university's current Core Curriculum Assessment Plan.

Assessment of the Core Objectives

Description of the Assessment Plan

From 2014-2019, SFA's Core Assessment Plan (Appendix 1) was grounded in a programmatic approach that considered general education as a whole with varied disciplines contributing to the overall outcomes set forth by the Texas Core Curriculum. The foundation of the plan was the assessment of student work samples (artifacts) drawn from course assignments. These assignments were intended to perform four functions:

1. demonstrate students' attainment of the core objectives;
2. serve as a direct measure of student performance;
3. supply specific information about student performance;
4. provide results that would allow the institution to focus on areas of demonstrated success and potential improvement within the core.

The core curriculum was not viewed as the responsibility of the individual disciplines, courses, or faculty, but as the province of the university. It was expected that this system would provide the ability to draw university-level conclusions about the effectiveness of the core.

SFA's former plan hinged on the understanding that the THECB core objectives could not be adequately developed through a small number of lower-level undergraduate courses early in a student's academic career and that the objectives are developed throughout the student's entire academic journey. To determine a target for assessment of the core objectives, two full years of assessment of lower-level work would allow a baseline to be developed that would provide a benchmark for subsequent comparison between students' performance on core objectives early in their career and at the end of their career through the assessment of upper level work samples.

To initiate this process, faculty in each department with a core course identified specific course assignments (e.g., papers, projects, speeches, presentations, essays) used to measure student mastery of each required or optionally selected core objective for the Foundational Component Area in which the course resided (see Table 1).

Component Area	Critical Thinking	Communication Skills	Empirical & Quantitative Skills	Teamwork	Social Responsibility	Personal Responsibility
Communication	Required	Required	Optional	Required	Optional	Required
Mathematics	Required	Required	Required	Optional	Optional	Optional
Life and Physical Sciences	Required	Required	Required	Required	Optional	Optional
Language, Philosophy, & Culture	Required	Required	Optional	Optional	Required	Required
Creative Arts	Required	Required	Optional	Required	Required	Optional
American History	Required	Required	Optional	Optional	Required	Required
Government & Political Science	Required	Required	Optional	Optional	Required	Required
Social & Behavioral Science	Required	Required	Required	Optional	Required	Optional
Component Area Option	Required	Required	Dependent	Dependent	Dependent	Dependent

Table 1: Core Objectives Mapped to Foundational Component Areas

Where possible, assignments were used to measure multiple objectives, and, when possible, existing assignments were used. Faculty selected or created assignments that provided students the opportunity to clearly demonstrate levels of mastery of the associated objective(s). Once the assignments were identified, they were submitted to the SFA Core Curriculum Committee for review and approval.

Description of Assignments Used for Each Core Objective

Assignments used for core assessment included, but were not limited to, lab reports, term/research papers, videos of speeches or presentations, essays, and journal entries.

Critical Thinking Skills

These were assignments that allowed students to demonstrate the comprehensive exploration of issues, ideas, artifacts, and events before accepting or formulating an opinion or conclusion. Critical thinking was demonstrated in assignments that required students to complete analyses of texts, data, or issues. Assignments focused on the evaluation of information sources, and student reflections were also used.

Communication Skills

We used assignments that required students to present a grammatically correct essay or speech effectively organized with an introduction, conclusion, thesis statement, supportive reasoning, and appropriately documented evidence. If the assignment was an oral presentation, the assignment included effective verbal and nonverbal delivery. Visual design elements were also incorporated into communication assignments. Visual elements included, but were not limited to, photographs, graphs, tables, charts, slides, videos, presentation graphics, etc.

Empirical and Quantitative Skills
These assignments required the application of logical, scientific, or mathematical analysis. Empirical skills addressed the thinking process as demonstrated through observation, experimentation, and/or experience and demonstrated through quantitative data and/or qualitative reasoning. Quantitative skills ideally demonstrated a student's higher-order thinking capabilities through the use of applied logic and/or analytical assignments that had a purpose beyond merely providing the "right" answer.

Teamwork
Teamwork assignments were required to demonstrate the quality of the teamwork process rather than the end result. Assignments demonstrated evidence of an individual's contribution and interaction within a team.

Personal Responsibility
Personal Responsibility assignments required students to reason about ethical human conduct. Assignments involved, but were not limited to, requiring students to assess their own ethical values and the social context of problems, recognize ethical issues in a variety of settings, think about how different ethical perspectives might be applied to ethical dilemmas, and consider the ramifications of alternative actions.

Social Responsibility
These assignments provided students the opportunity to demonstrate intercultural competence, knowledge of civic responsibility, and the ability to engage effectively in regional, national, and/or global communities. Assignments allowed students to demonstrate the cognitive, affective, and behavioral skills and characteristics associated with effective and appropriate interaction in varied cultural contexts. Assignments included service learning projects, volunteering, civic awareness activities, political involvement, reflective learning activities, discussions about race/ethnic relations, and diversity experiences.

Key Personnel and Offices Involved in the Assessment Process

The Core Curriculum Committee (CCC) provided oversight of the core curriculum assessment process with the Office of Institutional Effectiveness providing day to day management of the assessment efforts. As mentioned previously, core assessment assignments were developed by faculty within the various departments with courses in the core curriculum. Faculty from across the university were recommended by department chairs and appointed by college deans. Results of the core assessment process were reviewed by the CCC and provided to the Provost, deans, chairs, and faculty for consideration.

Assessment Methods

As a starting point, faculty groups considered rubrics from the Association of American Colleges & Universities, specifically the VALUE rubric set. The AAC&U describes the approach this way:

> *VALUE (Valid Assessment of Learning in Undergraduate Education) is a campus-based assessment approach developed and led by AAC&U. VALUE rubrics provide needed tools to assess students' own authentic work….*

Modified VALUE Rubrics from the Association of American Colleges and Universities were used to score student artifacts. The rubrics were developed by 6 to 10 member faculty teams representing academic departments offering core courses responsible for coverage of specific objectives. Eligible faculty were nominated by departments for service on rubric teams, including tenured, tenure track, non-tenure track faculty (at least 50% workload), and administrators with teaching responsibilities. Then, team members were selected by the Core Curriculum Committee from those faculty nominated by academic departments. Teams were chaired by members of the Core Curriculum Committee. To the extent practicable, rubric teams consisted of representatives from each component area required to assess an objective and specialists in assessment of a particular objective. The common rubrics were adjusted to fit the needs of SFA's core assessment process. Another column was added to indicate unacceptable work, which was only inferred in the AAC&U versions. Thus, the scale was expanded from AAC&U's 1 – 4 scale to SFA's 0 – 4 scale. Wording was adjusted to describe each of the five categories, as well. Appendix 2 includes the final rubrics developed by the teams for use at SFA.

Student artifacts were assessed by 6 to 10 member interdisciplinary faculty assessment teams drawn from a list of faculty nominated by departments. Faculty eligible to be nominated for service on assessment teams included tenured, tenure track, non-tenure track faculty (at least 50% workload), and administrators with teaching responsibilities. To the extent practicable, assessment teams included content area specialists from the courses from which student assignments were drawn. Members of the assessment teams were selected and assigned by the Core Curriculum Committee with the approval of the Provost and served staggered terms of 2 years.

The Office of Institutional Effectiveness (OIE) (formerly the Office of Student Learning and Institutional Assessment) and the Core Curriculum Committee were responsible for training members of the assessment teams in the use of the rubrics, as well as calibration of the team members' use of the rubrics. Members of the Core Curriculum Committee and staff from OIE facilitated meetings of the assessment teams.

Collection of Lower-level Student Artifacts

Collection of lower-level student artifacts for communication (written, written, and visual) began in Fall 2014, and assessment of those same artifacts commenced in Spring 2015. Collection of student work for critical thinking and social responsibility began in Spring 2015,

and assessment of that work began in Fall 2015. Collection of student work for empirical and quantitative skills, teamwork, and personal responsibility began in Fall 2015, and assessment of the artifacts occurred in Spring 2016.

Beginning with the Spring and Fall of 2016, the full schedule was implemented for lower-level collection. When the assessment schedule was fully implemented, student work from core courses was collected for three core objectives each academic year. The two major objectives (Communication, Critical Thinking) were assessed every fall, while the other four were split between odd/even year spring semesters. Student work was assessed during the following semester. See Table 2 for a visual representation of this collection schedule.

	CORE OBJECTIVES					
	Critical Thinking	Communication Skills	Empirical & Quantitative Skills	Teamwork	Social Responsibility	Personal Responsibility
Student work Collected	Fall of Odd Years	Fall of Even Years	Spring of Odd Years	Spring of Even Years	Spring of Even Years	Spring of Odd Years
COMPONENT AREAS						
Communication	COM 170; GER 131; POR 131; SPA 131, 132	**Written** BCM 247; ENG 131, 132, 133H **Written and Visual** ENG 273 **Oral and Visual** COM 111	Optional	COM 215; SPH 172, 272	Optional	FRE 131, 132; GER 132; POR 132
Mathematics	MTH 220	**Written and Visual** MTH 127, 233	MTH 110, 138, 143	Optional	Optional	Optional
Life and Physical Sciences	GOL 101, 131, 132	**Written** BIO 123; PHY 241	AGN 110; AST 105; BIO 121, 131, 133, 225, 238; ENV 110; PHY 100, 101, 102, 110, 118, 131, 132, 242	BIO 125; CHE 101, 111, 133, 134	Optional	Optional
Language, Philosophy, & Culture	HIS 151, 161	**Written** ENG 200, 209, 211, 212, 221, 222, 229, 230, 233H	Optional	Optional	HIS152, 162; ENG 223H	PHI 153, 223
Creative Arts	THR 161, 163	**Written** ART 280, 281, 282	Optional	MHL 245; MUS 140	DAN 140	Optional
American History	HIS 134	**Written** HIS 133	Optional	Optional	HIS 134	HIS 133
Government & Political Science	PSC 142	**Written and Visual** PSC 142	Optional	Optional	PSC 141	PSC 141
Social & Behavioral Science	ECO 231, 232	**Written and Visual** GEO 131 **Written** PSY 133	SOC 137	Optional	ANT 231	Optional

Table 2: Collection of Lower-Level Core Artifacts

Typically, the fall semester resulted in the collection of over 5,000 student artifacts; each spring could bring 3500 artifacts from each of the two assessed objectives (total: 7000). The Southern Association of Colleges and School Commission on Colleges (SACSCOC) recently imposed numerous sanctions on institutions based on sample size calculations. SACSCOC requires definitive reasoning behind any sampling presented to the Commission. Thus, changes were made to sampling procedures. Sample sizes were calculated with a confidence level of 80% and a margin of error of 10% using the following formula $Z^2*(p)*(1-p)/c^2$ where Z represents the Z value (in this case, 1.28), p is the population of submitted work in a specific core area, and c is the confidence interval (.1).

Each artifact of student work in the sample was sent to two raters. Raters evaluated the artifact in LiveText using an online copy of the rubric and following the rules developed in the calibration sessions. If the two raters had significant disagreement on a criterion (i.e., more than one point), the artifact was then sent to a third rater to score only the criteria for which there was disagreement. Faculty on the scoring teams were given two weeks to complete their first scoring round and then an additional week to finish their second round of scoring.

Collection of Upper-level Student Artifacts

Collection of upper-level course work began in Spring 2018 and assessment of that work during Fall 2018.The collection of student work from upper-level classes followed a schedule that was somewhat similar to that used for collecting lower-level work. The collection schedule is illustrated in Table 3.

	Spring 2018	Fall 2018	Spring 2019	Fall 2019
Student Work Collected	Critical Thinking Communication Social Responsibility	Critical Thinking Communication Social Responsibility (Repeated fall and spring of every even numbered year.)	Empirical and Quantitative Skills Teamwork Personal Responsibility	Empirical and Quantitative Skills Teamwork Personal Responsibility (Repeated fall and spring of every odd-numbered year.)
Student Work Assessed		Critical Thinking Communication Social Responsibility	Critical Thinking Communication Social Responsibility (Repeated following assessment of the objectives.)	Empirical and Quantitative Skills Teamwork Personal Responsibility (Repeated following assessment of the objectives.)

Table 3: Collection of Upper-Level Core Artifacts

Additional TCC Assessment Measures

ETS® Proficiency Profile

The ETS® Proficiency Profile (ETS PP) is a standardized test that was used by SFA in the early stages of core assessment. Each year, the ETS PP was to be administered to around 200 freshmen enrolled in ENG 131, and around 200 seniors enrolled in 400 level classes. Educational Testing Service (ETS) strongly recommends that the ETS PP be administered in the context of a class. Thus, instructors were to dedicate one class period for standardized testing.

The ETS PP purports to be a test of critical thinking, reading, writing, and mathematics designed to measure the academic skills developed through general education courses (as opposed to the subject knowledge specifically taught in those courses). While the ETS PP provided a general measure of some core objectives, it did not provide the specific information we needed to make specific improvements in our core curriculum. Further, the ETS PP is an expensive test to

administer. Thus, the test was discontinued in early 2017 as a response to state-mandated budget cuts in higher education.

SFA Senior Exit Survey

The SFA Senior Exit Survey was being developed by OIE staff in 2013. This survey is administered each year, and it includes six specific questions dealing with students' perceptions of achievement in each of the core objectives. The survey is distributed electronically to all graduating seniors each fall, spring, and summer.

National Survey of Student Engagement

The National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE) is administered by the Office of Institutional Research to SFA students during the spring of odd-numbered years. The NSSE is administered online to a sample of first-year and senior students. Some select items from the NSSE were used as an indirect measure of student performance on select core objectives.

Criteria/Targets

As discussed above, targets used to assess the attainment of the six core objectives were based on the benchmarking data collected after two full years of lower-level assessment. The data generated from our assessment process indicated that on a 0-4 VALUE rubric scale, our students in core courses were performing at the 1.0 – 2.2 level in nearly every assessed area within each objective. These scores straddle the *Beginning* and *Developing* levels, in keeping with normal expectations. Outside of upper-level comparison scores, the data were minimally helpful. The CCC was not able to identify specific curricular adjustments that would apply across diverse disciplines and instructors. Additionally, it would be difficult to accurately assess the variety of adjustments across the breadth of the courses associated with the core objectives to identify what worked and what did not.

Results

Lower-level Results

The following charts display mean student scores for each skill listed in the objective. The AAC&U advises against using VALUE rubric score means without context (Association of American Colleges and Universities, 2017). However, our extant data provides only student score means from the two or three members assigned to each Scoring Team. Thus, it is necessary we present means for illustration and comparison purposes in this report.

The Empirical & Quantitative Skills from spring 2016 mimicked the results from the other Core Objective assessments. SFA students in the core courses were rated at the *Developing* level, or 2 on the rubric. The composite score for these students had a mean average of 2.06. Figure 1 illustrates similar scores for the five skills assessed.

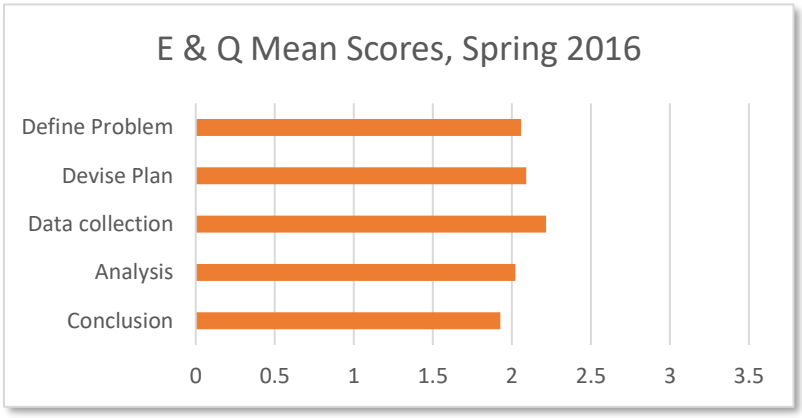

Figure 1: Empirical & Quantitative Scores

Meanwhile, assessment of student Personal Responsibility and Critical Thinking in the core classes produced lower rubric scores than other objectives. Figure 2 and Figure 3 indicate these scores using the same scale of measurement. In fact, the Empirical & Quantitative means are a full point higher than the other two Core Objectives. According to these scores, SFA underclassmen were at the *Beginning* level of skill in both Critical Thinking and Personal Responsibility, but students had *Developing* skills in mathematics. These scores illustrate obvious and expected levels of skill from SFA freshmen and sophomores.

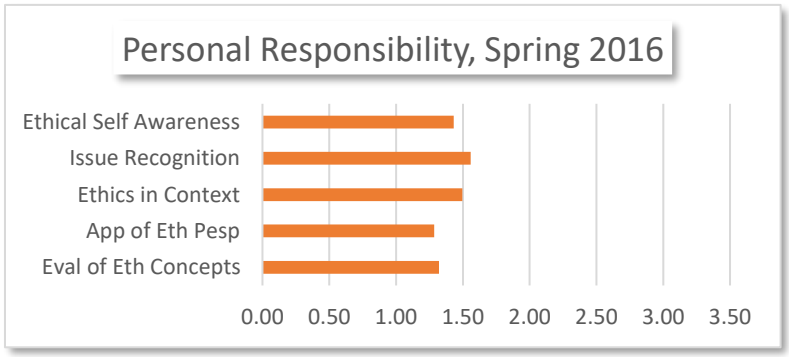

Figure 2: Personal Responsibility Scores

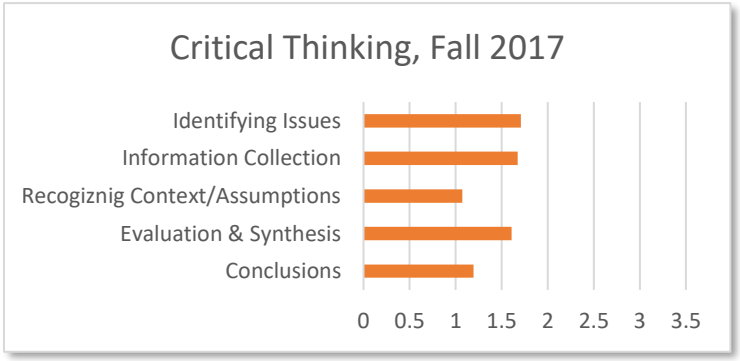

Figure 3: Critical Thinking Scores

Upper-level Results

During the summer of 2019, Scoring Teams met and engaged in the first multi-level scoring at SFA. The initial multi-level Communication rubric, shown in Figure 4, indicated upper-level students were faring better than the lower-level students. This was in keeping with faculty observations and common sense.

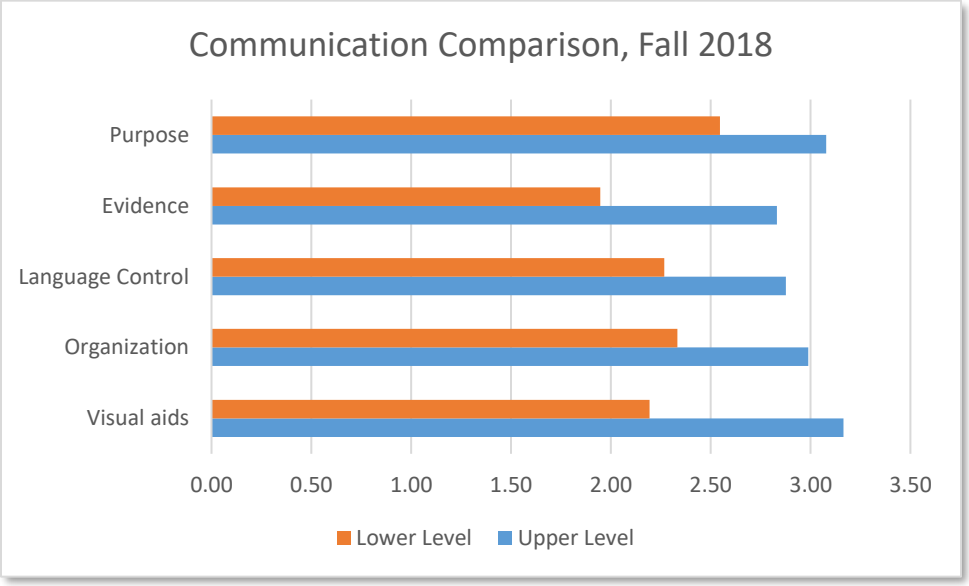

Figure 4: Communication Multi-Level Comparison

A cursory examination of Teamwork scores from Spring 2019 offers little insight into the academic development of SFA students (see Figure 5). For instance, it seems at least counterintuitive to think that a first-year student would resolve conflict better than a senior in a capstone course would. Overall, the data show very little difference, inferring that very little progress was made. *However, faculty observation ran counter to these results.*

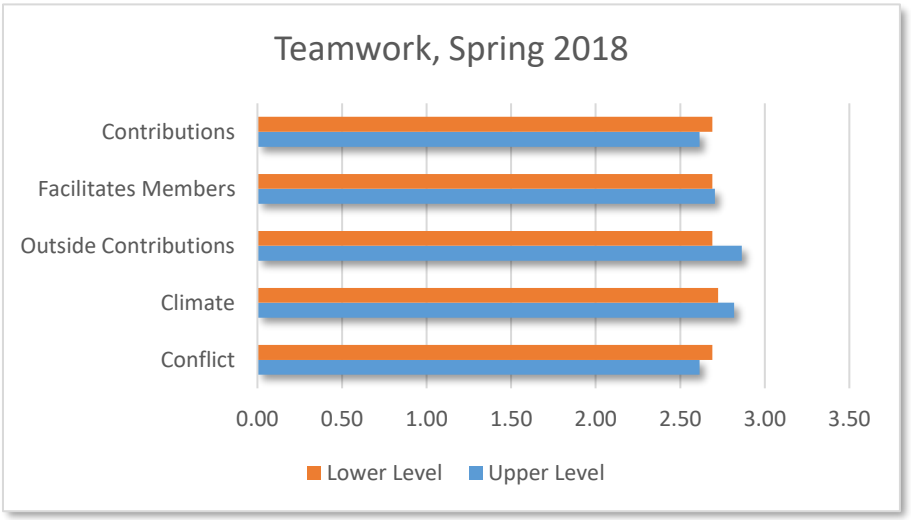

Figure 5: Teamwork Multi-Level Comparison

SFA's Social Responsibility assessment in 2019 was the result set that sparked action and initiated a revision of the Core Curriculum Assessment Plan discussed in subsequent sections of this report. In every component, the Lower Level students outperformed their more advanced counterparts. Figure 6 data indicate that core-complete, upper-level students knew less than their less-advanced, lower-level counterparts.

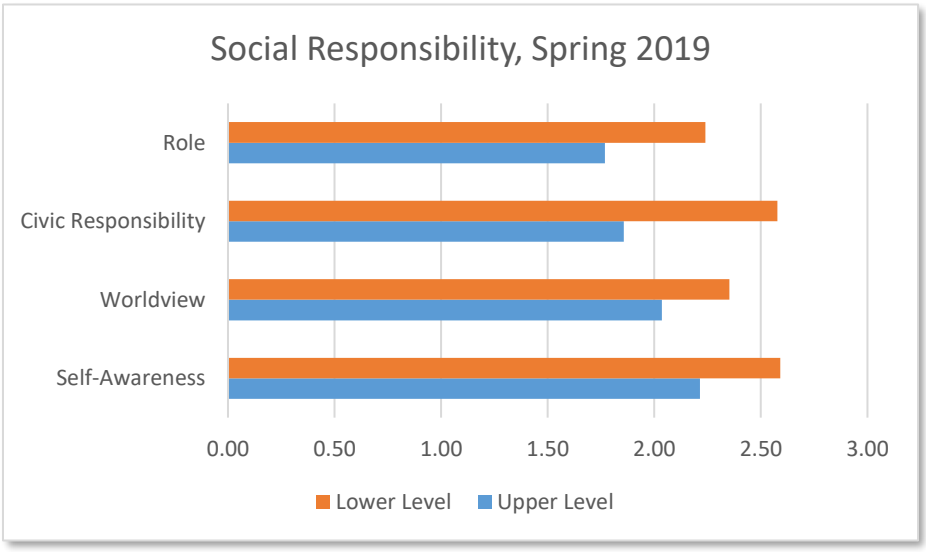

Figure 6: Social Responsibility Multi-Level Comparison

The findings and resultant data were questionable—and easily-discreditable—leaving no potential for meaningful improvement. No major changes in SFA's approach were justified by any of the data produced by this system. Such changes needed better data, not more of the same data.

Core Curriculum Responses—The Senior Exit Survey

For the past six years, graduating seniors have been asked to rate the progress they felt they had made in each of the six objectives of the Texas Core Curriculum. Students were asked to rate their progress from one (No Progress) to five (Very Good Progress). For purposes of Core assessment, answers of four (Good Progress) and five (Very Good Progress) were considered positive indicators. Results are illustrated by Figure 7. The percentages of those answering 4 or 5 on a five-point Likert scale are shown by Core Component Area (color) and Year of SES Administration (*x*-axis data points).

The data from these questions offers another viewpoint of how well SFA develops Core Competencies in students. Furthermore, these data are powerful in that they seem quite consistent. In all six administration years, Empirical and Quantitative Skills were given the least support. Through AY 2017, responses were continuing a downward pattern; however, graduate self-assessment has been more positive in the past two administration years. Of special note is the Critical Thinking response set, which indicates a positive trend line over the past two years. Overall, graduates felt they progressed the most in Personal Responsibility.

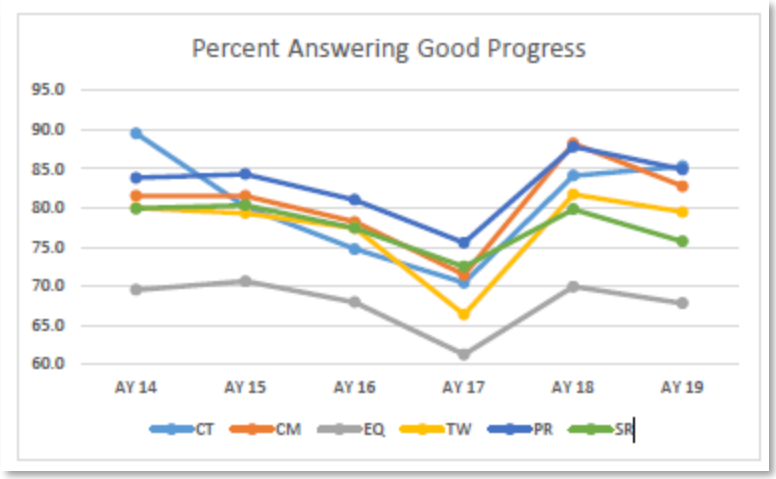

Figure 7: Senior Exit Survey Positive Response Percentage

Analysis

SFA's initial core assessment plan rightly won awards for its thoroughness and substance. This plan was well-structured and met the THECB requirements on multiple fronts. Despite this, unforeseen and confounding factors rendered our core assessment ineffective. Core Objectives are equivocal in nature, and determining attainment of these objectives proved quite difficult. The initial process was quite cumbersome, with hundreds of instructors and thousands of students involved for untold hours.

A central issue emanated from the principle that the faculty must maintain control of the curriculum, even in core courses. Because of this tenet, the format of the signature assignment

remained at the discretion of the instructor. Some instructors infused signature assignments into their normal course practice; however, others used the signature assignments as extra credit options. Still others offered no credit for signature assignments and only announced the THECB requirement to students. This resulted in uneven and mixed quality in the student artifact pool.

Similar issues came from other measures in the plan. Since multiple measures are preferred, the original model called for administration of the SFA Senior Exit survey, the National Survey of Student Engagement, and the Educational Testing Services Proficiency Profile (ETS-PP). This contributed to the burdens on faculty, staff, and students. Further, there was nothing in place to ensure/require students to complete any of these assessments. Not enough faculty built time for administration of the ETS-PP in their classes; therefore, the upper-level respondents were a sample of convenience, limited to seniors majoring in education. The first-year students taking the course came from different classes each year (including English courses, Introduction to College courses, and other courses). Thus, the data may have been distorted, but we did not know quite how they would have been skewed.

Student performance had been fairly consistent across all VALUE rubric dimensions for all objectives. While this could provide a potentially useful baseline, the lack of reliable upper level work made improvement difficult to quantify. A more acute version of the data quality issue became evident only after collecting upper-level assignments. Requesting faculty in capstone courses to create or modify assignments for purposes of the Core Curriculum was a non-starter. The only feasible approach was to make requests of every dean and chair to provide at least one assignment that addressed one or more of the Core Objectives. A list of the courses providing artifacts can be found in Appendix 3.

Too many upper-level student work samples did not align well with the core objective rubrics. While the quality of these assignments was high, the artifacts had applicability issues. For example, PowerPoint slides did not lend themselves to the AACU Communication rubric. Upper-level scores reflected this discrepancy.

The SFA Core Curriculum Committee repeatedly expressed strong concern for the first model in monthly meetings. Unclear data was a problematic issue for CCC members, but the pressure for change grew when the results on paper were in direct conflict with faculty observation. Results were problematic to the point that the committee determined that the system, itself, needed changing.

Actions/Follow-up

After considered review of the core assessment results in the summer of 2019, the CCC determined that in all three sets of scored core objectives, anomalies and discrepancies clouded the overall picture. Despite a great deal of time, effort, and analysis, we had not put ourselves in a position to demonstrate improvement regarding the core objectives. The students were fine; our process was not.

Multiple process issues affect assessment professionals as they try collecting meaningful, actionable data. In this case, the resultant data were questionable, easily discreditable, and contrary to what faculty and staff were observing. This left no potential for meaningful improvement. In five years, no major changes in SFA's approach occurred, nor were they justified by any of the data produced by this system.

Over the past decade, the CCC has retooled its approach to general education assessment and meeting the Core Objectives. The changes have come about through input from the faculty population at SFA and support from administration. The new approach, the Faculty Trust Model, took three years' discussion and development, and we look forward to new, more actionable information from the process.

The Faculty Trust Model

In spring 2020, the Core Curriculum Committee began to use a unique approach to determine Core Objective attainment. This approach compares the evaluations of upper-level students with the faculty evaluations of lower-level students (grades). The plan requires the collection and comparison of three specific streams of data.

1. Professors in upper-level, capstone courses are given a set of student names from their discipline majors. They are asked to rate each student (i.e., assess/grade) regarding their attainment of the following Core Objectives:
    a. Communication
    b. Critical Thinking
    c. Teamwork
    d. Personal Responsibility
    e. Empirical & Quantitative Data
    f. Social Responsibility

2. Course grades from Core Component area courses are collected from these same students and matched with each corresponding Core Objective. To maintain confidentiality, only results without individual faculty and student personal identifiers will be reported and/or disseminated.

3. Graduating seniors' responses from the Core Curriculum questions embedded in the annual Senior Exit Survey are also assessed. These questions request self-evaluation in each Core Objective area, using a standard five-point Likert scale.

Queries of Capstone Faculty

The Faculty Trust Model is built upon the fact that SFA depends on its faculty to lead in curricular matters and make the key decisions for assessments like this one. Our new approach acknowledges this fact. Further, faculty in capstone courses are considered experts in their field. As one researcher stated, "…expertise defines disciplines and how research and other scholarly work plays an essential role in establishing disciplinary expertise" (Wieman, Fall 2019). This

data collection takes disciplinary differences into account, while relying on evaluation from those faculty with the deepest student interaction.

Finally, the same researcher argues, "widespread recognition of expertise in university teaching will improve both the effectiveness and efficiency of teaching by making it a more collective and coherent endeavor with better-defined standards for evaluation and training" (Wieman, Fall 2019). SFA recognizes this expertise in myriad ways; however, querying these faculty both taps into this expertise and brings legitimacy to the process.

Use of Course Grades in Assessment

Course grades are the primary method that educational institutions use to assess student progress. There are myriad reasons to utilize course grades for purposes of general education assessment. Some of them are listed below:

- While assessment methods result in small, unique pictures of student data, grades provide a large, historical record of student work.
- Anonymous assessments are devoid of context, while course grades provide links to specific students.
- Both data types are ordinal, but grades are more summative, while assessment methods take formative results and recast them as summative.
- Outside of full portfolio assessment, course grades offer more unique types of student work than assessments.
- Whereas most assessments are created specifically for singular, one-off assessment purposes, course grades are readily available in normal education contexts and more viable as measurement.
- If courses are expected to teach specific Core Objectives, *and* SFA has tangible evidence of this instruction, then (syllogistically) these course grades reflect such instruction.

Stephen F. Austin State University has revisited the meaningful data and insights offered by course grades. The Core Curriculum Committee, the Deans' Council, and staff from the Office of Institutional Effectiveness unanimously agreed that this approach offers the most meaningful opportunity for general education student learning outcome assessment.

Perhaps David Eubanks has put this issue most aptly:

> *If our goal is increasing student success, the ban on grades is a significant barrier, and it has undoubtedly already cost us a great deal. The history of assessment would have been very different if at the beginning we had resolved to use grades as the primary outcome measure, and then spend our time trying to align grading practices with desired course outcomes. Instead, we have created a new parallel grading scheme via assessment that is supposed to be superior but in most cases cannot live up to that promise.* (Eubanks, 2019)

Faculty Discussion of Results from Disparate Data Sources

As discussed above, the Faculty Trust Model offers three distinct and meaningful sets of data regarding Core Objective attainment. This allows SFA faculty and staff to triangulate these data to derive meaningful direction for the programs and courses in the TCC. These sources may provide insight to faculty members, but the final decisions should rest with SFA faculty. Therefore, the discussions among faculty represent the key to meaningful changes in our approach to the TCC.

Each semester, the results of the three data sets, including previous year comparisons, will be presented to faculty in an open forum. The forum will include members of the CCC, as well as all relevant administration and the staff of OIE and the Office of Institutional Research. This allows for input from all interested parties, yet uses the filters of the CCC, the Deans Council, and the Provost in determining final directions. We see this data-discussion-decision approach as the positive future for Core Objective attainment at SFA.

Faculty Trust Model Preliminary Pilot Initial Data

In an effort to bring SFA's new core assessment plan to fruition, we conducted a small-scale test of the assessment design over the summer. All spring 2020 graduates served as the subject pool. We created a stratified sample of recent graduates from the spring 2020 graduating senior list. The sample (stratified by college) ensured that we collected upper-level work from all colleges. Sample sizes were calculated in keeping with former assessment processes.

Once we created the stratified sample, we sent a Qualtrics assessment survey to 54 instructors regarding 112 of their former students on June 16, 2020. Confounding issues due to COVID-19 led to a low response rate. We expect this to improve during the academic year. Full or partial responses on 24 students (118 unique data points) were used to create the first data in our proof of concept and preliminary pilot.

The second data set consisted of course grades from objective-specific core classes. These were the classes that had been collecting lower-level artifacts (shown previously in Table 1). Thus, each student in the sample would have two scores: an upper level assessment and a lower level grade point average (GPA).

Table 4 presents the comparison of these two sets. A comparison of student results for (a) the mean from upper-level faculty assessments in each core component; and (b) the core course GPA of these students in relevant core courses. Hypothetically, the shading pattern used in Table 4 could represent areas of success, as well as areas that may need deeper consideration. Similar to a traffic light, green is good, yellow indicates borderline progress, and red represents potential problems.

	CT	CO	EQ	PR	SR	TW
UPPER-LEVEL FACULTY EVALUATION	3.1	3.11	2.93	3.36	3.06	3.4
COMPUTED LOWER LEVEL CORE COURSE GPA	2.93	3.14	2.63	2.82	3.02	3.12

Table 4: Faculty Trust Model Proof of Concept Preliminary Results

If these results were to hold for a larger population, the first order of business would be to conduct an in-depth review of communication skills. The course grade point average in related coursework indicates better performance than capstone instructors felt they observed in upperclassmen. Similarly, the Social Responsibility results show very little improvement. The departments most related to these objectives may have insight for core instructors; however, this discussion needs to be campus-wide. As stated prior, all SFA faculty are responsible for Core Objective attainment.

Following dissemination of this data, a town hall or other all-faculty discussion would offer an open forum focused on core attainment perceptions, and possible ways to move forward with core instruction. Changes to SFA's core approach would emanate from faculty for subsequent deliberation in the CCC. At that point, any changes would follow standard protocol at SFA.

Mentioned previously, the data from the Senior Exit Survey provides a third set of data for comparison and discussion. These three sets of data, while unmatched, can provide potential insights and inform practice. Further, we can triangulate the data sources for a stronger overall perception of core attainment, all to be interpreted by our trusted faculty. As a preliminary analysis example, consider Figure 8, a comparison of two data sets. Charts A and B within Figure 8 represent the upper-level instructor assessments and the SES self-assessment percentages, respectively. Both form a similar pattern among specific objectives.

Figure 8: Data Set Comparison

In summary, a short, bulleted list may be appropriate. SFA's current assessment plan provides numerous advantages to the original structure:

- It costs less.
- It takes less time.
- It lowers the anger level of the professoriate.
- It provides flexibility toward future iterations of the Texas Core Curriculum.
- It avoids confusion regarding assignments and assessment protocol.
- It provides a simple, yet powerful, means of determining whether success in Core Component courses translates to success at the finishing stages of the undergraduate experience.
- It demonstrates trust to the very faculty on whom we depend to both educate and assess students.

References

Eubanks, D. (2019, July 23). Improving Assessment Practices. *SACSCOC Summer Institute Presentation Annotated Slide Handout*, 16. Dallas, TX.

Wieman, C. E. (Fall 2019). Expertise in University Teaching & the Implications for Teaching Effectiveness, Evaluation, & Training. *Dœdalus*, 1.

SFA CORE CURRICULUM ASSESSMENT PLAN
FALL 2014-FORWARD

3/22/2013

Core Curriculum Assessment Committee
Stephen F. Austin State University

Appendix 1

This document was prepared by the members of the Core Curriculum Assessment Committee:

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SFA CORE CURRICULUM ASSESSMENT PLAN
FALL 2014-FORWARD (*Discontinued in 2020*)

The New Texas Higher Education Core Curriculum

The Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board (THECB) approved a major revision of the Texas Core Curriculum on October 27, 2011. This revision included a "42 semester credit hour core curriculum for all undergraduate students in Texas" (see Appendix 1), ". . . a statement of purpose, six core objectives, and common component areas" (THECB, n.d., *Texas Core Curriculum*). The statement of purpose says, "Through the Texas Core Curriculum, students will gain a foundation of knowledge of human cultures and the physical and natural world, develop principles of personal and social responsibility for living in a diverse world, and advance intellectual and practical skills that are essential for all learning" (THECB, n.d., *Texas Core Curriculum*).

Core Objectives

The core objectives established by the THECB (n.d., *Elements of the core curriculum)* are:

Critical Thinking Skills - to include creative thinking, innovation, inquiry, and analysis, evaluation and synthesis of information
Communication Skills - to include effective development, interpretation and expression of ideas through written, oral and visual communication
Empirical and Quantitative Skills - to include the manipulation and analysis of numerical data or observable facts resulting in informed conclusions
Teamwork - to include the ability to consider different points of view and to work effectively with others to support a shared purpose or goal
Personal Responsibility - to include the ability to connect choices, actions and consequences to ethical decision-making
Social Responsibility - to include intercultural competence, knowledge of civic responsibility, and the ability to engage effectively in regional, national, and global communities

Component Areas

The component areas of the new core are:

Communication - Courses in this category focus on developing ideas and expressing them clearly, considering the effect of the message, fostering understanding, and building the skills needed to communicate persuasively. Courses involve the command of oral, aural, written, and visual literacy skills that enable people to exchange messages appropriate to the subject, occasion, and audience.
Mathematics - Courses in this category focus on quantitative literacy in logic, patterns, and relationships. Courses involve the understanding of key mathematical concepts and the application of appropriate quantitative tools to everyday experience.

Life and Physical Sciences - Courses in this category focus on describing, explaining, and predicting natural phenomena using the scientific method. Courses involve the understanding of interactions among natural phenomena and the implications of scientific principles on the physical world and on human experiences.

Language, Philosophy and Culture - Courses in this category focus on how ideas, values, beliefs, and other aspects of culture express and affect human experience. Courses involve the exploration of ideas that foster aesthetic and intellectual creation in order to understand the human condition across cultures.

Creative Arts - Courses in this category focus on the appreciation and analysis of creative artifacts and works of the human imagination. Courses involve the synthesis and interpretation of artistic expression and enable critical, creative, and innovative communication about works of art.

American History - Courses in this category focus on the consideration of past events and ideas relative to the United States, with the option of including Texas History for a portion of this component area. Courses involve the interaction among individuals, communities, states, the nation, and the world, considering how these interactions have contributed to the development of the United States and its global role.

Government/Political Science - Courses in this category focus on consideration of the Constitution of the United States and the constitutions of the states, with special emphasis on that of Texas. Courses involve the analysis of governmental institutions, political behavior, civic engagement, and their political and philosophical foundations.

Social and Behavioral Sciences - Courses in this category focus on the application of empirical and scientific methods that contribute to the understanding of what makes us human. Courses involve the exploration of behavior and interactions among individuals, groups, institutions, and events, examining their impact on the individual, society, and culture.

Component Area Option –

a. A minimum of 3 SCH must meet the definition and corresponding core objectives specified in one of the foundational component areas

b. As an option for up to 3 semester credit hours of the Component Area Option, an institution may select course(s) that:
   (i) Meet(s) the definition specified for one or more of the foundational component areas; and
   (ii) Include(s) a minimum of three core objectives, including Critical Thinking Skills, Communication Skills, and one of the remaining core objectives of the institution's choice. (THEBC, n.d., *Foundational component areas*)

In addition, the THECB established requirements for objectives to be satisfied by each component area in the core (see Appendix 2).

Assessment of the New Core Curriculum

The THECB also established guidelines for assessment of the core curriculum. They identified the purpose of assessment of the core to be, "for institutions to discover, document and seek to improve student attainment of the six core objectives of the UEAC proposed General Education Core Curriculum" (THECB, n.d.*, Core curriculum assessment guidelines*). Five values of core curriculum assessment were also identified:

1. The core objectives form the foundation of the institution's General Education Core Curriculum.
2. Institutions use assessment of the core objectives to improve student learning.
3. Faculty participation is integral throughout the assessment cycle.
4. Institutions use multiple measures for effective assessment, including at least one direct measure per core objective. Externally informed benchmarks are encouraged.
5. Assessment practice is evolving. (THECB, n.d.*, Core curriculum assessment guidelines*)

Institutions are required to submit a report on the assessment of the core to the THECB every 10 years. Accountability for assessment of the Core Objectives is at the institutional level. These reports will be reviewed by the THECB staff to confirm ongoing assessment of the core objectives. Institutions are "encouraged to voluntarily participate in a peer review of the assessment of the six core objectives" (THECB, n.d., *Core curriculum assessment guidelines*). Each institution is allowed to select peer reviewers, and the reviewers are encouraged to give feedback to the institution.

Timeline for Implementation of the New Core

Institutions must design a core curriculum that complies with the new state core and develop assessment plans for the core by November 30, 2013. Faculty should have responsibility for developing the core curriculum, and for ensuring that each course selected for inclusion will meet the requirements for the Foundational Component Areas, and the inclusion of all core objectives for the Foundational Component Areas. Institutions must submit their new core curriculum to the THCB staff for review by November 30, 2013. On or before February 1, 2014, the THECB staff will evaluate each institutions core to be sure that there are no problems, and will provide approval and/or constructive feedback if changes are needed. The new core must be implemented during Fall 2014.

The Current Core Course Assessment Process

Stephen F. Austin State University (SFA) began a program of continuous assessment of the core curriculum in 2006, in compliance with state regulations. The current core assessment process, based on assessment of the Exemplary Educational Outcomes at the course level, has produced uneven results and has not yielded the kind of information needed to draw institutional level conclusions on student success. In its review of the core assessment results, the Core Curriculum Assessment Committee (2010) reported to the Provost that it was "difficult to draw firm conclusions due to the lack of coordination of assessment methods between courses in the component areas" (p. 1). The committee went on to recommend "that when the core assessment process is revised, course coordinators and faculty in each component area of the core collaborate to develop objectives, assessment methods, learning outcomes, and rubrics that consistently measure the content" (p. 1). The committee went on to state, "when the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board issues the new core requirements, more coordination within component areas of the core will be needed to yield more useful information for institutional change" (p. 5). The Provost accepted the findings of the review conducted by the committee, along with the included recommendations. The new assessment plan outlined in this document has been developed with these findings and recommendations in mind.

Some departments have expressed concern about abandoning the current course-based assessment process because they have made positive improvements in their core courses based on the process. Assessment of the effectiveness of instructional strategies used in courses is essential for the continuous improvement of student learning, and conscientious departments will continue to assess the effectiveness of their courses. Nothing in the current plan should be interpreted as discouraging or preventing departments from assessing and improving courses. The current plan simply removes the reporting requirement for course level assessment.

Plan for Assessing the Core at SFA

SFA understands the importance of the THECB core objectives. The ultimate educational and professional success of SFA students is likely related to core objective accomplishment. SFA recognizes the institutional responsibility to develop an environment in which all students will have the best opportunity to meet the core objectives. All faculty, regardless of the specific courses taught, will be responsible for assisting students in meeting the core objectives. To that end, core objective assessment will proceed across all disciplines and undergraduate levels. This broader concept represents a change from the previous process where assessment only occurred in core courses. Other assessment process changes include the evaluation of student work samples with institutionally common assessment rubrics. The new core assessment process allows for evaluation of the core objectives as students progress from lower-level courses through upper-level courses. Assessment results will be

utilized to provide institutional insight, which will be used to improve student learning and move the university toward insuring the preparation of successful graduates.

This approach to assessment is informed by the experiences of institutions such as Oklahoma State University, San Jose' State University, California State Polytechnic University-Pomonia, Truman State University, Clemson University, Texas A&M University, The University of Houston, Illinois State University, Alverno College, Georgia Southern University, and many others. The assessment process outlined here is an adaption of the Institutional Portfolio Model which was developed by Jeffrey Seybert (2009), of the National Higher Education Benchmarking Institute, and is employed to one extent or another by a variety of institutions including Amarillo College, Edison State College, Johnson County Community College, Oklahoma State University, Texas A&M University, and Illinois State University.

The Institutional Portfolio Model

The Institutional Portfolio Model, as developed by Seybert (2009), was designed around several points. First, "general education is the responsibility of the faculty as a whole, not individual departments" (p. 7). Second, assessment should be "minimally intrusive for both faculty and students" (p. 7). The model "requires no special class sessions, no sacrifice of class time for testing, and no external incentives for students to perform well" (p. 7). Third, assessment should "use existing examples of student work" (p. 9). The model is not an add-on; "existing classroom projects should provide ample evidence of student learning and success that evolves from and can be considered in an authentic context" (p. 9). Fourth, the use of standardized tests is not recommended because they generally do not provide the type of information needed for improving the core curriculum, students are often not motivated to do their best work on standardized tests, and there are many core objectives for which there are no existing standardized tests. These principles have made the model attractive to many institutions seeking to assess the effectiveness of their core curriculum.

The Institutional Portfolio is developed through the collection and review of student work artifacts produced throughout the curriculum for each core outcome. Seybert (2009) recommends the review of 100 student work artifacts per core outcome. Reviews of student work are conducted by multidisciplinary faculty teams of 3 to 5 persons using holistic rubrics. Reviews can be conducted by team members individually or as a group with negotiated agreement on final ratings. The results of the reviews are compiled, analyzed, and reported in the aggregate. Analysis of the results may include demographic breakdowns on variables such as credit hours earned, prior courses completed, and transfer status. Results of the reviews and analysis are reported to faculty committees, and the faculty acts on the assessment results.

Guiding Principles

The proposed assessment plan for SFA's core curriculum is founded on several principles drawn from best practices in core curriculum assessment.

First, the most effective way to approach assessment of the core is from a programmatic perspective. This approach "conceptualizes general education as a coordinated whole leading to the development of the overall student as a member of society" (Nichols & Nichols, 2001, p. 17). This approach "considers general education as a whole with identifiable outcomes and different disciplines contributing to each of those outcomes" (p. 19). Nichols and Nichols note the advantages of this approach to be:

> (a) its comprehensive treatment of the subject, (b) its facilitation of assessment "beyond the individual section and instruction level," (c) its feasibility for implementation within an achievable and sustainable level of effort, and (d) the extent to which this approach fits most regional accrediting association expectations. (p. 19)

Second, the plan is based on the idea that the best way to assess expansive core objectives, like those required by the THECB, is through the evaluation of student work samples drawn from course assignments that are intended to demonstrate students' attainment of the core objectives. These assignments serve as direct measures of student performance, supply specific information about student performance, and can provide results that help target areas of success and needed improvement in the core (Nichols & Nichols).

Third, the core curriculum should be viewed not as the responsibility of individual departments, courses, or faculty, but as the province of the university (Nichols & Nichols). Viewed from this perspective, any core assessment plan should provide the ability to draw university level conclusions about the effectiveness of the core. The plan presented here will allow conclusions to be drawn on the effectiveness of the core at the university level.

Fourth, the core objectives, as identified by the THECB, should not be considered adequately developed through a small number of courses early in a student's academic career. Instead, the core objectives are developed throughout a student's career at the university (Nichols & Nichols). A baseline should be established to allow comparison of learning gains made over time. Such baselines allow for comparisons between students' performance on core objectives early in their career and toward the end of their career, or value-added assessment (Allen, 2004). To establish such benchmarks, examples of student work will be collected in core curriculum courses and assessed using common rubrics.

Fifth, the assessment plan outlined here also focuses in part on student performance at the upper-level. Examples of student work will be collected from upper-level courses and assessed using common rubrics developed and approved by faculty. The focus on measuring performance at the upper-level supports the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges (2012b) Comprehensive Standard 3.5.1, "The institution identified college-level general education competencies and the extent to which students have attained them" (p. 29). The rationale for this standard

includes the following, “the institution is responsible for identifying measures to determine the extent to which students have attained those competencies during their course of study as well as the extent to which students have actually attained those competencies” (Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges, 2012a, p. 66). Required documentation for this standard include, “evidence of the extent to which students of undergraduate degree programs have attained the college-level competencies” (p. 67). It is clear that SACS expects the development of the general education competencies/objectives to take place throughout a student’s college career and not just in lower-level core courses. Therefore, to gain an accurate picture of student achievement on general education competencies/objectives it is necessary to measure student achievement as close to the end of their college career as possible.

Sixth, the use of multiple measures will allow for a fuller picture of students’ achievement of the core objectives (Allen, 2004). Multiple measures will be incorporated into the core assessment plan for SFA through the use of direct and indirect measures (see Appendix 3). Direct measures will include the assessment of student work drawn from assignments in core-level and upper-level courses, and the ETS Proficiency Profile. Indirect measures will include select questions on the SFA Senior Exit Survey and the National Survey of Student Engagement.

Seventh, faculty involvement is essential at all stages of the core assessment process (Allen 2004; Palomba & Banta, 1999; THECB, n.d., Core curriculum assessment guidelines). Faculty will be meaningfully involved in each step of the core curriculum assessment process outlined in this document, yet when compared to the current course based system of assessment, the new process is intended to reduce the work load on individual faculty members. The responsibility for assessing student work, tracking student performance, and documenting results falls at the university level and not on individual faculty. Nichols and Nichols (2001) note that course-based assessment of the core is difficult to sustain over time because of the level of faculty effort required, but that a programmatic approach to assessment, like the one outlined here, is “distinctly accomplishable and sustainable year in and year out” (p. 19).

Eighth, academic freedom and assessment should be viewed as compatible, not antithetical. Gary Rhoades, general secretary of the American Association of University Professors, addressed this very issue:

> To some observers as well as some faculty, the AAUP’s principles and policies might suggest that the association encourages its members to resist the assessment of student learning outcomes, including action on that data to reform curriculum and instruction. That is a fundamental misreading and misapplication of the association’s basic principles as they pertain to assessment and institutional improvement . . . Assessment of student learning and reform of teaching and academic programs are core academic activities. As such, the AAUP sees them as being the primary responsibility of faculty—individually and collectively. (Gold, Rhoades, Smith, & Kuh, 2011, p. 7)

As noted, faculty will be involved in decision making at all steps of development and implementation of the core assessment process. At all points, care has been and will be taken to respect academic freedom and faculty rights.

Assessment of Student Work

Student work provides a direct and convenient way to assess student performance on the core objectives. While standardized tests provide general measures of student knowledge, the assessment of student work can be used to gain more detailed information on student learning and help identify specific areas of needed improvement in the core. Such student work should be a natural outgrowth of instruction tied to the core objectives required in each core course. In many cases existing assignments can be used to assess student performance on core objectives. Faculty should begin their work on identifying assignments to be used for core assessment by reviewing existing assignments to determine if they can be used for this purpose. In other cases, new assignments will need to be developed to assess student performance on the core objectives; such assignments will need to be developed as an integral part of the pedagogical requirements for compliance with the new core.

Identification of Student Work in Core Courses

Similar to our existing core course assessment process, faculty in each department proposing a course for inclusion in the core will identify specific course assignments (e.g., papers, projects, speeches, presentations, essays) used to measure student mastery of each required or optionally selected core objective for the Foundational Component Area in which the course is to be included (see Appendix 2). An assignment may be used to measure multiple objectives, and, when possible, existing assignments should be used. Faculty should make certain that the identified assignments provide students the opportunity to clearly demonstrate levels of mastery of the associated objective(s). A copy of the instructions, guidelines, rubrics/scoring guidelines, key and all other materials associated with the identified assignments must be submitted with the Core Curriculum Assessment Objective Map for Proposed Core Curriculum Courses (see Appendix 4). The Core Curriculum Assessment Objective Map for Proposed Core Curriculum Courses must be submitted to the OSLIA at assessmentcoordinator@sfasu.edu by October 1, 2013.

Assignments will be reviewed by the Core Curriculum Assessment Committee or an appropriate subcommittee of the Core Curriculum Assessment Committee for alignment to required and optionally selected objectives. Departments will be notified if, upon review, the assignments do not effectively align with assessment objectives. At such an occasion, the department will be asked for modifications, revisions, or submissions of new assignments. Reviews, approvals, and notifications to departments should be complete by May 1, 2014. The Core Curriculum Assessment Committee must review assignments and their acceptable alignment to objectives prior to the delivery of any course in the core.

Identification of Student Work in Upper-Level Courses

Faculty in each academic program/major will identify an upper-level course or courses in each major in which students are expected to demonstrate high level mastery of the core objectives. A course should be identified for each objective, but the same course may be identified for multiple objectives. These courses will be identified on the Core Curriculum Assessment Objective Map for Upper-Level Courses (see Appendix 5). Faculty will also identify specific course assignments (e.g., term papers, projects, speeches, presentations) used to measure mastery of the identified core objectives. A single assignment must be identified for each objective, but an assignment may be used for multiple objectives. When possible, existing assignments should be used. Faculty should make certain that the identified assignment provides students the opportunity to clearly demonstrate mastery of the associated objective(s). A copy of the instructions, guidelines, rubrics, and all other materials associated with the identified assignments will be submitted with the Core Curriculum Assessment Map for Upper-Level Courses. The Core Curriculum Assessment Map for Upper-Level Courses will be submitted to the Office of Student Learning and Institutional Assessment at assessmentcoordinator@sfasu.edu by October 1, 2015. The Core Curriculum Assessment Committee or an appropriate subcommittee of the Core Curriculum Assessment Committee will review all assignments for alignment with the associated objectives. Departments will be notified if, upon review, the assignments do not effectively align with assessment objectives. At such an occasion, the department will be asked for modifications, revisions, or submissions of other assignments. Reviews, approvals, and notifications to departments should be complete by May 1, 2016. The Core Curriculum Assessment Committee must review assignments and their acceptable alignment to objectives prior to the inclusion of assignments in the assessment of core objectives.

Descriptions of Assignments Used for Assessment

Assignments to be used for core assessment may include, but are not limited to, lab reports, term/research papers, videos of speeches or presentations, essays, and journal entries.

Critical Thinking Skills: assignments that allow students to demonstrate the comprehensive exploration of issues, ideas, artifacts, and events before accepting or formulating an opinion or conclusion. Critical thinking can be demonstrated in assignments that require students to complete analyses of texts, data, or issues. Assignments focused on the evaluation of information sources and student reflection may also be appropriate.

Communication Skills: any assignment that requires students to present a grammatically correct essay or speech effectively organized with an introduction, conclusion, thesis statement, supportive reasoning, and appropriately documented evidence. If the assignment is an oral presentation, the assignment should also require effective verbal and nonverbal delivery. Visual design elements should be incorporated

into communication assignments. Visual elements include, but are not limited to photographs, graphs, tables, charts, slides, videos, presentation graphics, etc.

Empirical and Quantitative Skills: assignments where logic, scientific, or mathematical analysis may be required. Empirical skills must address the thinking process as it is demonstrated through observation, experimentation, and/or experience and that can be demonstrated through quantitative data and/or qualitative reasoning. Quantitative skills will ideally demonstrate a student's higher-order thinking capabilities through the use of applied logic and/or analytical assignments that have a purpose beyond merely providing the 'right' answer.

Teamwork: assignments that demonstrate the quality of the teamwork process rather than the end result. Assignments will demonstrate evidence of an individual's contribution and interaction within a team.

Personal Responsibility: assignments that require students to reason about ethical human conduct. Assignments may involve, but are not limited to, requiring students to assess their own ethical values and the social context of problems, recognize ethical issues in a variety of settings, think about how different ethical perspectives might be applied to ethical dilemmas and consider the ramifications of alternative actions.

Social Responsibility: assignments that provide students the opportunity to demonstrate intercultural competence, knowledge of civic responsibility, and the ability to engage effectively in regional, national, and/or global communities. Assignments also allow students to demonstrate the cognitive, affective, and behavioral skills and characteristics that support effective and appropriate interaction in a variety of cultural contexts (Bennett, 2008). Assignments may involve, but are not limited to, service learning projects, volunteering, civic awareness activities, political involvement, reflective learning activities, discussions about race/ethnic relations, and diversity experiences.

Assessment Implementation Schedule for Student Work

To facilitate the implementation of the new assessment plan, it will be phased in over time. Collection of student work for communication will begin in Fall 2014, and assessment begins in Spring 2015. Collection of student work for critical thinking and social responsibility will begin in Spring 2015, and assessment begins in Fall 2015. Collection of student work for empirical and quantitative skills, teamwork, and personal responsibility will begin in Fall 2015, and assessment begins in Spring 2016. Beginning with the Spring and Fall of 2016, student work for critical thinking, communication, and social responsibility will be assessed every even-numbered calendar year. Beginning with the Spring and Fall of 2017, student work for empirical and quantitative skills, teamwork, and personal responsibility will be assessed every odd-numbered calendar year. When the schedule is fully implemented, student work from core courses will be collected for three core objectives each semester, and the student work will be

assessed during the following semester. This cycle will be repeated, so that all objectives will be assessed each calendar year (see Appendix 6).

Student work will be collected from upper-level classes for the first time in Spring 2018, and assessed during Fall 2018. The collection of student work from upper-level classes will follow a schedule similar to the one outlined above for core courses (see Appendix 7).

The Office of Student Learning and Institutional Assessment will select a random sample of 100 individual student assignments for core courses and 100 individual student assignments for upper-level courses annually for each objective scheduled for assessment, and provide them to the appropriate assessment team.

Collection of Assignments for Core Assessment

Student work from both core curriculum and upper-level courses will be collected electronically, either through Desire 2 Learn or another system. Student work identified for core assessment will be collected from all core courses scheduled for assessment and the designated upper-level courses. Faculty will be provided instruction for uploading assignments and will provide those instructions to their students as a part of the instructions/guidelines for the assignment(s). Faculty will require their students to upload the assignment(s). After the student work has been uploaded, the Office of Student Learning and Institutional Assessment will randomly select student work to be assessed from the uploaded material.

Assessment of Student Work

Student assignments will be assessed using common rubrics for each objective developed by 6 to 10 member faculty teams representing academic departments offering core courses responsible for coverage of specific objectives. Faculty eligible to be nominated by departments for service on rubric teams include tenured, tenure track, non-tenure track faculty with 50% or greater appointments, and administrators with teaching responsibilities. Team members will be selected by the Core Curriculum Assessment Committee from those faculty nominated by academic departments. Teams will be chaired by members of the Core Curriculum Assessment Committee. To the extent possible, rubric teams will consist of representatives from each component area required to assess an objective, and specialists in assessment of a particular objective. These common rubrics will focus on the skills developed through the core objectives, and not on course content specific information. An excellent starting point for these rubrics can be found in the VALUE Rubrics from the Association of American Colleges and Universities.

Student assignments will be assessed by 3 to 5 member interdisciplinary faculty assessment teams drawn from a list of faculty nominated by departments. Faculty eligible to be nominated for service on assessment teams include tenured, tenure track, non-tenure track faculty with 50% or greater appointments, and administrators with

teaching responsibilities. To the extent possible, assessment teams should include content area specialists from the courses from which student assignments have been drawn. Members of the assessment teams will be selected and assigned by the Core Curriculum Assessment Committee with the approval of the Provost, and serve staggered terms of 2 or 3 years.

The Office of Student Learning and Institutional Assessment and Core Curriculum Assessment Committee will be responsible for training members of the assessment teams in the use of the rubrics, and calibration of the team members' use of the rubrics. Special attention will be given in the training sessions to the development of intercoder reliability. Members of the Core Curriculum Assessment Committee and staff from the Office of Student Learning and Institutional Assessment will work together to facilitate meetings of the assessment teams.

ETS® Proficiency Profile

The ETS® Proficiency Profile (ETS PP) is a standardized test that has been used by SFA for several years. Each year the ETS PP is administered to around 200 freshmen enrolled in ENG 131, and around 200 seniors enrolled in 400 level classes. Educational Testing Service (ETS) strongly recommends that the ETS PP be administered in the context of a class, rather than administered outside of a class in a mass testing situation. We will continue to administer the ETS PP, and the information will be used as part of our information gathering for core assessment.

The ETS PP is a test of critical thinking, reading, writing, and mathematics designed to measure the academic skills developed through general education courses, instead of the subject knowledge specifically taught in those courses. Aside from measuring the designated skills, the ETS PP also measures three facets of context-based knowledge: humanities, social sciences, and natural sciences. While the ETS PP provides a measure of several core objectives, it does not provide specific or detailed information on our students' achievement on these objectives. ETS PP scores give us a general picture of how our students perform on the objectives covered by the test, but do not give us specific information we need to make specific improvements in our core curriculum.

SFA Senior Exit Survey

The SFA Senior Exit Survey is being developed by an institutional workgroup. This survey will be administered by Fall 2014, and include specific questions dealing with students' perceptions of achievement of the core objectives. The survey will be distributed electronically to all graduating seniors each fall, spring, and summer.

National Survey of Student Engagement

The National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE) is administered by the Office of Institutional Research to SFA students during the spring of odd-numbered years. The

NSSE is administered online to a sample of first-year and senior students. Select items from the NSSE will be used as an indirect measure of student performance on select core objectives.

Use of Assessment Results

The Office of Student Learning and Institutional Assessment staff will compile the results generated by the assessment teams and annually report the results to the Provost, deans, Core Curriculum Advisory Committee, Core Curriculum Assessment Committee, and all departments and faculty involved in teaching core curriculum courses. Results will be disaggregated to show the results for transfer and native students. The Core Curriculum Advisory Committee will meet to consider the results; facilitate meetings of faculty relevant to specific core objectives and/or component areas to consider action plans based on the assessment results; develop institutional action plans for improvements in the core based on the assessment results; communicate these actions to the faculty, deans, and Provost; and monitor implementation and effectiveness of improvements. The Core Curriculum Assessment Committee will meet to consider the results; facilitate meetings of faculty relevant to specific core objectives or component areas to consider action plans related to assessment plans based on the assessment results; develop institutional action plans for improvements in assessment methods and plans; communicate these actions to the faculty, chairs, deans, Provost; and monitor implementation and effectiveness of improvements in assessment of the core.

The faculty of any department may, based on assessment results, recommend action plans for improvements in the core to the Core Curriculum Advisory Committee or action plans for improvements in assessment of the core to the Core Curriculum Assessment Committee. Such recommendations from departmental faculty will be given due consideration by the appropriate committee, and the committee will provide a response to the departmental faculty. All assessment plans, results, and actions will be tracked in the assessment management system by the Office of Student Learning and Institutional Assessment.

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Appendix 1
Summary of New Texas Core Curriculum
Semester Credit Hour Requirements

Foundational Component Areas	Semester Credit Hour Minimum Requirement
Communication	6
Mathematics	3
Life and Physical Science	6
Language, Philosophy & Culture	3
Creative Arts	3
American History	6
Government/Political Science	6
Social/Behavioral Science	3
Component Area Option	6
TOTAL	42

Appendix 2
Core Objectives Mapped to Foundational Component Areas

Component Area	Critical Thinking	Communication Skills	Empirical & Quantitative Skills	Teamwork	Social Responsibility	Personal Responsibility
Communication	Required	Required	Optional	Required	Optional	Required
Mathematics	Required	Required	Required	Optional	Optional	Optional
Life and Physical Sciences	Required	Required	Required	Required	Optional	Optional
Language, Philosophy, & Culture	Required	Required	Optional	Optional	Required	Required
Creative Arts	Required	Required	Optional	Required	Required	Optional
American History	Required	Required	Optional	Optional	Required	Required
Government & Political Science	Required	Required	Optional	Optional	Required	Required
Social & Behavioral Science	Required	Required	Required	Optional	Required	Optional
Component Area Option	Required	Required	Dependent	Dependent	Dependent	Dependent

Appendix 3

Outline of the Core Curriculum Assessment Plan

Core Objectives	Assessment	Type
Critical Thinking To include creative thinking, innovation, inquiry, and analysis, evaluation and synthesis of information.	Assessment of Student Work from Across the Core Using the Critical Thinking Rubric	Direct
	Assessment of Upper-Level Student Work from Across the University Using the Critical Thinking Rubric	Direct
	ETS® Proficiency Profile	Direct
	SFA Senior Exit Survey	Indirect
	National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE)	Indirect
Communication To include effective development, interpretation and expression of ideas through written, oral and visual communication.	Assessment of Student Work from Across the Core Using the Communication Rubric	Direct
	Assessment of Upper-Level Student Work from Across the University Using the Communication Rubric	Direct
	ETS® Proficiency Profile	Direct
	SFA Senior Exit Survey	Indirect
	National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE)	Indirect
Empirical and Quantitative Skills To include the manipulation and analysis of numerical data or observable facts resulting in informed conclusions.	Assessment of Student Work from Across the Core Using the Empirical and Quantitative Rubric	Direct
	Assessment of Upper-Level Student Work from Across the University Using the Empirical and Quantitative Rubric	Direct
	ETS® Proficiency Profile	Direct
	SFA Senior Exit Survey	Indirect
	National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE)	Indirect
Teamwork To include the ability to consider different points of view and to work effectively with others to support a shared purpose or goal.	Assessment of Student Work from Across the Core Using the Teamwork Rubric	Direct
	Assessment of Upper-Level Student Work from Across the University Using the Teamwork Rubric	Direct
	SFA Senior Exit Survey	Indirect
	National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE)	Indirect
Personal Responsibility To include the ability to connect choices, actions and consequences to ethical decision-making.	Assessment of Student Work from Across the University Using the Personal Responsibility Rubric	Direct
	Assessment of Upper-Level Student Work from Across the University Using the Personal Responsibility Rubric	Direct
	SFA Senior Exit Survey	Indirect
	National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE)	Indirect
Social Responsibility To include intercultural competence, knowledge of civic responsibility, and the ability to engage effectively in regional, national, and global communities.	Assessment of Student Work from Across the University Using the Social Responsibility Rubric	Direct
	Assessment of Upper-Level Student Work from Across the University Using the Social Responsibility Rubric	Direct
	SFA Senior Exit Survey	Indirect
	National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE)	Indirect

Appendix 4
Core Curriculum Assessment Objective Map for Proposed Core Curriculum Courses

Please complete the following form for each course proposed for inclusion in the Core Curriculum. Refer to the Core Objectives Mapped to Foundational Component Areas table to (Appendix 2) ensure that required core objectives are addressed. Attach a copy of the instructions, guidelines, rubrics, and all other materials associated with each the assignments identified for measuring mastery of an objective (see Descriptions of Embedded Assignments Used for Assessment). Forms and required attachments should be completed and submitted electronically to assessmentcoordinator@sfasu.edu by October 1, 2013.

Course Prefix	Course Number	Short Course Title

Department	
Contact Name	
E-mail	
Extension	

Foundational Component Area			
Identify the appropriate Foundational Component Area for the course with an X in the space provided.			
	Communication		American History
	Mathematics		Government/Political Science
	Life and Physical Sciences		Social and Behavioral Sciences
	Language, Philosophy, and Culture		Component Area Option
	Creative Arts		

Required or Optional Core Objective		**Assignment Measuring Mastery of Objective**
Identify the appropriate objective by placing an X in the space provided.		**Provide the title for the assignment in the space below that will be used for demonstrating mastery of the selected objective.**
	Critical Thinking - to include creative thinking, innovation, inquiry, and analysis, evaluation and synthesis of information	
	Communication - to include effective development, interpretation and expression of ideas through written, oral and visual communication	
	Empirical and Quantitative Skills - to include the manipulation and analysis of numerical data or observable facts resulting in informed conclusions	
	Teamwork - to include the ability to consider different points of view and to work effectively with others to support a shared purpose or goal	
	Personal Responsibility- to include the ability to connect choices, actions and consequences to ethical decision-making	
	Social Responsibility- to include intercultural competence, knowledge of civic responsibility, and the ability to engage effectively in regional, national, and global communities	

Appendix 5
Core Curriculum Assessment Objective Map for Upper-Level Courses

Faculty in each academic program/major should identify upper-level courses in which students are expected to demonstrate high level mastery of a core objective. A course should be identified for each objective, but the same course may require mastery of multiple objectives. These courses should be listed in the "Course" space below. Faculty will also identify specific course assignments (e.g., term papers, projects, speeches, presentations) used to measure mastery of the identified core objective(s). An assignment should be identified for each objective, but an assignment may be used to measure multiple objectives. Faculty should make certain that the identified assignment provides students the opportunity to clearly demonstrate mastery of the associated objective(s). A copy of the instructions, guidelines, rubrics/scoring guides, keys, and all other materials associated with the identified assignments must be submitted with the Core Curriculum Assessment Objective Map. Please use a different form for each individual course. Forms and required attachments should be completed and submitted electronically to assessmentcoordinator@sfasu.edu by October 1, 2015.

Course Prefix	Course Number	Short Course Title

Department	
Contact Name	
E-mail	
Extension	

Core Objective Demonstrated		Assignment Demonstrating Mastery of Objective
Identify the appropriate objective by placing an X in the space provided.		Provide the title for the assignment that will be used for demonstrating mastery of the selected objective in the space below.
	Critical Thinking - to include creative thinking, innovation, inquiry, and analysis, evaluation and synthesis of information	
	Communication - to include effective development, interpretation and expression of ideas through written, oral and visual communication	
	Empirical and Quantitative Skills - to include the manipulation and analysis of numerical data or observable facts resulting in informed conclusions	
	Teamwork - to include the ability to consider different points of view and to work effectively with others to support a shared purpose or goal	
	Personal Responsibility- to include the ability to connect choices, actions and consequences to ethical decision-making	
	Social Responsibility- to include intercultural competence, knowledge of civic responsibility, and the ability to engage effectively in regional, national, and global communities	

Appendix 6

Schedule for Assessment of Student Work from Core Courses
Fall 2014 – Forward

	Fall 2014	Spring 2015	Fall 2015	Spring 2016	Fall 2016	Spring 2017	Fall 2017
Student Work Collected	Communication	Critical Thinking Social Responsibility	Empirical and Quantitative Skills Teamwork Personal Responsibility	Critical Thinking Communication Social Responsibility	Critical Thinking Communication Social Responsibility (Repeated fall and spring of every even calendar year.)	Empirical and Quantitative Skills Teamwork Personal Responsibility	Empirical and Quantitative Skills Teamwork Personal Responsibility (Repeated fall and spring of every odd-calendar year.)
Student Work Assessed		Communication	Critical Thinking Social Responsibility	Empirical and Quantitative Skills Teamwork Personal Responsibility	Critical Thinking Communication Social Responsibility	Critical Thinking Communication Social Responsibility (Repeated each semester following assessment of the objectives.)	Empirical and Quantitative Skills Teamwork Personal Responsibility (Repeated each semester following assessment of the objectives.)

Appendix 7

Schedule for Assessment of Student Work from Upper-Level Courses Spring 2018 – Forward

	Spring 2018	Fall 2018	Spring 2019	Fall 2019
Student Work Collected	Critical Thinking Communication Social Responsibility	Critical Thinking Communication Social Responsibility (Repeated fall and spring of every even numbered year.)	Empirical and Quantitative Skills Teamwork Personal Responsibility	Empirical and Quantitative Skills Teamwork Personal Responsibility (Repeated fall and spring of every odd-numbered year.)
Student Work Assessed		Critical Thinking Communication Social Responsibility	Critical Thinking Communication Social Responsibility (Repeated following assessment of the objectives.)	Empirical and Quantitative Skills Teamwork Personal Responsibility (Repeated following assessment of the objectives.)

CRITICAL THINKING RUBRIC

This rubric was developed by an interdisciplinary team of faculty representing colleges at Stephen F. Austin State University (SFA) through a process that examined and modified the AACU Written Communication Value Rubric to meet the needs of SFA's core curriculum assessment. The rubric articulates fundamental criteria for each learning outcome, with performance descriptors demonstrating progressively more sophisticated levels of attainment. The rubric is intended for institutional-level use in evaluating and discussing student learning, not for grading. The SFA team agrees with the utility of the AACU VALUE rubric, which "is to position learning at all undergraduate levels within a basic framework of expectations such that evidence of learning can by shared nationally through a common dialog and understanding of student success."

Definition

Critical thinking is a habit of mind characterized by the comprehensive exploration of issues, ideas, artifacts, and events before accepting or formulating an opinion or conclusion.

Framing Language

This rubric is designed to be transdisciplinary, reflecting the recognition that success in all disciplines requires habits of inquiry and analysis that share common attributes. Further, research suggests that successful critical thinkers from all disciplines increasingly need to be able to apply those habits in various and changing situations encountered in all walks of life.

This rubric is designed for use with many different types of assignments and the suggestions here are not an exhaustive list of possibilities. Critical thinking can be demonstrated in assignments that require students to complete analyses of text, data, or issues. Assignments that cut across presentation mode might be especially useful in some fields. If insight into the process components of critical thinking (e.g., how information sources were evaluated regardless of whether they were included in the product) is important, assignments focused on student reflection might be especially illuminating.

Glossary

The definitions that follow were developed to clarify terms and concepts used in this rubric only.

- Assumptions: Ideas, conditions, or beliefs (often implicit or unstated) that are "taken for granted or accepted as true without proof." (quoted from www.dictionary.reference.com/browse/assumptions)
- Context: The historical, ethical, political, cultural, environmental, or circumstantial settings or conditions that influence and complicate the consideration of any issues, ideas, artifacts, and events.

CRITICAL THINKING RUBRIC

Critical Thinking Skills (THECB, Elements of the Core Curriculum): to include creative thinking, innovation, inquiry, and analysis, evaluation and synthesis of information

Definition: critical thinking is a habit of mind characterized by the comprehensive exploration of issues, ideas, artifacts, and events before accepting or formulating an opinion or conclusion.

	Capstone 4	Accomplished 3	Developing 2	Beginning 1	Unacceptable 0
Identification and explanation of issues	Issue/problem to be considered critically is stated clearly and described comprehensively, delivering all relevant information necessary for full understanding.	Issue/problem to be considered critically is stated, described, and clarified so that understanding is not seriously impeded by omissions.	Issue/problem to be considered critically is stated but description leaves some terms undefined, ambiguities unexplored, boundaries undetermined, and/or backgrounds unknown.	Issue/problem to be considered critically is stated without clarification or description.	Issue/problem to be considered critically is not stated.
Collection of information	Information* taken from source(s) is sufficient to develop a comprehensive analysis and synthesis.	Information taken from source(s) is sufficient to develop a coherent analysis and synthesis.	Information taken from source(s) is insufficient to develop coherent analysis and synthesis.	Information taken from source(s) is insufficient to develop any analysis and synthesis.	No source information is provided.
Recognition of context and assumptions	Thoroughly (systematically and methodically) analyzes own and others' assumptions and carefully evaluates the relevance of contexts before presenting a point of view**.	Identifies own and others' assumptions and several relevant contexts before presenting a point of view**.	Questions some assumptions. May be more aware of others' assumptions than one's own (or vice versa). Identifies several relevant contexts before presenting a point of view.	Shows an emerging awareness of present assumptions (sometimes labels assertions as assumptions). Begins to identify some contexts before presenting a point of view.	Shows no awareness of present assumptions. Does not identify contexts before presenting a point of view.
Evaluation and Synthesis of information	The evaluation of information is thorough, taking into account the complexities of an issue, while acknowledging limits and synthesizing other points of view.	The evaluation of information is sufficient, taking into account some complexities of an issue, while acknowledging some limits and synthesizing other points of view.	The evaluation of information is incomplete, not taking into account the complexities of an issue.	The evaluation of information is simplistic, obvious, or has limited relevance.	No evaluation of information is provided.
Conclusions and related outcomes	Conclusions and related outcomes (consequences and implications) are logical and reflect student's informed evaluation and ability to place evidence and perspectives discussed in priority order.	Conclusion is logically tied to a range of information, including opposing viewpoints; related outcomes (consequences and implications) are identified clearly.	Conclusion is logically tied to information (because information is chosen to fit the desired conclusion); some related outcomes (consequences and implications) are identified clearly.	Conclusion is inconsistently tied to some of the information discussed; related outcomes (consequences and implications) are oversimplified.	No conclusion is provided.

*Information includes observations, experts' sources, or empirical data.
**Point of view includes hypothesis, thesis, conditions, or perspectives.

WRITTEN AND VISUAL COMMUNICATION RUBRIC

This rubric was developed by an interdisciplinary team of faculty representing colleges at Stephen F. Austin State University (SFA) through a process that examined and modified the AACU Written Communication Value Rubric to meet the needs of SFA's core curriculum assessment. The rubric articulates fundamental criteria for each learning outcome, with performance descriptors demonstrating progressively more sophisticated levels of attainment. The rubric is intended for institutional-level use in evaluating and discussing student learning, not for grading. The SFA team agrees with the utility of the AACU VALUE rubric, which "is to position learning at all undergraduate levels within a basic framework of expectations such that evidence of learning can by shared nationally through a common dialog and understanding of student success."

Definition

Written communication is the development and expression of ideas in writing. Written communication involves learning to work in many genres and styles. It can involve working with many different writing technologies, and mixing texts, data, and images. Written communication abilities develop through iterative experiences across the curriculum.

Framing Language

This writing rubric is designed for use in a wide variety of educational institutions. The most clear finding to emerge from decades of research on writing assessment is that the best writing assessments are locally determined and sensitive to local context and mission. Users of this rubric should, in the end, consider making adaptations and additions that clearly link the language of the rubric to individual campus contexts.

This rubric focuses assessment on how specific written work samples or collectios of work respond to specific contexts. The central question guiding the rubric is "How well does writing respond to the needs of audience(s) for the work?" In focusing on this question the rubric does not attend to other aspects of writing that are equally important: issues of writing process, writing strategies, writers' fluency with different modes of textual production or publication, or writer's growing engagement with writing and disciplinarity through the process of writing.

Evaluators using this rubric must have information about the assignments or purposes for writing guiding writers' work. Also recommended is including reflective work samples of collections of work that address such questions as: What decisions did the writer make about audience, purpose, and genre as s/he compiled the work in the portfolio? How are those choices evident in the writing -- in the content, organization and structure, reasoning, evidence, mechanical and surface conventions, and citational systems used in the writing? This will enable evaluators to have a clear sense of how writers understand the assignments and take it into consideration as they evaluate

The first section of this rubric addresses the context and purpose for writing. A work sample or collections of work can convey the context and purpose for the writing tasks it showcases by including the writing assignments associated with work samples. But writers may also convey the context and purpose for their writing within the texts. It is important for faculty and institutions to include directions for students about how they should represent their writing contexts and purposes.

Faculty interested in the research on writing assessment that has guided our work here can consult the National Council of Teachers of English/Council of Writing Program Administrators' White Paper on Writing Assessment (2008; www.wpacouncil.org/whitepaper) and the Conference on College Composition and Communication's Writing Assessment: A Position Statement (2008; www.ncte.org/cccc/resources/positions/123784.htm).

Glossary

The definitions that follow were developed to clarify terms and concepts used in this rubric only.

- Content Development: The ways in which the text explores and represents its topic in relation to its audience and purpose.
- Context of and purpose for writing: The context of writing is the situation surrounding a text: who is reading it? who is writing it? Under what circumstances will the text be shared or circulated? What social or political factors might affect how the text is composed or interpreted? The purpose for writing is the writer's intended effect on an audience. Writers might want to persuade or inform; they might want to report or summarize information; they might want to

work through complexity or confusion; they might want to argue with other writers, or connect with other writers; they might want to convey urgency or amuse; they might write for themselves or for an assignment or to remember.

- Disciplinary conventions: Formal and informal rules that constitute what is seen generally as appropriate within different academic fields, e.g. introductory strategies, use of passive voice or first person point of view, expectations for thesis or hypothesis, expectations for kinds of evidence and support that are appropriate to the task at hand, use of primary and secondary sources to provide evidence and support arguments and to document critical perspectives on the topic. Writers will incorporate sources according to disciplinary and genre conventions, according to the writer's purpose for the text. Through increasingly sophisticated use of sources, writers develop an ability to differentiate between their own ideas and the ideas of others, credit and build upon work already accomplished in the field or issue they are addressing, and provide meaningful examples to readers.
- Evidence: Source material that is used to extend, in purposeful ways, writers' ideas in a text.
- Genre conventions: Formal and informal rules for particular kinds of texts and/or media that guide formatting, organization, and stylistic choices, e.g. lab reports, academic papers, poetry, webpages, or personal essays.
- Sources: Texts (written, oral, behavioral, visual, or other) that writers draw on as they work for a variety of purposes--to extend, argue with, develop, define, or shape their ideas, for example.

Appendix 2

WRITTEN AND VISUAL COMMUNICATION RUBRIC

Definition: Written communication is the development and expression of ideas in writing. Written communication involves learning to work in many genres and styles. It can involve working with many different writing technologies, and mixing texts, data, and images. Written communication abilities develop through iterative experiences across the curriculum.

	Capstone 4	**Accomplished** 3	**Developing** 2	**Beginning** 1	**Unacceptable** 0
Audience, Context, and Purpose	Demonstrates a thorough understanding of context, audience, and purpose that is wholly responsive to the assigned task(s) and applied consistently through all elements of the work.	Demonstrates adequate consideration of context, audience, and purpose and a clear focus on the assigned task(s).	Demonstrates some attention to context, audience, purpose, and to the assigned task(s).	Demonstrates minimal attention to context, audience, purpose, and to the assigned task(s).	Fails to meet minimum criteria in addressing the audience, context, and purpose for writing.
Content Development	Uses appropriate, relevant, and compelling content and ideas that illustrate the writer's command and deep understanding of the subject, skillfully shaping the whole work.	Uses appropriate, relevant, and compelling content to accurately explore ideas within the subject and shape the whole work.	Uses appropriate and relevant content to develop and accurately explore ideas through most of the work.	Uses appropriate and relevant content to accurately develop simple ideas in some parts of the work.	Fails to meet minimum criteria in addressing content development.
Sources and Evidence	Demonstrates skillful use of high-quality, credible, relevant sources to develop ideas that are appropriate for the assignment.	Demonstrates consistent use of credible, relevant sources to support ideas that are appropriate for the assignment.	Demonstrates an attempt to use credible and relevant sources to support ideas that are appropriate for the assignment.	Demonstrates an attempt to use sources to support ideas in the assignment.	Fails to meet minimum criteria in demonstrating the use of sources to support ideas in the assignment.
Organization And Presentation	Demonstrates consistent, skillful, and thoroughly detailed attention to organization, presentation, and stylistic choices as appropriate to the assignment.	Demonstrates consistent and skillful organization and presentation as appropriate to the assignment.	Follows expectations for a consistent system of basic organization and presentation as appropriate to the assignment.	Attempts to use a consistent system for basic organization and presentation as appropriate to the assignment.	Fails to meet minimum criteria in organization and presentation.
Control of Syntax and Mechanics	Uses graceful language that skillfully communicates meaning to readers with clarity and fluency, and is nearly error-free.	Uses straightforward language that conveys meaning to readers with clarity. The language in the work has few errors.	Uses language that generally conveys meaning to readers, although writing may include some errors.	Uses language that sometimes impedes meaning because of errors in usage.	Fails to use language that demonstrates control of syntax and mechanics.

Visual aids	Visual aids effectively support the communication of purposes and ideas; aids are integrated into the presentation seamlessly, thus fostering a full understanding of the message's content.	Visual aids generally support the communication of the student's ideas and purposes; the aids effectively amplify or resonate the presentation of ideas and foster a good understanding of the message's content.	Visual aids support the communication of the student's ideas and purposes but are only partially useful or informative.	Visual aids do not particularly support the communication of the student's ideas and purpose; they are insufficient to be of much use as they do little to elevate understanding.	Visual aids are virtually non-existent, serve no purpose, or are not credible

ORAL AND VISUAL COMMUNICATION RUBRIC

This rubric was adapted from the AACU's VALUE rubric, developed by teams of faculty experts representing colleges and universities across the United States; although this adaptation is designed to aid Stephen F. Austin State University's (SFA) specific assessment plan relative to Texas Coordinating Board objectives, it is based upon the culmination of processes that included the examination of many existing campus rubrics and related documents. The rubric articulates fundamental criteria for each learning outcome, with performance descriptors demonstrating progressively more sophisticated levels of attainment. The rubric is intended for institutional-level use in evaluating and discussing student learning, not for grading. As the AACU recommended, the core expectations articulated in all of its VALUE rubrics was translated into the language of SFA's campus, disciplines, and courses. The rubric positions learning at all undergraduate levels within a basic framework of expectations such that evidence of learning can by shared nationally through a common dialogue and understanding of student success.

The type of oral communication most likely to be included in a collection of student work is an oral presentation and, therefore, is the primary focus for the application of this rubric. As the Texas Coordinating Board designates visual communication as one of its desired objectives, this rubric also provides for the examination of components for visual presentation most typically accompanying oral communication presentations.

Definition

Oral communication is, most generally, a prepared, purposeful presentation designed to increase knowledge, to foster understanding, or to promote change in the listeners' attitudes, values, beliefs, or behaviors. In some disciplines, oral communication is a direct interaction between a "professional" speaker and specific audience (such as nurse to patient, in clinical or therapeutic settings), where the effect of the presentation of ideas is to foster understanding or learning.

Visual communication is a prepared, purposeful presentation and delivery of supporting visual aids, typically relative to the oral communication and intended to benefit or amplify an audience's understanding of a central message or purpose. Thus, visual communication is facilitated through such media as poster presentations, power point presentations, video presentations, among others available and appropriate to specific disciplines and classroom experiences.

Framing Language

Oral and visual communication takes many forms. This rubric is specifically designed to evaluate oral presentations of a single speaker at a time and is best applied to live or video-recorded presentations. For panel presentations or group presentations, it is recommended that each speaker be evaluated separately. For speakers evaluated in field observations, the rubric may serve to measure the effectiveness of oral communication in the workplace setting. This rubric best applies to presentations of sufficient length such that a central message or purpose is conveyed; presentations should be supported by one or more forms of appropriate documentation, secondary materials, or visual aids, and should include purposeful organization and content. An oral answer to a single question not designed to be structured into a presentation does not readily apply to this rubric. At SFA, as intended by the assessment plan, skills in oral and visual communication should include effective development, interpretation, and expression of ideas.

Glossary

The definitions that follow were developed to clarify terms and concepts used in this rubric only. When assigning values to the rubric, assessment committee members should refer here to this Glossary for specific examples that may be used to determine levels of achievement. This Glossary is not intended to be absolute and exclusive of considerations appropriate to the needs of specific fields or disciplines; this should be considered as a guide only.

1. Organization: The grouping and sequencing of ideas and evidence-based support in a presentation. Organizational development that effectively supports a presentation typically includes an introduction, identifiable sections in the body of the message, and a conclusion. Organizational development that enhances the effectiveness of the presentation reflects a purposeful choice among possible alternatives (such as a chronological pattern, a problem-solution pattern, an analysis-of-parts pattern, etc.) and makes the content of the presentation easier to follow and more likely to accomplish its purpose.

2. Language: Vocabulary, terminology, and sentence structure. Language that supports the effectiveness of a presentation is appropriate to the topic and audience, grammatical, clear, and free from bias. Language that enhances the effectiveness of a presentation is also vivid, imaginative, and expressive. Not only does such language aid the development of the message, but it also enhances the expression of ideas and contributes to meaningful audience interpretation.

3. Delivery (both oral and visual): Delivery techniques include a variety of oral and visual cues. In the example of Oral Delivery, such cues may be use of voice, including vocal expressiveness, diction, enunciation, and presentation-appropriate language. Visual cues include posture, gestures, eye contact, body language, proper attire, and so on. Delivery techniques enhance the effectiveness of the presentation when the speaker stands and moves with authority, looks more often at the audience than at his/her speaking materials/notes, uses the voice expressively, and uses few vocal fillers ("um," "uh," "like," "you know," etc.). Speaker energy and emphases, as evidenced in skillful delivery, foster interpretation of ideas expressed.

4. Evidence-based support: Explanations, examples, amplifications, statistics, analogies, quotations from relevant authorities, and other kinds of information or analysis that supports the principal ideas of the presentation. Evidence-based support is generally credible, relevant, and derived from reliable and appropriate sources. Furthermore, evidence-based support requires correct use of citations, as expected within specific disciplines; in Oral Communication contexts, the speaker should know how to handle attribution of secondary resources so that it does not distract. Evidence-based support increases credibility when it is also vivid and varied (e.g., a mix of examples, statistics, and references to authorities).

5. General purpose: The main point/thesis/"bottom line"/"take-away"/central message of a presentation. A clear central message is easy to identify; a compelling central message is also vivid and memorable.

6. Visual aids: Appropriate use of charts, posters, slides, illustrations, graphics, bulleted information, animations, or videos, among other media; the visual aid should enhance the delivery of the communication, oral and/or visual by providing clarification, amplification, emphasis or support to the principal ideas and general purpose of the presentation.

ORAL AND VISUAL COMMUNICATION RUBRIC

Definitions: Oral communication is, most generally, a prepared, purposeful presentation designed to increase knowledge, to foster understanding, or to promote change in the listeners' attitudes, values, beliefs, or behaviors. In some disciplines, oral communication is a direct interaction between a "professional" speaker and specific audience (such as nurse to patient, in clinical or therapeutic settings), where the effect of the presentation of ideas is to foster understanding or learning.

Visual communication is a prepared, purposeful presentation and delivery of supporting visual aids, typically relative to the oral communication and intended to benefit or amplify an audience's understanding of a central message or purpose. Thus, visual communication is facilitated through such media as poster presentations, power point presentations, video presentations, among others available and appropriate to specific disciplines and classroom experiences.

	Capstone 4	**Accomplished 3**	**Developing 2**	**Beginning 1**	**Unacceptable 0**
Organization	Organizational development is clearly and consistently observable; skillfully makes content and expression of ideas in the presentation cohesive.	Organizational development and expression of ideas are clearly and consistently observable within the presentation; content is expressed reasonably well as a result.	Organizational development and expression of ideas are observable within the presentation.	Organizational development and expression of ideas are occasionally observable.	Organizational development and/or expression of ideas are not observable within the presentation; lack of coherence and unity exist.
Language	Language choices are imaginative, memorable, and compelling; choices enhance presentation effectiveness. Language is appropriate to audience and aids the clear expression of ideas.	Language choices are thoughtful and generally support the effectiveness of the presentation. Language is appropriate to audience and is useful to the expression of ideas.	Language choices are mundane and commonplace and partially support the effectiveness of the presentation and the expression of ideas.	Language choices are sometimes unclear and minimally support the effectiveness of the presentation. Language appropriateness is inconsistent. Expression of ideas is hindered.	Language choices are unclear and fail to support the effectiveness of the presentation. Language is not appropriate to audience; ideas are not expressed clearly.
Delivery (oral/visual)	Delivery techniques make the presentation compelling; speaker appears polished and confident; speaker energy and emphases foster interpretation of ideas expressed. Dependency upon notes, if applicable, is not evident or intrusive. Non-verbal cues aid significantly.	Delivery techniques make the presentation interesting, and speaker appears comfortable; speaker tends toward conversational tone, and dependency upon notes is minimally noticeable. Non-verbal cues are appropriate and useful.	Delivery techniques make the presentation understandable; speaker appears tentative; speaker tends to be a bit casual, as evidenced in word choices; non-verbal cues do not particularly elevate audience's level of understanding or interpretation.	Delivery techniques sometimes detract from audience comprehension; speaker appears uncomfortable; speaker seems unenthusiastic, monotonic, or hesitancies suggest unpreparedness. Verbal cues include unnecessary gestures and purposeless body language.	Delivery techniques are either distracting from understandability of the presentation or fail to be effective; the speaker is clearly uncomfortable or unprepared.

	Capstone 4	Accomplished 3	Developing 2	Beginning 1	Unacceptable 0
Evidence-based support	Supporting materials make appropriate reference to information or analysis and significantly enhance development; materials establish presenter's credibility/authority.	Supporting materials make appropriate reference to information or analysis and generally supports development; presenter's credibility/authority is clear but evidence-based support could be stronger.	Supporting materials make appropriate reference to information or analysis but only partially fosters development and presentation of ideas. Presenter's credibility/authority could benefit from more careful exploration of evidence.	Insufficient supporting materials provide minimal information or analysis; presenter's credibility/authority on the topic is not particularly clear.	Supporting materials are virtually non-existent, or the supporting materials are not credible.
General purpose	Purpose is compelling, precisely stated, appropriately repeated, memorable, and strongly supported. Purpose and evidence are aligned well.	Purpose is clear and consistent; purpose and evidence are appropriately aligned.	Purpose is understandable but is neither reinforced nor memorable; purpose and evidence are generally aligned.	Purpose can be deduced, but is not explicitly stated in the presentation. Alignment of purpose and evidence is not always clear.	Purpose is absent; the presentation does not seem to know what it is about. Unifying principles do not exist.
Visual aids	Visual aids effectively support the communication of purposes and ideas; aids are integrated into the presentation seamlessly, thus fostering a full understanding of the message's content.	Visual aids generally support the communication of the student's ideas and purposes; the aids effectively amplify or resonate the presentation of ideas and foster a good understanding of the message's content.	Visual aids support the communication of the student's ideas and purposes but are only partially useful or informative.	Visual aids do not particularly support the communication of the student's ideas and purpose; they are insufficient to be of much use as they do little to elevate understanding.	Visual aids are virtually non-existent, serve no purpose, or are not credible

Empirical and Quantitative Skills Rubric

This rubric was developed by the empirical and quantitative skills committee at Stephen F. Austin State University in the Fall 2013 semester. The development process examined many existing campus and AAC&U's rubrics. This rubric articulates fundamental criteria for each learning outcome, with performance descriptors demonstrating progressively more sophisticated levels of attainment. The rubric is intended for institutional-level use in evaluating and discussing student learning, not for grading. The utility of this rubric is to position learning at all undergraduate levels within a basic framework of expectations such that evidence of learning can by shared through a common dialog and understanding of student success.

Definition

Empirical and Quantitative (EQ) skills are those skills necessary to frame a problem, analyze empirical information, draw conclusions from the analysis, and communicate the results to an audience. Often, EQ skills are synonymous with critical thinking skills, and they closely correspond to the Quantitative Literacy definition developed by AAC&U. Individuals with strong EQ skills possess the ability to reason and solve quantitative problems from a wide array of disciplines and real-life situations, and they can clearly communicate the process and results in a variety of formats (e.g., words, tables, graphs, mathematical equations).

Empirical and Quantitative Skills Across Disciplines

Most academic disciplines seek to foster strong EQ skills in their students. These skills are critically important for success in today's data-driven marketplace. Employers seek applicants with strong EQ skills, and these employees tend to have upward mobility, all else being equal. Since EQ skills are important for students, faculty are encouraged to develop assignments that provide opportunities for students to develop their critical thinking skills including but not limited to analyzing quantitative information, representing quantitative information in appropriate forms, completing necessary calculations to answer meaningful questions, making judgments based on quantitative information, or communicating the results of that work for various purposes and audiences. This rubric can be used as a framework for faculty to design assignments that provide students with the opportunities to enhance their empirical and quantitative reasoning skills.

Framing Language

This rubric has been designed for the evaluation of work that addresses EQ skills. EQ skills go beyond mere calculations or citing data. Students must be able to understand a question, seek the most appropriate information to answer the question, analyze this information, and draw conclusions that have practical significance.

Empirical and Quantitative Skills Rubric

Definition: Empirical and Quantitative (EQ) skills are those skills necessary to frame a problem, analyze empirical information, draw conclusions from the analysis, and communicate the results to an audience. Often, EQ skills are synonymous with critical thinking skills, and they closely correspond to the Quantitative Literacy definition developed by AAC&U. Individuals with strong EQ skills possess the ability to reason and solve quantitative problems from a wide array of disciplines and real-life situations, and they can clearly communicate the process and results in a variety of formats (e.g., words, tables, graphs, mathematical equations).

	Capstone 4	**Accomplished 3**	**Developing 2**	**Beginning 1**	**Unacceptable 0**
Define Problem/Topic	Demonstrates the ability to construct a clear and insightful problem/topic statement with evidence of all relevant contextual factors.	Demonstrates the ability to construct a problem/topic statement with evidence of most relevant contextual factors, and problem statement is adequately detailed.	Begins to demonstrate the ability to construct a problem/topic statement with evidence of most relevant contextual factors, but problem statement is superficial.	Demonstrates a limited ability in identifying a problem/topic statement or related contextual factors.	Does not define problem/topic.
Devise/Formulate a Plan	Uses information or observation to form a correct plan to achieve a solution. Analyzes each step of the plan for plausibility and correctness.	Uses information or observations to form a correct plan to achieve a solution.	Uses information or observations to form a partially correct plan to achieve a solution.	Uses information or observations to form an incorrect or incomplete plan to achieve a solution.	Does not formulate a plan for solution.
Data/information collection and/or selection	Skillfully gathers or converts relevant information into insightful portrayal that contributes to further or deeper understanding of the problem/topic.	Converts/gathers relevant information into an appropriate portrayal of the problem/topic.	Converts/gathers relevant information into a partially appropriate portrayal of the problem/topic.	Attempts to gather/convert information, but the information is incomplete or irrelevant to the problem/topic.	Does not attempt to gather/convert information.
Analysis	Analyzes and synthesizes evidence to reveal insightful patterns, differences, or similarities related to problem/topic.	Analyzes evidence to reveal relevant patterns, differences, or similarities related to the problem/topic.	Analysis is partially effective in revealing patterns, differences or similarities.	Analysis is not effective in revealing patterns, differences or similarities.	Does not attempt analysis.
Conclusion	Conclusion(s) is/are correct, insightful, and relate to the original problem/topic.	Conclusion(s) is/are correct and relate to the original problem/topic.	Conclusion(s) is/are partially correct and relate to the original problem/topic.	Conclusion(s) is/are incorrect or unrelated to the problem/topic.	Does not form a conclusion.

TEAMWORK RUBRIC

This rubric was developed by an interdisciplinary team of faculty representing colleges at Stephen F. Austin State University (SFA) through a process that examined and modified the AACU Teamwork Value Rubric to meet the needs of SFA's core curriculum assessment. The rubrics articulate fundamental criteria for each learning outcome, with performance descriptors demonstrating progressively more sophisticated levels of attainment. The rubrics are intended for institutional-level use in evaluating and discussing student learning, not for grading.

Definition

Teamwork is behaviors under the control of individual team members (effort they put into team tasks, their manner of interacting with others on team, and the quantity and quality of contributions they make to team discussions.)

Framing Language

Students participate on many different teams, in many different settings. For example, a given student may work on separate teams to complete a lab assignment, give an oral presentation, or complete a community service project. Furthermore, the people the student works with are likely to be different in each of these different teams. As a result, it is assumed that a work sample or collection of work that demonstrates a student's teamwork skills could include a diverse range of inputs. This rubric is designed to function across all of these different settings.

Two characteristics define the ways in which this rubric is to be used. First, the rubric is meant to assess the teamwork of an individual student, not the team as a whole. Therefore, it is possible for a student to receive high ratings, even if the team as a whole is rather flawed. Similarly, a student could receive low ratings, even if the team as a whole works fairly well. Second, this rubric is designed to measure the quality of a process, rather than the quality of an end product. As a result, work samples or collections of work will need to include evidence of the individual's interactions within the team. The final product of the team's work (e.g., a written lab report or a group presentation) is insufficient, as it does not provide insight into the functioning of the team.

It is recommended that work samples or collections of work for this outcome come from one (or more) of the following three sources: (1) students' own reflections about their contribution to a team's functioning; (2) evaluation or feedback from fellow team members about students' contribution to the team's functioning; or (3) the evaluation of an outside observer regarding students' contributions to a team's functioning.

TEAMWORK RUBRIC

Definition: Teamwork is behaviors under the control of individual team members (effort they put into team tasks, their manner of interacting with others on team, and the quantity and quality of contributions they make to team discussions.)

	Capstone 4	**Accomplished 3**	**Developing 2**	**Beginning 1**	**Unacceptable 0**
Contributes to Team Meetings	Helps the team move forward by articulating the merits of alternative ideas or proposals.	Offers alternative solutions or courses of action that build on the ideas of others.	Offers new suggestions to advance the work of the group.	Shares ideas but does not advance the work of the group.	Does not share ideas and does not advance the work of the group."
Facilitates the Contributions of Team Members	Engages team members, facilitating their contributions by building upon or synthesizing their contributions and offering original ideas. (Should also notice and encourage non-participating members to engage with the group.)	Engages team members in ways that facilitate their contributions by synthesizing all contributions.	Engages team members in ways that facilitate their contributions by asking probing/meaningful questions.	Engages team members by commenting on the contributions of others	Not engaged in the teamwork activity.
Individual Contributions Outside of Team Meetings	Completes all assigned tasks by deadline; work accomplished is thorough, comprehensive, and advances the project. Proactively helps other team members complete their assigned tasks to a similar level of excellence.	Completes all assigned tasks by deadline; work accomplished is thorough, comprehensive, and advances the project.	Completes all assigned tasks by deadline; work accomplished advances the project.	Completes all assigned tasks by deadline.	Fails to complete all assigned tasks by deadline

	Capstone 4	Accomplished 3	Developing 2	Beginning 1	Unacceptable 0
Fosters Constructive Team Climate	Supports a constructive team climate by doing all of the following: • Treats team members respectfully by being polite and constructive in communication. • Uses positive vocal or written tone, facial expressions, and/or body language to convey a positive attitude about the team and its work. • Motivates teammates by expressing confidence about the importance of the task and the team's ability to accomplish it. • Provides assistance and/or encouragement to team members. • Promotes an open group climate where members feel safe to share information and where members listen to each other actively and appreciatively.	Supports a constructive team climate by doing any four of the following: • Treats team members respectfully by being polite and constructive in communication. • Uses positive vocal or written tone, facial expressions, and/or body language to convey a positive attitude about the team and its work. • Motivates teammates by expressing confidence about the importance of the task and the team's ability to accomplish it. • Provides assistance and/or encouragement to team members. • Promotes an open group climate where members feel safe to share information and where members listen to each other actively and appreciatively.	Supports a constructive team climate by doing any three of the following: • Treats team members respectfully by being polite and constructive in communication. • Uses positive vocal or written tone, facial expressions, and/or body language to convey a positive attitude about the team and its work. • Motivates teammates by expressing confidence about the importance of the task and the team's ability to accomplish it. • Provides assistance and/or encouragement to team members.□• Promotes an open group climate where members feel safe to share information and where members listen to each other actively and appreciatively.	Supports a constructive team climate by doing any two of the following: • Treats team members respectfully by being polite and constructive in communication. • Uses positive vocal or written tone, facial expressions, and/or body language to convey a positive attitude about the team and its work. • Motivates teammates by expressing confidence about the importance of the task and the team's ability to accomplish it. • Provides assistance and/or encouragement to team members. • Promotes an open group climate where members feel safe to share information and where members listen to each other actively and appreciatively.	Fails to support a constructive team climate by doing fewer than two of the following: • Treats team members respectfully by being polite and constructive in communication. • Uses positive vocal or written tone, facial expressions, and/or body language to convey a positive attitude about the team and its work. • Motivates teammates by expressing confidence about the importance of the task and the team's ability to accomplish it. • Provides assistance and/or encouragement to team members. • Promotes an open group climate where members feel safe to share information and where members listen to each other actively and appreciatively.
Response to Conflict	If conflict is present, the student addresses conflict directly and constructively, helping to manage/resolve it in a way that strengthens overall team cohesiveness and future effectiveness.	If conflict is present, the student identifies and acknowledges conflict and stays engaged with it.	If conflict is present, the student redirects focus toward common ground, toward task at hand (away from conflict).	If conflict is present, the student passively accepts alternate viewpoints/ideas/opinions.	If conflict is present, the student refuses to collaborate or consider ideas other than his/her own.

Personal Responsibility Rubric 

This rubric was developed by an interdisciplinary committee of faculty representing different colleges at Stephen F. Austin State University. The committee's point of departure was the Ethical Reasoning Value Rubric developed by the American Association of Colleges and Universities. The committee found that the AACU's rubric was best suited to evaluate student work in the context of a course in ethical philosophy. Consequently the committee modified the document considerably to evaluate ethical reasoning across a variety of disciplines. The rubric is intended for institutional use, not for grading of assignments by instructors.

Definition

Personal responsibility is the ability to reason about and evaluate ethical human conduct.

Framing Language

Personal responsibility has many components, from good hygiene and punctuality to assuming responsibility for the well-being of others. This rubric is designed to assess work that requires students to reflect on the beliefs that inform their own ethical views and to consider alternative perspectives. Students who benefit from a university education should be able to reexamine, articulate, and defend their ethical beliefs and apply them to a variety of issues arising in different personal, professional, and social contexts.

This rubric is designed to asses a variety of types of assignments across disciplines. Possible assignments could include a written assignment based on readings or other sources that require students to reflect on different ethical perspectives, an oral presentation that requires students to outline different facets of an ethical issue, or an on-line or in-class group discussion of an ethical issue. However, the assignment must produce work samples that can be preserved and evaluated at the institutional level.

Glossary

Core belief. A core belief is a principle or fundamental belief which guides a person's actions or decisions. A core belief can change over time.

Ethical issue. An ethical issue is a problem or situation that requires a person to choose between alternatives based on standards of moral conduct.

Context. Context is the historical, cultural, professional, or political situation, background, or environment that applies to a given ethical issue.

Perspective. A perspective is a world view that informs core beliefs and ethical opinions. It is how one sees oneself, other people, and the world. Perspectives are not limited to theories and concepts in ethical philosophy. They may also include political and religious convictions, cultural assumptions, and attitudes shaped by one's family, background, and experiences.

Personal Responsibility Rubric

Definition: Personal responsibility is the ability to reason about and evaluate ethical human conduct.

	Capstone 4	Accomplished 3	Developing 2	Beginning 1	Unacceptable 0
Ethical Self-Awareness	Student assesses in detail core beliefs and analyzes the origins of the core beliefs with greater depth and clarity.	Student assesses in detail core beliefs and analyzes the origins of the core beliefs.	Student states both core beliefs and the origins of the core beliefs.	Student demonstrates an emerging awareness of their core beliefs.	Student demonstrates little to no understanding of ethical self-awareness.
Ethical Issue Recognition	Student can recognize ethical issues and explain cross-relationships among ethical issues in greater detail.	Student can recognize ethical issues and cross-relationships among the issues.	Student can recognize ethical issues and grasp incompletely the complexity or interrelationships among the issues.	Student can recognize basic ethical issues but fails to grasp complexity or interrelationships.	Student fails to recognize basic ethical issues.
Ethics in Different Contexts/ Settings	Student fully considers the implications of context in relation to ethical issues.	Student recognizes the importance and most of the implications of context in relation to ethical issues.	Student recognizes the importance of context in relation to ethical issues.	Student incompletely recognizes the importance of context in relation to ethical issues.	Student does not recognize the importance of context in relation to ethical issues.
Application of Ethical Perspectives	Ethical perspectives are applied persuasively to an ethical question, and how the ethical perspectives relate to the question is fully considered.	Ethical perspectives are not applied persuasively to an ethical question and most of the implications of this application are considered.	Student applies ethical perspectives satisfactorily to an ethical question.	Student applies ethical perspectives to an ethical question, but the analysis is incomplete and there are inaccuracies in describing either the perspectives or the question.	Ethical perspectives are not applied acceptably to an ethical question. The ethical perspectives and the question are seriously misprepresented or misunderstood.
Evaluation of Different Ethical Perspectives/ Concepts	The student is able to recognize and evaluate different perspectives with greater depth and clarity.	The student is able to recognize and evaluate different perspectives acceptably.	The student recognizes a greater diversity of different perspectives.	The student recognizes a limited range of different perspectives.	Student does not recognize different perspectives.

Social Responsibility Rubric

This rubric was developed by an interdisciplinary team of faculty representing the colleges of Stephen F. Austin State University (SFA) to meet the needs of SFA's core curriculum assessment. The rubric articulates fundamental criteria for each learning outcome, with performance descriptors demonstrating progressively more sophisticated levels of attainment. The rubric is intended for institutional-level use in evaluating and discussing student learning, not for grading.

Definitions

Social Responsibility incorporates intercultural competence, knowledge of civic responsibility, and the ability to engage effectively in regional, national or global communities.

Framing Language

Assessment instruments used for this rubric should allow the student to demonstrate the cognitive, affective and behavioral skills and characteristics that support effective and appropriate interaction in a variety of cultural contexts. Assessment instruments may involve, but are not limited to, service learning projects, volunteering, civic awareness activities, political involvement, reflective learning activities, and discussions about race/ethnic relations and diversity. See the table below for explanation of the milestones of achievement within the rubric that should be used in evaluating the assessment instrument.

Glossary

- The term "civic life" refers to the duties or activities of people in relation to their town, city, or local area.
- The term "culture" (or "cultural") refers to any behavioral patterns cultivated from societal interaction rather than from biological inheritance. This includes, but is not limited to, societal interactions within the areas of the arts, philosophy, language, history, politics, commerce, education, physical sciences, human sciences, athletics and many other traditional areas of university studies.
- The term "social interaction" is used in a broad interpretation that refers to the duties or activities of people in a broader area, such as the regional (e.g., multi-county, state-wide), national or global environment.

Social Responsibility Rubric

Definition: Social Responsibility incorporates intercultural competence, knowledge of civic responsibility, and the ability to engage effectively in regional, national or global communities.

	Capstone 4	Accomplished 3	Developing 2	Beginning 1	Unacceptable 0
Cultural Self-Awareness	Recognizes complexity among the elements and biases in one's own culture or subculture	Recognizes complexity in some of the elements and biases in one's own culture or subculture	Identifies the basic elements and biases in one's own culture or subculture	Shows minimal awareness of the elements and biases in one's own culture or subculture	Shows no awareness of the elements and biases in one's own culture or subculture
Cultural Worldview Frameworks	Demonstrates a comprehensive understanding of the complexity of other cultures	Demonstrates an adequate understanding of the complexity of other cultures	Demonstrates a partial understanding of the complexity of other cultures	Demonstrates a minimal understanding of the complexity of other cultures	Demonstrates no understanding of the complexity of other cultures
Civic Responsibility	Identifies patterns of engagement in civic life, social interaction or politics and recognizes complexity among those patterns.	Identifies patterns of engagement in civic life, social interaction or politics and recognizes complexity in some of those patterns.	Identifies basic patterns of engagement in civic life, social interaction or politics.	Shows minimal awareness of patterns of engagement in civic life, social interaction or politics.	Shows no awareness of patterns of engagement in civic life, social interaction or politics.
Understanding One's Role in Regional, National and/or Global Communities	Demonstrates a comprehensive understanding of the roles of individuals in regional, national, or global communities	Demonstrates an adequate understanding of the roles of individuals in regional, national, or global communities	Demonstrates a partial understanding of the roles of individuals in regional, national, or global communities	Demonstrates a minimal understanding of the roles of individuals in regional, national, or global communities	Demonstrates no understanding of the roles of individuals in regional, national, or global communities

Upper Level Core Objective Assessment Courses

Communication	Critical Thinking	Empirical-Quantitative Reasoning	Teamwork	Personal Responsibility	Social Responsibility
AEC 451	AEC 451	CHE 470 (Spring Only)	CHE 443 (Fall Only)	HMS 414	AGD 400
BIO 470	BIO 470	ECH 350	HMS 390	HMS 420	CSC 411
CHE 470 (Fall Only)	CHE 470 (Spring Only)	HMS 304	HMS 403	HMS 449	ELE 441
COM 414	COM 414	HMS 305	HMS 414	HMS 452	HIS 470
CSC 411	CSC 411	HMS 349	HMS 420	HMS 459	HMS 353
ELE 441	ECH 350	HMS 350	HSC 470	HSC 470	HMS 403
GOL 449	ENG 344	HMS 414	MGT 416	MGT 416	HMS 414
HIS 470	GOL 435	HSC 489	RHB 407	PHI 422	HMS 485
HMS 339	HIS 470	MGT 416	SPE 461	RHB 407	KIN 450
HMS 407	HMS 339	MLG 403	NUR 431		KIN 487
HMS 414	HMS 414	PSC 490			MCM 307
HMS 441	HMS 441	RHB 407			MGT 416
HMS 452	HMS 452	SED 443			RHB 325
HSC 489	HMS 480				SED 442
KIN 431	HSC 489				SPH 442
KIN 450	KIN 450				
KIN 487	MCM 409				
MCM 300	MGT 416				
MGT 416	MHL 461				
MHL 461	MLG 403				
MTC 461	MTC 461				
MTH 412 (Fall Only)	PSY 341				
MTH 463 (Fall Only)	RHB 407				
PSC 490	SED 443				
PSY 341	SPE 442				
RHB 340	SPE 461				
RHB 407	SPH 320				
SED 442	THR 421				
SPE 461					
SPE 471					
SPH 472					

Appendix 5: Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board Response to SFASU Texas Common Core Assessment Submission

From: "Cornelius, Reinold Dr." <Reinold.Cornelius@highered.texas.gov>
Date: November 24, 2020 at 11:45:25 AM CST
To: Steve Bullard <bullardsh@sfasu.edu>
Cc: Marc Guidry <mguidry@sfasu.edu>
Subject: Submission of Core Curriculum Assessment report

Dear Dr. Bullard,

We received your report "Stephen F. Austin State University Texas Core Curriculum Objective Attainment," submitted through our agency's document submission portal on September 7, 2020.

All requirements are fulfilled. Thank you so much for your work in support of your students.

Yours sincerely,

Reinold

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Reinold R. Cornelius, PhD, Director (512-427-6156)
Academic Quality and Workforce Division
Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board
www.highered.texas.gov - www.60x30TX.com

Sensitive