

# **Texas A&M International University**

## **Annual Institutional Effectiveness Review (AIER)**

**Date Submitted** February 10, 2006

**Assessment Period Covered (2006)**

**Academic Program/AES Unit** PASE/General University

**Person(s) Preparing Review** Conchita C. Hickey

**Provide summary of the last cycle's use of results and changes implemented**

One of the outcome goals (2b) was met. The other 3 showed student performance improved 1% (Outcome 2a), 4% (Outcome 3), and 6% (Outcome 1). Six new initiatives were incorporated into the freshman seminar, GENU1300, Theories and Applications of Learning:

1) faculty guest speakers across the disciplines presented in GENU class.

2) two learning communities were piloted in Hist1301/Genu1300/Engl1301, and one hybrid Soci1301/Genu 1300 was taught for Fall 2005.

3) The PASE Executive Director and COAS faculty member attended a summer assessment conference sponsored by the National Center for Research on the First Year Experience to begin the construction of a more thorough assessment plan for the freshman seminar. The Educational Benchmark Institute (EBI) instrument focuses on course effectiveness regarding student satisfaction with the course design and delivery. The use of retention, GPA, probation status will continue to be monitored, but since so many factors contribute to the data in these categories, a detailed assessment of the class itself will be used to evaluate its effectiveness from a student perspective.

4) Common course syllabus now includes the addition of four formal short writing assignments as part of PASE/GENU department's contribution to the QEP and the development of academic skills for entering freshmen.

5) Common course syllabus now includes the PLATO software reading level assessment of entering freshmen. Eight additional PLATO licenses were purchased to increase student access to the assessment and instruction for this initiative.

6) Common course syllabus reduced the number of required academic support hours per month on a pilot basis to compare student response with prior years.

## Section I: Planning and Implementation

### **Institutional Mission**

Texas A&M International University, a Member of The Texas A&M University System, prepares students for leadership roles in their chosen profession in an increasingly complex, culturally diverse state, national, and global society ... Through instruction, faculty and student research, and public service, Texas A&M International University embodies a strategic point of delivery for well-defined programs and services that improve the quality of life for citizens of the border region, the State of Texas, and national and international communities.

### **Academic Program or Administrative/Educational Support Unit Mission**

Committed to the success of its students, the Department of Developmental Studies endeavors to prepare students for future roles in the community by providing an academic foundation that will lead to a successful academic experience. Access to Developmental Studies is not limited to students who need to meet Texas Success Initiative (state standards in basic math, reading, writing) requirements; traditional and non-traditional students who want to strengthen their skills before enrolling in regular courses may also benefit from developmental courses. Instructors of developmental classes work with professors of various departments to ensure curricular continuity and promote active learning through the use of successful teaching and learning strategies.

### **Identify outcomes and the relationship to Strategic Plan**

#### **Outcome 1**

**Is this outcome related to writing (QEP)?**

Students taking GENU 1300, Freshman Seminar, will conduct a library research project that demonstrates they can a) determine the nature and extent of the information needed, 2) access needed information effectively and efficiently, 3) evaluate information and its sources critically and incorporate selected information into his or her knowledge base and value system. (Learning outcomes taken from Information Competency Standards for Higher Education, ACRL, 2000).

#### **Identify Strategic Plan Goal related to Outcome 1**

Goal 1 Academics

**Identify Strategic Plan Objective related to Outcome 1**

1.7 Establish and pursue student learning outcomes appropriate for each program with systematic assessment and use of results for continuous quality improvement.

**Identify methods of assessment to be used**

Graded library assignment

**Indicate when assessment will take place**

Annual

**Criteria/Benchmark**

75% of the students (still enrolled at end of term) will complete the library assignment satisfactorily.

**Outcome 2**

**Is this outcome related to writing (QEP)?**

Students taking GENU 1300, freshman seminar, will indicate on the Educational Benchmarking Institute Freshman Seminar Survey that the course improved their a) academic and cognitive skills, b) managing and time priorities, c) critical thinking skills, d) study strategies, e) connections with faculty, f) knowledge of academic services and g) felt the course was overall effective

**Identify Strategic Plan Goal related to Outcome 2**

Goal 1 Academics

**Identify Strategic Plan Objective related to Outcome 2**

1.7 Establish and pursue student learning outcomes appropriate for each program with systematic assessment and use of results for continuous quality improvement.

**Identify methods of assessment to be used**

Educational Benchmark Instrument (EBI)

**Indicate when assessment will take place**

Annual

**Criteria/Benchmark**

GENU 1300, freshman seminar, will rank in the top 20%, i.e. rank 1 or 2 in the select 6 institution comparison group or 1 through 4 in the 20 Carnegie classification comparison group, of the colleges and universities in the Educational Benchmark Institute (EBI) freshman seminar survey for each of the factors listed (a-g).

**Outcome 3**

**Is this outcome related to writing (QEP)?**

Students taking GENU 1300 Learning Communities will earn a 2.0 overall GPA (not including credit by exams grades but including developmental grades) the semester that they take their

course.

**Identify Strategic Plan Goal related to Outcome 3**

Goal 1 Academics

**Identify Strategic Plan Objective related to Outcome 3**

1.3 Increase student retention rates and graduation.

**Identify methods of assessment to be used**

An end of the semester, focus report ( MTLCM) part of the University's Student Information System database used for reporting (Report name may change due to the Banner conversion)

**Indicate when assessment will take place**

Annual

**Criteria/Benchmark**

At least 50% of students who took General University (GENU) learning community section (s) Fall 2006 will earn a 2.0 overall GPA during that semester.

## Section II: Analysis of Results

### **When (term/date) was assessment conducted?**

#### **Outcome 1**

Fall 2005 and Spring 2006

#### **Outcome 2**

Fall 2005 and Spring 2006

#### **Outcome 3**

Fall 2006/ January 30, 2007

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### **What were the results attained (raw data)?**

#### **Outcome 1**

Exact data on how many students completed the assignment was very difficult to gather from all the professors; however it was very clear that very few students, maybe 30%, completed the library assignment so the 75% criteria was clearly not met.

#### **Outcome 2**

Fall 2005: Number of respondents = 176

For Select 6: Met the criteria for 6 of 7 factors measured on the EBI. We placed 1<sup>st</sup> in those 6 and placed 3<sup>rd</sup> in the "knowledge of academic services."

For 20 Institutions Participating: Met the criteria for all 7 factors, that is we ranked top 20% of the group.

Spring 2006: Number of respondents= 216

For Select 6: Exactly the same as Fall 2005 results.

For 20 Institutions Participating: Met the criteria for 5 of the 7 factors. Need to improve on "knowledge of academic services" and "improved connections with peers."

#### **Outcome 3**

Fall 2006

N= 201

Results: 67.16% of those taking GENU 1300 and participating in a learning community earned at least a 2.0 GPA. Criteria benchmark was met and exceeded by 17.6%

58.91% of GENU 1300 students who did NOT participate in a learning community earned at least a 2.0 GPA.

Data indicate a 9% higher GPA for those GENU 1300 students in learning communities.

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### **Who (specify names) conducted analysis of data?**

#### **Outcome 1**

Library Instructors

**Outcome 2**

Educational Benchmark Institute  
PASE office/ Conchita Hickey

**Outcome 3**

Conchita Hickey and Elizabeth Martinez

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**When were the results and analysis shared and with whom (department chair, supervisor, staff, external stakeholders)? Submit minutes with data analysis to [assessment@tamiu.edu](mailto:assessment@tamiu.edu) (Please use Minutes Template located on the **Project INTEGRATE** web page.)**

The results for Outcomes 1 and 2 were shared with the PASE faculty and administrative staff during the October 5, 2006 retreat. The data for Outcome 3 was just gathered on January 30, 2007 since we needed to wait for the Fall 06 term GPA. It will be shared with the First Year Task Force and the Foundations of Excellence Steering Committee at their next meetings in February.

**NOTE: Submit all assessment documentation (i.e., surveys, rubrics, course exams with embedded questions, etc.) to the Office of Institutional Effectiveness and Planning.**

**Use of Results: Indicate whether criteria were met/not met and what changes, if any, have been identified based on the data collected?**

**Outcome 1**

Met    Not Met

**Provide narrative:** We (faculty and librarians) experienced great difficulty in motivating the students to complete the assignment. Many of the students simply did not do the assignment and preferred to take the failing grade than do the exercise. Increasing the grade percentage and assigning the activity earlier in the semester were discussed and proposed for the following year. The library unit was lengthened and formalized in an attempt to increase student participation.

**Outcome 2**

Met    Not Met

**Provide narrative:** The survey showed that the students enrolled in GENU 1300 felt the course had done an excellent job of covering the course objectives.

**Outcome 3**

Met    Not Met

**Provide narrative:** The data indicates that GENU 1300 students who participated in learning communities earned a higher GPA for Fall 06 than those who did not.

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**How have these data-based changes improved your program/unit?**

Outcome 1: With the help of the library faculty, we have decided to redesign the library component so that it is not so ambitious and so that it can be measured. Since there are many assignments in the freshman seminar class, we cannot assign enough of a grade percentage to encourage students to do the library unit. As a result, the library assignment has been modified so that enough students complete it and we can measure the outcome. The learning outcome has already been proposed to the First Year Task Committee and it has been approved.

Outcome 2: The results of the EBI survey were very gratifying. It documents that we are doing many things right and that we should continue to focus on the objectives we have laid out for the class. The two areas that need improvement will be addressed in the new syllabus that has been designed for the two semester freshman seminar. This outcome will still be part of the proposed UNIV 1101 and UNIV 1102 courses for Fall 2007-Spring 2008.

Outcome 3: The data supports the decision that has been made to have every freshman participate in a learning community during their first year. Students who do so outperform those who do not, at least those that were taking it this semester. Fall 06 will be the last fall semester that we have a control group, since from now on all freshman will be participating. Nonetheless, we should be able to compare the GPA of all freshman from years past with the new data that will be gathered starting Fall 2007-Spring 2008.

Section III: Programmatic Review

**Are resources affected by the changes identified in Section II?**  Yes  No

**If so, specify the effect(s) using the chart below:**

Funding	Physical	Other
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> New resources required	<input type="checkbox"/> New or reallocated space	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Primarily faculty/staff time
<input type="checkbox"/> Reallocation of current funds		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> University rule/procedure change only
		<input type="checkbox"/> Other: Enter text here

**Provide a narrative description and justification for requested resources (include linkage to Strategic Plan)**

Since learning communities for all freshmen will be implemented starting Fall 2007, this plan will require commitment of financial resources. First, faculty who participate should be compensated for their participation in this endeavor as they will have to invest additional time and energy working with their faculty team in the delivery of these courses. The proposed honorarium by the First Year Task Force is approximately \$650 per faculty and the projected cost per year is \$ . Additionally, 31 sections of the freshman seminar will be offered each semester which means that some new salary lines need to be funded for the PASE/General University department that oversees this course offering.

<b>Identify proposed outcomes for the next assessment cycle:</b>
Continuation of present outcome(s) – (Indicate reason for continuation): 1. Freshman seminar library unit evaluation, 2. Freshman seminar course effectiveness, 3. GPA of freshmen in learning communities. These same outcomes will be measured so that we can track the same data across time and determine whether the new course design over two semesters is effective.
New Outcome(s) – (List outcomes below):
Modification of present outcome(s) – (Indicate reason for modification):

**\*\*\*\* This section to be completed by dean/director/vice-president \*\*\*\***

**Are resources requested a priority for the academic program/AES unit?**

Yes  No

**Comments:**

We cannot implement the new program without funding.



**If funding, physical or other resources were requested, what is the impact of the budget decisions on the academic program/AES unit?**

The unit cannot deliver the program without the additional faculty lines or the faculty honorarium for participation.