Assessment Report: HUMN Courses

Narrative:

The faculty who teach HUMN 1301, 1303, and 1305 are committed to the mission of Georgia Perimeter College. To that end, their assessment goals are intended to strengthen student success. These goals foster a culture of teamwork as faculty collaborate in the assessment process and offer feedback and suggestions for course improvement based upon the results. The HUMN courses enhance the economic, social, and cultural vitality of our communities by assisting students in completing their associates degree requirements prior to transferring to four-year institutions and by encouraging them to use their reasoning skills outside the classroom environment. The courses are also offered in different manners of delivery to support the College’s goal to expand access and enrollment capacity.

Assessment Goals

1) Students will be able to effectively explain the importance of literature, languages, philosophy, religion, or fine arts in the human experience by studying some of them at different points in history, both in class and in out-of-class aesthetic “encounters.”

2) Students will be able to effectively analyze global economic, political, historical, cultural, or geographic forces by reflecting, both in their written work and in class discussion, on how these forces have expressed themselves in the arts and how they have played out over the course of centuries of civilization.

Process / Explanation of Findings

In Spring, 2012, the Humanities Curriculum committee elected to use an assignment in common in all three HUMN courses (HUMN 1301, 1303, and 1305) in order to evaluate the three courses at the same time. This assignment, call an “aesthetic encounter,” requires students to go to some place in the Atlanta metro area, such as a museum, a concert, or a play, and then write a report on the experience. The experience in question has to be relevant to the subject matter of their course.

Instructors in all HUMN courses taught that semester were required to take the alphabetized stack of submitted encounter assignments, pull the 3rd and 13th papers from the stack, cover all identifying marks on them, and bring copies of them to the assessment meeting. At the meeting, we composed a scoring system of 1 (the lowest) to 5 (the highest). We decided that we hoped to see (ie, would be satisfied if there turned out to be) 60% of the papers with a score of 3 or better. The four committee members then read the papers and scored them, but did not show one another the scores until the end of the process. As it turned out, although the scores on the papers ranged fairly broadly, all of the papers received scores of 3 or better from all reviewers.
**Action Taken / Improvements Resulting From Assessment**

Although we were satisfied with the results of the assessment, we were not sure that all humanities instructors, especially contingent faculty, were aware that the aesthetic encounter assignment is in the common course outline of each of the three courses, and must therefore be included in each humanities course. We decided to enlist the assistance of the humanities chairs to help make that clear.

Second, the committee decided to recommend to all HUMN instructors that their aesthetic encounter assignments have the following three elements: a) the facts (the who, what when, where, and why) of the experience; b) the student’s evaluation and interpretation of the quality of what they have seen or heard in the encounter; and c) the way the encounter that the student has experienced relates (or fails to relate) to the subject matter of the course. Department chairs will be sent these recommendations.