 Office of General Education A-218C

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Pathways Learning Outcomes Syllabi Assessment Report



# Purpose

The purpose of this assessment was to examine whether Pathways learning outcomes and activities/assignments related to those outcomes presented on course syllabi across a variety of Pathways courses.

**Methodology**

Syllabi were collected from representative courses from each Pathways category and assessed by the General Education Director. The expectation was that outcomes listed conveyed the same meaning as Pathways statements, not necessarily exactly the same wording. Course activities and assignments were reviewed with the same expectation. It is important to note than many of the courses are offered as large lectures, therefore, only one syllabus is presented.

# Assessment Findings

Overall, most of the syllabi are found to be satisfactory in terms of Pathways learning outcomes and activities/assignments related to them, however, differences are noted between categories leaving room for improvement in certain Pathways designated courses.

**The Fixed Core**

**English composition courses**, FIQWS and ENGL 110, have the same prescribed departmental outcomes, which are compatible with Pathways outcomes; as required by the department, all sections of these courses state the outcomes on the syllabi. Class activities and assignments address all of the outcomes.

**Math and Quantitative Reasoning** category includes Math 150 offered by the Math department and FQUAN, offered thorough Psychology. Math department has standardized learning outcomes and weekly topics for all sections; all Pathways outcomes except #4 are clearly stated and addressed. FQUAN courses do a good job of presenting Pathways outcomes on the syllabi, although it is not obvious from the syllabus how some of the outcomes are being met.

**Life and Physical Sciences:** EAS 104 states Pathways outcomes clearly and offers a range of activities/assignments to address them. CHEM 110 states all Pathways outcomes but course activities focus primarily on content knowledge (related to outcome #1), it is not obvious how others are being met.

**The Flexible core**

Over the last several years, the General Education Office has been asking departments/faculty to include the “Gen Ed statement” in their syllabi. The statement, such as:

***General Education Information***

*As part of the College’s General Education Curriculum, this course is designed to enhance your understanding of artistic issues and how they are studied. Students successfully completing this course will develop the following proficiencies:*

*•Oral and written communication skills - Students will produce well-reasoned written or oral arguments using evidence to support conclusions.*

*•Critical thinking skills - Students will evaluate evidence and arguments critically or analytically. •Information literacy - Students will gather, interpret, and assess information from a variety of sources and points of view.*

*•Artistic/Creative expression proficiency – Students will identify and apply the fundamental concepts and methods of architectural history in order to explore creative expression.*

is present in almost all Flexible Core syllabi. This addresses 4 out of 6 expected Pathway outcomes.

All the syllabi included additional outcomes which in many cases were compatible with Pathways outcomes, but not all of them were. In terms of activities and assignments, they are in large part meeting the expectations, except in a couple of cases. Courses in the IS category, especially ECO 102, which serve as major requirements had the most challenge here, because their syllabi are most focused on terminology and content knowledge. Courses in other categories, especially WCGI and CE, paid special attention to Pathways outcomes and ensured their syllabi communicated Pathways goals and addressed them. One syllabus even had a weekly “theme” identified for students.

**Conclusion/Discussion**

While the majority of syllabi do a good job presenting Pathways outcomes and including activities and assignments which address them, there is room for improvement in some cases. It is noticeable that courses which offer a large number of sections and have a steady course coordinator do a good job of standardizing learning outcomes and ensuring they are aligned with Pathways expectations (ex. English composition, Art 100…) It is also noticeable that steady instructors in large lecture Gen Ed courses allow for continued implementation of Pathways outcomes (ex. EAS 104, ASTR 305). We are utilizing this assessment as an opportunity to ask for changes in cases were syllabi fell short of expectations: in those cases, faculty were asked to self-assess their syllabi and discuss whether any changes will be made in the future. As a result, CHEM 110 which has a new instructor, has already committed to modify the course by moving it online and developing interactive exercises-some independent, some in groups. The College will also continue with its efforts to reach out to faculty and Chairs every semester to ensure that Pathways learning goals are understood and are being addressed.