

UofSC Carolina Core Assessment

Reporting Assessment Results to Improve Student Learning Outcomes
for a General Education Program

History of the Carolina Core

- In 2005, the UofSC Provost called for a revision of the General Education curriculum.
- A task force of more than 100 faculty, staff, and students across five campuses created a task force addressing the question, "**What do our students need to know to thrive as well-educated citizens in the twenty-first century?**"
- In December 2007, the task force concluded its work and proposed new learning goals for a revised General Education curriculum.



History of the Carolina Core

- A General Education Committee was formed in early 2008 to oversee the General Education program, including revision of the curriculum.
- The Committee refined the learning outcomes received from the task force and articulated the rationale, values, and guiding principles for the proposed curriculum revision.
- University Forums were held to receive comments from faculty, staff, and students at USC-Columbia. Their final proposal, with the new learning outcomes, was presented to the Faculty Senate and adopted in April 2009.



History of the Carolina Core

- The new general education requirements were renamed the Carolina Core.
- A website for communicating the new requirements for general education was designed in 2012.
- Assessment of the Carolina Core began in 2013.



OIRAA's Role

The Office of Institutional Research, Assessment, and Analytics (OIRAA) implements the assessment of the Carolina Core by:

- Managing the assessment system (i.e., Blackboard Outcomes)
- Training raters via rating calibration sessions
- Reporting student outcomes for each Core area via standardized reports



OIRAA'S Role (cont'd)

- Making reports of assessment results available to faculty
- Documenting “closing the loop” processes where the findings are forwarded to the faculty for discussion of curricula and teaching practices.



Goals of the Results Website

Data Sharing

How can one reflect on what one hasn't seen?

- Size - over 1,200 faculty members across five campuses
- Scope - data across 10 areas (learning outcomes)
- Duration – over six years of data across various rubrics

Communication

- Alerting faculty of discussions
- Collecting feedback from faculty unable to attend in-person sessions

Documentation

- Providing evidence of continuous improvement for SACSCOC



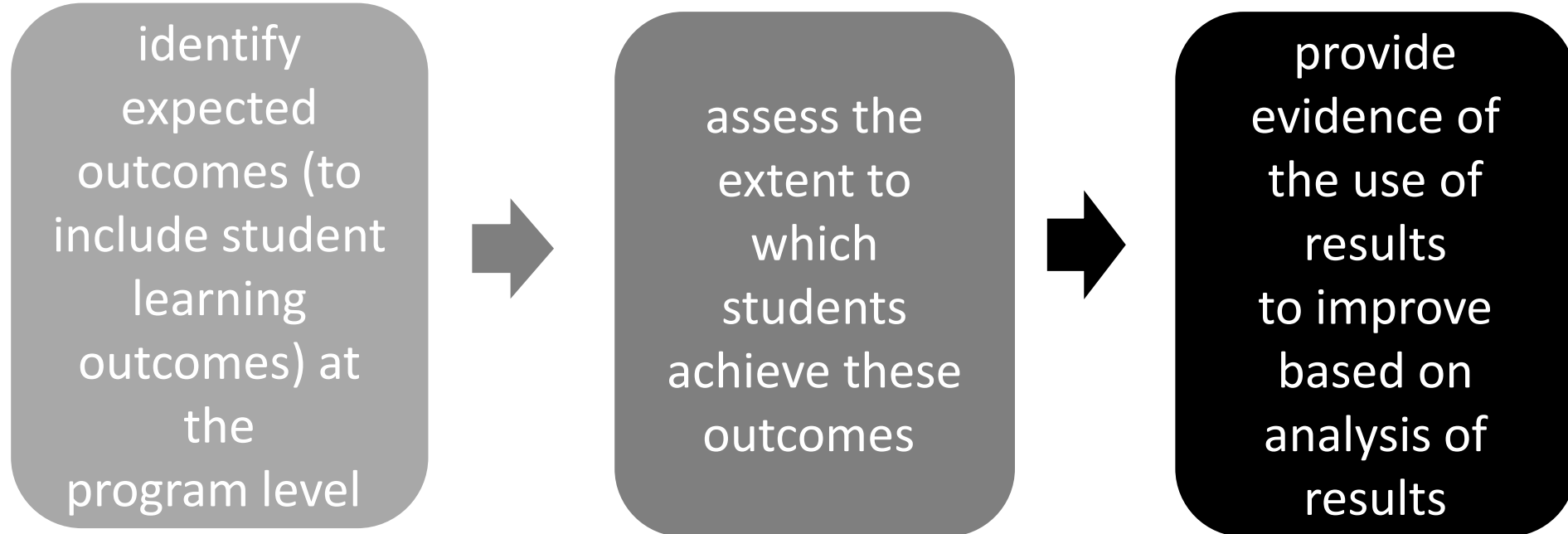
Southern Association Of Colleges And Schools Commission On Colleges (SACSCOC) Standard 8.2.b

8.2 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 following areas:

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



Southern Association Of Colleges And Schools Commission On Colleges (SACSCOC) Standard 8.2.b



Data Collection & Reporting

- Assessments relied heavily on course-embedded measures
- Majority of the artifacts were collected in Blackboard (Bb) LMS or by email or Drop Box and uploaded to Blackboard Outcomes.
 - Blackboard Outcomes is an add-on module for assessment.
 - Facilitates evaluation of assessments by a third party.
 - Selects assignments and distributes them to raters.
 - Incorporates a scoring rubric for raters
 - Generates results of assessments in aggregate.
- OIRAA staff downloaded results from Bb Outcomes and used SAS to create PDF versions of the reports for each area.

For report preparation details, please refer to the **2020 SCAIR Conference Presentation by Michael Tucker titled, **"Streamlining The Assessment Reporting Process Using SAS"**



Designing and Managing the Site

The Carolina Core website focuses on each of the Core areas by providing summaries, yearly reports, and rubrics for each area. This information is collected for the Columbia campus as well as the Palmetto College campuses (Lancaster, Salkehatchie, Sumter, and Union).


SACSCOC reviewers and authorized UofSC personnel can access the website to view the assessment results for the Core areas.



Carolina Core Assessment Results Homepage

SharePoint

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Step 2: Review the reports and additional information for that area. Reports for the Columbia and Palmetto College campuses are available within each link.

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Carolina Core Assessment Results

Carolina Core Learning Outcomes (Areas)

Aesthetic and Interpretive Understanding (AIU): Students must be able to create or interpret literary, visual or performing arts.

Global Citizenship and Multicultural Understanding: Historical Thinking (GHS): Students must be able to use the principles of historical thinking to understand past human societies.

Analytical Reasoning and Problem Solving (ARP): Student must be able to apply the methods of mathematical, statistical, or analytical reasoning to critically evaluate data, solve problems, and effectively communicate findings verbally and graphically.

Global Citizenship and Multicultural Understanding: Social Sciences (GSS): Students must be able to use the principles of the social sciences to explore diverse cultural identities and to analyze political and environmental issues.

Effective, Engaged and Persuasive Communication - Spoken Component (CMS): Students must be able to identify and analyze issues, develop logical and persuasive arguments, and communicate ideas clearly for a variety of audiences and purposes through writing and speaking.

Information Literacy (INF): Students must be able to collect, manage and evaluate information using technology and communicate findings.

Effective, Engaged, and Persuasive Communication -Written Component (CMW): Students must be able to identify and analyze issues, develop logical and persuasive arguments, and communicate ideas clearly for a variety of audiences and purposes through writing and speaking.

Scientific Literacy (SCI): Students must be able to apply the principles and language of the natural sciences and associated technologies to historical and contemporary issues.

Global Citizenship and Multicultural Understanding –Foreign language (GFL): Students will be able to communicate effectively in more than one language.

Values, Ethics and Social Responsibility (VSR): Students must be able to examine different kinds of social and personal values, analyzing the ways in which these are manifested in communities as well as individual lives.



AIU

Aesthetic and Interpretive Understanding (AIU): Students must be able to create or interpret literary, visual, or performing arts.

Columbia Campus

Summary

[AIU Summary](#)

Report

[2015 AIU Report](#)
[2016 AIU Report](#)
[2017 AIU Report](#)
[2019 AIU Report](#)

Rubric

[AIU Assessment Rubric](#)

Palmetto College

Summary

[AIU Summary](#)

Report

[2019 AIU Report](#)

Rubric

[AIU Assessment Rubric](#)



AIU Results

AIU Summary

Summary of Assessment Results for Aesthetic and Interpretive Understanding (AIU)					
Learning Outcomes	Assessments	Outcome	% of Students Meeting Outcome	Recommendations from OIRAA and/or Specialty Team	Proposed Actions for the Future
<p>1. Create works of literary, visual, or performance art that demonstrate proficiency in a specific area of specialization.</p> <p>2. Analyze works of literary, visual, or performance art with regard to style, period, and composition.</p> <p>3. Discuss specific artistic periods or styles with regard to history, development, and major practitioners.</p>	2015	1	n/a	<p>N/A</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> In conjunction with the Carolina Core Committee, the AIU Specialty Team should encourage faculty members include assignment instructions and identify whether or not their assignment assesses one or both AIU learning outcomes. Quality assignments that link to multiple AIU learning outcomes are vital to the success of measuring student attainment of the learning outcomes. Training for raters is critical to the overall success of using rubrics to assess student work artifacts. The AIU specialty team should discuss and implement strategies to encourage more faculty participation in inter-rater reliability training, including providing guidance to OIRAA in identifying exemplars that can be used for inter-rater reliability training. The AIU Specialty Team, in conjunction with departmental chairs, should facilitate the creation of a work group that analyzes assignments the semester after artifact collection 	<p>Learning Outcomes: None</p> <p>Face to Face Teaching: The specialty team would like to...</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> propose AIU workshops similar to the CTL sessions, that occur on a somewhat routine basis look more closely at discipline specific findings and areas where instructors can improve (workshops at the discipline/department level) conduct workshops after each AIU core review period recruit faculty from these disciplines to participants in their specific areas of study unify AIU course syllabi develop some similar forms of assignments in order to make sure students are getting adequate skills and knowledge <p>Assessment:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Remove the OIRAA note, "The Carolina Core Committee should begin a broader investigation on students' ability to use and correctly site source material, particularly focusing on which Core courses impart these skills and when students are expected to complete the requirement," from the 2019 AIU Core Report. AIU assessment rubric should be revised to replace the word "evidence" with "source" as it is a different skill than what is described in the learning outcome the phrase "as appropriate" be put into the AIU assessment rubric allow students to see the AIU rating rubric for the specific assignment that the student would be submitting for assessment <p>Online Instruction:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> May be worth further examination
		2	52.4		
		3	36		
	2016	1	n/a		
		2	79		
		3	75		



AIU

Aesthetic and Interpretive Understanding (AIU): Students must be able to create or interpret literary, visual, or performing arts.

Columbia Campus

Summary	Report	Rubric
AIU Summary	2015 AIU Report 2016 AIU Report 2017 AIU Report 2019 AIU Report	AIU Assessment Rubric

Palmetto College

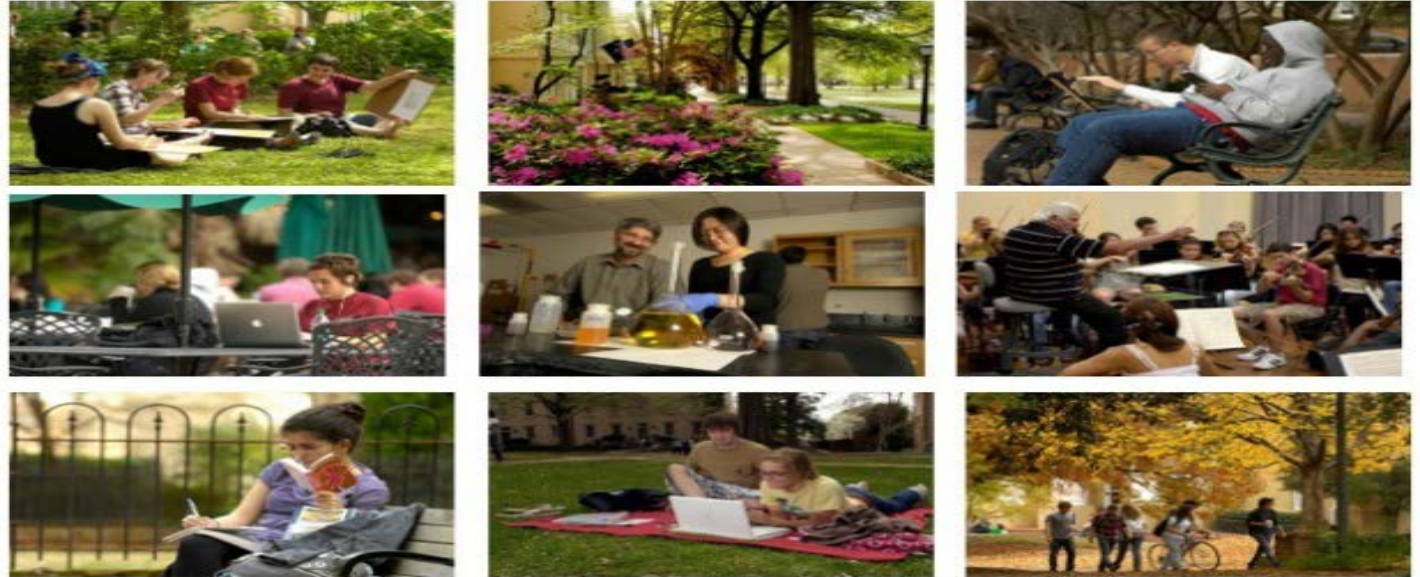
Summary	Report	Rubric
AIU Summary	2019 AIU Report	AIU Assessment Rubric



Carolina Core Assessment

2019 AIU Report

- Methodology
- Performance Results
- Longitudinal Data Comparison
- Recommendations



AIU - Spring 2019

*Prepared for:
Sandra Kelly, Vice Provost and Dean of Undergraduate Studies
September 10th, 2019*

Prepared by:

The Office of Institutional Research, Assessment, and Analytics



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Columbia Campus

Summary	Report	Rubric
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Palmetto College

Summary	Report	Rubric
AIU Summary	2019 AIU Report	AIU Assessment Rubric



AIU Results

Carolina Core Learning Outcome *Aesthetic and Interpretive Understanding (AIU)*

Note: As per the Syllabus Review Rubric on the Carolina Core webpage, syllabi must satisfy Student Achievement (Learning Outcome) 1 or 2, & 3.

AIU Rubric (abridged)

#	Learning Outcome	1-Weak	2-Satisfactory	3-Strong
1	Create works of literary, visual or performance art that demonstrate proficiency in a specific area of specialization.	Creative product doesn't demonstrate basic understanding of foundational structure, concepts, and/or vocabulary; creative work is poorly developed.	Creative product demonstrates a basic understanding of foundational structure, concepts, and/or vocabulary; creative work is adequately developed.	Creative product demonstrates clear foundational structure and follows elements and principles of composition; demonstrates clear understanding of concepts and vocabulary; creative work is fully developed and executed.
OR				
2	Analyze works of literary, visual or performance art with regard to style, period and composition.	Demonstrates no understanding of analytical format; doesn't demonstrate understanding of genre, period style, or principles of composition; doesn't make reference to primary or secondary sources.	Demonstrates a basic understanding of genre, period style, or principles of composition; demonstrates basic use of primary and/or secondary evidence; work is adequate, but not outstanding.	Demonstrates a good understanding of genre, period style, and/or principles of composition; relevant and complete use of primary and/or secondary evidence.



Obtaining Faculty Feedback


- In Fall 2019, lists were compiled of all faculty who taught in each area over the previous 3 years.
- These faculty members were sent emails with a link to the Carolina Core Website and were invited to a discussion of the results for their area to be held in the Center for Teaching Excellence.
- Faculty members were provided a list of guiding questions to consider as they reviewed the results.
- Specialty Chairs for each area facilitated conversation around the guiding questions.
- OIRAA took notes during each session and synthesized all findings in the Spring of 2020.



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Faculty Feedback

In the fall of 2019, the Office of Institutional Research, Assessment, and Analytics (OIRAA), the Office of the Provost, and the Center for Teaching Excellence (CTE) collaborated to convene meetings of faculty from the Columbia and Palmetto College campuses. The purpose of these meetings was to bring groups of faculty together to discuss general education, i.e., the Carolina Core, and to comment on the university's assessment of undergraduate student learning.

In preparation for these meetings, this Carolina Core Results website was developed and Specialty Team Chairpersons for each Core area were provided a link to this site and invited instructors to in-person discussions of assessment results. Specialty Team Chairs were also provided with the following list of guiding questions for discussion:

- 1. Each Carolina Core area is considered a learning outcome. In your opinion, is this learning outcome appropriate for first-and-second year undergraduate students?*
- 2. What skills or knowledge do you expect a student will gain as a result of taking your Carolina Core course?*
- 3. After reviewing the assessment results for this learning outcome (both with these data in mind and in general) how will you improve your teaching of the Carolina Core?*
- 4. What changes would you recommend to the manner in which the assessment was executed? Are there any changes you would recommend to how the data were collected and/or reported?*
- 5. Do the results align with any of your classroom experiences? Does the data corroborate any interactions or challenges you have had with students? Consider challenges for on-line/distance ed. teaching versus face-to-face instruction.*

A total of ten meetings were held between October 2019 and February 2020. A summary of faculty responses to each of the above guiding questions from these meetings across all Core areas can be found by clicking the link below:

[Synthesis of CC Faculty Sentiment](#)



Faculty Sentiment toward Carolina Core and its Assessment: A Synthesis

University of South Carolina

Columbia and Palmetto College Campuses



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AIU Synthesis of Faculty Sentiment

Core Area: (AIU) Aesthetic Interpretation and Understanding				
	Learning Outcomes	Face to Face Teaching	Assessment	Online Instruction
Positive Comments/Strengths	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> general consensus that Aesthetic and Interpretive Understanding (AIU) courses were very important to first and second year students 	Students... <ul style="list-style-type: none"> are able to cite sources properly and know the process of developing a works cited know how to properly use parenthetical documentation stick to citing primary sources for the purposes of meeting AIU criteria who receive their AIU credit get a similar course experience and skill set regardless of the how they choose to fulfill that requirement 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> online format allowed for better delivery of photos and videos for analysis from the students
Negative Comments/Challenges		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A concern was expressed that some of the AIU instructors were not being made aware of the learning out comes or their crucial role in data collection before the course had started due to the large number of graduate student teachers and adjunct professors that teach these AIU introductory level courses they may be missing the details pertaining to their role in Carolina Core assessment. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> the difference between honors student submission and regular student submissions was different enough to make it challenging for raters to rate items uniformly the subject matter differed greatly 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> it can be difficult to have students break out of their standard essay format some faculty felt that online delivery may be detrimental to student learning



AIU Synthesis of Faculty Sentiment (cont'd)


Core Area: (AIU) Aesthetic Interpretation and Understanding				
	Learning Outcomes	Face to Face Teaching	Assessment	Online Instruction
Action Items/ Recommendations		<p>The specialty team would like to...</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> propose AIU workshops similar to the CTL sessions, that occur on a somewhat routine basis look more closely at discipline specific findings and areas where instructors can improve (workshops at the discipline/department level) conduct workshops after each AIU core review period recruit faculty from these disciplines to participants in their specific areas of study unify AIU course syllabi develop some similar forms of assignments in order to make sure students are getting adequate skills and knowledge 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Remove the OIRAA note, "The Carolina Core Committee should begin a broader investigation on students' ability to use and correctly site source material, particularly focusing on which Core courses impart these skills and when students are expected to complete the requirement," from the 2019 AIU Core Report. AIU assessment rubric should be revised to replace the word "evidence" with "source" as it is a different skill than what is described in the learning outcome the phrase "as appropriate" be put into the AIU assessment rubric allow students to see the AIU rating rubric for the specific assignment that the student would be submitting for assessment 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> may be worth further examination



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About

Assessment of the university's Carolina Core is a collaborative effort among the Office of the Provost; the Office of Institutional Research, Assessment, and Analytics (OIRAA); and the faculty and staff of the University of South Carolina.

All information obtained via this website is used to document our general education assessment efforts in order to be compliant with the teaching and learning requirements for the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges (SACSCOC) standards.

SACSCOC does not penalize institutions for failure to meet assessment targets, so none of the information obtained via this site will adversely affect the university's ability to remain accredited. Instead, the sole purpose of this site is to document that our faculty and constituents are informed about how well our students are performing with respect to general education learning outcomes of the Carolina Core.

For more information, visit the following links:



- [SACSCOC Standard 8.2.b](#)
- [Carolina Core Requirements](#)
- [Carolina Core Specialty Teams](#)
- [Palmetto College Carolina Core Specialty Team Subcommittees](#)
- [Important Contacts](#)



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Carolina Core Contacts

	<p>Sandra J. Kelly, Ph.D., Vice Provost and Dean of Undergraduate Studies</p>
	<p>Sabrina Andrews Executive Director Institutional Research, Assessment, and Analytics</p>
	<p>Donald Miles Director of Institutional Effectiveness and Accreditation Institutional Research, Assessment, and Analytics</p>
	<p>La Trice Small Assistant Director of Assessment Institutional Research, Assessment, and Analytics</p>
	<p>Michael Tucker Assessment Coordinator Institutional Research, Assessment, and Analytics</p>

	<p>Scott Smith System Administrator / Web Designer Institutional Research, Assessment, and Analytics</p>
	<p>Stan Lawrimore Director of Information Resources</p>



POSITIVE Faculty Feedback on Assessment of Carolina Core

- Appreciative of the Carolina Core Results Website, because all of the data, rubrics, and reports were in one place.
- Openness to more guidance on the process and standardization of assignments for assessment.
- Willingness to rate their own assignments with a common rubric.
- Interest in a new, more robust assessment system.



NEGATIVE Faculty Feedback on Assessment of Carolina Core

- Faculty felt they did not receive enough advance notice of their need to participate in assessment.
- Lack of clarity on assignments sufficient for assessment, and difficulty making assignments fit outcomes.
- Recruitment and training of raters was not sustainable.
- Too many changes to assessment methods between assessment rounds, inability to compare assessment results from one assessment cycle to another.
- Heavy reliance on quantitative methods with no use of qualitative methods in analysis.



Actions Taken Since Calendar Year 2020

- The assessment system used to support assessment (Blackboard Outcomes) did not live up to expectations and the contract was discontinued in the spring of 2020.
- A procurement effort to secure a new system to support general education assessment began in 2020 and a Request For Proposals was issued. The deadline for proposals was July 20, 2021.
- In January of 2021, the Vice Provost and Dean of Undergraduate Studies called for action around revising the Carolina Core.



General Education Activities in 2021

- The Standard 8.2.b was considered as compliant based on the SACSCOC review held in December of 2021.
- The Faculty Senate's Instructional Development (INDEV) subcommittee is preparing background materials on general education (Carolina Core) for review and vote by the full Faculty Senate regarding whether to revise the Carolina Core.
- The Columbia Carolina Core Specialty Teams convened on December 1, 2021, to discuss plans for resuming assessment in Spring 2022 and for using newly collected assessment results to inform decisions about a revision.



General Education Assessment Activities in 2021

Faculty represented were provided with 5 options for resuming Carolina Core Assessment

- **Option A:** Continuing what we have been doing. Ten Core Learning Outcomes. No changes.
- **Option B:** Collect student artifacts, but collapse the existing ten areas to three areas (Big Three, LO1: Interpretation, LO2: Communication, and LO3: Analysis).
- **Option C:** Using Standardized tests to assess general education learning outcomes.
- **Option D:** Using artifacts from classes of incoming and then soon-to-be graduating students (longitudinal)
- **Option E:** Integrating general education assessment with our assessment processes for academic degree programs.

OPTION E was selected by members present. OIRAA is collaborating with the Vice Provost and Dean of Undergraduate Studies to complete the framework for implementation in Fall 2022.



Conclusions

- The Website was instrumental in providing evidence of using results for improvement, resulting in a “compliant” rating for Standard 8.2.b following the off-site review.
- The website provided a unique opportunity for IR staff to work collaboratively with IE staff and with our IT department.
- The synthesis document is being used to inform revisions to the Carolina Core.



Questions?



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