**GE ID Social, Political, and Economic Institutions and Behavior SLO Evaluation Report July 2023:**

**Background/Description of GE Program ePortfolio:**

Prior to the 2017-2018 AY, departments/programs were responsible for assessing GE student learning outcomes and submitting a report every year for the GE Committee to review. This system had several weaknesses. Departments and programs were responsible for deciding which of the two to four outcomes designated for a specific GE Area to assess; thus some outcomes were evaluated multiple times within a year and others were not evaluated at all in certain years. It was also not possible for departments to access and evaluate a representative sample of student work, nor was it possible to compare the results from GE courses in the same GE Area taught by different departments/programs, because each department/program used its own criteria/rubrics. Finally, the GE Committee was not able to review and analyze the GE assessment reports in a comprehensive fashion, since the committee was also tasked with reviewing all GE curriculum proposals, as well as with discussing and updating GE policies and procedures.

Therefore, Fresno State developed a proposal for a new system of evaluating GE student learning outcomes during the 2014-2015 AY. The proposal was approved by Fresno State’s Academic Senate in May 2017 and by the President in August of 2017. Essentially, all freshmen and transfer students admitted to Fresno State beginning in Fall 2018 will submit one designated assignment aligned to one GE student outcome from lower-division (for freshmen) and upper-division (for freshmen and transfer students) GE courses to a GE Program ePortfolio. Students will also write 300-word reflections (freshmen write three and transfer students write one) about their learning and submit these to the GE Program ePortfolio. The GE Program ePortfolio was set up by the Director of Assessment and students were automatically enrolled. Handouts, videos, and other resources that were posted previously to Blackboard were uploaded to Canvas when the campus transitioned from Blackboard to Canvas.

During the first year of implementation (2017-2018 AY), efforts focused on electing members to the new GE Assessment Subcommittee and on approving common rubrics to be used to evaluate GE student learning outcomes. Fresno State’s GE student learning outcomes were approved by the Academic Senate in 2010. These forty outcomes were originally to be evaluated on a five-year rotating schedule. With the addition of Area F to the GE curriculum, the outcomes are now evaluated on a six-year schedule.

The ePortfolio submission process will change in Fall 2023. The university contracted with Canvas to develop an assignment LTI that eliminates the need for students to submit the designated assignments to their ePortfolio. When GE faculty set up their course in Canvas, they designate which assignment is the ePortfolio assignment. When students submit the designated assignment to their professor, the LTI duplicates the assignment and seamlessly routes that copy to their ePortfolio.

In the 2022-2023 AY, the Director of Assessment selected a random sample of student submissions for the two learning outcomes in Area ID, Social, Political, and Economic Institutions and Behavior. The Chair of the GE Assessment Subcommittee selected two faculty members from the subcommittee to assess each learning outcome. The Director of Assessment collaborated with each team of subcommittee members to determine which assignments aligned well with the relevant learning outcome. The Director of Assessment then provided a random sample of assignments to the team and they applied the appropriate rubric to assess the assignments and determine student proficiency in each learning outcome.

**GE Assessment Subcommittee: Evaluation and Norming Process:**

The GE Assessment Subcommittee had previously reviewed and approved common rubrics for evaluating each of the two GE learning outcomes designated for GE Area ID. Prior to conducting the assessment, the Director of Assessment met with each faculty team for the purpose of norming. Each team member had independently reviewed a sample of student work and used the rubric to evaluate the work. Where there were discrepancies in the team members’ ratings of proficiency or questions about the rubric criteria, the Director of Assessment and team members discussed the reasons for the differences and reached a consensus on how to apply the rubric going forward. The faculty teams then independently scored all of the selected assignments. After scoring the work, faculty teams met to identify common strengths and weaknesses. A third reviewer scored all assignments on which the two reviewers did not agree about proficiency.

**Student Learning Outcomes and measures (assignments) used to evaluate**

***Student Learning Outcomes***

Upon completion of a course in Area ID, a student will be able to:

1. Describe the inextricable connections among human social, political, cultural and economic institutions and behavior and employ the diverse methodologies used to examine them.
2. Discuss social science issues, human institutions, and their interconnections from both a contemporary and historical perspective.

***Assignments:***

Multiple courses satisfy area ID requirements and were a source of assignments for this assessment. For learning outcome 1, these included Anthropology, Chicano and Latin American Studies, Criminology, Forensic Behavioral Sciences, Geography, Gerontology, History, Media, Communications and Journalism, Sociology, and Women’s, Gender, and Sexuality Studies. For learning outcome 2, these included courses in Agricultural Business, Chicano and Latin American Studies, Forensic Behavioral Sciences, Gerontology, Media, Communications, and Journalism, Social Sciences, and Women’s, Gender, and Sexuality Studies.

For learning outcome 1, the assignments required students to analyze a variety of institutions, including agriculture, business, education, finance, government, labor, legal, and media. For learning outcome 2, issues included crime, education, employment discrimination, food production, immigration, intergenerational trauma, industrialization, redlining, social media, stereotyping, and trade.

**RESULTS**

**Results for Area ID, Learning Outcome 1**

The evaluation of ID learning outcome 1 resulted in the following ratings:

* Proficient 31 (91.1%)
* Developing 3 (8.9%)

Students were rated proficient if they scored 3 (advanced) or 2 (proficient) on the rubric. Students were rated developing if they scored a 1.

Inter-rater reliability was 94.1%, above Fresno State’s benchmark of 90%.

The students did very well on this assessment, exceeding Fresno State’s 90% benchmark. Faculty reviewers are not asked to reconcile ratings when they agree as to proficiency but disagree about rating a paper a 3 (advanced) or 2 (proficient). It is noteworthy that fourteen students earned scores of 3 from both reviewers. Representative reviewer comments from papers that were rated proficient and not proficient are reported below.

For assignments rated advanced, reviewers made comments such as these:

* Discussed multiple connections effectively
* Good diversity of connections
* Excellent analysis of the effect of institutions
* Analyzed data well, excellent methodology
* Excellent literature review
* Uses scholarly research effectively
* Presented study results well
* Good use of statistics
* Conclusion well supported by the analysis

For assignments rated proficient, reviewers made comments such as these:

* Expand on how the methodology was employed
* Needed deeper development of methodology
* Analysis was good, but needed to be extended
* Would benefit from additional examples

For assignments rated developing, reviewers made comments such as these:

* Need to describe more connections
* No methodology presented
* Limited discussion of links between institutions and behavior
* Primarily personal opinions, needed research sources

In summary, papers rated advanced were more developed than papers rated proficient. The advanced papers used more examples, provided stronger interpretations, and detailed explanations. The papers rated proficient included interpretation and at least one example, but had less development of their analysis.

**Results for Area ID, Learning Outcome 2**

The evaluation of ID, Learning Outcome 2 resulted in the following ratings:

* Proficient 18 (90%)
* Developing 2 (20%)

Students were rated proficient if they scored a 3 (advanced) or 2 (proficient) on the rubric. Students were rated developing if they scored a 1 on the rubric.

Inter-rater reliability was 95%, exceeding Fresno State’s benchmark of 90%.

The students did very well on this assessment, meeting Fresno State’s 90% benhmark. Although reviewers are not asked to reconcile scores when both reviewers rate a paper as proficient or better, it is noteworthy that ten students received a score of 3 (advanced from both reviewers). Here are representative comments from reviewers:

For assignments rated advanced, reviewers made comments such as these:

* Excellent selection of significant issues
* Very good contemporary and historical comparisons
* Excellent job drawing conclusions from analysis
* Good use of statistics
* Good breakdown of impact of institutions, depending on ethnicity
* Effective discussion of institutions’ effect on people
* Good, practical application of content to develop a lesson
* Good link to theoretical perspectives
* Excellent application of theory

For assignments rated proficient (but not advanced), reviewers made comments such as these:

* Applied theories well on interconnections, needed more balance of contemporary and historical perspectives
* Very good discussion of institutions, needed more discussion of their impact
* Good job discussing relevant legislation, needed more analysis of interconnections

For assignments rated developing, reviewers made comments such as these:

* Needed contemporary examples in addition to historical perspective
* Needed to explain link between issue and institutions
* Analysis was very brief
* Interconnections need to be explicit

In summary, papers rated proficient provided clear definitions, strong connections to the self, and detailed, relevant examples. For many of the papers, the reviewers were impressed with the significance of the subject matter under consideration and the ways that the students made connections between that subject and themselves. Papers rated developing were missing a clear connection to the self and/or provided limited examples.

**Disaggregated Assessment Data for Upper Division GE**

Disaggregated assessment data is an important element of the university’s diversity, justice, equity, and inclusion efforts.[[1]](#footnote-1) The assessment results for upper division GE assignments were analyzed by the Office of Institutional Effectiveness to determine whether there were equity gaps in the results. For first generation students, 92.6% of assignments were rated proficient, compared to 90.7% of continuing generation students. For historically underrepresented students, 93.8% of the assignments were rated proficient, compared to 94% of students who were not part of that group. For females, 95.7% of the assignments were rated proficient, compared to 86.7% of men.[[2]](#footnote-2)

The disaggregated data are shown in the following table:

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Upper Division GE Assessment Proficiency** **AY 2022-23** | |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |
| **Column1** | **Column2** | **Column3** | **Column4** |
|  |  | **Percentage Proficient** | **Significant Difference (.05)** |
|  |  |  |  |
| **All Students (n = 216)** |  | 92.7% | N/A |
|  |  |  |  |
| **First Generation** |  |  |  |
|  | Yes | 92.6% | No |
|  | No | 90.7% |  |
| **Sex** |  |  |  |
|  | Female | 95.7% | Yes |
|  | Male | 86.7% |  |
|  |  |  |  |
| **Historically Underrepresented Students** | |  |  |
|  | Yes | 93.8% | No |
|  | No | 94% |  |

The disaggregated data are noteworthy because there was not an equity gap in the results for first generation students or historically underrepresented groups. Furthermore, all these student groups exceeded Fresno State’s 90% benchmark for proficiency. There was a statistically significant difference in results for male and female students. Women exceeded Fresno State’s benchmark, with 95.7% demonstrating proficiency. For men, 86.7% of the assignments were proficient, slightly below Fresno State’s benchmark.

**Conclusions**

The results of the assessment of Area ID (Social, Political, and Economic Institutions and Behavior) were excellent. For Learning Outcome 1 (connections among institutions and behavior), 91.1% of assignments were rated proficient, exceeding Fresno State’s 90% benchmark. Faculty reviewer comments on papers rated proficient noted that these assignments discussed multiple connections, analyzed the effects of institutions well, analyzed data logically, deployed appropriate methodology, and used scholarly research sources effectively. Papers that were not rated proficient needed to discuss more connections, provide additional research sources, and/or discuss methodologies used to analyze connections.

Lor Learning Outcome 2 (social science issues and human institutions), 90% of the assignments were rated proficient, meeting Fresno State’s benchmark. Papers rated proficient selected significant issues, provided good contemporary and historical perspectives, explained the effects of institutions well, and applied theory effectively. Papers not rated proficient needed both a contemporary and historical perspective or provided very brief analysis.

Another issue that has often arisen during GE Assessment is the question of whether the prompt aligns well with one or more GE Learning Outcomes for that area. There were more papers that aligned with GE Learning Outcomes in the upper division GE assignments than in the lower division GE Areas assessed in 2020-21 and 2021-22. To assist GE faculty with alignment and other GE Assessment policies, a new site has been created in Canvas for all GE Faculty. This site has modules explaining how to implement the new assignment designation tool, the GE Learning Outcomes and Rubrics, guidelines on alignment with learning outcomes, results of previous GE assessments, and a suggestion box. All GE faculty are included on this site and the participants can be updated by the Office of IDEAS as new GE faculty are added. This will hopefully make it easier to inform new GE faculty about GE assessment. Many lower division GE courses are taught by lecturers who may be less connected to campus communications than tenured/tenure track faculty. Some part time lecturers are hired near the start of a semester because openings in the schedule have suddenly occurred.

A challenge noted during previous lower division GE assessments is the workability of assessing proficiency for each GE Learning Outcome in a single assignment. Upper division GE courses require at least 2,000 words of writing, with one assignment of at least 1,000 words. The upper division papers assessed in 2022-23 were significantly longer than the typical papers assessed in lower division GE courses, which may have made it easier for students to demonstrate proficiency on learning outcomes. The minimum writing requirement for lower division GE courses is 1,000 words total. The GE Learning Outcomes for some areas (such as A3 Critical Thinking) are discrete and can be assessed in a single assignment in a course where students are writing about 1,000 words in a term. Other Learning Outcomes include substantial content, and it is difficult for an assignment of 1,000 words or less to cover the totality of a learning outcome.

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1. . Ruth Williams, “Culturally Responsive Assessment, What to Tackle First,” NIOLA, December 2018. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. . The difference between first generation students and students who were not part of that group were not statistically significant (.05 level), nor was the difference between historically underrepresented students and students who were not part of that group. The difference between men and women was statistically significant. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)