

## 4 General Education Redesign

Annual Update: 2009-09-11

### A. Describe the past year's accomplishments and the current status of this Action Project.

We spent the last year in full faculty and department chair-level conversations concerning our core identity and the outcomes we believed we wanted to see in our graduates. From these conversations we developed 20 outcomes for the University. These will constitute the core of our redesign and assessment efforts moving forward. In addition, we looked at other gen ed models from comparable schools, held brainstorming sessions with students and department chairs to determine what elements of these models were most attractive to us, and finished the year by asking faculty to align their courses with the outcomes we had developed. This summer, we held faculty workshops to train some faculty on course design and outcomes alignment, while other faculty continued the conversations on ethos to engage our faculty in continued thinking about our core values.

#### *Review (09-27-09):*

In the past year, Evangel University has made excellent progress in building a foundation for its general education redesign. It is highly commendable that the full faculty, as well as department chairs, have spent a year in serious conversation about the institution's core identity, as well as the outcomes desired for the institution's graduates (Category 1, Helping Students Learn). Looking ahead, Evangel University may wish to consider the number of outcomes (20) that it is proposing to measure. Is it manageable for the faculty and the institution to measure so many outcomes? Are all of the outcomes vital to Evangel's graduates? Can any of the outcomes be consolidated? If all are vital, and none can be consolidated, then a schedule for measuring the outcomes should be formulated, as it would be a logistical nightmare – or even impossible – to measure every outcome every year.

### B. Describe how the institution involved people in work on this Action Project.

Most of the work was conducted at the full faculty or department chair level. All faculty were given an opportunity to comment on the process throughout the year. About 30 faculty attended summer workshops to get training to lead fall workshops for the rest of the faculty (now in progress) that will continue discussions on ethos as well as begin to train faculty to use the EU20 outcomes developed last year.

#### *Review (09-27-09):*

Evangel University should be commended for giving all faculty and academic departments the opportunity to have input on the new general education outcomes (Categories 4, Valuing People, and 5, Leading and Communicating). It is an excellent strategy to train a group of 30 Evangel faculty to be the trainers of the other faculty in the area of student learning outcomes assessment.

### C. Describe your planned next steps for this Action Project.

This year we have developed at least six sub-committees for looking at different aspects of the general education redesign. One team will design a minor within the gen ed curriculum. Another will look at requirements for the remaining gen ed hours. Another group is looking at electronic portfolio packages to help in assessing and reporting. The department chairs will be determining what kind of oversight entity this new program will need, while another committee is working on naming our program. Finally, the full faculty--and later a smaller team--will work on

developing assessment rubrics for the products and performances identified as assessable in this program.

**Review (09-27-09):**

Now that there is broad consensus on the general education learning outcomes, Evangel is dividing up the work of implementing the general education redesign to six different sub-committees. This is also a commendable – efficient and effective – strategy to undertake at this point in the process of a general education redesign.

**D. Describe any "effective practice(s)" that resulted from your work on this Action Project.**

We borrowed some course alignment strategies from ORU that helped us tremendously to focus the faculty's energies toward assessment products and performances. By asking faculty to identify ONE assignment in ONE course that aligns with at least ONE outcome, we seem to have alleviated the concerns among faculty that their courses and assignments will be changing drastically as a result of this process. This practice has help focus the discussions about assessment for faculty who are not familiar with its processes.

**Review (09-27-09):**

Just as Evangel has done well to train “in-house” experts in student learning outcomes assessment, it also did well to utilize external models or experts (e.g. ORU) as it began its general education redesign. Evangel appears to have struck a nice balance between consulting outside authorities and utilizing its own faculty authorities in re-visioning its general education program. It is also a sound strategy to ask faculty who are overwhelmed by the prospect of a new general education program to focus their initial work on one assignment in one course that aligns with one outcome. However, as was suggested in feedback earlier, having 20 general education outcomes may be legitimately overwhelming.

**E. What challenges, if any, are you still facing in regards to this Action Project?**

Time, money, and logistics. We hope to launch our project in the fall of 2010. This means all the decisions must be made, new elements must be in place, and faculty must be trained in record time. We will not be able to hire new faculty or spend lots of money on advertising or packaging, so we hope to make clear through naming and faculty buy-in the benefits of our new program to potential students and parents.

**Review (09-27-09):**

Evangel's general education redesign project is certainly ambitious, as its timeline with a projected launch in Fall 2010. The ambitiousness of the project and timeline is admirable. This Action Project would be no less admirable, however, if it took a bit longer than expected! The kind of redesign that is being proposed often takes longer. The faculty and academic leadership of the University are certainly doing their part to make this Action Project a success. The leadership of Evangel University also is encouraged to do its part to ensure the success of this project . Two of the overall outcome measures for this Action Project are: 1) increased enrollment in general education courses, and 2) decreased number of students who take general education courses elsewhere. Without funding devoted to advertising and marketing the new general education system at Evangel, it will be extremely difficult to achieve these two outcome measures. Evangel University is strongly encouraged to find the funding to ensure that this project results in more students meeting their general education requirements at Evangel rather than elsewhere. Finally, in the long-term, Evangel University is encouraged to find means to demonstrate to prospective students the value (tangible and less tangible) of pursuing their

general education at Evangel rather than elsewhere.

F. If you would like to discuss the possibility of AQIP providing you help to stimulate progress on this action project, explain your need(s) here and tell us who to contact and when?

**Review (09-27-09):**

No assistance requested. 35608