

GENERAL EDUCATION PROGRAM ASSESSMENT REPORT AY 2022 – 2023

We again assessed our program of General Education at CSI by reviewing student work assembled in representative portfolios. A record number of 72 readers participated. Ten teams of participants were assigned two portfolios to read and assess. We collected feedback both from the individual readers and from the reading teams. This report summarizes feedback from individual readers.

Results: Readers found this evidence of student achievement of our program goals of Think, Communicate, Connect and Be Well:

- Students demonstrate the ability to draw on multiple ways of thinking and are able to make connections between different disciplines / ways of knowing. Students show the ability to reflect on content, experiences, and the learning process.
- Students are able to locate, summarize and effectively use information. Readers also noted students' effective use of multiple technologies.
- Students demonstrate the ability to connect content to larger themes, to societal issues, and to their own personal lives. Readers also observed that students can practically apply what they are learning.
- Wellness artifacts in general show a firm grasp of content; students demonstrate evidence of an understanding of the importance of wellbeing and evidence of growth/change through in-depth reflection.

Readers would like to see “more of” the evidence above, in particular the following:

- Deeper struggles with content and inquiry; meta-cognition or thinking about learning
- Reflection that is of deeper significance.
- More student “buy-in”; some readers commented on work that merely “checked the box” instead of a deeper level of engagement.
- More independent thought: many readers commented on the length and specificity of assignment instructions, which they felt reduced opportunities for self-directed learning, risk-taking, and independent thinking.
- Improved communication skills, especially as demonstrated in written work.
- Improvements in how students connect ideas, both between and across disciplines and to their own lives and social issues; in response to this finding, many readers suggested a need to create interdisciplinary coursework or more opportunities to team teach.

Assessment readers found this evidence of faculty giving students appropriate opportunities to demonstrate achievement of our program goals:

- Assignments that allow students to show growth and change.
- Assignments that allow students to make connections to self and the larger world.
- Assignments that allow students to apply content.
- Assignments that build in reflection.
- Assignments that give students choice.

One reader commented that “the quality and variety of assignments made me want to go back to college. We are challenging students!” Another wrote, “Participating in this event confirms that CSI has awesome instructors!”

Readers suggested faculty could improve opportunities we give students to demonstrate outcomes by making the following changes:

- Create less prescriptive and shorter assignments; give students more opportunities to create and to think about solutions.
- Ask for something other than a written response.
- Give students more opportunities to connect content to the real world and create assignments that are useful to careers and other relevant non-academic activities.
- Create assignments that allow for practical application and/or hands-on experience.
- Explicitly connect the assignment to the Gen Ed program outcome it supports, or increase opportunities for students to make connections to program outcomes.
- A remarkable number of readers suggested we craft assignments that allow students to see intra- and extra-disciplinary connections, perhaps by engaging in team teaching or creating shared or connected assignments across disciplines/courses.

In terms of changes to the process, multiple readers suggested we allow for instructors to assess (not grade) student performance on an assignment so that readers understand how the instructors measure student performance. Some readers also expressed a desire to comprehend how the assignment “fits” in the course itself.

Next Steps / Closing the Loop: The General Education program will work with the TLC to create professional development opportunities to address weaknesses identified in the portfolio assessment process. As a campus we are considering how we can integrate High Impact Practices in our teaching, and these HIPs seem to resonate with assessment results, in particular the use of Collaborative Assignments and Projects and Common Intellectual Experiences as they relate to supporting our “Connect” outcome and readers’ suggestion we focus on the interdisciplinarity of what we do.

Another strategy to address this suggestion would be to use the GNED 101 course as a platform for a shared intellectual experience. Students could be introduced to an idea, theme, issue, text in all GNED sections, and other general education courses could integrate that content throughout the academic year.

As mentioned earlier, we had a record number of faculty read this year. Many of them were first-time readers, and they found much value in the activity. Said one “This is my first time reading Gen Ed portfolios. It was a valuable experience for me for I was truly astonished with student work and accomplishments in their projects. . . . I enjoyed being acquainted with other departments, structures of teaching, and a variety of educational material.” Said another, “I suggest requiring all faculty who teach general education to participate in this process so that they may experience some level setting and get ideas of good designs for assignments.” This feedback will be shared with the Gen Ed Review Committee, the Assessment Committee, and the Gen Ed Department Chairs for their consideration.

Finally, feedback submitted by reading teams will also be shared with the Gen Ed Review and Assessment Committees for review. [That feedback is available by clicking here.](#)