

University at Albany RESOLUTION

WHEREAS an email sent from Associate Provost Donald Steven on the SUNYGED Listserv on March 21, 2003 indicated that the Provost's office "would like to begin discussing the Task Force recommendations on university-wide assessment..."; and

WHEREAS the purpose of general education assessment has been understood to be an evaluation of a campus' programs, not an assessment of individual students; and

WHEREAS it is our belief that assessment needs to be a campus-based activity for the following reasons:

- Such a standardized system-wide assessment would interfere explicitly with the fundamental academic freedom of instructors in discussing their subject, an important element of higher education in a democracy.
- A standardized system-wide assessment would appear to presuppose a system-wide curriculum, which would tend to undermine the rigor and comprehensive nature of each campus' General Education Program.
- The University at Albany created a General Education Assessment Plan mandated by SUNY System Administration which was approved by the University at Albany's University Senate and submitted to SUNY GEAR, and which is currently in its first year of a three-year cycle of implementation.
- The University at Albany adopted the SUNY Learning Outcomes and *Guidelines for the Approval of State University General Education Requirement Courses* and in addition developed for our campus a more in-depth set of learning objectives.
- The logistics of such system-wide standardized assessment would appear to be insurmountable, given that general education is specifically defined as a four-year program, with students following numerous individual routes in choosing from the intellectually rich diversity that is appropriate to a university education; and given that general education requirements can be met through coursework taken at other institutions, including high schools and study abroad programs, making an examination given at one campus an evaluation not only of that campus but of many other teaching and learning environments.
- Uniform system-wide standardized assessment at any point prior to the completion of the four-year general education experience would not reflect the accomplishments of the graduate.
- Any funds which might be spent developing such a vehicle would be better spent on enhancing individual campus-based undergraduate assessment.

BE IT RESOLVED THAT: the faculty of the University at Albany will continue to follow the General Education Assessment Plan of its own, and not support, embrace, or willingly participate in any SUNY-mandated standardized General Education Assessment Plan.