General Education Assessment
Humanities Action Plan

Please interpret the findings and provide a specific action plan that can be implemented to improve or reinforce student learning as a result of the assessment process. The action plan should address the area(s) in need of improvement or reinforcement. The plan does not have to be limited to general education student learning but could include departmental initiatives designed to improve student success.

English

Part One: Results Discussion / Reflection

Please provide insightful interpretations of the results presented in the Assessment Results section, noting any relevant context/background concerns the unit may have.

Assessment results in ENGL classes in Fall 2020 showed that students performed slightly below expectations on SLOs 1, 2, and 3.

All quiz questions were multiple-choice questions, which may be easier to assess in the aggregate than short writings. However, the structure of the multiple-choice exams may focus too much on students' ability to identify literary terms related to forms, conventions, and themes and not enough on students' ability to analyze literary works as they address the intention of the SLOs to measure student development the humanities.

We should take into account that these courses started face to face and transitioned to online delivery unexpectedly.

Under-represented students had lower levels of performance, which requires some consideration of the extent to which the choices of passages used for analysis on the exams are relevant to their experiences and interests.

Part Two: Action Plan

Please describe what actions you will take as a result of the assessment in the following four areas.

   a. **Pedagogical / Curriculum**

Action Plan 1: Discuss on how best to align course materials, activities and instructions to the SLOs to ensure students' mastery in learning

Faculty is returning to face-to-face instruction in most sections. We need to be aware of, and monitor, differences in student performance in different course delivery options.

The Undergraduate Committee representing the faculty will discuss with the faculty strategies for making the SLOs and their purpose/importance more apparent in the course planning, materials, and instruction. Students should be able to articulate the connections among the course material, activities, and SLOs that we expect students to master.

Faculty will consider how—specifically—the SLOs can be articulated and operationalized in GEN ED courses including presenting the SLOs in ways that reflect the diverse perspectives and interests of students. For example, what are "enduring human concerns and the human condition" referred to in all the SLOs that the study of literature and language address? What do students recognize as part of their experience as well as the concerns of other groups? How—specifically—do particular works/forms of literature contributed to our understanding of human concerns/conditions? The faculty will ensure that the range of literature presented in these courses is relevant to a diverse student body.

Action Plan 2: Revise the means of assessment to better assess the students' learning

Faculty will discuss revising assessment to include short essay responses that allow students to respond in ways that are meaningful to them, including choosing which literature presented in the course to discuss.

b. Student Support Services

Action Plan 3: Provide opportunities to student tutors to help build their skills in articulating the purposes of literature and the place of literature in the understanding of human endeavors

Faculty will make opportunities available to student tutors to attend GEN ED designated courses to help build their skills in articulating the purposes of literature and the place of literature in the understanding of human endeavors. This should allow them to give feedback to students in GE:HU courses with more understanding of higher order interpretation skills expected by faculty.

Action Plan 4: Include information on Canvas Commons site about mental health resources on campus and online

The Department will include information in Canvas Commons site about mental health resources on campus (virtual and in person) in addition to information about resources that can help students develop good study / time management skills. The instructors have determined that these are areas where online students often need help. The instructors already make use of Joyner Library resources related to the conduct of research such as how to evaluate sources critically and how to cite them, but those modules will be expanded with examples from successful student research projects.

c. Faculty Development

Action Plan 5: Conducting more discourse on learning outcomes and the means of assessments across courses
Hold discussions about learning outcomes, strategies for ensuring the outcomes are addressed in classes, and means of assessment to ensure that faculty are consistently addressing them across courses.

Action Plan 6: Involve more faculty in the assessment process
Involve more faculty in the assessment process to increase understanding of the results. Engage faculty in analysis of assessment results in time to make meaningful changes and adjustments to approaches

    d. Other Areas

None

Foreign Languages and Literatures

Part One: Results Discussion / Reflection

Please provide insightful interpretations of the results presented in the Assessment Results section, noting any relevant context/background concerns the unit may have.

Assessment results in FLL classes in Fall 2020 (CLAS and GLST) showed that students performed consistently well on SLOs 1, 2, and 3. That said, there were differences in performance at the course level. In the case of FORL 2680, students in that course performed very well on SLOs 1, 2, and 3. Though the instructor would like to take credit for the students' performance, the positive results are more likely influenced by the fact that the students were able to take each quiz (and thus answer each assessment-related question) twice. Students were not able to see which questions they had answered incorrectly before taking the test a second time but being able to take the test twice encouraged them to consider the related topics more deeply and critically—even rereading the texts and related video lectures as often as they liked given that the course was taught asynchronously. All quiz questions were also multiple choice/multiple answer questions, which may be easier for students to answer than essay questions which rely on the students' realizing that they should answer the questions in sufficient depth lest they be deemed insufficient (developing instead of "meets" or "exceeds").

As can be seen by the FORL 1662 results, students performed better on the open-ended essay than on the closed-ended test. On the closed-ended test, 82 % of students on SLO 1, 60% of students on SLO 2, and 73% of students on SLO 3 were in the domains of developing or minimal. On the open-ended essay, all students either met or exceeded expectation on SLO 2 and 92% of students either met or exceeded expectation on SLO 1 (SLO 3 was not assessed) thus meeting the threshold for success of 70%. We need to take into account that this course started face to face and had to transition to online delivery unexpectedly. Also, it must be taken into consideration that this was the first semester that students took exams using the LockDown browser in Canvas. That said, actions are needed to improve the results in the closed-ended exam in order to achieve at least the desired 70% of students meeting

In CLAS 2000 and CLAS 2230, in SLO 3, 5% of students exceeded expectations (compared with 45% and 51% in other courses) and 60% of students met expectations (total 65%). The outcome was assessed by three means: a close-reading notebook assignment was reviewed for student ability to evaluate readings and note points of comparison with other texts ancient and modern; a test over the material covered in the notebook assignment was reviewed for student ability to identify values and world views expressed in Roman literature and evaluate their similarity and difference from our own; and in Adobe Spark projects on each unit, which were reviewed for student ability to explain the significance of at least one theme's contribution to the exploration of the human condition.

In sum, SLO 3 from CLAS 2230 became the means of assessing all the higher order interpretive skills of this humanities course. As a result, our action plan will be directed toward improving how faculty can adapt the course to redistribute instructional focus toward an emphasis on student abilities to 'evaluate texts', 'identify and compare values', and 'explain the significance' humanities themes in readings.

Part Two: Action Plan

Please describe what actions you will take as a result of the assessment in the following four areas.

a. Pedagogical / Curriculum

Action Plan 1: Remove WI designation

Faculty will return the CLAS 2220/2230 sequence to face to face instruction and remove the writing intensive designation. While the course will still feature a good bit of writing, the removal of WI will allow more class time to focus on developing higher order interpretive skills.

Action Plan 2: Use Research Project as means of assessment

The instructor of FORL 2680 is revising the course to include undergraduate research projects, a move which will allow him to diversity the types of questions and answers he collects/analyzes as means of assessment. This diversification of means of assessment will help ensure the legitimacy of the data collected and analyzed and help the instructor more clearly determine developing areas of learning that need to be addressed.

b. Student Support Services

Action Plan 3: Provide opportunity for student tutors to learn more advanced courses

In CLAS 2000/2230, Faculty will make opportunities available to student tutors to attend upper division language courses to help build their skills in working with ancient literature. This should allow them to give feedback to students in GE:HU courses with more understanding of higher order interpretation skills expected by faculty.

Action Plan 4: Include mental health related resources in Canvas site

The instructors of FORL 2680 and FORL 1662 will include information in their Canvas site related to mental health resources on campus (virtual and in person) in addition to information about resources that can help students develop good study / time management skills. The instructors have determined that these are areas where online students often need help.

Action Plan 5: Make research projects more robust

The instructors already make use of Joyner Library resources related to the conduct of research such as how to evaluate sources critically and how to cite them but those modules will be expanded with examples from successful student research projects.

c. Faculty Development

Action Plan 6: Opportunity for faculty to learn more about effective course delivery.

The instructor of FORL 2680 will participate in the Quality Matters review process to ensure that the format of the course taught asynchronously is as accessible to students as possible.

d. Other Areas

None

Philosophy and Religious Studies

Part One: Results Discussion/Reflection

Please provide insightful interpretations of the results presented in the Assessment Results section, noting any relevant context/background concerns the unit may have.

In Spring 2020, selected questions from two multiple-choice exams from two sections of PHIL 2274 (Business Ethics) were used to evaluate student performance on the three Student Learning Outcomes (SLOs) adopted for the Humanities by the University. 194 students completed both exams. Each question assessed on the multiple-choice exams had four possible responses (one correct response and three distractors or incorrect responses). The institutional rubric used to evaluate student success at meeting the three SLOs consists of four achievement levels (Exceeds Expectation, Meets Expectation, Developing, and Minimal). Based on the number of *correct responses* to the set of six (6) questions, these levels were specified by the Unit Assessment Committee as follows: Exceeds Expectation (5-6), Meets Expectation (4), Developing (3), and Minimal (2 or fewer). Based on this model, a student must respond correctly to 4-6 questions to perform at the desired level, Meets Expectation or above. The Unit's Criterion for Success is that at least 80% of the students perform at this level. 84% of the students assessed performed at this target level for SLO 1, 68% of students performed at this

level for SLO 2, and 70% of students performed at this level for SLO 3. Therefore, students met the Criterion for Success for SLO 1, but not for SLO 2 and SLO 3.

Environmental factors present during Spring 2020 may possibly have impacted these assessment results. After the discovery of Covid clusters on campus, most undergraduate courses at the University, including both sections of PHIL 2274 used for assessment of the three SLOs, were converted from face-to-face delivery to an internet/DE format. This unanticipated disruption also required the term to be shortened by one week to allow students to adjust to the new format, giving instructors less time to cover the material. The date for one of the two exams used for assessment had to be postponed. Face-to-face office hours on campus were also cancelled, limiting the opportunity for students to consult with the instructor about upcoming material on the exams. In order to assist students in coping with the added stress of continuing their studies during a health crisis, the instructor in PHIL 2274 also took the unprecedented step of permitting students to drop their grade on one of the three exams, which generally depresses student performance on at least one exam (the one they intend to drop). The University also permitted students after the semester to convert their course letter grades to PASS/FAIL, where letter grades as low as D- were converted to PASS, with a note on the transcript indicating that their work may have been affected by extenuating circumstances, i.e., Covid. This change in grading policy provided yet another disincentive for students who intended to convert letter grades to PASS after the semester was complete to put less effort into achieving high marks on their coursework. Regardless of the possible effect that the mid-semester migration of PHIL 2274 from face-to-face to internet/DE delivery may (or may not) have had on assessment results for Spring 2020, a useful analysis of these results can be conducted.

84% of the students performed at the Meet Expectation level or above for SLO 1, thus meeting the Criterion for Success for this outcome. To satisfy SLO 1, students must demonstrate the ability to "distinguish artistic, literary, philosophical or religious creations from other types of work and describe how they address enduring human concerns and the human condition." If this general competence in the Humanities is adapted to a course in the discipline of Philosophy, the relevant philosophical *creation*, in the case specifically of Business Ethics, is a set of normative theories that can applied to the solution of moral issues that arise during business activities. SLO 1 requires that students demonstrate the ability to distinguish this sort of creation, as used in Philosophy, from other types of creations, viz. to distinguish normative or ethical theories from theories in other disciplines, which tend not to be (at least not explicitly) normative, as can be seen by the inspection of STEM theories. This aspect of SLO 1 is most directly assessed in Questions 7, 9, and 33 on Exam 1, where, respectively, students responded correctly at a rate of 76%, 70%, and 69%. As all three of these results, as individual questions, are somewhat below the Criterion for Success (that is, 80% or higher), this indicates that more attention should be directed toward the ability to distinguish between normative and scientific theories. Clearly, the ability to reason at the theoretical level as well as to express the difference between normative and scientific theories, relates to matters of "enduring human concern," the second competence mentioned in SLO 1. Note that SLO 1 requires that students be assessed on their ability to "describe" how the philosophical creation "address[es] enduring

human concerns," whereas multiple-choice exams do not require students to make *descriptions*. Multiple-choice exams, however, are accepted as valid assessment instruments, as indicated by their wide use in many professional areas, e.g., SAT, ACT, GRE, MCAT, LSAT, NTE, as well as advanced placement and military occupational specialty (MOS) exams. Presumably, students who can identify the correct response to a set of multiple-choice questions about the status of normative theories have exhibited a competence that should theoretically be transferable to writing true descriptions of this sort of creation, if tested using an essay exam or other methods.

68% of the students performed at the Meet Expectation level or above for SLO 2, which is below the Criterion for Success. To satisfy SLO 2, students must demonstrate the ability to "apply discipline-specific criteria and evaluate the significance of specific literary, artistic, philosophical or religious works to enduring human concerns and the human condition." To evaluate SLO 2, as adapted to PHIL 2274 (Business Ethics), which is a study in the discipline of Philosophy, the instructor should assess students on their ability to *apply* normative theories ("discipline-specific criteria") to moral issues that arise in the field of business. Correspondingly, the "works" which students are asked to evaluate could be interpreted either as the texts containing the statement of the normative theories (Kant's *Groundwork* (*Grünlegung*), etc., as exposited by the portions of the textbook written by the instructor) or as actions occurring in business that require a moral analysis. On either interpretation, the student's engagement clearly relates to "enduring human concerns and the human condition," specifically, to the human interest in creating fair conditions for economic exchanges. The majority of the questions used to evaluate SLO 2 dealt with the knowledge required to make a proper application of Kant's Categorical Imperative, a normative principle that requires moral actions to meet a standard of rational consistency. The lowest score (43%) was for Question 9, Exam 2, which required students to recognize that Kant's principle takes an absolutist approach where exceptions are never permitted, even for such desirable goals as attempting to save a life. The instructor will emphasize more in posted and oral lectures that when applying a normative theory, students should realize that their own moral intuitions may not always agree with the solution provided by the theory. However, since the Criterion for Success was not met for SLO 2, the instructor will attempt to impress on students better that there is a critical distinction between stating one's personal opinion about a moral issue and reporting the evaluation of the issue that would be derived from a specific moral theory.

70% of the students performed at the Meet Expectation level or above for SLO 3, which is below the Criterion for Success. Note, however, that this a somewhat better result than for SLO 2 and not far below the desired percentage for successful performance (i.e., 80%). Also note that of the 70% who performed at Meet Expectation level or higher, the majority of these (48%) scored at the Exceed Expectation level, the higher of the two levels. To satisfy SLO 3, students had to demonstrate the ability to "*contrast* their understanding with that of others …." Of the three SLOs, this may be the one least likely to be emphasized in some disciplines. However, in PHIL 2274 (Business Ethics), there is a strong emphasis on contrasting the understanding of ethicists with the moral attitudes of those inside the field of business. To highlight this emphasis, the instructor selected a textbook that contained selections from an

ethicist (the instructor) along with selections by Steven Lovett, a former corporate lawyer who writes textbooks in business ethics. The instructor also introduced students to moral theories that have been widely adopted by major corporations, e.g., CSR (Corporate Social Responsibility) and Lovett's own view, which he calls *resilient prosperity* (a profit model where ethics is secondary or used merely to increase profits). Student performance on the set of questions used to evaluate SLO 3 was fairly uniform, ranging from 61% to 83%, even though as a whole below the Criterion for Success. The instructor will emphasize more that one can understand one's own field better by seeing how (and why) some of its conclusions are not accepted by specialists in other disciplines or by those with conflicts of interest that may interfere with the acceptance of moral conclusions.

Part Two: Action Plan

Please describe which actions you will take as a result of the assessment in the following four areas.

a. Pedagogical/Curriculum

Action Plan 1: Improve in means of assessment
In order to increase the student opportunities to expose their knowledge of the discipline of Business Ethics, the instructor in PHIL 2274 is increasing the number of exams from three to five. The instructor will continue to use multiple-choice exams, but with more exams, the number of questions will be increased from 150 to 250. With more questions, the instructor can include blocks of related questions on specific topics that might be a better predictor of whether the student could describe or evaluate the material, outcomes cited in SLO 1 and SLO 2.

Action Plan 2: Additional materials in Canvas and more preparation for students before taking PHIL 2274
Although most sections of PHIL 2274 have now moved back to face-to-face (F2F) delivery, the instructor will make the written versions of lectures posted on Canvas for the internet/DE sections available to students in F2F courses so that they can compare their notes on the oral lectures to the instructor's written narrative of the same lecture. Additional office hours will also be added if indicated by student demand. More emphasis in lecture will be placed on helping students understand that questions about moral theories are not asking them to express their own opinion but to *derive* a conclusion from a normative theory. In this regard, an improvement in the presentation of PHIL 1500 (Introduction to Logic) which adds a Logic Lab with a formal proof program may provide crossover for any students who take the logic course before taking PHIL 2274. Students in PHIL 2274 will be encouraged to take PHIL 1500 or to request access to the Logic Lab, if this is feasible.

b. Student Support Services

Action Plan 3: Manage a tutor for the students
The Department of Disability Services (DDS) provides students with a registered disability with accommodations in testing, including extended time. The instructor in PHIL 2274 has adjusted the time frames for exams on Canvas to permit qualified, disabled students to have extended time on exams. The instructor completes the Athlete Progress Report to inform the athletic office of the academic progress of athletes enrolled in PHIL 2274. The athletic office has acquired a highly-qualified graduate student as tutor for athletes in PHIL 2274. The Unit will attempt to make a tutor available for non-athletes in the course, keeping in mind that the field of Business Ethics is a specialized topic with a scarcity of qualified tutors.

Action Plan 4: Utilize early-warning grade alert system and address different issues related to student learning

Student Health Services notifies instructors when students are unable to attend class because of an exposure to Covid and also provides for Covid testing of students and contact tracing. The instructor is more flexible in requiring attendance because of the need for Covid isolation or quarantine, and copies of written lectures and make-up exams are sent through Canvas or email exchange to limit contact with students who must be absent because of Covid-related issues. Because more freshmen are now enrolling in PHIL 2274, the instructor will use the early-warning grade alert system to inform students whose work in the course does not meet the expected course standards. Students who miss exams will also be informed promptly and encouraged to request a make-up exam, if they have a valid excuse for missing a scheduled exam.

c. Faculty Development

Action Plan 5: Opportunity to learn more on LMS
Because more sections of PHIL 2274 (Business Ethics) are now delivered as internet/DE, including all summer courses, the instructor has completed Cornerstone training to improve their understanding of Canvas, the learning management system used by the University. Training completed by the instructor of PHIL 2274 includes Best Practices in Information Security (3/11/2021), Mastering the Canvas Gradebook (4/7/2021), and Canvas's Next Generation Quizzing Platform (9/28/2021). The instructor has also completed tutorials offered as instructional support by Canvas as well as tutorials available on YouTube and other internet sites that explain special features of Canvas delivery.

d. Other Areas

Action Plan 6: Include more courses and means of assessment in future
In future, the Unit Assessment Committee may use a greater range of courses as the basis for general education assessment, providing a broader context for determining whether the unit is satisfying the three SLOs, based on the unit's Criterion for Success. Comparison of results from distinct courses may also provide better insight into why some courses and not

others are more successful at meeting the Criterion for Success selected by the unit. By using more than one general education course, the unit should also be able to obtain embedded exams in other formats that could complement the multiple-choice exams in providing a more direct assessment of the ability of students to "describe" and "evaluate," skills that are not directly tested by multiple-choice exams but which appear in the SLOs.