

Improving General Education @ Simpson: A S.L.I.C Approach to Success

HLC Academy Report

Plan

February 2013

Describe your plan for creating shared responsibility for assessing and improving student learning. (100 - 200 words)

We plan to develop a sustainable assessment program of our general education, the Engaged Citizenship Curriculum (ECC). The plan is (1) to develop a manageable and affective feedback loop for assessment (Student Learning Improvement Cycle – SLIC), (2) to build a support structure including IS resources, personnel and budgeting, and (3) to establish a professional development program (Student Learning Assessment Academy – SLAAc) that would increase the number of experts in assessment on campus each year.

We are in the middle of the second year of implementing the ECC. This criteria-based curriculum was developed over several years based on discussions involving all parts of the college and reflecting our values. Courses in the curriculum were selected/developed to meet a set of SLOs. Assessment is the next step, and will be the way that we communicate to our stakeholders how well the ECC prepares our students.

The ECC was developed through a collaboration of faculty, staff, administration, students and alumni, the responsibility for assessment will involve many of the same groups. The faculty, staff and administration are already involved in the process.

What is the broader impact of your Academy work on the institution, faculty and staff, students, or other stakeholders? How will this work influence the culture of your organization, build institutional capacity, advance teaching and learning...etc.? (100 - 200 words)

Through the feedback loop of the SLIC, the ECC will be monitored and modified to enhance student learning. The ECC combines areas of engagement with embedded skills we believe will enable students to become engaged lifelong learners. Thus, our first focus is the positive impact that continual renewal will have on the student experience.

In addition to classroom experience the skills of the ECC are incorporated into extra-curricular experiences coordinated by student development staff. We will offer professional development to address the challenges identified by the SLIC feedback loop, e.g., training for creating effective activities or assignments. This professional development will be offered to both faculty and staff, and thus both will benefit from ongoing training and community building.

Each academic department has an assessment plan including program-level SLOs, but Simpson still has much to learn about assessment. The expertise in assessment built from professional development (SLAAc), while part of the plan to assess the ECC, will be taken back to the departments to improve the assessment plans across the college. Bringing faculty, administration and trustees together in SLAAc workshops will build a common vocabulary and understanding of the mechanics and value of assessment of student learning.

