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Wayne State College

**General Education Assessment Using Educated Perspective Seminars**

**Presenters – WSC Academy Team**

Dr. Patricia Arneson, Professor of Business  
Dr. Gwen Jensen, Associate Professor of Theatre  
Dr. James O'Donnell, Dean, School of Arts and Humanities  
Ms. Phyllis Spethman, Director of Field Experience and Teacher Certification  
Ms. Sue Sydow, Director of Assessment  
Dr. Tamara Worner, Professor of Mathematics  
Dr. Keith Willis, Professor of Counseling and Special Education

 Higher Learning Commission  
A commission of the North Central Association

Academy Learning Exchange  
Academy for Assessment of Student Learning  
March 30 – 31, 2012

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**Session Overview**

- Share WSC's General Education Program Assessment Methods:
  - Indirect Measure
    - NSSE
  - Direct Measures of Assessment
    - Interdisciplinary Assessment through Educated Perspective Seminars (EPS)
    - CAAP Testing

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### Size

- City Population: 5,660 (2010 Census)
- College Enrollment: 3,519
  - **Undergraduate 82% and Graduate 18%**
    - 83% of students from Nebraska
    - 17% from 38 States and 21 Foreign Countries

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### Scope

- Average Class Size 21
- 122 Full-time Faculty/93 Part-time Faculty
- Degrees Granted: B.A., B.S., M.B.A., M.S., M.S.E., Ed.S.
- Student academic preparation (2011 Freshmen)
  - **Average ACT score (composite) 21.5**
    - Middle 50% of score range 18-25

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### 2009-2010 Graduate Survey Results

- 100% of all WSC graduates responding to the survey are employed or are attending graduate school
  - 82% of these graduates remain in Nebraska for their employment or graduate school

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### WSC Mission

*Wayne State College is a comprehensive institution of higher education dedicated to freedom of inquiry, excellence in teaching and learning, and regional service and development. Offering affordable undergraduate and graduate programs, the College prepares students for careers, advanced study, and civic involvement. The College is committed to faculty-staff-student interaction, public service, and diversity within a friendly and collegial campus community.*

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### WSC Mission

*Wayne State College is a comprehensive institution of higher education dedicated to freedom of inquiry, **excellence in teaching and learning**, and **regional service** and development. Offering affordable undergraduate and graduate programs, the College prepares students for careers, advanced study, and civic involvement. The College is committed to faculty-staff-student interaction, **public service**, and diversity within a friendly and collegial campus community.*

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Background

- 2007-2008 General Education Program Revised
- AQIP 2007 Quality Check-up Visit
  - WSC in beginning level on the continuum of assessment program implementation
  - Needed to expedite assessment on campus
  - Establish a campus-wide “Culture of Assessment”
- Need for General Education Assessment Plan

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Background

- Academy for Assessment of Student Learning Team Cohort February 2008
  - One Dean, Two Directors, Four Faculty Members
    - Represents 4 Schools, General Education Committee, EDU Accreditation, a Dean/administration
  - Developed Assessment Plan
  - Became AQIP Action Project



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Academy and AQIP Action Project

- One Indirect Measure
  - National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE)
- Two Direct Measures
  - Educated Perspective Seminar (EPS) Courses
    - Assess Goals of General Education Program
  - ACT’s Collegiate Assessment of Academic Achievement (CAAP)
    - Critical Thinking and Essay Writing
      - Required for Voluntary System of Accountability (VSA)

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Lessons Learned

- Learned that centralized support was crucial
  - Director of Assessment
- Need to build a culture and foundation
  - Assessment Retreats
  - Administrative Support
  - Assessment Web site
  - Develop a common vocabulary/definition of terms
- Learned importance of keeping the process simple
- Need to nurture leadership from within

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Lessons Learned

- Learned importance of keeping the process simple
- Need for a General Education Committee (Representative from each Department)
- Build Academy Team Comradeship
  - Have fun
  - Provide food
  - Attend HLC Annual Meeting
  - Share responsibilities

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Stumbling Blocks

- Lack of campus-wide understanding of assessment practices
- Not complete buy-in from all departments
  - General Education Committee represented all departments with one person from each department
  - For better communications, no department or school was omitted
- No previous best practices had been established
  - Kept the assessment process simple
  - General Education Committee key to assessment

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## General Education Goals

- **Develop expression** – Foster communication skills that facilitate effective expression of ideas; (e.g. writing, speaking, reading, listening, and visualizing).
  - **Expand communication skills**
- **Participate in methods of inquiry** – Advance ideas and concepts through applied critical, logical, scientific, and creative thinking skills and processes.
  - **Develop further competence in investigative processes**
- **Expand knowledge** – Enhance awareness, understanding and appreciation of complex issues and diverse perspectives across a broad range of academic disciplines.
  - **Increase awareness in human understanding by examining topics from a variety of perspectives**
- **Encourage civic involvement** – Develop a sense of civic responsibility and involvement in a diverse society.
  - **Enhance awareness of one's role in a civic society**

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## General Education Baseline Assessment Data; 2009 NSSE Survey (Indirect Measure)

**WSC Goal 1**  
*Develop Expression: Foster communication skills that facilitate effective expression of ideas (e.g. writing, speaking, reading, listening, and visualizing).*

NSSE: Made a class presentation.

	WSC	Plains Public
FY	2.48*	2.35
SR	3.13*	2.76

*\*WSC mean score exceeds the mean scores at Plains Public, Carnegie Class, and combined NSSE 2009 survey institutions.*

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## General Education Baseline Assessment Data; 2009 NSSE Survey (Indirect Measure)

**Plains Public Peer Group:** [\[Web site data\]](#)

Bemidji State University	Missouri Southern State University
Chadron State College	Peru State College
Dickinson State University	Pittsburg State University
Emporia State University	Southern Arkansas University
Fort Hays State University	Southern Oregon University
Harris-Stowe State University	Southwestern Oklahoma State University
Minnesota State University-Mankato	St. Cloud State University
Minnesota State University-Moorhead	Winona State University
Minot State University	

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General Education Baseline Assessment Data;  
2009 NSSE Survey (Indirect Measure)

**WSC Goal 1**  
*Develop Expression: Foster communication skills that facilitate effective expression of ideas (e.g. writing, speaking, reading, listening, and visualizing).*

NSSE: Number of written papers or reports of 20 pages or more.



	WSC	Plains Public
FY	1.20	1.30
SR	1.55	1.60

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General Education Baseline Assessment data;  
2009 NSSE Survey (Indirect Measure)

**WSC Goal 1**  
*Develop Expression: Foster communication skills that facilitate effective expression of ideas (e.g. writing, speaking, reading, listening, and visualizing).*

NSSE: Number of written papers or reports of fewer than 5 pages.

	WSC	Plains Public
FY	3.10	3.15
SR	3.49*	3.18



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General Education Baseline Assessment Data;  
2009 NSSE Survey (Indirect Measure)

**WSC Goal 2**  
*Participate in Methods of Inquiry: Advance ideas and concepts through applied critical, logical, scientific, and creative thinking skills and processes.*

NSSE: Analyzing the basic elements of an idea, experience, or theory, such as examining a particular case or situation in depth and considering its components.

	WSC	Plains Public
FY	2.96	2.99
SR	3.12	3.20



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General Education Baseline Assessment Data;  
2009 NSSE Survey (Indirect Measure)

**WSC Goal 3**  
*Expand Knowledge: Enhance awareness, understanding and appreciation of complex issues and diverse perspectives across a broad range of academic disciplines.*

NSSE: Included diverse perspectives (different races, religions, genders, political beliefs, etc.) in class discussions or writing assignments.



	WSC	Plains Public
FY	2.78	2.75
SR	2.73	2.81

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General Education Baseline Assessment Data;  
2009 NSSE Survey (Indirect Measure)

**WSC Goal 4**  
*Encourage Civic Involvement: Develop a sense of civic responsibility and involvement in a diverse society.*

NSSE: Voting in local, state, or national elections.

	WSC	Plains Public
FY	2.44	2.57
SR	2.43*	2.32



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General Education Baseline Assessment data;  
2009 NSSE Survey (Indirect Measure)

**WSC Goal 4**  
*Encourage Civic Involvement: Develop a sense of civic responsibility and involvement in a diverse society.*

NSSE: Contributing to the welfare of your community.

	WSC	Plains Public
FY	2.33	2.39
SR	2.65 *	2.45



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General Education Baseline Assessment Data;  
Educated Perspective Seminar (EPS) (Direct Measure)

- **EPS Catalog Description** (From the 2008–09 General and Graduate Catalog)
- EPS 300 Educated Perspective Seminar (3) Prerequisite: Junior Standing, 60 or more hours completed, 30 hours in General Education. The course incorporates knowledge, concepts, and philosophies across various disciplines by examining a topic of interest pertinent to today's citizens. Students from a variety of majors will come together bringing the perspectives advanced in their majors to the discussions and assignments. When no duplication of topic exists, this course may be repeated for additional credit.

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General Education Baseline Assessment Data;  
Educated Perspective Seminar (EPS)  
(Direct Measure)

- Purpose:
  - Conceptualize the integration of disciplines
  - Utilize the knowledge and skills emphasized in the general education program
  - Examine a topic of interest pertinent to today's citizens

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General Education Baseline Assessment Data;  
Educated Perspective Seminar (EPS)  
(Direct Measure)

- Guidelines:
  - Required for all students – including those who transfer with an AA or AS
  - Before taking EPS 300, students must complete 60 hours, including at least 30 hours of General Education courses
  - An EPS 300 course cannot count towards a student's major or endorsement

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### EPS 300 Topics

[\[Descriptions\]](#)

Appreciating Diversity	Global Health: Right, Responsibility and Privilege
Capitalism and Morality	Global Issues: Let's Trace the Spice Trade
Colonizing Space	Language, Identity and Race
Communication and Ethics	Leadership Styles
Critical Thinking Concepts and Skills	Literary Ghosts and Vampires
Culture and Literature of the Great Plains	Nature and Culture of the Great Plains
Economic Perspectives of Social Issues	Outlaws in American Culture
Endangered Languages: Issues and Solutions	Peace Studies
Environmental Ethics	Technology and Society

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### EPS 300: Leadership Styles



- Teaching Attributes
  - Smaller class size
  - Student perspectives from multiple disciplines
- Assessment
  - Integral part of course

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### Process

- Electronic Assessment Program Development
  - WSC Network and Technology Service

Student to be assessed:

Develop Expression: [Click to Show/Hide Criteria](#)

Poster communication skills that facilitate effective expression of ideas (e.g., writing, speaking, reading, listening, and visualizing).

☐ 0 Deficient ☐ 1 Emerging ☐ 2 Acceptable ☐ 3 Competent ☐ 4 Exceptional

Participate in Methods of Inquiry: [Click to Show/Hide Criteria](#)

Advance ideas and concepts through applied critical, logical, scientific, and creative thinking skills and processes.

☐ 0 Deficient ☐ 1 Emerging ☐ 2 Acceptable ☐ 3 Competent ☐ 4 Exceptional

Expand Knowledge: [Click to Show/Hide Criteria](#)

Enhance awareness, understanding and appreciation of complex issues and diverse perspectives across a broad range of academic disciplines.

☐ 0 Deficient ☐ 1 Emerging ☐ 2 Acceptable ☐ 3 Competent ☐ 4 Exceptional

Develop Civic Involvement: [Click to Show/Hide Criteria](#)

Develop a sense of civic responsibility and involvement in a diverse society.

☐ 0 Deficient ☐ 1 Emerging ☐ 2 Acceptable ☐ 3 Competent ☐ 4 Exceptional

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General Education Baseline Assessment Data; CAAP Results (Direct Measure)		
Average Mean CAAP Scores (Fall 2009 and Spring 2010)		
Critical Thinking		
	Freshmen Scores	Senior Scores
CAAP score range: 40 to 80	60.1	62.8
Percent at or above the National Norm	40%	59%
Essay Writing		
	Freshmen Scores	Senior Scores
CAAP score range: 1 to 6	3.0	3.2
Percent at or above the National Norm	36%	46%
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Institutional Implications	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Compare new data with baseline data on an annual basis</li><li>• Expand the emerging campus-wide “Culture of Assessment”<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>– Fall and Spring Assessment Retreat Days</li><li>– Bi-Annual Departmental Program Assessment Reporting</li></ul></li><li>• Review and analyze data<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>– Office of Assessment</li><li>– Assessment Oversight Committee</li><li>– General Education Committee</li><li>– Academy for Assessment of Student Learning Team</li></ul></li></ul>	
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Sustainability Measures	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Maintain focus<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>– Centralized Office of Assessment with Director</li></ul></li><li>• Maintain a visible process<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>– Postings on Web site</li></ul></li><li>• Expand internal public relations<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>– Various faculty members sharing assessment endeavors during Assessment Retreats</li><li>– Faculty Conversations workshop</li></ul></li><li>• Partner with General Education Committee<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>– Key to collaborative assessment efforts</li></ul></li></ul>	
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Closing the Loop

- Need for longitudinal data
  - Compare baseline data against longitudinal data
- Continue discussions using NSSE data using 2006, 2009, and upcoming 2012 data
- Discuss trends in student performance
  - Engage all EPS course faculty, Academy Team, and General Education Committee members to develop strategies to yield stronger performance
- Analyze CAAP Scores
  - Compare benchmark data from 2009-2010 with upcoming 2012-2013 results

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Final Thoughts

- Assessment needs a continual, visual presence on campus
- Continue collaborative work with General Education Committee to review goals and assessments
  - Receive feedback on goals
  - Define “Civic Involvement” for better understanding
- Articulate EPS outcomes better
- Discuss the impact of writing
  - Recommend to VPAA and General Education Committee outcomes to be assessed
  - Adopt a writing rubric

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Contact Information



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WSC Assessment Web site:  
[www.wsc.edu/assessment](http://www.wsc.edu/assessment)  
WSC General Education EPS Course Web site:  
[http://www.wsc.edu/academic/general\\_education/eps\\_course\\_descriptions/index.php](http://www.wsc.edu/academic/general_education/eps_course_descriptions/index.php)  
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