

Committee on Faculty Welfare, Diversity & Academic Freedom (FWDAF)

Tuesday, February 18, 2014

3:00 – 5:00 pm, KL 324

Documents found at [UCMCROPS/FWDAF1314/Resources](https://ucmcrops.org/fwda/1314/resources)**AGENDA**

- I. Chair's Report – *Rudy Ortiz*
 - A. Review of diversity contributions in faculty searches
 - B. Meeting with Provost and Deans about recruitment practices

- II. Systemwide Updates
 - A. UCAAD – *FWDAF representative: Rudy Ortiz*
 - B. UCFW – *FWDAF representative: Linda Cameron*
 - C. UCAF – *FWDAF representative: Sean Malloy*

- III. Meeting with Susan Carlson, Systemwide VP for Academic Personnel
VP Carlson will visit UC Merced on Wednesday, February 19. FWDAF is scheduled to meet with her from 3:00 – 4:00 pm.
Action requested: Formulate a list of discussion topics for tomorrow's meeting.

- IV. Livescan Issue – *David Ojcius*
Discussion: What is the practice on other UC campuses?

- V. WASC Influence – *Chair Ortiz and Member Malloy* **Pg. 1-9**
Background: Division Council asked standing committees to review the new WASC Core Competency expectation. While FWDAF had no comments about the specific provisions, the committee's memo reflected the concern over WASC's impact of faculty's control over the curriculum.
Discussion: Impact of WASC expectations on faculty and curriculum.

VI. Funding Concerns

Pg. 10-11

Background: On February 5, COR emailed memos to Division Council expressing concern over funding, namely, the need for emergency funds for faculty and the future of funding for the annual Senate faculty grants.

Action requested: FWDAF to review memos and discuss whether to send similar memos to the Senate Chair.

VII. Other Business

Next meeting: Monday, March 17, 3:00 – 5:00 pm, KL 324

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ACADEMIC SENATE, MERCED DIVISION
COMMITTEE ON FACULTY WELFARE, DIVERSITY & ACADEMIC FREEDOM
RUDY ORTIZ, CHAIR
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January 21, 2014

To: Ignacio López-Calvo, Chair, Division Council

From: Rudy Ortiz, Chair, Committee on Faculty Welfare, Diversity, and Academic Freedom (FWDAF)

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "R. Ortiz", is placed below the "From:" line.

Re: Request to Review New WASC Core Competency Expectation

FWDAF has no comments on the specific provisions of the attached document; however, the committee wishes to convey its grave concerns over the larger issue of WASC's impact on faculty control of the curriculum.

What these measures demonstrably do is to push faculty to routinize and standardize our curriculum into the "one-size-fits-all" model that No Child Left Behind foisted on K-12. They also have resulted in a large drain on faculty time and a ballooning assessment bureaucracy on campus that eats up resources that could be better used for actual teaching or research. Faculty are deeply committed to undergraduate teaching and if we believed that documents like the one attached pointed the way to better educating our students we'd be willing to invest the time and resources. We think the opposite is true, however, and that the culture of assessment is actually about the continued corporatization of public education and the diminishing of faculty control over the curriculum.

cc: FWDAF members
DivCo members
Senate office



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December 4, 2013

To: Ignacio López-Calvo, Chair, Academic Senate

From: Laura Martin, Accreditation Liaison Officer & Coordinator for Institutional Assessment
Elizabeth Whitt, Vice Provost and Dean for Undergraduate Education

Re: New WASC Core Competency Expectation

As you know, WASC's recent redesign of the reaccreditation process changed both the substance of the review and the review process itself. Among several new accreditation expectations is that institutions must ensure the development of the following "five core competencies" in all baccalaureate programs:

- Written communication
- Oral communication
- Quantitative reasoning
- Information literacy
- Critical thinking

A summary of these efforts will be provided in the institution's self-study for reaccreditation through an essay that

1. describes how the undergraduate curriculum addresses each of the five core competencies,
2. explains its learning outcomes in relation to those core competencies, and
3. demonstrates, through *evidence of student performance*, the extent to which those outcomes are achieved *at or near the time of graduation*.¹

WASC has put in place a schedule for phasing in this requirement, and UC Merced is in the first set of institutions to meet these expectations for all five competencies. Therefore, by spring 2017, the time of UC Merced's Off-Site Review for reaccreditation, WASC expects UC Merced to have assessed four of the five competencies. By the time of our Accreditation Visit in spring 2018, all five competencies will have been assessed.

Appended to this memo for the Senate's review, comment, and support is a proposal for meeting this new expectation. As described in more detail in Section IV of the appended document, we propose to integrate this work as seamlessly as possible into the ongoing annual assessment activities of the undergraduate majors, thereby taking maximum advantage of the work faculty are already doing and avoiding any duplication of effort in campus assessment activities. Indeed, as the following table suggests, many majors are already addressing the competencies in their learning outcomes and as part of annual program assessment activities.

¹ For additional descriptions of this new expectation, please see *Educational Quality: Student Learning, Core Competencies and Standards of Performance at Graduation* on p. 30 of the [2013 Handbook of Accreditation](#).

Table 1: Assessment of competencies by majors.

Competency	% of majors* that have assessed the competency to some extent** within last 4 years	% of majors that <u>explicitly name</u> the competency in the language of a PLO	% of majors with PLOs that could be interpreted to address the competency together with majors that explicitly name the competency in the PLO***
Oral Communication	29%	47%	82%
Written Communication	76%	59%	94%
Quantitative Reasoning	47%	12%	88%
Information Literacy	29%	0%	41%
Critical Thinking	76%	6%	100%

* Of the 17 majors submitting PLO Reports in last four years.

** According to rubric criteria.

*** Based on inclusive interpretation of PLO.

In developing this proposal, we considered several possible models, but in the end concluded that the proposed approach is the simplest and most sustainable because it integrates the new expectations into existing assessment efforts. We would be happy meet with Undergraduate Council, Divisional Council or any other interested Senate committees to discuss our thinking and to answer any questions.

Given the timeline established by the WASC Commission, we will need to begin our efforts to address the core competency requirement this coming spring semester, and so ask that the Senate provide comments by the end of January.

We look forward to the Senate’s thoughts. Thank you for your help.

Encl(1)

CC: Tom Peterson, Provost and Executive Vice Chancellor
 Susan Sims, Chief of Staff, Office of the Provost and Executive Vice Chancellor

Addressing the WASC Core Competency Requirement

Laura Martin, UCM ALO & Coordinator for Institutional Assessment
Elizabeth Whitt, Vice Provost & Dean for Undergraduate Education

I. Background: The New WASC Core Competency Requirement

WASC's recent redesign of the reaccreditation process changed both the substance of the review and the review process itself. One new expectation is that institutions must ensure the development of the following "five core competencies" in all baccalaureate programs.

- Written communication
- Oral communication
- Quantitative reasoning
- Information literacy
- Critical thinking

As part of the institutional review process for reaccreditation, the institution must provide an essay that

1. describes how the undergraduate curriculum addresses each of the five core competencies,
2. explains its learning outcomes in relation to those core competencies, and
3. demonstrates, through *evidence of student performance*, the extent to which those outcomes are achieved *at or near the time of graduation*.

For additional descriptions of this new expectation, please see *Educational Quality: Student Learning, Core Competencies and Standards of Performance at Graduation* on p. 30 of the [2013 Handbook of Accreditation](#).

II. Timeline

By spring 2017, the time of UC Merced's Off-Site Review for reaccreditation, UC Merced will need to have assessed four of the five competencies. By the time of our Accreditation Visit in spring 2018, we will need to have assessed all five competencies.

III. Further Detail

What do we need to do?

The core competency requirement applies to all undergraduates regardless of their major. Faculty expectations for student achievement at or near the time of graduation, however, may differ among students in keeping with their majors.

To meet WASC's expectations, *very generally* we will need to

1. Establish expectations¹ for aggregate student performance at or near the time of graduation for each of these five competencies.
2. Ensure the curricula support development and achievement of these expectations.
3. Identify *sustainable* methods for assessing student achievement of each competency; we expect that this will be an ongoing accreditation expectation.

¹ i.e. *criteria* the specific skills or abilities to be demonstrated that describe the key abilities that comprise each competency, and related standards (levels) of performance.

4. Assess student performance in relation to each competency at least one time before the 2018 reaccreditation site visit, consistent with the timeline above.
5. Ensure that actions are taken to improve student achievement, as warranted by the evidence.

It's important to note that we can approach this work in a manner that builds on existing practices. Below, we suggest this work be integrated into existing program-level assessment activities.

IV. Proposed Strategy to Address the Competency Expectation

Guiding Principles

Any strategy to define and assess the WASC Five Core Competencies must

1. be supported and implemented by the faculty, with appropriate administrative support, consistent with the faculty's ownership of curriculum.
2. acknowledge that the competencies outline a core set of abilities that are essential to, but not sufficient for, the high quality, intellectual work expected of a bachelor's degree graduate from the University of California.
3. recognize that although there may be broad agreement on the general attributes of these competencies², their expression is likely to differ by discipline in keeping with field-specific intellectual conventions.
4. add value to faculty goals for student learning.
5. generate actionable insights into student learning at institutional level(s) (e.g., program, school, campus) at which responsive action will have meaning and impact.
6. use and build on existing assessment support and activities, so as to be sustainable.
7. evaluate student learning in relation to the competencies in keeping with the accreditation timeline established above.

These principles underpin the strategy we propose for addressing the competencies.

Proposed Approach: Assessment in the Majors

There appear to be two complementary institutional avenues to support both development and assessment of these competencies – the majors and general education. For several reasons, the majors seem to be a more practical route for assessing the competencies.

First, annual assessments are conducted for each major at UC Merced, whereas we are only in the beginning stages of developing an assessment plan for general education. The latter is anticipated to take some time to develop, and is unlikely to proceed at a pace sufficient to generate evidence in keeping with the timeline outlined above. Second, the existing school-based, distributed model for general education does not seem easily amenable to systematic, representative assessment of the competencies *at or near graduation*. Third, evidence suggests that the competencies are already being assessed in some way as part of annual program assessment activities (or could be easily; Table 1). Finally, assessment results are more likely to be used and have impact on student learning if student achievement is evaluated within the major, rather than at a broader institutional level.

² As represented, for example, in the [AAC&U's VALUE Rubrics](#) associated with these skills.

Table 1: Assessment of competencies by majors.

Competency	% of majors* that have assessed the competency to some extent** within last 4 years	% of majors that <u>explicitly name</u> the competency in the language of a PLO	% of majors with PLOs that could be interpreted to address the competency together with majors that explicitly name the competency in the PLO***
Oral Communication	29%	47%	82%
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Critical Thinking	76%	6%	100%

* Of the 17 majors submitting PLO Reports in last four years; recognizing that most programs have only assessed a subset of their PLOs (mode = 3 PLOs assessed typically of 5 PLOs).

** According to rubric criteria.

*** Based on inclusive interpretation of PLO.

Proposed Strategy and Timeline for Implementation within the Majors

For the reasons outlined above, we propose that assessment of the competencies be integrated into each program’s ongoing program learning outcome assessment activities. The underlying assumption is that, with support, most programs will be able to integrate assessment of each competency into the assessment of existing PLOs in some way.³ In other words, student achievement of the competencies would be assessed as part of the work of assessing a PLO, with results used to inform program curriculum and pedagogy as usual.

With this approach, programs would not necessarily have to change the schedule for the review of PLOs, but rather would be sure to flag and report PLO-related findings and actions that address one or more competencies. Criteria defining each competency could also be developed to address discipline specific intellectual conventions, consistent with the understanding that the competencies are skills that are engaged in discipline-specific ways.

To pursue this plan, we propose the following timeline of activities (see appended table for additional details):

AY2013-2014

Products: By the conclusion of this academic year, FAOs for each *major*⁴, with the support of the school assessment specialist, will have completed the following:

1. Submitted a brief assessment plan addressing all five competencies⁵. In addition to providing a road map for assessing the competencies, these plans will form the foundation of the institutional essay we must include in our next accreditation report that describes how the undergraduate curriculum addresses each of the five core competencies as well as the relationship of our learning outcomes to the core competencies. (See Section 1, bullets 1 and 2.)

³ An exception may be quantitative reasoning in humanities majors. This could be the focus of a separate working group of humanities faculty.

⁴ Majors only, not standalone minors.

⁵ Again, an exception may be quantitative reasoning in humanities majors, which may need special consideration.

2. Reviewed and identified existing program rubrics or other descriptions of criteria and or/standards that they feel reflect expectations related to one or more competencies.

Activities: To develop the brief assessment plan (bullet 1 immediately above), a program would need to

- a. align the competencies to existing PLOs to identify which competencies are already addressed or could easily be addressed under the umbrella of an existing PLO.
- b. identify at least one substantive source of direct evidence⁶ *for each competency to be collected at or near graduation*, recognizing that a rich source of evidence could support more than one PLO and competency. For example, a program might assess critical thinking, information literacy, and written communication through a single significant assignment such as a research paper completed at or near graduation. The evidence should be collected through one or more required courses to ensure that the findings are representative of all students in the major.
- c. identify how student work will be archived for future use, with archiving initiated in AY2014-15.
- d. identify the year each competency (and corresponding PLO) will be assessed, with the expectation that all five competencies must be assessed by spring 2018 for programs with a March PLO Report date (with four of the five completed by spring 2017), and fall 2018 for programs with an October PLO Report date (with four of the five completed by fall 2017).

Institutional Input: By the start of spring semester, a working group of assessment staff and interested faculty will identify some basic definitions of each competency, examples of useful sources of evidence, and one or more mechanisms to store student work.

Summer 2014

- Building on collected in spring 2014 and other institutional resources, the working group further refines institutional definitions of each of the five competencies to provide programs with basic guidelines for assessing each competency for adoption and adaptation within the majors. Draft materials for three of the competencies developed by conclusion of summer.

AY2014-15

- Programs begin archiving student work in support of assessing PLOs and the related competencies.
- Programs begin assessing competencies as per assessment plan.

AY 2015-16 – AY 2017-2018

- Programs assess PLOs and competencies, completing all five by spring 2018 for programs with a March PLO Report date, and fall 2018 for programs with an October PLO Report date.

Other considerations: Links to Undergraduate Writing Task Force.

V. Draft Detailed Time Table for Competency Assessment

The proposed process takes a sampling approach to meeting WASC's expectations to have assessed four of the five competencies by the spring 2017 Off-Site Review and all five by the spring 2018 Accreditation Visit.

⁶ Ex. a major research paper, lab report, presentation, design project, etc.

If implemented as proposed,

- by the Off-Site Review in spring 2017, ~ 50% of the majors would have assessed four of the five competencies, with 50% having assessed three.⁷
- by the Accreditation Visit in spring 2018, ~50% of the majors would have assessed all five competencies, with 50% having assessed four.

As outlined in the table below (shaded cells), this schedule would ask programs with March 1 annual reporting dates to assess and report results for four competencies within the next three annual reporting periods, starting with spring 2015 (i.e. spring 2015, 2016, and 2017). Programs with October 1 reporting dates would be asked to assess and report results for four competencies within their next three annual reporting periods (i.e. fall 2015, 2016, and 2017).

AY			Work Plan	Who?
Fall	Spring	Summer		
2013			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Plan for addressing competencies approved. • Basic definitions of competencies in development. 	Senate approves approach.
	2014		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Basic definitions developed by mid- February to support assessment plan development by conclusion of spring. • Program assessment plans developed by conclusion of semester. • One competency, ex. oral communication⁸, elaborated to support assessment beginning in fall 2014. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Small working group of staff and faculty led by VPDUE and CoIA to work on competency definition. • FAOs and Assessment Staff develop assessment plans
		2014	Working with materials submitted in spring, staff drafts basic definitions and guidelines for another two competencies for review in fall (1 per month).	Staff
2014			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Complete elaboration of final two competencies by October for review by conclusion of fall. (1 per month) • By conclusion of fall semester, basic definitions and guidelines developed for all five competencies so that programs can begin adopting and adapting materials to program specific purposes. 	Basic definitions and elaboration of one competency, small working group of staff and faculty led by VPDUE?
	2015		Programs with March 1 reporting dates: First report of competency assessment data based on assessment conducted in fall 2014. (~50% of majors)	
2015			Programs with Oct 1 reporting dates: First report of competency assessment data based on assessment conducted in spring/summer 2015. (~50% of majors)	
	2016		Programs with March 1 reporting dates: Second report of competency assessment data. (~50% of majors)	
2016			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Programs with Oct 1 reporting dates: Second report of competency assessment data. (~50% of majors) 	

⁷ Currently, there are 20 undergraduate majors, eight of which are scheduled to submit reports on October 1st annually, the remainder submit annual reports on March 1.

⁸ Suggested, because will want to assess this as students give presentations, to avoid having to archive work.

AY			Work Plan	Who?
Fall	Spring	Summer		
			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • UCM Accreditation Report due, includes description of process and progress assessing competencies, existing conclusions. 	
	2017		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Programs with March 1 reporting dates: Third report of competency assessment data. (~50% of majors) • By this report, these programs will have assessed and reported on four of five competencies. • Off-Site Accreditation Review: Prior to or as part of Off-Site Review Teleconference, provide update on competency progress, including additional findings, actions etc. 	
2017			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Programs with Oct 1 reporting dates: Third report of competency assessment data. • By this report, these programs will have assessed and reported on four of five competencies. (~50% of majors) 	
	2018		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Programs with March 1 reporting dates: Fourth report of competency assessment data. (~50% of majors) • By this report, these programs will have assessed and reported on all five competencies. • Accreditation Visit: Provide update and additional evidence of all five competencies for majors with March 1 report due date, and for four of the competencies for majors with Oct 1 due dates. 	
2018			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Programs with Oct 1 reporting dates: Fourth report of competency assessment data based on assessment conducted in spring/summer 2018. • By this report, these programs will have assessed and reported on all five competencies. 	
Continue competency assessment as part of routine PLO assessment activities.				

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February 5, 2014

To: Ignacio López-Calvo, Chair, Division Council

From: Ruth Mostern, Chair, Committee on Research (COR)

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Ruth Mostern", is written over the "From:" line.

Re: Emergency Funding for Faculty

COR and the Vice Chancellor for Research have discussed the lack of an emergency funding source for UC Merced faculty members who face an unexpected shortfall in research funds. The committee notes that there are a number of circumstances that might cause this problem to occur, and that the Office of Research periodically receives requests from faculty who are in this situation.

The Senate is not well positioned to administer an emergency fund source that requires rapid turnaround. Therefore, COR requests that Division Council work with Provost/EVC Peterson and Vice Chancellor for Research Traina to establish, in the next budget allocation cycle, an "emergency" fund source, controlled by the central administration, to be used by faculty members experiencing gaps in funding.

cc: COR Members
DivCo Members
Senate Office

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February 5, 2014

To: Ignacio López-Calvo, Chair, Division Council

From: Ruth Mostern, Chair, Committee on Research (COR)

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Ruth Mostern", is placed to the right of the "From:" line.

Re: Funding for Senate Faculty Research Grants

COR is concerned that the amount of funding allocated for Senate faculty grants has not kept up with the growth in faculty numbers. COR requests that Division Council work with Provost/EVC Peterson and Vice Chancellor for Research Traina to develop and implement a mechanism to ensure that future Senate funds grow in proportion to the size of the faculty.

cc: COR Members
DivCo Members
Senate Office