ASSOCIATION FOR GENERAL AND LIBERAL STUDIES
2008 AGLS Awards for Improving General Education:
Effective Program Processes

Award Information and Application

Increasingly in the minds of national education officials, accreditors, and faculty leaders, "quality" education is associated less with "inputs" and more with student learning outcomes and the continuous quality improvement processes associated with these outcomes. Academic leaders and accrediting bodies are encouraging institutions to view quality education as more than a simple matter of a static body of knowledge that faculty pass on to students. Instead, quality education is viewed as commitment to the ongoing activities of making *institutional choices* about appropriate outcomes, developing a shared faculty commitment to *actions* deliberately designed for student achievement of the outcomes, making *judgments* about student outcomes achievement, and ensuring *improvements* to outcomes and instruction. However, despite the commitment of academic leaders and accreditors to outcomes and assessment, limited effort has been made to apply these concepts to an essential component of a liberal education, the general education program. Recent national discussions about accountability and the responsibilities of higher education suggest the commitment to general education outcomes and assessment can benefit from a public sharing of model general education practices and assessment successes.

As an organization committed to quality general education and a national leader in promoting the centrality of general education in the liberal education of students, the Association for General and Liberal Studies invites individuals and institutions to apply for the 2008 AGLS Awards for Improving General Education: Effective Program Processes. The awards are intended to promote institutional commitment to continuous quality improvement processes, to recognize faculty and institutions that practice these quality behaviors, and to provide much needed examples of effective, innovative improvement processes. The 2008 Awards will recognize excellence in two crucial general education program processes: the efforts made by an institution to effectively design and implement a new general education program (C1), or the successful steps taken to design a systematic assessment of general education and provide evidence that graduates have acquired the knowledge and skills expected by the institution and stakeholders (J2). Additional information about and explanation of these general education program process can be found in the AGLS *Guide to Assessment and Program Review.* (See below.) Up to six awards (three per category) will be made each year during the AGLS conference, held annually in October. Winners will be asked to present a discussion of their program processes in an identified special session and provide a poster presentation for display throughout the conference. Winners will receive the following: a plaque recognizing their efforts, listing in the AGLS Newsletter, recognition of the process on the AGLS website, and half-priced registration for the up-coming conference, including a year's membership in AGLS.

Award Selection and Criteria

Applications will be reviewed by an Award Committee comprised of AGLS Executive Council members, members of accrediting associations, and recognized leaders in general education. Award categories are based on the Systems Analysis Questions found in the *Improving Learning in General Education: An AGLS Guide to Assessment and Program Review.* Applications will be judged on the extent to which the institution's program improvement efforts can serve as a practical model for other institutions. Judging will consider how innovatively and effectively an institution has addressed one of the following continuous quality improvement processes:

- C1: Commitment to Common Student Learning Objectives: Process used to design a new program, including steps taken to identify and gain institutional commitment to the general education knowledge, values, and skills desired in your graduates.
- J2: Assessment of Student Learning: Process used to provide evidence that graduates have acquired the general education knowledge and skills expected by the institution and its stakeholders for awarding its degrees.

ASSOCIATION FOR GENERAL AND LIBERAL STUDIES
2008 AGLS Awards for Improving General Education:
Effective Program Processes

Application Format

To be considered for the award, an applicant on behalf of an institution should complete:
- Section #1: Contact information for individual submitting the application
- Section #2: Institutional endorsement by either the chief executive or academic officer
- Section #3: Application summary (150 words or less)
- Section #4: Responses to four award criteria, limited to two pages per criterion

Examples of Evidence for Award Criteria

Evidence of merit requires answering the questions under each of the criterion listed in the application below. Evidence should focus on specific activities and processes that employ the continuous quality improvement principles discussed in the AGLS publication *Improving Learning in General Education: An AGLS Guide to Assessment and Program Review* and found in the supporting reference materials listed in the *Guide.* The application should clearly present the creative solutions and leadership methods used to address the issues, concerns, and goals relevant to C1 or J2. Supporting material can be summarized as part of the application and narrative, but **limit your explanations to two pages per criterion**. Please feel free to cite any web addresses that readers or AGLS members might use to better understand or see samples of your efforts.

Award Timeline

April—Application materials available on AGLS website
June 15th—Materials must be received by AGLS
June 20th—Materials distributed to review panel
August 1st—Winners notified
September—Winners' presentations and awards during AGLS Annual Conference

Suggested Reference Material

Improving Learning in General Education: An AGLS Guide to Assessment and Learning can be found at: www.agls.org. Supporting literature (from regional and specialized accreditors and from AAC&U) is listed in the *Guide.*

Application Submission

Applications and supporting materials may be submitted as e-mail attachments in Microsoft Word or Adobe Acrobat format, sent to Paul Ranieri at pranieri@bsu.edu. Applications can also be mailed to:

Paul Ranieri
AGLS Executive Director
Department of English
Ball State University
RB 2109
Muncie, IN 47306

ASSOCIATION FOR GENERAL AND LIBERAL STUDIES
2008 AGLS Awards for Improving General Education:
Effective Program Processes

Section #1: Contact Information of Person Submitting Application

Name	**Joan Hawthorne**
Title	**Assistant Provost**
Institution	**University of North Dakota**
Department/Program	**Academic Affairs**
Street Address	**264 Centennial Drive Stop 8176, Twamley 304**
City, State, Zip	**Grand Forks, ND 58202**
Phone	**701-777-4684**
Fax	**701-777-4139**
Email	**joan_hawthorne@und.nodak.edu**
Signature	

Section #2: Institutional Endorsement

Chief Executive Officer or Chief Academic Officer

Name	**Greg Weisenstein**
Title	**VPAA/Provost**
Institution	**University of North Dakota**
Phone	**701-777-2167**
Fax	**701-777-4139**
Email	**gweisenstein@mail.und.nodak.edu**
Signature	

Section #3: Application Summary

Include a summary of the award application, identifying the award category (C1 or A1). Please begin the narrative with a brief description of your institution and the time frame for the process. Briefly explain your process and why you think it equates with quality. The summary should not exceed 150 words. The text box may be increased in size as necessary.

ASSOCIATION FOR GENERAL AND LIBERAL STUDIES
2008 AGLS Awards for Improving General Education:
Effective Program Processes

UND's new Essential Studies (ES) Program is nominated in category C1. UND is a public research university of 12,000 students, offering degrees from the BA to the PhD in a wide range of disciplines. The ES program was approved by the University Senate in May 2007, following two years of intensive Task Force work (2005-07) which itself was preceded by years of assessment and discussion (2000-06). Implementation for first-year students occurs in Fall 2008.

This program is noteworthy for the success of our process, which was effective in generating widespread campus interest in general education and consensus about the need for change. We believe the new program will be effective for two reasons: (1) The program is focused on a limited number of clearly articulated goals which everyone on campus supports – and can remember. (2) Program review and revision are built into the plan to leave room for on-going reform.

Section #4: Award Criteria

Criterion 1: Identification of the Problem

Provide a description of how your institution identified its need to design a new general education program and commit to common general education outcomes (C1), or its need to produce evidence that graduates acquired the general education knowledge and skills expected by the institution and its stakeholders for awarding its degrees (J2). Address the following issues:

- The need at your institution, including context for the issue at your institution
- The process used to identify the need, for instance, a review of assessment practices by a campus committee or a visit by an accrediting agency
- The process used to understand the need
- The process used to communicate the need and related issues to faculty and decision making bodies

Please limit your response to two pages. The following text box may be increased in size as necessary.

The confluence of three factors prompted close attention to our General Education program.

First, we had the benefit of preliminary findings from a six-year General Education Longitudinal Study (GELS) of student perceptions of their learning around general education goals. The study was done by a ten-person faculty team, each of whom was assigned to interview 10-12 entering UND students each semester during their time on campus (concluding only when the student transferred, dropped out of UND, graduated, or declined continued participation in the study). (See assessment reports at <http://www.und.edu/dept/oid/getf_assessment.htm>.)

By the time the first two or three years of GELS interviews had been conducted, it was already clear that there were significant problems in our general education program. Faculty interviewers were surprised to find that our program included some unfamiliar goals like "recognizing and evaluating choices and their consequences" and "recognizing relationships" – a clear sign that those goals were rarely addressed with any intentionality. Students didn't understand the meaning of the goals, assuming that the "relationships" they were expected to attend to were personal and the "choices" to be made revolved around decisions like how much alcohol to consume in a given evening. Other goals pointed students toward more commonly identified outcomes like critical thinking, creative thinking, communication, and understanding cultures. But most general education courses taken by first and second year students were lecture courses taken in groups of 100 or 200 students. Students had little opportunity to practice such skills in those classes which served primarily as introductions to the discipline and only secondarily (and sometimes without the teacher's awareness) as components of the university's general education program. Clearly, these findings were signs of a program in need of attention.

Second, members of the General Education Requirements Committee (GERC), a group charged with oversight for the program, became dissatisfied with their experience. When faculty requested that courses be validated or revalidated for inclusion in the general education program, there was often no mention of program goals or ways

in which the course enhanced students' learning. In fact, there was little indication that faculty saw the program as having a purpose or goals. Many faculty seemed to assume that the program was a mechanism for encouraging students to take classes outside the major, for ensuring that each department generated its fair share of student credit hours, and, particularly, for ensuring that students would take an assortment of introductory classes which might help them discover new interests. It became clear to GERC members that greater intentionality around general education was needed, and greater understanding – by faculty – of the program's purpose and goals was essential.

Finally, UND was due for a visit by its regional accreditation association by that time. Although the longitudinal study (then in progress) could be cited as evidence of assessment activity, that study was the only assessment occurring within the general education program. There had been no effort to conduct direct assessment of student learning around program goals, a fact that was not surprising given that many departments were not conducting assessment of learning around their own goals either. To no one's surprise, the accrediting association directed that UND participate in a focused visit on assessment prior to the next comprehensive visit. Furthermore, team members cited the general education program as an example of a program with particularly weak assessment of learning.

These three sources of information about and disaffection with our general education program reached a confluence in 2003-04. Based on these multiple concerns, a team including both faculty and administrators was sent to an AAC&U working retreat on general education reform. Under the guidance of retreat leaders and with input from colleagues at other institutions, team members developed a plan to work toward review and reconsideration of UND's general education program. Team members continued work as a "steering committee" once they returned to campus.

Steering committee members sought out additional data, a decision that was prompted in part by discussions at the retreat. Although the GELS told us something about our general education program and the experience of the GERC provided more information, there was more that could be learned. A goals analysis was conducted to answer the questions, "Which general education goals are intended to be addressed in each of the various courses?" and "How frequently is each goal addressed across our general education curriculum?" An analysis of academic transcripts was done to answer the question, "Based on the courses a student actually takes, how many 'exposures' to each goal does a typical student experience?" A faculty team conducted a direct assessment of two goals (written communication and critical thinking) to determine how well students actually demonstrated the learning outcomes in question by the time they graduated from UND.

Based on the accumulated data, members of the steering committee agreed to request appointment of a task force to study the general education program and recommend whatever changes were necessary. To prepare the way for the task force, they used the faculty newsletter to describe the evidence and outline the issues and problems that had been identified. This effort supplemented informal processes that had begun building awareness of the need for program review: (1) the 10 members of the GELS team had made yearly presentations of findings to audiences as large as 100 people; (2) about 10 faculty each year served on the GERC and experienced problems first-hand; (3) about 20 faculty participated in the direct assessment of written communication and critical thinking.

The provost appointed members of the task force in May of 2005, and the reform effort was officially underway.

ASSOCIATION FOR GENERAL AND LIBERAL STUDIES
2008 AGLS Awards for Improving General Education:
Effective Program Processes

Award Criteria

Criterion 2: Identification of Goals and Procedure Used to Address Needs

Describe how your institution identified and approved the goals and procedure used to address the need identified in Criterion 1 above.   Address the following issues:

- The persons involved in the process of identifying the goals and procedure used to address the need identified in Criterion 1
- The research used to identify the desired goals and procedure that would most effectively address the need identified in Criterion 1
- The process used to select the desired goals and identify the appropriate procedure
- The process used to win institutional commitment to the desired goals and appropriate procedure

 Please limit your response to two pages. The following text box may be increased in size as necessary.

ASSOCIATION FOR GENERAL AND LIBERAL STUDIES
2008 AGLS Awards for Improving General Education:
Effective Program Processes

Steering committee members, each of whom served by virtue of his/her role on campus, continued as the management arm of the task force itself. Initial members included the Interim Provost (who later returned to her role as Dean of Arts & Sciences, charged with institutional oversight of general education), the Assistant Provost for Assessment, the chair of the GERC, the chair of the University Assessment Committee, and the faculty leader of GELS. There were some changes in membership over subsequent years, most notably the addition of new chairs of the GERC as years went by (over time, five individuals joined the steering committee by virtue of their role as GERC chair). Three members of the original steering committee persisted in their roles throughout the process, however, and provided a stable core.

Steering committee members brainstormed names of individuals who might serve on the task force itself. People were named on a variety of bases: representation of a wide variety of departments and programs, including arts, humanities, social sciences, math and sciences, technology, and professional; variety in level of seniority; racial and gender diversity; inclusion of representation from appropriate student services departments and other non-academic units; inclusion of student representation; interest in the general education program; involvement in assessment activities. Drawing from that list of names, the Interim Provost sent letters of invitation to participate in the task force and the new Provost provided the official "charge" later that summer.

Task force members immediately began study, beginning with a packet of materials such as *Greater Expectations* and *Strong Foundations* (both published by AAC&U) and *Assessment Clear and Simple* (by Barbara Walvoord). However, no one – not the Provost, not the steering committee, and not the task force – started with the presumption that there was a "right answer" in terms of goals or requirements toward which to aim. Instead, a small number of principles, agreed to by consensus prior to making decisions on any aspect of the program itself, guided the work of the task force.

In terms of outcomes, we recognized four needs. First, general education needed greater intentionality and visibility. Everyone on campus should know and be committed to the GE goals. Second, task force members would need to suspend personal disciplinary affiliations and focus on student learning as our single essential "product." Third, the program should be assessable, which meant that we needed clarity about the meaning of goals. Finally, we needed to build in a review process that allowed future changes to occur before things reached a crisis point.

Process principles were equally critical. We agreed that all information should be not only available but actively shared. All interested parties should be invited to participate in brainstorming sessions and other conversations. We would invite people in, but task force members would also go to faculty at their regular department meetings (by invitation) to provide information, answer questions, and solicit input.

We agreed that, when making decisions, consensus was key. The task force imposed upon itself a 2/3 rule: any proposal or idea needed to receive a 2/3 vote of members present in order to be included in the program we would create. In fact, each proposal was typically responded to by a series of votes that included not only a vote on the principle itself (e.g., "Do we include quantitative reasoning in the plan?") but also on each aspect of the decision ("Should it be a goal? A course requirement? With a prerequisite? Course A or Course B as the prerequisite?") Careful records were kept of all of our work – from the task force's charge to its research and study to campus outreach and, eventually, to decision points – and we posted those records on the Internet. (See <http://www.und.edu/dept/oid/getf.htm>.)

These process principles guided task force work. They derived from steering committee members' planning, task force research, and stories from other institutions. For example, several members of the steering committee had read *Revitalizing General Education in a Time of Scarcity* by Kanter, Gamson, and London, an instructive book that includes a series of stories about reform efforts (often disheartening) at a wide variety of institutions.

The principles served us well. After 16 months of research and discussion, task force members spent a long day in retreat, voting on specific goal and requirement proposals that had been developed by sub-committees. When

that process was complete, the selected goals and requirements were publicized and distributed across campus. Those who believed something was either missing or unacceptable were asked to write a short proposal and rationale; those were brought to the task force for discussion and a vote using the same 2/3 majority procedure. Approved goals and requirements were then folded into a single document for task force review. Members who were dissatisfied with that document were encouraged to re-propose and make a case for anything still in need of change. The entire process of proposals, re-proposals, and votes took five months, following the previous months of study and research. By the conclusion of Year 2, task force members had a document which incorporated the best of our thinking, our research, and campus-wide consensus around key features for a general education program. We were ready to take it to campus one final time.

Again, we used open forums, publication of documents, and outreach to departments to share the final version of the proposed program with the rest of campus – a final version that seemed "sudden" to those who had not spent the last two years immersed in the process. We first asked members of the GERC for their endorsement, which was received after extensive discussion extending across two meetings. The new plan was then put on the Senate agenda, where it would need to be adopted in order to take effect. Packets of information (a list of research conducted, outreach opportunities provided, task force charge, task force membership, and the proposal itself) were prepared and distributed in early April. In order to avoid the likelihood that a Senate vote (scheduled for May) would be delayed by a perceived need for more time or additional information, each member of the task force volunteered to contact and meet individually with a small number of Senators in order to answer questions. Those meetings ensured that every Senator had actually read the document prior to the May meeting. Task force co-chairs presented the proposal at that meeting and, as with the GERC, after spirited discussion, the proposal was passed with implementation to occur in Fall 2008 (for first year students) and Fall 2009 (for transfer students).

ASSOCIATION FOR GENERAL AND LIBERAL STUDIES
2008 AGLS Awards for Improving General Education:
Effective Program Processes

Award Criteria

Criterion 3: Actions Taken

Describe the actions taken by your institution to achieve the goals and implement the procedure designed to address needs. Address the following issues:

- The individuals involved in the process
- The action steps identified
- The process used to gain faculty and administrative support and participation
- The process used to check progress

Please limit your response to two pages. The following text box may be increased in size as necessary.

There is a full page of names of individuals who served on the task force, and there are additional pages identifying the events (i.e., open forums, department meetings, etc.) during which people from across campus were involved (see details at <http://www.und.edu/dept/oid/getf.htm>). So when naming individuals, it is difficult to know where to begin and end. Steering committee members who attended the original retreat and are still involved with the reform process are then-Interim-Provost Martha Potvin (Arts & Sciences Dean), then-GERC Chair Tom Steen (Physical Education, Exercise Science, and Wellness), and then-GELS leader Anne Kelsch (History). Jim Mochoruk (History) served as the first chair of the task force and steering committee, Steen and Kelsch served as co-chairs during the second year, and Steen and Lori Robison (English) co-chaired the 2007-08 transition year. We are now seeking a Director of Essential Studies (the name of our new program) and the director, once chosen, will continue leadership during 2008-09 and beyond.

Among the items on our original action plan (roughly in chronological order) were the following:
- educate ourselves and each other about our current GE program, its strengths, and its weaknesses;
- educate ourselves about national trends in GE;
- educate ourselves about key constraints (e.g., state system rules);
- build awareness of the current program and enthusiasm for campus-wide discussions about GE as a program;

- find out what faculty across campus view as strengths and weaknesses of the current system;
- educate ourselves about opportunities for strengthening connections with student affairs and other non-academic units;
- pay attention to wording as a tool for establishing and communicating about shared values regarding GE purpose and potential goals;
- research and outline ideas for potential program components (i.e., goals, requirements) in which task force members have clear interest;
- develop detailed plans for potential program components that rise to the top of our list of options;
- reach agreement on program structure and goals;
- maintain continuity of approach and interests with GERC;
- ensure that the Provost is supportive of structure and goals, once selected;
- seek out cross-campus response and input in response to proposals;
- consider additional "last minute" ideas from all of campus and from task force members;
- finalize plan and reach agreement on wording and presentation;
- receive approval from the Provost;
- receive approval from the GERC;
- receive approval from the University Senate;
- plan for implementation, including assessment, a program director and office, a program review process, transfer and articulation, website presence, advising materials, disseminating detailed information across campus, etc.

It is important to note that many of these steps were on-going (e.g., additional self-education was needed as new proposal ideas were considered) and iterative (e.g., returning to faculty and staff for additional conversations at many stages of the process.

Faculty buy-in is never complete. However, we believe that a number of process decisions enabled us to receive a high level of buy-in to the task force process and, eventually, to the proposal itself.

First, we had participation and involvement from every quarter of campus both on the task force and via outreach. We didn't wait for faculty to come with complaints – task force members actively sought out their perspectives. Inclusivity was important both practically and in terms of perceptions. Transparency was equally important: we used every mechanism we could think of to keep those interested (and those less so) aware of our progress. Furthermore, we publicized and documented all of our actions in those areas, so when questions arose at the end of the process ("why wasn't I aware of this?"), we could easily demonstrate our efforts to provide information.

Requiring a 2/3 vote for approval of each included item proved to be critical. That high threshold for consensus and, thus, approval, meant that most task force members approved of most decisions and were therefore willing to promote those decisions to the rest of campus. On the other hand, every task force member and every stakeholder had "lost" some battles, including co-chairs, members of the steering committee, and even the new Provost. The essential fairness of that process made it easier to accept both wins and losses.

This year of transition to the new program has provided one kind of check-in regarding process. In order to move from idea to implementation, we have been forced to spell out details and find answers to unanticipated questions. The program itself, however, is holding up well. This summer, as students begin registering, and next fall, when faculty at large get involved with advising, will be additional tests of progress. We have built in plans for assessment, culminating in an every-five-year review of the program, and that process will provide additional information about progress as well as opportunities for "tinkering" that fall short of whole-scale revision of the sort just completed. However, at this point we are proud of the program and optimistic about its effectiveness.

ASSOCIATION FOR GENERAL AND LIBERAL STUDIES
2008 AGLS Awards for Improving General Education:
Effective Program Processes

Award Criteria

Criterion 4: Evidence of Improvement and Continuing Commitment to the Processes
Provide evidence of the success of your improvement strategy and your institution's continuing
commitment to the goals and processes used. Address the following issues:

- A description of the results of your activities
- An explanation of how the results address the needs
- An explanation of how the institution is improved by the results
- Evidence or justification of your improvement claims
- Evidence of on-going commitment to the improvements

Please limit your response to two pages. The following text box may be increased in size as necessary.

After six years of GELS activity, after three years of steering committee work, and after two years of task force
involvement, UND spent 2007-08 preparing for a transition to a newly adopted program of general education,
renamed "Essential Studies" to signify its importance within the curriculum (see program website,

<http://www.und.edu/dept/registrar/EssentialStudies/escommitteeindex.html>).

The identification of four kinds of "needs," all interwoven, prompted initial reconsideration of our general education program:

1. There was little intentionality in the program. Neither faculty nor students could name program goals and little attention was given to program purpose.
2. The language of the goals themselves was often vague and unclear, especially to students but even to faculty themselves.
3. Too few GE courses were purposeful about addressing any of the GE goals.
4. Direct assessment was not occurring, and, in fact, would be difficult to do given the generality of some program goals.

Data collection had also identified a limited number of specific problems, e.g., we knew that our "cultural familiarity" goal received less attention in GE courses than did other goals, and many students perceived it as the "least important" of the six goals. We also knew that faculty perceived student achievement of the communication goal as particularly nettlesome.

Each need has been thoroughly addressed.

1. One of the greatest successes of the task force was that it drew campus-wide attention to general education. Faculty agreed that they do care deeply about the program and there is widespread consensus around the new goals. Although students have not yet experienced the new program, greater faculty commitment and intentionality will yield greater student awareness.
2. Careful attention was given to language during the writing process. Task force members debated over words (e.g., socio-cultural diversity vs. social-cultural diversity) and the test, always, was whether the words would be meaningful to students. For that reason, for example, we rejected "quantitative literacy" in favor of "quantitative reasoning" (which informal surveys of friends and family members revealed to be more readily understood). In the final document, each goal is accompanied by examples to further clarify.
3. Faculty revalidating GE courses now need to present evidence regarding achievement of program goals during revalidation. Within the ES program, evidence for only a single goal will be required for each course in order to provide opportunity for a very high degree of intentionality and focus. This will also allow us to track the prevalence with which each course is addressed within the program and within a typical student's curriculum, and make changes as necessary.
4. Assessment was a key consideration throughout development of the ES program and some decisions were influenced by assessment. For example, although we are under a state mandate to use a distribution model for our program, we chose not to include a "breadth" goal because it became clear that there really is no specific learning outcome that we expect students to achieve as a result of the distribution system. Another example is the rubrics that have been developed – although not mandated – for each goal, as a means of helping faculty understand the intended meaning of the goal and providing tools that can be used (at the faculty member's discretion) for assessment and revalidation.

Specific details of the program were designed to address more concrete problems like the lack of attention to the diversity goal and concern about students' communication skills (both of which received additional emphasis through requirements in the new program).

The program has not yet been implemented, and we recognize that it will take four years to see significant numbers of students move through the new program. Outcomes assessment at that point will be very important and will help us understand the degree to which learning goals have been met. However, our campus has very clearly been improved by this process already. For example:

1. There has never been a greater interest in or attention to general education. That alone is significant, especially at a research university.
2. The conversation and debates during this time of study and transition have been heavily dominated by concerns about student learning – which faculty seem to generally agree trumps their own departmental

priorities. Furthermore, the need to develop new courses for the ES program has generated many opportunities to cross disciplinary boundaries and engage in conversations about larger, cross-campus learning outcomes. This is another triumph.

3. Every administrator on this campus, including the president and the VPAA/Provost, has become quite familiar with the new program. Again, this is a new state of affairs – but as research of George Kuh and his colleagues has demonstrated, a university is better when there is top to bottom understanding of and support for a clear mission regarding student learning.

4. For the first time ever, UND will have a director and office for its general education program. This reflects the enhanced importance the program has gained through the work of the steering committee and task force.

5. A three-year series of General Education "Summits," conducted by the steering committee and the GERC, have drawn significant numbers of faculty and staff into conversations about general education, thereby educating them about general education nationally as well as our local program.

Our president has provided funding for a new half-time program director, support staff person, and office. The dean of Arts & Sciences is actively seeking that office space (despite the fact that it's likely to be purloined from her own college), and she is chairing the search committee – both indications of strong support from that important part of campus. The new program was identified during a recent visit from our accreditation association as "visionary," which is a major change from four years ago when lack of assessment of learning around GE goals was part of the impetus for a focused visit. Accreditation team members were especially pleased by the degree to which assessment findings informed the new ES program – a clear example of effective loop-closing. A presentation on our new program was selected as a LEAP exemplar at a recent AAC&U conference on general education and assessment. All of these, we believe, provide evidence of improvement and continuing commitment to progress.

ASSOCIATION FOR GENERAL AND LIBERAL STUDIES
2008 AGLS Awards for Improving General Education:
Effective Program Processes