Shared Competencies Survey
Report to the University Senate

Senate Ad hoc Committee on Shared Competencies
March 28, 2018
Summary

• The shared competencies are “the things we expect every Syracuse University student to know and be able to do by the time they graduate.”

• This year, an ad hoc Committee met and administered a survey to the Senate
  • Shared competencies can benefit students. (62%)
  • The proposed 4+4 is satisfactory as a starting point (46%)
  • The University should periodically assess (54%)
  • Each school and college should have the freedom to choose [shared competency] assessment tools consistent with their disciplines (76%)
  • Competencies should be rolled out gradually (60%)
Ad hoc Committee Recommendations

We recommend the continuance of the ad hoc Committee on Shared Competencies to:

- Create and modify the competencies
- Review the processes by which assessment and competencies are administered (with Office of Institutional Assessment and Effectiveness)
- Periodically review and report on assessment and shared competencies to the Senate
- Lay the groundwork for a standing Committee on Assessment and Shared Competencies
Definitions

The Basics

**Shared Competencies Framework** (Working title was *Syracuse 4+4*)

**Shared Competencies**: A set of institutional integrative learning outcomes (knowledge and skills) common to all graduates

**A Shared Competency**: A general learning outcome that can support, reinforce, complement and/or augment the program-specific knowledge and skills that students develop in their specialized majors, minors, concentrations, and co-curricular experiences

**SCF Framework** = *things we expect every Syracuse University student to know and be able to do by the time they graduate.*
What Shared Competencies Are Not

- Not about owning curriculum or curriculum areas
- Not about ”checking the box” for Middle States
- Not about credentialing individual students
- Not an attempt to put more work on faculty

Much of what is already happening is relevant; Much of the data already exists; Focused on documenting what students can do; Focused on improving the preparedness of students for life success
Definitions

The 4+4 Framework Proposed by Academic Strategic Plan Working Group 1: The Student Experience

*Two “Central Components”: Integrity and Ethics*

and

*4 Reasoning Competencies*
- Creative Reasoning
- Critical Reasoning
- Quantitative Reasoning
- Scientific Reasoning

*4 Ability Competencies*
- Applied & Collaborative Learning Ability
- Civic and Global Abilities
- Communicative Ability
- Information & Technology Ability
Brief History of Senate Involvement

Timeline

{WG #1 (including # of senators involved in this process)
Rochelle’s interaction with Senate
Agenda Committee’s Charge to COI and AAC to create an Ad hoc Committee
October/November 2017 Ad Hoc Committee meets to discuss and create survey
November/December 2017 Senate Survey
January/February 2018 Survey analysis and Ad Hoc Committee discussion
March 2018 Report/Recommendations to Senate}
Notable Survey Results

The Survey

A Temperature Check of Senate Opinion
13 Questions (6 Likert scale, 7 open-ended)
N = 37 (34 Senators = 5 Staff, 29 Faculty)
Response Rate: 20.6% of Senate (P = 165)
Notable Survey Results

The Survey Limited Response Questions

Percentage who strongly agree or agree . . .

- Shared competencies can benefit students. 62%
- The . . . proposed 4+4 is satisfactory as a starting point. 46%
- The University should periodically assess. . . Student [achievement] of the shared competencies. 54%
- Each school and college should have the freedom to choose [shared competency] assessment tools consistent with their disciplines. . . 76%
- Competencies should be rolled out gradually . . . 60%
- An existing Senate committee should oversee the processes related to competencies in cooperation with the provost. 41%
Notable Survey Results

Analysis of Open Ended Survey Questions

How should the committee determine what (and how many) competencies SU should have?

- Answers gave less advice and asked more questions about details of 4+4.
  - Senators seem to be asking for more information about 4+4 framework, planning and implementation process.
- Concrete Suggestions: Backward design, institutional peer benchmarking.
Notable Survey Results

Analysis of Open Ended Survey Questions

What role should faculty and academic departments have in assessing the shared competencies?

• 90% say: YES to involvement of faculty/departments.
• No consensus about specific roles but answers provide dozens of great ideas.
• 10% say: No faculty/department involvement. Waste of our time.
Notable Survey Results

Analysis of Open Ended Survey Questions

Who should be responsible for ensuring that our graduates achieve these competencies?

- Some support for SHARED responsibility between students, faculty, staff, departments, senate and administration. One University.
  - Strong case made by a few for heightened student responsibility in demonstrating competency.
How should students’ development of the competencies be assessed?

- Senators suggest that competency assessment needs to be based on mixed forms of evidence.
  - Indirect/Direct
  - Curricular/Co-Curricular/Extra-curricular
Analysis of Open Ended Survey Questions

How should shared competencies be rolled out?

• Many want a slow and gradual roll-out, like we did for the course and program assessments.

• Senators provided many suggestions for “first steps,” e.g.
  • evaluate the 4+4 creation process to date
  • create benchmark framework based on our peers to use during implementation.
Analysis of Open Ended Survey Questions

What has, is, and should be the Senate’s role?

• Little discussion about the Senate’s past and current role.
• Some mention of “oversight”.
  • (OF WHAT?)
    • Further development of the competencies?
    • Senate approval of the competencies?
    • Operation of a competency curriculum approval system?
    • Monitoring of the assessment process?