

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.

Notable Survey Results

Analysis of Open Ended Survey Questions

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

Notable Survey Results

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.

Notable Survey Results

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?