



Pittsburg State University

OFFICE OF THE PROVOST

September 7, 2012

Dr. Howard W. Smith
Dean
College of Education
Pittsburg State University

Dear Howard:

Over the past three years, Pittsburg State University has invested considerable human and fiscal resources to develop assessment strategies for the Core of General Education. Now it is time to undertake the same for the remainder of General Education. Much of this process was framed by our participation in the Higher Learning Commission's Assessment Academy. As the Assessment Academy Team's work comes to a close, they have provided significant insights and recommendations for our continued efforts. These logically provide a framework for further discussions and strategic directions.

As a first next step, a General Education Work Group was appointed during the summer of 2012 to accomplish several tasks related to assessment in this area. One task was to "Establish the composition and charge for a Critical Thinking Task Force on the assessment of the University's General Education Goal #2: 'Students should be able to think critically.'" Based on the work of this group, a Critical Thinking Task Force is being established to begin its work immediately with completion to occur within the 2013 Academic Year. A final report should be submitted to the Provost before or on March 15, 2013.

The charge of the Critical Thinking Task Force is to examine the existing implementation of General Education Goal #2, specifically the nature of critical thinking instruction in the general education curriculum, and to propose an effective assessment process for documenting progress toward, and improving attainment of, Goal #2. Specific elements of the charge are:

1. Develop a working definition of critical thinking for general education at PSU.
2. Investigate critical thinking instruction models at other institutions.
3. Develop a critical thinking instructional model for PSU incorporating the needs of general education.
4. Consult with the Assessment Committee and Faculty Senate General Education Committee to develop an appropriate assessment plan to support the instructional model.
5. Ensure recommendations of the task force are consistent with current developments in the assessment of critical thinking as a learner outcome defined by the Kansas Board of Regents. (*Added note: assessment data regarding this learner outcome must be submitted for the first time in FY2014.*)
6. Make necessary recommendations to the Faculty Senate General Education Committee for the developed assessment plan.

Dr. Howard W. Smith
September 7, 2012
Page 2

I am asking that you provide leadership for this important task force. Other membership is as follows:

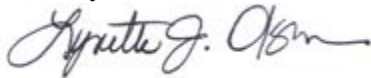
Department Chairs Dr. Celia Patterson, English (also served on Writing Task Force)
 Mr. Tim Thomas, Engineering Technology

Faculty Ms. Mary Polfer, College of Business
 Dr. Julie Allison, College of Education
 Dr. Brian Sandford, College of Technology
 Dr. Ananda Jayawardhana, College of Arts & Sciences
 Dr. James McBain, College of Arts & Sciences

Ex-Officio Dr. Patricia Lindley, Director of Assessment
 Dr. Barbara McClaskey, Faculty Senate General Education Committee
 Mr. Earl Lee, Library Services

Please confirm to Trish Peak at ppeak@pittstate.edu your willingness to serve as chair for this very important task force. We need to hear from you on or before Tuesday, September 11, 2012. Thank you!

Sincerely,



Lynette J. Olson, PhD
Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs

cc: Dr. Peter Chung, Faculty Senate President