

General Education Council

2014-2015 Academic Year

Agenda for the meeting on Tuesday, October 28, 2014, in ELL 205 at 3:30 P.M.

1. Call to order
2. Approve the Minutes of the previous meeting on September 23, 2014 (Attachment A)
3. Old Business
 - a. Feedback from Middle States Commission of Higher Education about Shippensburg University's 2014 Self Study (Attachment B)
 - b. Report from our GEC rep at the UCC (Dr. Kate Shirk)
 - c. Reports from the Standing Committees
 - i. Budget (Dr. Joseph Beck)
 - ii. Assessment (Dr. Dudley Girard)
 - iii. Program (Dr. Sherri Bergsten, Attachment C)
4. New Business
 - a. A proposal from the APSCUF Gender Issues and Social Justice committee (Attachments D and E)
5. Announcements
6. Adjourn

MINUTES

General Education Council, 3:30 PM September 23, 2014, ELL 205

- I. Meeting was called to order by Dr. Scott Drzyzga at 3:35 pm in ELL 205. Attendance at the meeting included: M. Moilanen, S. Bergsten, C. Sipes, D. Girard, B. Finucane, L. Cella, S. Drzyzga, A. Feeney, D. Godshalk, W. Kingsley, L. Bryant, R. Lesman, M. Lucia, K. Shirk, C. Botteron, A. Olerjarski, A. Seibert, K. Lorenz, A. James, F. Liu, J. Beck, B. Wentz, B. Henson, B. Meyer, J. Clements, H. Liu, K. Johnson, K. Moll, J. Fowler, and C. Brackin.
- II. Dr. Drzyzga wanted to start the meeting by extending a wonderful thanks to Dr. Godshalk for his service and leadership this past year.
- III. Dr. Clement motioned, seconded by Dr. Moll, to approve the April 22, 2014 minutes. All were in favor and the motion passed unanimously.
- IV. Report from UCC-Dr. Shirk attended the Sept 2nd meeting. UCC did not review any new proposals, but a number of courses that were approved last spring had been forwarded and approved by the president. A French course that is offered as a face-to-face course at Shippensburg University is offered through distance education to other sister institutions. This raises questions about policies, and members of University Forum requested that this issue be brought forward to the Academic Outreach Committee and the Academic Policies and Standards Subcommittee of the UCC.
- V. Reports from Standing Committees-
 - a. Budget-Dr. Drzyzga reported that the budget committee is operating on \$19,770.50. The Provost rolled over funds from last year and gave us full funding again this year. Such funds provide fantastic opportunities to get word out to faculty and generate innovative activities. One proposal had been submitted in August. It clearly and diligently followed all the procedures and stipulations required for funding, however due to the late date of the first GEC meeting and the fact that standing committee members have not been set yet, a discussion arose to have the entire GEC review proposal and support the grant. Dr. Godshalk addressed concerns about forgoing the standard procedures. It was stressed that this will not to set a precedent but to accommodate a strong proposal with a fast approaching date. Dr. Clements motioned, seconded by Dr. Seibert to suspend normal procedures. All were in favor and the motion carried. Dr. Moll motioned to approve the proposal, seconded by Dr. James, all were in favor and the motion carried.
 - b. Assessment-Dr. Girard reported that the committee had met during the summer to review the standardized testing that was conducted last spring to graduating seniors. It represents one point in time so no meaningful comparisons can be made yet, but it will ideally work toward a long term assessment. Several departments had sent their assessment plans to the committee last spring and many departments filled out an accompanying survey. The goal is to accommodate departments that already are doing assessment and match them to general education. A discussion arose as to the wording in the Middle States review. In summary they don't like our current assessment state but like the direction we are headed.
 - c. Program-Dr. Drzyzga reported on the status of the program revision. Last spring, many workload-related questions were asked but the committee had insufficient data to provide answers. Over the

summer Dr. Drzyzga worked with department chairs and the registrar's office to account for every class and every student being supported. He asked people to take the matrix to their department chairs to make sure the course data are accurate and verify the numbers are correct. If so, the program can begin to move forward and estimate how many students and faculty might be impacted by revisions.

- d. Dr. Drzyzga reviewed the preliminary report from Middle States that emphasizes reorganization with the intention to support academic values on campus and student learning, and that the University has to carefully integrate assessment with the program to get reliable, consistent data. A few unanswered questions were generated on who provided Middle States with information and the importance that our revision of the program is definitely still in draft form. Clearly a few mistakes in the report exist and there is some uncertainty as to the status and interpretation.

VI. Dr. Drzyzga met with co-chair Dr. Mike to organize standing committees. The Assessment Committee has L. Bryant, J. Fowler, D. Girard, K. Johnson, H. Liu, S. Morin, and K. Shirk assigned to it. Dr. Girard was asked to organize the first meeting. The Budget Committee has assigned J. Beck, R. Lesman, F. Liu, M. Moilanen, and A. Seibert assigned to it. Dr. Seibert was asked to organize the first meeting. The Program committee must include representatives from different colleges, and the members include D. Godshalk, P. Peet, C. Botteron, K. Lorenz, S. Bergsten, A. Predecki, B. Wentz, and J. Clements. Dr. Drzyzga will organize the first meeting. The Entry-Year Experience (EYE) committee has E. Galioto, W. Kingsley, M. Lucia, K. Moll, and C. Sipes assigned to it. Dr. Moll was asked to organize the first meeting.

VII. Finally just a few announcements, the approved budget will allow a general education program on campus occur this week, and in January a 190 course will take students to Curacao, and special recognition to Sherri Bergsten and Tim Maret for receiving the Provost's Extraordinary Service award. All these activities are part of the exciting news from general education.

VIII. Dr. Botteron motioned, seconded by Dr. Shirk, to adjourn. The meeting concluded at 4:25 pm.

Minutes respectfully submitted by Alison E. Feeney

CHARACTERISTICS of EXCELLENCE

in HIGHER EDUCATION

REQUIREMENTS OF AFFILIATION AND STANDARDS FOR ACCREDITATION



Middle States Commission on Higher Education

Standard 12

General Education

The institution's curricula are designed so that students acquire and demonstrate college-level proficiency in general education and essential skills, including at least oral and written communication, scientific and quantitative reasoning, critical analysis and reasoning, and technological competency.

Context

General education is an important component of all undergraduate and some graduate higher education degree programs. All undergraduate and those graduate programs that include a general education component are expected to meet this standard and the related Fundamental Elements. Graduate programs that do not include general education components should ensure that students at admission have appropriate general education skills.

Institutions should identify and provide a recognizable core of general education that:

- expresses the educational philosophy of the institution for each undergraduate degree program or cluster of degree programs;
- incorporates essential knowledge, cognitive abilities, and an understanding of values and ethics;
- enhances students' intellectual growth; and
- draws students into new areas of intellectual experience, expanding their cultural and global awareness and sensitivity, and preparing them to make enlightened judgments outside as well as within their academic specialty.

What are presented here as general education skills are not necessarily distinct and apart from each other. There is an inherent relationship among these skills. This interrelatedness is evident in the concept of "information literacy," which embraces all of the specific general education skills (see Context, Standard 11).

Consistent with institutional practices, general education degree requirements may be fulfilled through courses completed at the institution, transfer credits, competencies demonstrated in ways determined by the institution, or admission prerequisites.

A general education program — developed, owned, and reviewed by the institution's faculty — should be purposeful, coherent, engaging, and rigorous. General education skills may be taught or developed as part of courses in the major, in separate courses, or through a decentralized distribution. However, the

skills and knowledge derived from general education and the major should be integrated because general education and study in depth, together, comprise a quality undergraduate education.

Institutions offering the associate and baccalaureate degrees will strike an appropriate balance between specialized and more general knowledge. The institution's ability to demonstrate that its students are able to integrate and apply in different contexts the core knowledge and skills learned in their course work is a critical component of successful undergraduate educational programs.

General education offerings should reflect the particular programs and mission of the institution. However, general education courses should not focus narrowly on those skills, techniques, and procedures specific to a particular occupation or profession. The content of general education within specialized degree programs should be comparable, though not necessarily identical, to traditional academic offerings at the collegiate level or above. Programs in postsecondary vocational technical institutions should evidence recognition of the relationship between broad education and the acquisition of techniques and skills. In professional degree programs beyond the baccalaureate, courses in ethics, humanities, and public policy may be particularly relevant.

Fundamental Elements of General Education

An accredited institution offering undergraduate degrees and some graduate institutions are expected to possess or demonstrate the following attributes or activities:

- a program of general education of sufficient scope to enhance students' intellectual growth, and equivalent to at least 15 semester hours for associate degree programs and 30 semester hours for baccalaureate programs; (An institution also may demonstrate how an alternative approach fulfills the intent of this fundamental element.)
- a program of general education where the skills and abilities developed in general education are applied in the major or concentration;
- consistent with institutional mission, a program of general education that incorporates study of values, ethics, and diverse perspectives;
- institutional requirements assuring that, upon degree completion, students are proficient in oral and written communication, scientific and quantitative reasoning, and technological competency appropriate to the discipline;
- general education requirements clearly and accurately described in official publications of the institution; and
- assessment of general education outcomes within the institution's overall plan for assessing student learning, and evidence that such assessment results are utilized for curricular improvement.

Institutions and evaluators must consider the totality that is created by the fundamental elements and any other relevant institutional information or analysis. Fundamental elements and contextual statements should not be applied separately as checklists. Where an institution does not possess or demonstrate evidence of a particular Fundamental Element, the institution may demonstrate through alternative information and analysis that it meets the standard.

Optional Analysis and Evidence

In addition to the evidence inherent within or necessary to document the fundamental elements above, the following, although not required, may facilitate the institution's own analysis relative to this accreditation standard:

- evidence of institutional statements of the rationale supporting the curriculum and the benefits of a quality general education program; and evidence that this rationale has been communicated to students, parents, advisors, employers, and other constituencies;
- analysis of statements of institutional mission, goals, or objectives relative to core knowledge and skills (general education);
- analysis of statements of individual curricular or degree program goals/objectives relative to core knowledge and skills (general education);
- evidence of articulated expectations of student learning outcomes for written communication, speech communication, quantitative reasoning, scientific reasoning, information literacy, technological competence, and critical analysis and reasoning for all undergraduate degree students;
- evidence of student understanding of the key learning outcomes of each general education requirement;
- evidence of institutional support for the general education program (administrative structure, budget, faculty incentives); or
- evidence of completed analytical review of the general education curriculum that addresses topics such as:
 - appropriateness to institutional mission;
 - relevance to student goals, interests and aspirations;
 - provision of adequate time on task and information to learn and to practice the knowledge, skills and abilities imparted by each requirement within the program;
 - provision of adequate balance between theory and practice, given curricular and institutional goals;
 - opportunity for active student engagement in the learning undertaken;

- o opportunity for collaborative learning and to work with others in the completion of learning tasks; or
- o provision of an atmosphere of inquiry where diverse backgrounds and perspectives are valued.

Standard 14

Assessment of Student Learning

Assessment of student learning demonstrates that, at graduation, or other appropriate points, the institution's students have knowledge, skills, and competencies consistent with institutional and appropriate higher education goals.

Context

Assessment of student learning may be characterized as the third element of a four-step teaching-learning-assessment cycle:

1. Developing clearly articulated written statements, expressed in observable terms, of key learning outcomes; the knowledge, skills, and competencies that students are expected to exhibit upon successful completion of a course, academic program, co-curricular program, general education requirement, or other specific set of experiences, as discussed under Standard 11 (Educational Offerings);
2. Designing courses, programs, and experiences that provide intentional opportunities for students to achieve those learning outcomes, again as discussed under Standard 11;
3. Assessing student achievement of those key learning outcomes; and
4. Using the results of those assessments to improve teaching and learning.

This standard on assessment of student learning builds upon Standards 11 (Educational Offerings), 12 (General Education), and 13 (Related Educational Offerings), each of which includes assessment of student learning among its fundamental elements. This standard ties together those assessments into an integrated whole to answer the question, "Are our students learning what we want them to learn?" Self-studies can thus document compliance with Standard 14 by summarizing the assessments of Standards 11 through 13 into conclusions about overall achievement of the institution's key student learning outcomes.

Because student learning is at the heart of the mission of most institutions of higher education, the assessment of student learning is an essential component of the assessment of institutional effectiveness (see Standard 7: Institutional Assessment), which additionally monitors the environment provided for teaching and learning and the achievement of other aspects of the institution's mission, vision, and strategic goals and plans.

The fundamental question asked in the accreditation process is, "Is the institution fulfilling its mission and achieving its goals?" This is precisely the question that assessment is designed to answer, making assessment essential to the accreditation process. Assessment processes help to ensure the following:

- Institutional and program-level goals are clear to the public, students, faculty, and staff;
- Institutional programs and resources are organized and coordinated to achieve institutional and program-level goals;
- The institution is providing academic opportunities of quality;
- The institution is indeed achieving its mission and goals; and
- Assessment results help the institution to improve student learning and otherwise advance the institution.

Assessment is not an event but a process that is an integral part of the life of the institution, and an institution should be able to provide evidence that the assessment of student learning outcomes and use of results is an ongoing institutional activity. While some of the impact of an institution on its students may not be easily or immediately measured—some institutions, for example, aim for students to develop lifelong habits that may not be fully developed for many years—the overall assessment of student learning is expected whatever the nature of the institution, its mission, the types of programs it offers, or the manner in which its educational programs are delivered and student learning facilitated.

While the Commission expects institutions to assess student learning, it does not prescribe a specific approach or methodology. The institution is responsible for determining its expected learning outcomes and strategies for achieving them at each level (institutional, program, and course), assessment approaches and methodologies, sequence, and time frame. These may vary, based on the mission, goals, organization, and resources of the institution. Whatever the approach, effective assessment processes are useful, cost-effective, reasonably accurate and truthful, carefully planned, and organized, systematic, and sustained.

Useful assessment processes help faculty and staff make appropriate decisions about improving programs and services, developing goals and plans, and making resource allocations. To assist with interpretation and use of assessment results, assessment measures and indicators have defined minimally acceptable performance targets. Because institutions, their students, and their environments are continually evolving, effective assessments cannot be static; they must be reviewed periodically and adapted in order to remain useful.

Cost-effective assessment processes are designed so that their value is in proportion to the time and resources devoted to them. To this end, institutions can begin by considering assessment measures already in place, including direct evidence such as capstone projects, field experience evaluations, and performance on licensure examinations and indirect evidence such as retention and graduation rates and alumni surveys. New or refined measures can then be added for those learning outcomes for which direct evidence of student learning is not already available, concentrating on

the most important institutional and program-level learning outcomes. Effective assessments are simple rather than elaborate and may focus on just a few key goals in each program, unit, and curriculum.

Reasonably-accurate and truthful assessment processes yield results that can be used with confidence to make appropriate decisions. Such assessment processes have the following characteristics:

- ✦ Because there is no one perfectly accurate assessment tool or strategy, institutions should use multiple kinds of measures to assess goal achievement. Assessments may be quantitative and/or qualitative and developed locally or by an external organization.
- ✦ Assessment tools and strategies should be developed with care; they should not be not merely anecdotal information nor collections of information that happen to be on hand.
- ✦ Student learning assessment processes should yield direct—clear, visible, and convincing—evidence of student learning. Tangible examples of student learning, such as completed tests, assignments, projects, portfolios, licensure examinations, and field experience evaluations, are direct evidence of student learning. Indirect evidence, including retention, graduation, and placement rates and surveys of students and alumni, can be vital to understanding the teaching-learning process and student success (or lack thereof), but such information alone is insufficient evidence of student learning unless accompanied by direct evidence. Grades alone are indirect evidence, as a skeptic might claim that high grades are solely the result of lax standards. But the assignments and evaluations that form the basis for grades can be direct evidence if they are accompanied by clear evaluation criteria that have a demonstrable relationship to key learning goals.

Planned assessment processes that clearly and purposefully correspond to learning outcomes that they are intended to assess promote attention to those goals and ensure that disappointing outcomes are appropriately addressed.

Organized, systematized, and sustained assessment processes are ongoing, not once-and-done. There should be clear interrelationships among institutional goals, program- and unit-level goals, and course-level goals. Assessments should clearly relate to important goals, and improvements should clearly stem from assessment results.

As noted earlier, because student learning is a fundamental component of the mission of most institutions of higher education, the assessment of student learning is an essential component of the assessment of institutional effectiveness. An institution may therefore create institutional effectiveness documentation that includes a component on assessing student learning (see Standard 14: Assessment of Student Learning), or it may create a bridge between two separate sets of documentation, one for the assessment of student learning and one for other aspects of institutional effectiveness.

The improvement of overall educational quality and the enhancement of effective teaching and learning is most likely to occur when faculty and administrators work together to implement a sound, institution-wide program of assessment. Because the faculty guide decisions about curriculum and pedagogy, the effective assessment of student learning is similarly guided by the faculty and supported by the administration.

A commitment to assessment of student learning requires a parallel commitment to ensuring its use. Assessment information, derived in a manner appropriate to the institution and its desired academic outcomes, should be available to and used by those who develop and carry out strategies that will improve teaching and learning.

Assessment results should also be used to evaluate the assessment process itself, leading to modifications that improve its relevance and effectiveness.

Fundamental Elements of Assessment of Student Learning

An accredited institution is expected to possess or demonstrate the following attributes or activities.

- clearly articulated statements of expected student learning outcomes (see Standard II: Educational Offerings), at all levels (institution, degree/program, course) and for all programs that aim to foster student learning and development, that are:
 - appropriately integrated with one another;
 - consonant with the institution's mission; and
 - consonant with the standards of higher education and of the relevant disciplines;
- a documented, organized, and sustained assessment process to evaluate and improve student learning that meets the following criteria:
 - systematic, sustained, and thorough use of multiple qualitative and/or quantitative measures that:
 - maximize the use of existing data and information;
 - clearly and purposefully relate to the goals they are assessing;
 - are of sufficient quality that results can be used with confidence to inform decisions; and
 - include direct evidence of student learning;
 - support and collaboration of faculty and administration in assessing student learning and responding to assessment results;
 - clear, realistic guidelines and timetable, supported by appropriate investment of institutional resources;
 - sufficient simplicity, practicality, detail, and ownership to be sustainable; and

- periodic evaluation of the effectiveness and comprehensiveness of the institution's student learning assessment processes;
- assessment results that provide sufficient, convincing evidence that students are achieving key institutional and program learning outcomes;
- evidence that student learning assessment information is shared and discussed with appropriate constituents and is used to improve teaching and learning; and
- documented use of student learning assessment information as part of institutional assessment.

Institutions and evaluators must consider the totality that is created by the fundamental elements and any other relevant institutional information or analysis. Fundamental elements and contextual statements should not be applied separately as checklists. Where an institution does not possess or demonstrate evidence of a particular Fundamental Element, the institution may demonstrate through alternative information and analysis that it meets the standard.

Optional Analysis and Evidence

In addition to the evidence inherent within or necessary to document the fundamental elements above, the following, although not required, may facilitate the institution's own analysis relative to this accreditation standard:

- analysis of institutional support for student learning assessment efforts, including:
 - written statements of expectations for student learning assessment work;
 - policies and governance structures to support student learning assessment;
 - administrative, technical, and financial support for student learning assessment activities and for implementing changes resulting from assessment; and
 - professional development opportunities and resources for faculty to learn how to assess student learning, how to improve their curricula, and how to improve their teaching;
- analysis of the clarity and appropriateness of standards for determining whether key learning outcomes have been achieved;
- evidence of workable, regularized, collaborative institutional processes and protocols for ensuring the dissemination, analysis, discussion, and use of assessment results among all relevant constituents within a reasonable schedule;

- analysis of the use of student learning assessment findings to:
 - assist students in improving their learning;
 - improve pedagogies, curricula and instructional activities;
 - review and revise academic programs and support services;
 - plan, conduct, and support professional development activities;
 - assist in planning and budgeting for the provision of academic programs and services;
 - support other institutional assessment efforts (see Standard 7: Institutional Assessment) and decisions about strategic goals, plans, and resource allocation; and
 - inform appropriate constituents about the institution and its programs;
- analysis of evidence that improvements in teaching, curricula, and support made in response to assessment results have had the desired effect in improving teaching, learning, and the success of other activities;
- analysis of the institutional culture for assessing student learning, including:
 - the views of faculty and institutional leaders on assessment;
 - faculty members' understanding of their roles in assessing student learning;
 - the quality and usefulness of institutional support for student learning assessment efforts;
 - campus-wide efforts to encourage, recognize, and value efforts to assess student learning and to improve curricula and teaching;
 - evidence of collaboration in the development of statements of expected student learning and assessment strategies;
- evidence that information appropriate to the review of student retention, persistence, and attrition, is used to reflect whether these are consistent with student and institutional expectations [also included in Standard 8 Optional Analyses]
- evidence of the utilization of attrition information to ascertain characteristics of students who withdraw prior to attaining their educational objectives and, as appropriate, implementation of strategies to improve retention [also included under Optional Analyses in Standard 8];
- analysis of teaching evaluations, including identification of good practices; or
- analysis of course, department or school reports on classroom assessment practices and their outcomes, including grading approaches and consistency.

Minutes

Program Committee of the General Education Council, 9/30/14, 3:30 pm, OM 203B

I. Meeting was called to order by Dr. Scott Drzyzga, Faculty Co-chair of the General Education Council. The meeting was attended by Scott Drzyzga, Allison Predecki, Karl Lorenz, Alice James, Brian Wentz, Jennifer Clements, Sherri Bergsten, Paris Peet and David Godshalk.

II. As past chair of the GEC Program Committee, Dr. Drzyzga introduced the new members to the work of the committee by presenting the current GEC timeline which outlines the past activities of the GEC and the history of the current General Education program. He also emphasized that we are one of the few PASSHE schools that have not revised their general education programs recently. Dr. Drzyzga also expressed that a new general education program should be easily assessable in a meaningful way and the goals and structure should be easily communicated to students and the public. Dr. Drzyzga also suggested that the committee should work closely with the GEC Assessment Committee in the continuing development of a new general education program.

III. Dr. Drzyzga presented the Enrollment and Workload Summary Report that he compiled over the summer. This report should enable the committee to determine which courses would be affected most by changes to the general education curriculum. The committee would like to gather feedback from departments through the department GEC representatives concerning the accuracy of the data presented in this report.

IV. Dr. Drzyzga reminded the committee about the PASSHE policy revisions for majors and directed general education courses that go into effect August 2015. The committee should work with departments to identify majors that will be affected by the change in policy.

V. Sherri Bergsten was nominated and unanimously elected the chair of the GEC Program Committee. Allison Predecki was nominated and unanimously elected the secretary.

V. The next Program Committee meeting will be on 10/21/14 starting at 3:40 pm. The committee will meet on the 1st and 3rd Tuesdays of each month.

VI. The meeting was adjourned at 4:30 pm.

Minutes submitted by Allison Predecki

Minutes approved on October 21, 2014

Drzyzga, Scott

From: Knight, Misty
Sent: Monday, October 20, 2014 10:08 AM
To: Drzyzga, Scott
Subject: Syllabi Statement

Scott,

The APSCUF Executive Committee and the APSCUF Gender Issues and Social Justice (GISJ) committee enthusiastically support the endorsement of a recommended syllabi statement for all faculty in an attempt to demonstrate our commitment to a safe learning environment. The statement has been drafted in conjunction with support from the Women's Center and Women and Gender Studies. Further, the statement will be presented at the next meeting of Rep Council. The GISJ committee would also like to have the support of the Gen Ed Committee because we think that this statement will be particularly important to place on syllabi for courses in the general education curriculum. We will be encouraging all faculty to place this statement on their syllabi, but we believe that gen ed courses are an important starting place. To that end, we'd like for your committee to discuss this and reply with feedback.

The statement drafted by Shippensburg University GISJ follows:

No one on this campus has the right to threaten you or make you feel intimidated in any way. More specifically, unwanted advances, harassment, aggressive or violent behavior, and sexual assault will not be tolerated. A comprehensive list of reporting and treatment options, including confidential resources, can be found at www.ship.edu/no_more/.

For further information on why such a statement is urgently needed, please take a moment to read the following article from The Chronicle of Higher Education (<http://chronicle.com/blogs/conversation/2014/09/03/how-syllabi-can-help-combat-sexual-assault/>).

If you have questions or further concerns, please let me know.

Regards,
Misty

Misty L. Knight, Ph.D.
(717) 477-1767
Dauphin Humanities Center (DHC) 301
Department of Human Communication Studies
APSCUF Gender Issues and Social Justice (GISJ) Committee Chair
Shippensburg University
1871 Old Main Drive
Shippensburg, PA 17257

THE CHRONICLE OF HIGHER EDUCATION



The Conversation

Opinion and ideas.

September 3, 2014 by Nadia Dawisha and Karen Dawisha

How Syllabi Can Help Combat Sexual Assault

While we deal with students primarily in the classroom, we are not insensitive to their larger struggles. As a new academic year approaches, one scourge in particular stands out: the epidemic of sexual violence on campus. Is there anything professors can do to complement the work done by counseling centers? There is—and it involves adding only one paragraph to your syllabi.

The [campus sexual-assault bill](http://www.nytimes.com/2014/08/02/upshot/campus-sexual-assault-bill-relies-on-public-shaming.html?_r=1&abt=0002&abg=0) (http://www.nytimes.com/2014/08/02/upshot/campus-sexual-assault-bill-relies-on-public-shaming.html?_r=1&abt=0002&abg=0) this past summer, plus the many [media exposés](http://www.nytimes.com/2014/07/13/us/how-one-college-handled-a-sexual-assault-complaint.html) (<http://www.nytimes.com/2014/07/13/us/how-one-college-handled-a-sexual-assault-complaint.html>) about the campus rape crisis, have raised awareness of Title IX. [Title IX mandates](http://www.usatoday.com/story/opinion/2014/05/06/sexual-assault-colleges-universities-title-ix-editorials-debates/8786319/) (<http://www.usatoday.com/story/opinion/2014/05/06/sexual-assault-colleges-universities-title-ix-editorials-debates/8786319/>) that colleges receiving federal funding provide gender equity, not just in sports, but in all areas of campus life, meaning that all students should be able to study in an atmosphere free of harassment, sexual violence, and gender discrimination.

By taking the simple measures of incorporating Title IX language into syllabi and giving students the names and numbers of the primary campus resources, we as educators can do our part to provide support for victims and help end the epidemic of campus sexual violence.

Consider the example of Laura Dunn.

[Dunn](http://www.npr.org/templates/story/story.php?storyId=124001493) (<http://www.npr.org/templates/story/story.php?storyId=124001493>) was just a freshman at the University of Wisconsin when her life changed forever. The dedicated student-athlete was out drinking with new friends from her crew team when two of her male team members offered

to take her to another party. Instead, she says, they drove her to their place and took turns sexually assaulting her as she drifted in and out of consciousness, begging them to stop.

Laura's story is not unusual. Sexual violence has been labeled by the Centers for Disease Control as a major public-health problem (http://www.cdc.gov/violenceprevention/nisvs/2010_report.html), affecting approximately one-fifth of American women. The percentages are staggering for younger women; it is estimated that between 20 to 25 percent (<http://www.businessweek.com/articles/2014-05-29/glenn-becks-man-in-a-blonde-wig-fails-to-debunk-rape-statistics#p1>) will be the victims of a completed or attempted rape during their college careers alone. College men are not immune either; 6 percent will be victims of some form of sexual assault during their college tenure. That said, sexual violence remains a gendered crime, with most victims women and most perpetrators men.

According to a 2007 report, first-year students like Laura are especially susceptible, with the first three months of the freshman year (<https://www.ncjrs.gov/pdffiles1/nij/grants/221153.pdf>) the most recognized time for sexual assaults. Not wanting to accept the fact that she had been raped and not knowing that she had the right to report, Dunn, like so many survivors (<http://chronicle.com/article/For-a-Victim-of-Rape-Silence/126899/>), stayed silent. For over a year she told no one, while she fought to focus on her schoolwork. Her grades dropped, she lost weight, she struggled with nightmares, and she broke up with her boyfriend, whom she never told about her attack.

But then things changed. During a summer philosophy class she was finally given the tools to take back control over her life. While discussing how rape is used as a weapon of war, the professor stopped the class to mention that sexual assault is also prevalent on college campuses, and that the dean of students was required by Title IX to handle assault cases. As soon as class was over, Laura went to the dean of students and reported, launching a two-year process that would prove stressful but would lead to her decade of work in survivor advocacy.

Language that we have incorporated into our own syllabi could easily be modified to suit other campus situations:

Title IX makes it clear that violence and harassment based on sex and gender is a Civil Rights offense subject to the same kinds of accountability and the same kinds of support applied to offenses against other protected categories such as race, national origin, etc. If you or someone you know has been harassed or assaulted, you can find the appropriate resources here ...

We advise, in addition to including the Title IX coordinator, mental-health coordinator, and campus police, also mentioning a confidential resource. The Campus Sexual Assault Study indicated that when students know they can talk confidentially, they are more likely to report.

A statement in a syllabus might also send a message of accountability to potential perpetrators. In a now-classic study (<http://www.jstor.org/discover/10.2307/3053901?uid=3739840&uid=2129&uid=2&uid=70&uid=4&uid=3739256&sid=21104048535661>), the authors found that the perceived threat of formal sanctions (being dismissed from the university or arrested) had a significant deterrent effect on potential perpetrators of sexual assault. In a 2002 study that utilized self-reporting, the majority of undetected rapists were found to be repeat rapists (<http://www.davidlisak.com/wp-content/uploads/pdf/RepeatRapeinUndetectedRapists.pdf>), and the results of this study were replicated in a subsequent 2009 study of Navy personnel (<http://nchem.org/documents/McWhorterVV2009.pdf>). These studies suggest that many perpetrators continue to offend because they have not been caught and do not think they will ever be caught (http://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstract_id=1829425), or if caught, sanctioned. Depriving them of the culture of silence may limit their actions by increasing their fear of the consequences.

Thus, a statement in a syllabus could send a multipronged message: Survivors have the information needed, and the campus community as a whole is watching and will hold perpetrators accountable for their actions.

Many departments now mandate that syllabi include the university's religious-holiday policy, the code of academic integrity, and contact information for disability support services. Since a quarter of our female students are or will be survivors of sexual violence, we believe that a statement on Title IX is just as important. One simple paragraph could provide your students with the tools they need to come forward and report the violence they have suffered. The more we normalize the conversation, the easier it becomes.

Nadia Dawisha is a Ph.D. candidate in communication studies at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. She is working with activists in the Title IX movement to develop programs and curricula for students on assault and harassment. She writes about gender, sustainability, media, and culture at Listengirlfriends.com and [The Huffington Post](http://TheHuffingtonPost.com).

Karen Dawisha is a professor of political science at Miami University, in Ohio.