

Summary of Fall DQP Conference and Possible Next Steps in Alignment Work

Prepared for Oregon-ized Summit Organizers

A. October 25 Conference

Thirty-two people from 10 community colleges 4 universities attended the DQP conference on October 25, 2013. In the morning, small groups discussed the learning outcomes from four institutions and the AAOT learning outcomes and compared them to the DQP outcomes. Groups were asked to record differences, similarities, gaps, and other observations.

In the afternoon, small groups discussed five different topics related to making change happen in their institutions. These topics included the connection between general education and a student's major, teaching and learning conversations at their institutions, ideas for involving people in conversations about learning outcomes across all fields, connections between associate degree outcomes and junior status at a university, and connecting assessment to the learning outcomes alignment conversation.

At the end of the day, participants were asked to summarize the thoughts of the people at their table in response to the question, "Is there work to do on alignment in Oregon?" They were also asked to articulate a goal for alignment work in Oregon and identify possible first steps or existing work that we should build upon.

B. Some observations and conclusions

At the conference, there was general agreement that alignment of student learning outcomes could be improved amongst the 24 public universities and community colleges. Although the AAOT has been in place for many years, it could work better for students. People in the room appeared committed to this work. There was also general agreement that the DQP is difficult for many people to work with and does not readily align with general education curriculum in Oregon. It would be more helpful to use another framework that more closely relates to how we have our curriculum and outcomes organized at this time. Mapping our outcomes to the DQP is possible. However, we want to use a framework that actually helps us increase alignment, and it doesn't appear that the DQP will do this.

Many participants suggested that we build on work that has already been done or is currently being worked on. Discussions from the DQP Core Team (a group that provides leadership for the DQP in Oregon) have also focused on the need to streamline our work with related efforts. Suggestions include: 1) use the LEAP structure, in particular the intellectual skills, as a possible framework for liberal arts core/ general education alignment discussions in Oregon, 2) look at the WICHE passport work on written communication and quantitative literacy, 3) work in parallel with the multi-state collaborative so that we are aligning outcomes at the same time we are talking about assessment, 4) encourage attendance and participation at the Oregon-ized Summit in January and develop our plan for alignment

based on the plan that comes out of that Summit, 5) revisit the DQP structure when and if it seems appropriate and helpful to our discussions.

C. Next Steps

The next steps for serious work on aligning liberal arts core/general education learning outcomes in Oregon will be greatly influenced by the plan that emerges from the Oregon-ized Summit. The Summit is particularly well positioned to articulate the goals and scope of this alignment work. It is also well positioned to produce a coordinated strategic plan for this work. Based on the input from the DQP conference participants and from the DQP core group, here is the work we see in front of us at this time. For the purposes of the DQP project in Oregon, we expect to:

1. Develop a plan and timeline for faculty meetings to work on alignment of written communication and quantitative literacy outcomes. This concrete focus will build on the WICHE passport work. It will include conversations about assessment, in parallel to the work of the multi-state collaborative.
2. Develop a plan and a timeline for faculty meetings to work on alignment of other learning outcomes. Use the LEAP Intellectual and practical skills for organizing this work. In addition to written communication and quantitative literacy, this framework includes oral communication, critical and creative thinking, inquiry and analysis, information literacy, and team work and problem solving. These categories more closely align with the curricular structure and outcomes in Oregon.
3. Encourage institutions to send representatives to the Oregon-ized Summit with the understanding that we will tie our alignment planning with the plans of that Summit.
4. Student learning outcomes won't have real visibility and meaning to students until they see their assessment results and see their progression through the attainment of these outcomes. Just as a student needs to see their progress through the series of courses that culminate in a degree, they need to see their progress through attainment of learning outcomes. This will require some creative work from Student Services and Registrars to help make this visible to students. It is important that we find ways, early on in the work, to engage people with this expertise.

This work is larger than the DQP project as written by Oregon academic leaders and as funded by Lumina. There are many areas of overlap in the work. We look forward to working collectively to better serve Oregon students.