



Degree Qualifications Profile in Oregon
Year 2 Work Plan Progress Report

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Table of Contents

Summary of Institutional Characteristics

Statement of Year 2 DQP Work Plan Goals and Objectives

Progress to Date

Reflections

Concluding Thoughts

Summary of Institutional Characteristics

Western Oregon University (WOU) is a mid-sized public university located in the Monmouth-Independence area of Oregon's Willamette Valley. First-generation students represent over 50% of the undergraduate enrollment; close to 50% of WOU students are Pell Grant eligible. The university is comprised of two academic colleges -- education; liberal arts and sciences -- and a division of extended programs. Undergraduate enrollment is about 5,400; graduate enrollment accounts for an additional 800 students. Approximately 350 international undergraduate/graduate students attend Western. The instructional faculty is comprised of approximately 200 full-time and 200 part-time faculty. The university supports NCAA Division II athletics.

Statement of Year 2 DQP Work Plan Goals and Objectives

The objective for Year 2 in the DQP initiative was for academic units in the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences to become familiar with the DQP learning outcomes matrix and begin examination of how the DQP learning outcomes align with current academic unit learning outcomes for the various degree programs offered in the College.

Progress to Date

The DQP matrix has been reviewed by all academic units in the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences which has led to substantial rewriting of student learning outcomes statements for the various degree programs offered in the college. Further refinement of learning outcomes will continue over subsequent years as programs move from passive objectives to assessable action-oriented objectives. The same process is now being undertaken with programming associated with the University's general education curriculum.

Reflections

A positive outcome of faculty engagement with the DQP and with AAC&U's LEAP Initiative is that the faculty have invested new effort into substantiating that the learning outcomes they had defined for students in their programs are actually the outcomes that the faculty seek for their majors. While some debate does exist on what level of learning outcome is attained at the associate vs. baccalaureate level, such discussion is healthy in ensuring the 4-year degree paradigms for our various majors are appropriately designed. Further, DQP proficiencies have provided a solid base upon which to target assessment approaches that will yield valid, representative data on our students. An unanticipated benefit of our engagement in the DQP/AAC&U LEAP process was the guidance these initiatives provided regarding proficiency-based learning outcomes. Such outcomes were incorporated in the design of the general education curriculum for the University's first-ever applied baccalaureate degree programs.

Concluding Thoughts

The engagement with DQP has been done cautiously and at different levels of departmental unit activity the past two years. As chief academic officer, I wish to see the adoption of the DQP and AAC&U-LEAP by the faculty to be one of natural alignment of shared goals rather than an external demand upon the faculty's academic self-governance.