

2014-15 Report of the Assessment of the General Education Program

The following report, which details the assessment of UNCG's General Education Program for the 2014-15 academic year, was developed by the General Education Assessment Coordinator in conjunction with the General Education Council.

Information on General Education Program's mission and goals, assessment process, and assessment results from prior academic years may be found on the Office of Assessment and Accreditation's website at <http://assessment.uncg.edu/academic/GenEd/>.

Questions about the assessment of the General Education Program may be directed to David Carlone (david_carlone@uncg.edu), the Chair of the General Education Council, or to Teresa Brumfield (tebrumfi@uncg.edu), the General Education Assessment Coordinator.

Fall 2014 – Spring 2015

In response to the UNC-GA General Education Council's identification of two system-wide General Education competencies—Critical Thinking and Written Communication, UNCG's General Education Council agreed to pilot the AAC&U VALUE rubrics for Critical Thinking, Written Communication, and Information Literacy to determine if they were viable replacements for the currently used three-point proficiency scale (see <http://assessment.uncg.edu/academic/GenEd/>).

The Council decided that 7 to 10 sections each in the following categories/markers would be asked to participate in the fall 2014 pilot:

- GRD would pilot the VALUE Critical Thinking rubric
 - Criteria 1, 2, 3 for GRD student learning outcome (slo) 1, and
 - Criteria 4, 5 for GRD slo2
- GL/GN would pilot the VALUE Information Literacy rubric for GL and GN slo1
- WI would pilot the VALUE Written Communication rubric for the new slo1.

These categories/markers were chosen because they were last assessed in the 2012-13 academic year.

Piloting three VALUE rubrics

In early August, selected GRD, GL/GN, and WI faculty were invited to participate in the piloting of these Council-selected VALUE rubrics. Faculty who agreed to participate were instructed that they would:

- attend an August 26 rubric calibration workshop,
- use one of three VALUE rubrics to score all students' work for a selected assignment in the pilot section(s), and
- provide copies, or make available, student work that was evaluated.

Of the faculty who were invited to participate in the pilot,

- 3 of 10 GL/GN faculty agreed to participate (with 78 enrolled students),
- 6 of 6 GRD faculty agreed to participate (with 297 enrolled students), and
- 4 of 9 WI faculty agreed to participate (with 93 enrolled students).

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Departments represented were Communication Studies, English, Philosophy, and Political Science.

In August 2014, Dr. Ashley Finley, Senior Director of Assessment and Research with the Association of American Colleges and Universities, presented a three-hour VALUE Rubric Calibration Workshop. In the workshop, Dr. Finley walked piloting faculty through a calibration session using the Critical Thinking VALUE rubric to score a piece of student work. She also discussed how the data gathered using the VALUE rubrics could be used to improve student learning in UNCG's General Education Program.

A peer validation workshop was held in January 2015. Peer reviewers also used the three VALUE rubrics in place of the three-point scale to rate samples of student work products. Faculty were grouped by VALUE rubric.

The results from the pilot are presented by VALUE rubric. To make the five performance levels of each VALUE rubric somewhat comparable to the three-point proficiency scale, "> PL-2" approximates "highly proficient", "= PL-2" approximates "proficient", and "< PL-2" approximates "not proficient."

Critical Thinking VALUE Rubric

The Critical Thinking rubric is made up of five criteria (or dimensions) and five performance levels:

Criteria (or dimensions):	Performance Levels:
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• CT01: Explanation of issues• CT02: Evidence (selecting and using information to investigate a point of view or conclusion)• CT03: Influence of context and assumptions• CT04: Student's position (perspective, thesis/hypothesis)• CT05: Conclusions and related outcomes (implications and consequences)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• PL 4: Capstone [highest level]• PL 3: Milestone 2• PL 2: Milestone 1• PL 1: Benchmark• PL 0: Does not meet benchmark (PL 1)• NA: student work is not intended to meet the criterion
http://www.aacu.org/value-rubrics	

Course faculty (CF) participation

Thirteen GRD sections from two departments, representing 286 students, volunteered to participate in the pilot.

In this pilot, GRD course faculty applied the Critical Thinking VALUE rubric, rather than the three-point proficiency scale, to score all students' work for their selected assignment(s).

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Workshop faculty (WF) participation

From the 13 participating GRD sections, 78 sample students' work products were provided for peer reviewers. Six unique pairs of faculty raters scored the sample student work products using the Critical Thinking VALUE rubric (n=156 ratings).

Charts: CF ratings and WF ratings

Chart 1 provides the course faculty (CF) and workshop faculty (WF) ratings for each of the five criterion (CT 01 . . . CT 05).

Chart 1 shows the comparison between course faculty and workshop faculty ratings using the Critical Thinking VALUE rubric.

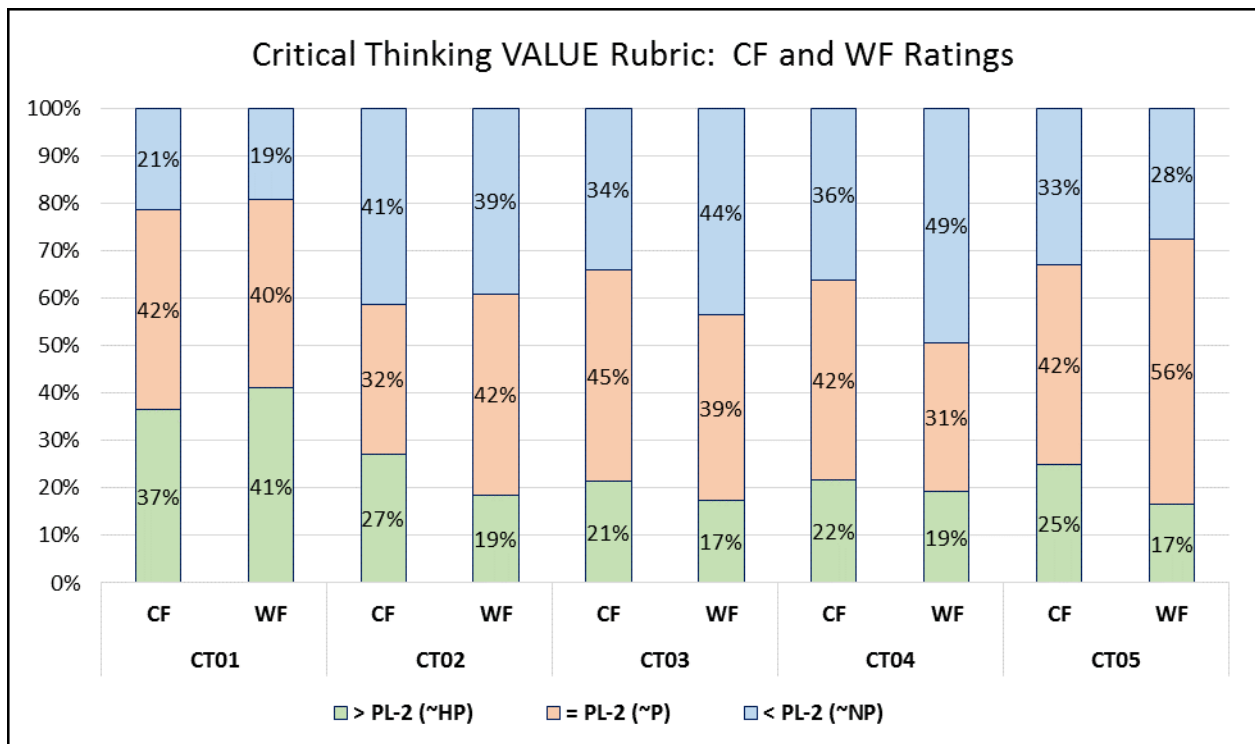


Chart 1. Comparison of course faculty and workshop faculty ratings

Table 1 presents the median (the point in a distribution at which 50% of scores lie below) and mode (the score of greatest frequency in a distribution) of course faculty and workshop faculty ratings. Ratings appear to be consistent between the two faculty groups.

Table 1. Comparison of Median and Mode											
Critical Thinking: 78 SWPs											
		Course Faculty					Workshop Faculty Raters				
Rubric		CT01	CT02	CT03	CT04	CT05	CT01	CT02	CT03	CT04	CT05
CT	Median	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2
CT	Mode	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	1	2

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Information Literacy VALUE Rubric

The Information Literacy rubric is made up of five criteria (or dimensions) and five performance levels:

Criteria (or dimensions):	Performance Levels:
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• IL01: Determine the extent of information needed• IL02: Access the needed information• IL03: Evaluate information and its sources critically• IL04: Use information effectively to accomplish a specific purpose• IL05: Access and use information ethically and legally	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• PL 4: Capstone [highest level]• PL 3: Milestone 2• PL 2: Milestone 1• PL 1: Benchmark• PL 0: Does not meet benchmark (PL 1)• NA: student work is not intended to meet the criterion
http://www.aacu.org/value-rubrics	

Course faculty (CF) participation

Two GL/GN sections from two departments, representing 62 students, volunteered to participate in the pilot.

In this pilot, GL/GN course faculty applied the Information Literacy VALUE rubric, rather than the three-point proficiency scale, to score all students' work for their selected assignment(s).

Workshop faculty (WF) participation

From the two participating GL/GN sections, 11 sample students' work products were provided for one pair of peer reviewers, who also used the Information Literacy rubric to score the sample students' work products (n=22 ratings).

Charts: CF ratings and WF ratings

Chart 2 provides the course faculty (CF) and workshop faculty (WF) ratings for each of the five criterion (IL 01 . . . IL 05).

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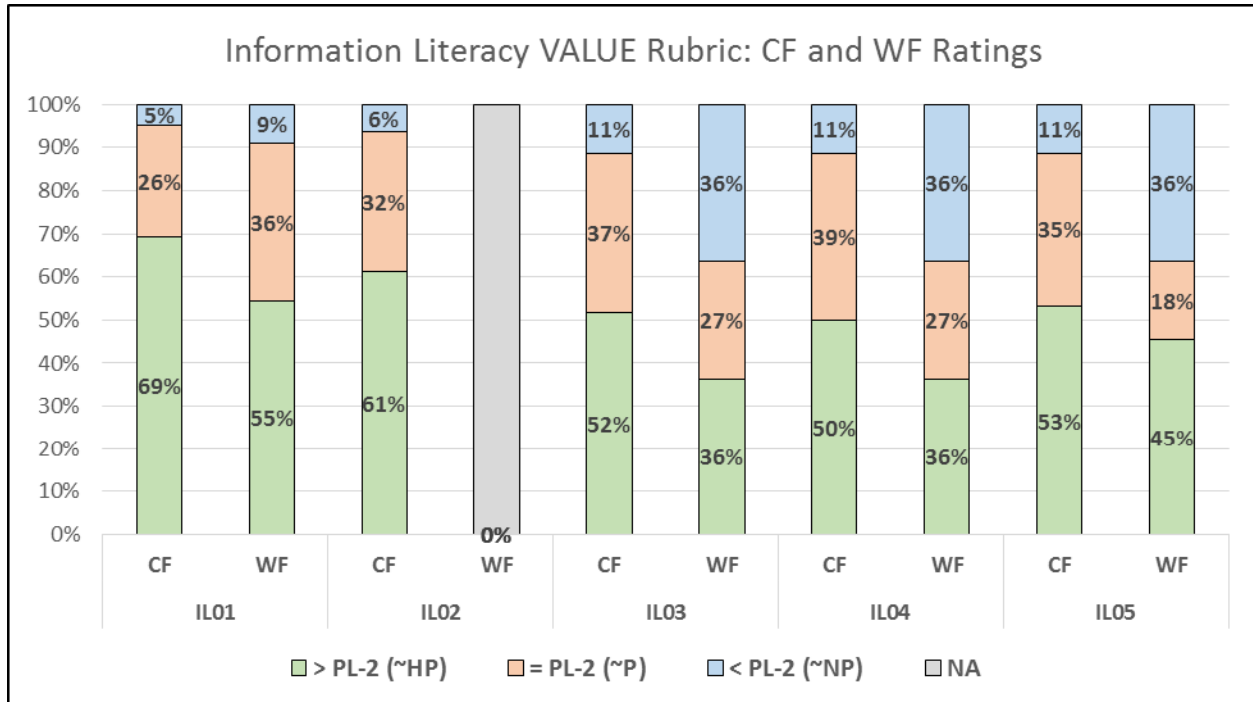


Chart 2. Comparison of course faculty and workshop faculty ratings

Table 2 presents the median (the point in a distribution at which 50% of scores lie below) and mode (the score of greatest frequency in a distribution) of course faculty and workshop faculty ratings. Course faculty scored student work higher on dimensions 2 through 5 than workshop faculty.

Table 2. Comparison of Median and Mode											
Information Literacy: 11 SWPs											
Rubric		Course Faculty					Workshop Faculty Raters				
		Dim1	Dim2	Dim3	Dim4	Dim5	Dim1	Dim2	Dim3	Dim4	Dim5
IL	Median ¹	3	3	3	3	3	3	NA	2	2	2
IL	Mode ²	3	3	3	3	2	3	NA	3	2	3

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Written Communication VALUE Rubric

The Written Communication rubric is made up of five criteria (or dimensions) and five performance levels:

Criteria (or dimensions):	Performance Levels:
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• WC01: Context of, and purpose for, writing• WC02: Content development• WC03: Genre and disciplinary conventions• WC04: Sources and evidence• WC05: Control of syntax and mechanics	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• PL 4: Capstone [highest level]• PL 3: Milestone 2• PL 2: Milestone 1• PL 1: Benchmark• PL 0: Does not meet benchmark (PL 1)• NA: student work is not intended to meet the criterion
http://www.aacu.org/value-rubrics	

Course faculty (CF) participation

Five WI sections from two departments, representing 82 students, volunteered to participate in the pilot.

In this pilot, WI course faculty applied the Written Communication VALUE rubric, rather than the three-point proficiency scale, to score all students' work for their selected assignment(s).

Workshop faculty (WF) participation

From the five participating WI sections, 23 sample students' work products were provided for two unique pairs of peer reviewers, who also used the Written Communication rubric to score the sample students' work products (n= 46 ratings).

Charts: CF ratings and WF ratings

Chart 3 provides the course faculty (CF) and workshop faculty (WF) ratings for each of the five criterion (WC 01 . . . WC 05).

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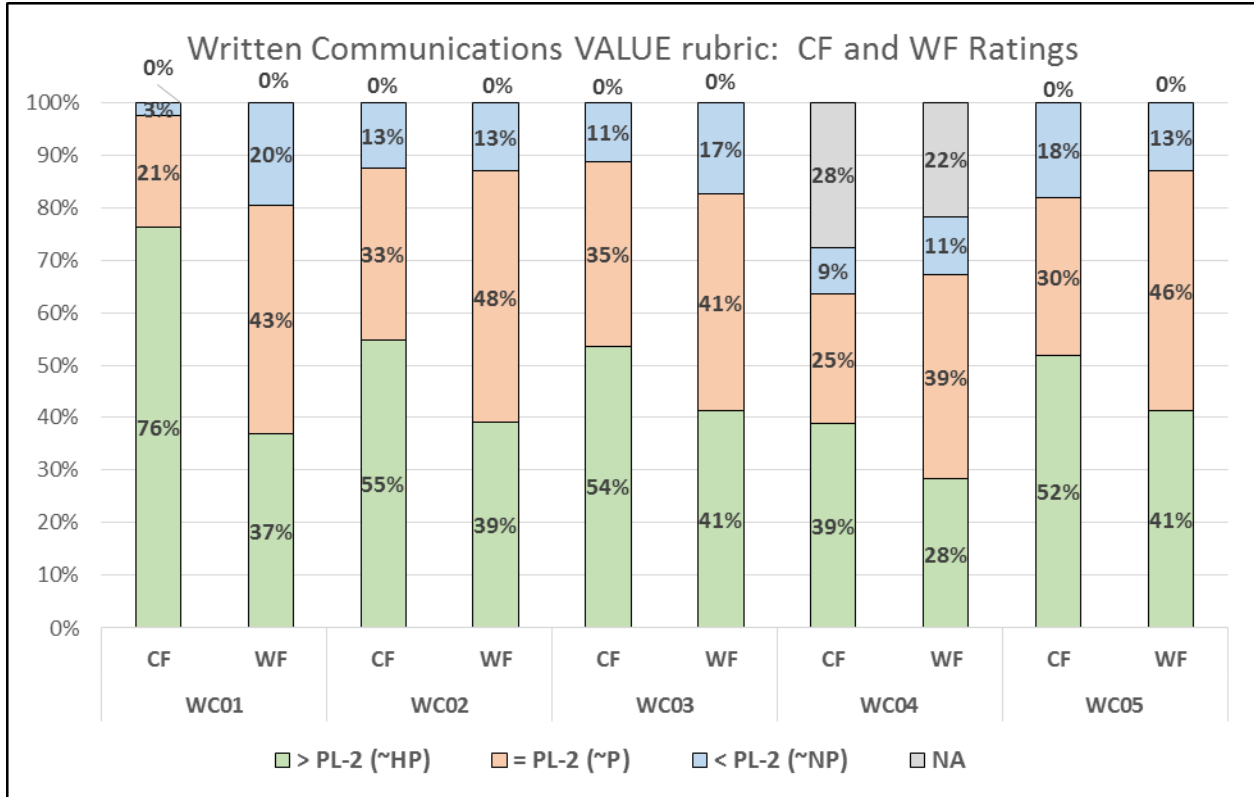


Chart 3. Comparison of course faculty and workshop faculty ratings

Table 3 presents the median (the point in a distribution at which 50% of scores lie below) and mode (the score of greatest frequency in a distribution) of course faculty and workshop faculty ratings. Course faculty scored student work higher on Dimensions (or criteria) 1, 3, and 4 than workshop faculty.

Table 3. Comparison of Median and Mode											
Written Communication: 23 SWPs											
Rubric		Course Faculty					Workshop Faculty Raters				
		Dim1	Dim2	Dim3	Dim4	Dim5	Dim1	Dim2	Dim3	Dim4	Dim5
WC	Median	3	2	3	3	2	2	2	2	2	2
WC	Mode	3	2	3	3	2	2	2	2	2	2

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Faculty Comments

Piloting course faculty commented on:

- the challenges of using the VALUE rubrics:
 - It took a burdensome amount of time to score students' work products using the rubric (too complex). Maybe other rubrics (e.g., Watson & Glaser) would be more effective/efficient.
 - Even though assignments evoked critical thinking, the VALUE rubric may not have shown an accurate representation of these skills.
 - It was difficult to separate grades given to students versus competencies.
- whether the results were reflective of student learning in the General Education Program:
 - The product and the instructor rubric were a better representation; the VALUE rubric did not yield results that were accurately reflective of student learning.
 - The rubric had good points but did not work for all assignments.
 - Currently, courses are designed around the GEC objectives, which do not align directly with competencies.
- how the information gained from using the VALUE rubric would improve student learning in their General Education course:
 - It helps instructors to think about intentionality when designing course assignments.
 - It illuminated potential gaps in the course and room for improvement.
 - It provided an opportunity to make sure assignments had a critical thinking component to them.

Workshop faculty commented on:

- what they liked about using the VALUE rubric to rate student work products:
 - It eliminated the ambiguity of using the three-point proficiency scale.
 - The rubric provided a clear delineation of expectations.
 - VALUE rubrics presented a good basis for the standardization of rating student work products.
 - Using the rubrics made it easier to score in a relatively objective manner. It also helped faculty to focus on the identified skill.
- what they disliked about using the VALUE rubric to rate student work products:
 - Some criteria measured more than one thing, e.g., "evidence" on Critical Thinking rubric.
 - Critical Thinking rubric did not distinguish between reliable, credible, peer-reviewed evidence and non-reliable, etc., evidence.
- ways the VALUE rubrics could be used effectively to evaluate student learning in the General Education Program:
 - Use the rubrics as a tool to educate and train faculty, who could then use it to evaluate their own students' performance and their existing assignments.

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- “If we moved to a competencies-based GE, rubrics would allow for streamlined assessment, consistency across courses, and provide a unifying aspect that is currently missing in our GE program.”
- These rubrics could be used to standardize expectations for student learning. Currently, there is a lack of consistency for different elements

August 2015 Forums

General Education Program assessment results were presented at two August forums. One of the forums was scheduled for August 13 before classes began on August 17; four faculty attended. The second forum was scheduled for August 26 during the second week of classes; nineteen faculty attended—the highest attendance of any General Education Program assessment forum.

At the end of each forum, faculty were asked to rank their top three choices from the six actionable items derived from both course and workshop faculty comments:

- A. Create a UNCG-specific rubric.
- B. Develop a checklist that would generate a level of proficiency.
- C. Offer more practice during rubric calibration training.
- D. Offer training to faculty on how to integrate good rubrics and assessment.
- E. Develop a common assignment: by course? by General Education category?
- F. Have a campus-wide discussion about the perceived misalignment between Gen Ed category/marker student learning outcomes and competencies (i.e., critical thinking, written communication).

Of the forum attendees who participated in the ranking activity, the top two choices were D (faculty training on how to integrate good rubrics and assessment) and A (create a UNCG-specific rubric), followed by F (have a campus-wide discussion about the perceived misalignment between Gen Ed category/marker SLOs and competencies) as the third choice.

When the GEC Assessment Subcommittee discussed the feasibility of implementing items D (faculty training on how to integrate good rubrics and assessment) and A (create a UNCG-specific rubric), the consensus was that 1) a UNCG specific rubric may be too broad to yield information that faculty could act on to improve student learning, and 2) outside expertise would be necessary to train faculty on how to integrate good rubrics and assessment.

Moving Forward in 2015-16

At the November 9, 2015 meeting of the Council, Laura Pipe, the Coordinator of the Teaching Innovations Office (University Teaching Learning Center), indicated that the TIO would like to provide greater support to the General Education Program based on input about what the Program might need. The TIO is in the process of developing non-credit bearing certificate programs for faculty with General Education, QEP, Assessment, and other tracks. They will also be considering ways to cross-populate the certificates. The Council suggested the addition of workshops on teaching/assessing large classes. The TIO may also be able to offer training for faculty on the development, use, and integration of rubrics and assessment.

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In addition to the work of the Teaching Innovation Office in 2015-16, the Council revisited the process by which General Education courses are recertified. One change made by the Council was to revise the course recertification form for 2015-16. A question was added for applicants to examine course, category/marker, or department/program level assessment results in order to provide evidence that the course has successfully contributed to the General Education Program and to indicate any course improvements. The revised course recertification form will be used for the 2015-16 recertification of GFA, GLT, and GPR courses, which will be assessed in the 2016-17 academic year.

Another change made by the Council was to expand the charge to ad hoc recertification subcommittees. Historically, recertification ad hoc subcommittees had been charged with simply reviewing and revising current student learning outcomes for the respective category/marker. Beginning with the GHP, GRD, GN, and WI Ad Hoc Recertification Subcommittees, faculty members will be charged to:

1. Review and discuss: 1) recent category/marker assessment data, 2) the current category/marker description, and 3) current category/marker SLOs to gauge how well a category or marker is meeting the General Education Program mission and learning goals;
2. Revise category/marker description and SLOs, as needed;
3. Define achievement levels of Highly Proficient, Proficient, and Not Proficient for each SLO; and
4. Link the category or marker to UNC-GA competencies, such as written communication and critical thinking.

Outcomes from the 2014-15 assessment of the General Education Program included:

1. the feasibility of using rubrics to assess the GE Program *provided that* faculty are trained in their use and that the rubrics are reasonably aligned with the category/marker student learning outcomes being assessed;
2. the UTLC's planned inclusion of faculty development opportunities in support of the GE Program;
3. the GE Council's revision of the course recertification form by requiring the use of prior GE Program assessment results to substantiate how a course that is being recertified has successfully contributed to the Program; and
4. the Council's expansion of the charge to ad hoc recertification committees to include defining the three achievement levels (Highly Proficient; Proficient; Not Proficient) and linking category/marker student learning outcomes to the UNC-GA competencies (critical thinking and written communication).