

To: All Faculty

From: Gilbert D. Rivera, VPAA

RE: Inclusion of Four University Traits in Spring 2011 Syllabi

I am writing to remind faculty that all spring 2011 syllabi should include reference to one or more of four University traits that NMHU students are expected to acquire upon program completion. The four traits are part of a four-year outcomes assessment action plan developed through an agreement between NMHU and the Higher Learning Commission (HLC) of the North Central Association.

The four traits are: 1. Mastery of content knowledge; 2. Critical and reflective thinking skills; 3. Ability to communicate effectively; and 4. Ability to use technology. The intent is that each program identify where in their courses the traits are being addressed.

According to the approved action plan, one or more of these four traits were to have been included in every NMHU syllabus by the fall 2009 semester.

The NMHU HLC Assessment Academy Team reviewed a sample of fall 2010 syllabi to check for the presence of the four traits as part of the HLC monitoring. Approximately 50% of the syllabi reviewed include one or more of the four traits, with rates of compliance by department ranging from 0% to 100%.

The Assessment Team has recommended, and I am requesting, that spring 2011 syllabi identify one or more of the four traits that will be addressed in each course, linking the trait(s) to course objectives or otherwise describing how the trait or traits are addressed in the course. Examples provided by the Assessment Team of different ways to include the traits in syllabi are embedded below.

Thank you for your attention to this matter.

Example 1. MGMT 601 Business Research Methods

Course Objectives

1. To develop your ability to formulate a research study that meets academic and professional scrutiny (*mastery of content knowledge, analytical and reflective thinking skills*).
2. To build your skills in producing research evidence for problem identification and solution (*mastery of content knowledge, analytical and reflective thinking skills*).
3. To provide you with hands – on experience in research design and execution including the formulation of a testable research question or hypothesis (*mastery of content knowledge, analytical and reflective thinking skills*).

4. To integrate the knowledge of business research to include empirical generalizations, theory, observation and hypothesis testing (*mastery of content knowledge, analytical and reflective thinking skills*).
5. To make you aware of the importance of ethical principles and socially responsible research.
6. To help you become more proficient in logical reasoning including deductive and inductive reasoning (*mastery of content knowledge, analytical and reflective thinking skills, oral and written communication skills, proficient use of technology*).
7. To prepare you for your real world research (*mastery of content knowledge, analytical and reflective thinking skills, oral and written communication skills, proficient use of technology*).

Example 2. ENGL 4XX Gender and The Politics of Literacy

By the end of the course students will:

- Demonstrate competence in engaging texts as readers;
- Communicate understanding of course concepts;
- Analyze and evaluate texts or events in writing;
- Responsibly integrate others' ideas/sources in writing;
- Create a multimedia presentation;
- Apply course concepts and address implications in writing.

The NMHU traits achieved by this course include:

- Content knowledge, addressed through the midterm
- Critical and reflective thinking, addressed through the book review

Effective communication, addressed through the final essay

NMHU Core Curriculum Traits

The NMHU graduate in 2014 should display personal characteristics in relation to:

- Mastery of content knowledge and skills
- Effective communication skills
- Critical and reflective thinking
- Effective use of technology

In this class, we will develop these academic characteristics, or personal traits. Each individually written essay and group project is an opportunity to develop effective communication skills; and additionally,

we will pay particular attention to certain traits in each project. We will analyze and evaluate our mastery of the course objectives and the NMHU core curriculum traits in the midterm and final exams.

Example 3. BIOL 423 Cell and Molecular Biology

**INTEGRATING UNIVERSITY OBJECTIVES WITH
CELL AND MOLECULAR BIOLOGY**

- 1) **Students will achieve a mastery of content knowledge and skills.** Specifically, students will understand the cellular and molecular nature of Alzheimer's disease and Cancer. This approach will lead to a mastery of basic cell function and transfers to many areas of cell biology and human disease. (Mastery is defined by an average of at least 80% on online quizzes and exams).
- 2) **Students will develop effective oral and written communication skills.** Students will be reading, evaluating, and presenting primary research papers, current reviews, research and analytic methodologies. Students will conduct a literature review and write a review paper further exploring cell biology related to human disease. (Mastery is defined an average of at least 80% on class presentations, discussion, and the paper).
- 3) **Students will acquire critical and reflective thinking skills through evaluation of readings and course material.** Students will participate in self and peer assessment (Mastery is defined by an average of at least 80% on exams and the paper).
- 4) **Students will learn the effective use of technology.** Students will learn to navigate the scientific resources available through the library and the Web, by finding and accessing primary sources for cell biology, and using them to enhance their understanding of course topics. In the laboratory, students will learn how to use advanced laboratory equipment and bioinformatics databases. (Mastery is defined by an average of at least 80% on the paper and the lab grade).

These objectives are designed to prepare student for careers in the biological sciences and health professions including human and veterinary medicine, dentistry, pharmacy, and physical therapy