

General Studies Capstone Assessment Results (Spring 2016):

In accordance with the long-term assessment plan for General Studies Program, Capstone courses were assessed in Spring 2016. A total of 328 responses were received.

Capstone course assessment utilizes a common assessment rubric, approved by the General Studies Council, to evaluate the Capstone project completed within the course. Assessment results were collected using a Qualtrics survey during the last 3 weeks of the semester.

The General Studies Council determined in October 2015 that students in general studies courses should meet the standard of at least 70% of students achieving Proficient and Advanced for each identified learning outcome (both category and program level), where “Proficient” describes the skills of the typical student near the end of the course and “Advanced” is anything above proficient.

The assessment results for Capstone learning outcomes (CO) are reported in Table 1. As shown in the last column of Table 1, the 70% goal was met for all of the Capstone learning outcomes (CO 1 – CO 5). Over eighty percent of the responses were rated Proficient and Advanced for both CO 1 – evaluate information from more than one academic discipline (83.54%) and CO 5 – communicate effectively in the medium chosen for the Capstone project (85.71%). More than three-quarters of the responses for CO 2 – formulate logical connections between disciplines as they relate to the topic (79.19%); CO 3 – employ the approach of more than one academic discipline in completing a Capstone project (78.50%); and CO 4 – synthesize knowledge related to the topic in completing a Capstone project (77.95%) were rated Proficient and Advanced.

In addition to assessing the specific learning outcomes for Capstone courses, the instruments used in the assessment process also measured the achievement on the GS Program Level Learning Outcomes; the assessment results for these Program Level Learning Outcomes are reported in Table 2.

As shown in the last column of Table 2, the 70% goal was met for the three Program Level Learning Outcomes (GS) measured. Over three-quarters of the responses were rated Proficient and Advanced for GS 1 – evaluate information appropriate to the task (83.54%) and GS 2 – apply principles of critical thinking to demonstrate integrative learning (77.95%). The Capstone rubric also measures communication; however, the rubric evaluates the ability to “*communicate effectively in the medium chosen*” while the GS Program Learning Outcomes differentiate between oral communication (GS 3 – communicate effectively in spoken form) and written communication (GS 4 – communicate effectively in written form). Thus, the “communication” measured by the Capstone rubric – and reported in Table 2 under GS 4 - should be interpreted as a combined measure of written and oral communication skills exhibited by the students. As shown in Table 2, 85.71% of the responses were rated Proficient and Advanced for “communicating effectively.”

Overall, the results reported above indicate that the 70% goal was met for all of the learning outcomes at the course level and program level. As mentioned earlier, although the initial 70% goal was reached, it should be recognized that the results reported above are from the first-time data collection in the assessment cycle. Thus, the results should be considered the first step in determining the base-line for achievement of the learning outcomes. As more data become available, recommendations for any potential changes can be made.

