Final Plan for Assessing USP 2015 and the Baccalaureate Degree Outcomes

Report for the
Office of Academic Affairs

Prepared and Submitted by the
University Assessment Coordinators Committee

May 11, 2015
Introduction

The University Studies Program 2015 (USP 2015) goes into effect in fall 2015. As such, UW needs to solidify its plans for assessing the student learning outcomes associated with this new program. The initial university committee tasked with revising the USP program, USP Taskforce 1, devised a general process for assessment in 2011 and submitted this process in its report to the Office of Academic Affairs.

Alyson Hagy, Interim Associate Vice President for Undergraduate Education, tasked a team comprised of the University Assessment Specialist, the two faculty Assessment Fellows, the Communication Skills Coordinator, and the First-Year Seminar Coordinator to draft a more detailed assessment plan. This team then presented a draft plan to the University Assessment Coordinators Committee for their review and revision. The final plan presented in this document represents the collective work of these individuals and is respectfully submitted by the University Assessment Coordinators Committee to the Office of Academic Affairs for its consideration.

This plan provides a detailed framework and timeline for assessing UW’s USP 2015 program, taking into account the original work from USP Taskforce 1, the numerous other assessment efforts underway at UW, other university assessment obligations, as well as the requirements of and commitments to the Higher Learning Commission for regional accreditation.

Background

In 2011, USP Taskforce 1 first discussed the process by which UW would assess the new USP 2015 program. In its final report, USP Taskforce 1 outlined a general process for assessing the new student learning outcomes and identified existing university-level assessments that could be used for the purposes of USP assessment. This work served as the starting point for the more detailed USP 2015 assessment plan submitted in this report.

USP Taskforce 1 recommended that the student learning outcomes for a UW baccalaureate degree be assessed in an institutionally coordinated fashion, using national instruments that are currently available and through the direct assessment of student work where appropriate. Under this model, degree programs would assume responsibility for identifying how students will achieve these student learning outcomes within the degree programs and how best to assess the attainment of the outcomes as students leave UW. USP Taskforce 1 also recommended that university resources be dedicated to the assessment of these institutional-level outcomes and that the process (at least for assessing the attainment of these outcomes within the USP 2015 program) be coordinated institutionally.

The most logical place for the coordination of these assessment efforts is through the Office of Academic Affairs, with the expectation that faculty from across the university participate in various assessment activities when called upon to do so. Faculty engagement in assessment, supported through additional ECTL programming and robust reward and recognition, will be necessary for these efforts to be successful.
Table 1 that follows shows the original work of USP Taskforce 1. The Taskforce recommended that the “Breadth of Knowledge” student learning outcomes be assessed through the direct examination of student work. They also recommended that the outcomes in the “Intellectual and Practical Skills” category be assessed using a combination of direct measures including the examination of student work, performance on nationally normed exams such as the Critical Thinking Assessment Test (CAT) and the Collegiate Learning Assessment (CLA), and through indirect measures using the National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE) and Faculty Survey of Student Engagement (FSSE). Finally, they recommended that UW assess the outcomes in the “Personal and Social Responsibility” category indirectly through the NSSE and FSSE, and through other means yet to be identified.

As with any good assessment process, there should be a mix of both direct and indirect assessment measures. In a perfect world, we would like to have at least one direct measure of student learning for each outcome. While an admirable goal, we acknowledge that not all outcomes can be assessed easily using direct measures of student learning.

Table 1 shows that the identified methods of assessment appear to be most robust for the “Breadth of Knowledge” and “Intellectual and Practical Skills” categories. In addition to the direct examination of student work in these categories, other direct and indirect measures of student learning are available providing multiple measures of student learning for most of these student learning outcomes. In contrast, with the exception of one student learning outcome in the “Personal and Social Responsibility” category, the student learning outcomes within this category would be assessed entirely through indirect measures using the NSSE and FSSE. This indicated the need for UW to identify additional measures to assess student learning in this category.
## Table 1
USP Taskforce 1 Recommendations for Assessing USP 2015

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Learning Outcomes</th>
<th>Assessment Measures</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Direct Measures</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Breadth of Knowledge:</td>
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<tr>
<td>Human Culture (H)</td>
<td>Examination of student work</td>
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<tr>
<td>Physical &amp; Natural World (PN)</td>
<td>Examination of student work</td>
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<tr>
<td>U.S. &amp; Wyoming Constitutions (V)</td>
<td>Examination of student work</td>
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<tr>
<td>Intellectual and Practical Skills:</td>
<td>CLA (see Appendices for skills)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Communication Skills (COM 1) (COM2) (COM 3)</td>
<td>CLA (see Appendices for skills)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Critical &amp; Creative Thinking (FYS, H, PN, V)</td>
<td>CLA (see Appendices for skills)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Quantitative Reasoning (Q)</td>
<td>Examination of student work</td>
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<tr>
<td>Personal and Social Responsibility:</td>
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<td>Civic Knowledge &amp; Engagement</td>
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<td>Collaborative Learning</td>
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<tr>
<td>Personal Health &amp; Wellness</td>
<td>NSSE Item 14f</td>
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<td>Personal Integrity &amp; Academic Honesty</td>
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<td>Ethical Reasoning</td>
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<td>Independent Learning</td>
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<td>Intercultural Knowledge &amp; Competency</td>
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CLA = Collegiate Learning Assessment; administered once every three years to 100 freshmen and 100 seniors, last administration 2014-2015 academic year.

CAT = Critical thinking Assessment Test; administered by nine different academic programs since 2011. Approximately 800 UW students take the CAT annually.

NSSE = National Survey of Student Engagement, administered once every three years to all freshmen and seniors, last administration spring 2015. Approximately 1,000 UW students participate in the NSSE.

FSSE = Faculty Survey of Student Engagement, administered with NSSE once every three years, last administration spring 2015. Approximately 300 UW instructors (tenure track or extended term) participate in the FSSE.

**General Overview**

We recommend a three-phase assessment plan for USP 2015 to begin in fall 2015. Phase 1 of the plan is three years long and includes the direct examination of student work for the outcomes in the “Breadth of Knowledge” and “Intellectual and Practical Skills” categories. Phase 2 of the plan would begin immediately after Phase 1 and would include developing other measures to assess the outcomes in the “Personal and Social Responsibility” category. Phase 3 overlaps with Phase 2 and would include determining the role of departments and programs in assessing the
baccalaureate degree outcomes within the major and determining ways that the USP 2015 assessment process dovetails into the assessment efforts already underway by departments and programs. We suggest this phased approach for five reasons:

(1) UW has an urgency to assess the critical and creative thinking student learning outcomes in its First-Year Seminar courses as part of its Quality Initiative Project for the Higher Learning Commission (due in 2017).
(2) The University Assessment Coordinators Committee identified several ideas for assessing the “Personal and Social Responsibility” category, but did not make any decisions as to the best assessment solution(s).
(3) UW needs to devote more thought in determining the roles and responsibilities of the departments and programs in assessing the baccalaureate degree learning outcomes and how this work fits into the work that departments are already doing to assess the student learning outcomes required of majors.
(4) A phased approach helps distribute this important assessment work over several years and creates processes that are sustainable both in terms of human and fiscal resources.
(5) A phased approach allows for the transition to new leadership within the Office of Academic Affairs, the colleges, and the ECTL. While this important work cannot wait, there is ample opportunity for new UW leaders to help shape the future of UW assessment by incorporating the best assessment ideas at that point in time into the latter stages of this work.

The remainder of this report outlines further details for each of the three phases of the USP 2015 assessment process.

Phase 1 Assessment (2015-2017)

Phase 1 assessment consists of the assessment of the “Breath of Knowledge” and “Intellectual and Practical Skills” outcomes. This three-year cycle for Phase 1 ensures that all outcomes within these two categories will be assessed within the first three years of USP 2015 implementation. (This cycle would then repeat itself.) The activities to take place within this three-year period include the following:

(1) Examination of student work for the Human Culture, Physical and Natural World, U.S. & Wyoming Constitutions, Communication Skills (1-3), Critical and Creative Thinking, and Quantitative Reasoning student learning outcomes;
(2) Refinement of the standardized rubrics for each of the student learning outcomes based on faculty feedback after using the rubrics to examine student work;
(3) Further analysis of UW’s results on the CAT and the CLA; and
(4) Analysis of other indirect evidence collected on the NSSE and FSSE.

Context and History

UW has learned a lot from the assessment process used for USP 2003. UW had been assessing its current USP program using standardized rubrics for each of the USP course categories. Faculty members who taught a designated USP 2003 course were asked to assess a student
assignment using the applicable rubric. These results were then collated by the Office of Academic Affairs and reviewed by the USP Committee. While this process had produced some preliminary information on student performance, it was difficult to ascertain specific student learning deficiencies due to the general nature of the rubrics and the fact that faculty were examining different types of student work independently of each other.

USP Taskforce 1 recommended an alternative approach for examining student work for USP 2015. The taskforce ascertained that the process would be more valuable if small groups of faculty (from a variety of disciplines) gather for a single day to evaluate samples of student work rather than working independently. This type of assessment would clarify many of the ambiguities that plagued the existing assessment process and would foster discussion among faculty members as they work with one another to assess student learning. The best model for this type of direct assessment is the scoring process used for CAT test. One alternative model in the same spirit of faculty collaboration would be to have small groups of faculty meet several times over the semester to assess student work. For both options, the Taskforce also suggested that faculty be trained in and specifically rewarded for their participation. Again the scoring process for the CAT test serves as a good model in this regard as well.

**Process for the Direct Examination of Student Work**

The “Breadth of Knowledge” and “Intellectual and Practical Skills” student learning outcomes can be quantitatively and qualitatively assessed through the direct examination of student work using the standardized rubrics provided in the appendices. Many of the “Intellectual and Practical Skills” outcomes can also be assessed using existing instruments and nationally normed tests including the CAT, CLA, NSSE, and FSSE. Because UW has administered these instruments and has historical data on UW performance, we strongly encourage the use of these results as part of the overall USP 2015 assessment plan.

The information collected via these additional measures outlined in this document should be used to complement the information collected through the direct examination of student work. UW needs to tell a story about each student learning outcome using as complete information as possible. Using multiple measures of student learning, whenever possible is considered to be best practice.

The three-year rotation for assessing the “Breadth of Knowledge” and “Intellectual and Practical Skills” outcomes will begin in the 2015-2016 academic year with the assessment of the critical and creative thinking student learning outcomes within the FYS category. In the second year, UW will assess the student learning outcomes associated with the H, PN, and COM 1 categories in addition to FYS. In the third year, UW will assess the student learning outcomes associated with the remainder of the Communication Skills sequence (COM2, & COM3), and the V and Q categories.

The Office of Academic Affairs will coordinate the assessment process. Prior to the beginning of each semester, all faculty members teaching courses in a selected category will be notified that they are required to provide examples of student work for a subset of students randomly selected from their course(s). This random selection of students from all courses ensures that the unit of analysis is the student not the faculty. Faculty members will be given detailed instructions
regarding what kind of assignments to select given the specific student learning outcomes being assessed.

During the 2015-2016 academic year, the Office of Academic Affairs will engage in a pilot project to conduct the proposed USP assessment process online using Canvas, UW’s new learning management system. This means that all faculty teaching FYS courses during the 2015-2016 academic year will need to use WyoCourses for USP 2015 assessment purposes. While the details of the process are still unfolding, the University Assessment Specialist is working closely with Information Technology and the Learning Management System Support Team to dialogue with the vendor Canvas about using the platform for USP 2015 assessment purposes. All FYS faculty will be notified in writing of the pilot project in early summer 2015. During the 2015-2016 academic year, the University Assessment Specialist, the First-Year Seminar Coordinator, and the Learning Management Support Team will be readily available to assist faculty with the assessment process.

The Office of Academic Affairs, with assistance from the ECTL, will also coordinate the group processes for assessing student work. The University Assessment Specialist will assume responsibility for designing a report template, writing the final assessment report for each student learning outcome category, and working jointly with the ECTL Director to disseminate the results to faculty and spur discussions on how improvements to the curriculum can be made. It is extremely important that UW demonstrate that it is “closing the loop” on assessment, meaning we can clearly show how we are using the results of our assessment processes to make ongoing improvements to the USP 2015 curriculum.

Faculty will examine student work using the standardized rubrics already developed for each student learning outcome. These rubrics are provided in the appendices. With regard to the faculty assessment groups, we recommend that each faculty member examine 50 pieces of student work for most outcomes categories (25 for the Communication Skills sequence since these assignments will be longer). Faculty members examining student work will receive $250 each to be used for any kind of professional development as a thank you for participating. Given these parameters, as well as the need to devise a plan with a sustainable budget, we recommend that UW examine 150 to 300 pieces of student work per outcome (depending on the outcome and frequency of assessment for that outcome).

Table 2 that follows provides further details of the three-year assessment cycle for the “Breadth of Knowledge” and “Intellectual and Practical Skills” outcomes. This table includes information about which outcomes will be assessed each semester and the suggested number of pieces of student work to be examined for each outcome.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Outcome</th>
<th>Course Selection Details</th>
<th>Examples of Student Work/ Faculty Scoring</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>2015-2016</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Critical &amp; Creative Thinking (FYS)</td>
<td>FYS courses Fall 2015 FYS courses Spring 2016</td>
<td>50 pieces of student work per faculty reader; 2 readers per piece. 300 examples of student work per semester. 24 faculty readers needed (12 per semester).</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>2016-2017</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Critical &amp; Creative Thinking (FYS, H, &amp; PN)</td>
<td>FYS courses Fall 2016 FYS courses Spring 2017 H &amp; PN courses Fall 2016 H &amp; PN courses Spring 2017</td>
<td>50 pieces of student work per faculty reader; 2 readers per piece. 200 examples of student work per semester. 16 faculty readers (8 per semester). See details under H, PN, and Q categories.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Human Culture (H)</td>
<td>Fall 2016 Spring 2017</td>
<td>50 pieces of student work per faculty reader; 2 readers per piece. 200 examples of student work per semester. 16 faculty readers (8 per semester).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Physical &amp; Natural World (PN)</td>
<td>Fall 2016 Spring 2017</td>
<td>50 pieces of student work; 2 readers per piece. 200 examples of student work per semester. 16 faculty readers (8 per semester).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communication 1 (COM1)</td>
<td>Fall 2016 Spring 2017</td>
<td>25 pieces of student work; 2 readers per piece. 150 examples of student work per semester. 24 faculty readers (12 per semester).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Course</td>
<td>Semester 1</td>
<td>Semester 2</td>
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<td>--------------------------------------------</td>
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<tr>
<td>Communication 2 (COM2)</td>
<td>Fall 2017</td>
<td>Spring 2018</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communication 3 (COM3)</td>
<td>Fall 2017</td>
<td>Spring 2018</td>
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<tr>
<td>Quantitative Reasoning (Q)</td>
<td>Fall 2017</td>
<td>Spring 2018</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>US &amp; Wyoming Constitutions (V)</td>
<td>Fall 2017</td>
<td>Spring 2018</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

**Other Considerations**

There are several other items noted below that should be taken into consideration as the USP 2015 assessment process moves forward.

*Initial Focus on FYS:* The focus of the Phase 1 assessment for the first two years must be FYS because UW submitted and gained approval for the implementation and assessment of FYS as part of it’s Quality Initiative Project (QIP) for the Higher Learning Commission. Therefore, the timeline for FYS assessment cannot be amended and any changes to this plan should be carefully considered based on the QIP proposal and addendum submitted to the HLC on November 7, 2014 and February 11, 2015. (The Office of Academic Affairs has both HLC documents).

*Exceptions to Faculty Assessment Groups:* It should be noted that a handful of student learning outcomes contain elements that cannot be assessed in a group setting by outside evaluators after a class ends. For example, there are elements of oral communication with the COM2 and COM3 sequence that need to be assessed in real time when the student work is delivered. Another example occurs in FYS courses. Individual faculty members will need to assess the students’ ability to collaborate with peers, as outside evaluators cannot do this after the class is completed. In these cases, the faculty will be notified of these exceptions and given directions on how to assess these subsets of the student learning outcomes independently. All of the elements that require faculty participation in the assessment process are noted in the rubrics provided in the appendices.
There are also several courses designated COM2 and COM3 that are foreign language courses. As such, only a subset of university faculty will have the expertise to assess the applicable student learning outcomes in written assignments in a foreign language. Therefore, we recommend that the University Assessment Specialist earmark these examples of student work and develop a similar, yet parallel group assessment process to examine this work with faculty whose expertise is in that particular language. Obviously, faculty from the Department of Modern and Classical Languages will need to be involved in this process.

Amount of Student Work to be Examined: The number of pieces of student work provided in Table 2 represents our best guess as to how much student will need to be reviewed to reach suitable conclusions about attainment of each student learning outcome. It may be that with time, UW discovers it needs to examine more or less work student work to reach the same conclusions. Therefore, we recommend that the Office of Academic Affairs review these numbers over time and make any necessary adjustments.

Modifications to Rubrics: Extensive work went into developing the rubrics provided in the appendices. However, with any good assessment process, rubrics should be modified after their use with the goal of improving them for future application. Therefore, we recommend that the University Assessment Specialist and ECTL Director gather feedback from the faculty during the group assessment sessions and make any improvements to the rubrics as necessary.

Manual vs. Electronic Collection of Student Work: We are recommending that UW fully pursue the use of WyoCourses as the vehicle to conduct USP assessment. This means that all faculty teaching USP 2015 designated courses will need to use WyoCourses for the purposes of assessment. We are recommending though that UW engage in a pilot project using WyoCourses in the 2015-2016 academic year with the FYS courses only. This will give UW ample opportunity to design the best assessment process with only a subset of USP 2015 courses before rolling out the electronic process for all USP 2015 course categories. In doing so, the University Assessment Specialist and Learning Management System Support Team can work with FYS faculty to get their input on the assessment process, to work the bugs out of the system, and to engage with Canvas, the vendor to enhance the assessment capabilities of WyoCourses.

During the 2015-2016 academic year, the Office of Academic Affairs will also explore how an assessment system using WyoCourses would work for the other USP 2015 course categories and make a final decision as to whether UW should continue to implement USP 2015 assessment using WyoCourses based on the results of the pilot project. Ideally, in the long run, an electronic system for assessment is best because it eliminates the need to collect hard copies of student work and by storing the data electronically, it is easier to create and retrieve assessment reports for accreditation-related matters.

Inclusion of Distance Education Faculty: We strongly recommend that UW remember to include faculty teaching via distance delivery in the faculty assessment groups. Because some of these faculty may not be located in Laramie, we suggest that the Office of Academic Affairs discuss with the Outreach School whether a small pool of funds can be identified for their travel to Laramie to participate in the USP 2015 assessment process where appropriate.
Phase 2 Assessment (2017-2020)

With the assessment activities in Phase 1 well underway, we recommend that Phase 2 begin in fall 2017. During Phase 2, UW needs to further refine its procedures for assessing the “Personal and Social Responsibility” outcomes category, including the identification and adoption of additional assessment measures of student learning as necessary. Some of the “Personal and Social Responsibility” outcomes are difficult to assess directly, yet are important priorities for the university. The most useful assessment information already collected by UW pertaining to these outcomes is from the NSSE and FSSE. However, as already noted, these two instruments cannot assess all outcomes within this category and they provide only indirect evidence.

In this section, rather than propose a set solution for collecting supplemental evidence for determining the attainment of the student learning outcomes in the “Personal and Social Responsibility” category, we outline five different options for consideration. Each should be considered separately, as well as in combination with each other. The goal is to determine which tools and strategies can be combined with each other and paired with existing results from the NSSE and FSSE so that UW assesses all outcomes within this category successfully, but in ways that are not onerous and are sustainable over time. By the end of Phase 2, UW should have collected and analyzed further data to demonstrate how well its students are achieving the “Personal and Social Responsibility” student learning outcomes.

Option 1 – Global Perspective Inventory (GPI)

The GPI was developed by the Global Perspectives Institute Inc. and is used by many colleges and universities around the nation. It has three forms: 1) the General Student Form, 2) the Study Abroad Post Test Form, and 3) the New Student Form. While International Programs or Global and Area Studies may choose to use the Study Abroad Post Test Form, the General Student Form and the New Student Form are most helpful in assessing several areas of “Personal and Social Responsibility” for USP 2015. The GPI currently costs $3.25 per inventory and it is conducted by GPI Inc. The results are then reported back to the institution.

First-year students would complete the New Student Form as they begin their USP 2015 program. It could be administered in their FYS course. During the senior year, students would be invited to take the General Student Form. It would be ideal to have the same students complete both versions, but given attrition rates, this may be difficult to accomplish. Even if different students completed the two test forms, we would still have insights into their growth at the beginning of the USP 2015 program through their senior year.

Table 3 that follows shows how the specific student learning outcomes in the “Personal and Social Responsibility” category could be assessed through the GPI. Additionally, another advantage of the GPI is that some questions map to other USP 2015 student learning outcomes in the “Breadth of Knowledge” and “Intellectual and Practical Skills” categories. As a result, these measures could be used to provide additional indirect measures of student learning for the FYS (Critical & Creative Thinking), H, and V categories.
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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Learning Outcomes</th>
<th>Direct Measures</th>
<th>Indirect Measures</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Breadth of Knowledge:</strong></td>
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<td>Human Culture</td>
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<td>U.S. &amp; Wyoming Constitutions</td>
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<td>#47</td>
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<td><strong>Intellectual and Practical Skills:</strong></td>
<td></td>
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<td>Critical and Creative Thinking</td>
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<td>Quantitative Reasoning</td>
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<td><strong>Personal and Social Responsibility:</strong></td>
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<td>Intercultural Knowledge &amp; Competency</td>
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**Option 2 – Student Electronic Portfolios**

Several departments currently use or have used e-portfolios to assess their student learning outcomes within the major. For example, Family & Consumer Sciences used e-portfolios through the former eCollege platform for several years; the College of Education has required their students to demonstrate competencies through portfolios (Counselor Education still has this
requirement for its masters and doctoral students); and the School of Nursing and College of Engineering explored the use of e-portfolios for compiling accreditation information including assessment of their student learning outcomes. There are also departments who have asked UW recently to investigate the use of e-portfolios or another electronic data storage systems to collect and analyze assessment information for their required annual assessment reports.

If such a system were used, students would start their portfolios in their FYS course, add data at least annually, and complete them at the end of their senior year as part of a university-wide requirement. Rubrics would then be created for the “Personal & Social Responsibility” category to be used by faculty teams to assess the e-portfolios. This process would be similar to the assessment process previously outlined for the direct examination of student work in Phase 1. The USP 2015 assessment schedule would then be modified to include the examination of student work as part of the assessment of the “Personal and Social Responsibility” student learning outcomes.

**Option 3 – Office of the Registrar “Transcript”**

Several institutions have created a separate transcript to show participation in clubs and organizations, study abroad experiences, alternative spring break, leadership experiences and other co-curricular experiences. These transcripts are also used to show prior learning assessment including badges and certificates that can be applied to college credits. If it were feasible from a time and process standpoint, student experiences that support the student learning outcomes would appear on a “transcript” that would be issued just as UW does for their formal transcript (or as an additional page to the existing transcript). Data would then be available to show how many students met the student learning outcomes through which experiences.

**Option 4 – Centralized Collection & Analysis of Existing UW Data**

Various UW departments and programs currently collect data that could be used for USP 2015 assessment purposes. This data could be centrally collected by the Office of Academic Affairs and analyzed as indirect evidence to support the attainment of some of the “Personal and Social Responsibility” outcomes. For example, UW collects data on how many students use Half Acre and how often, how many students study abroad, and how many students participate in outdoor leadership, alternative spring break, and student government.

**Option 5- Advisor-administered Exit Survey**

UW could develop a student exit interview that advisors in each program administer electronically (using an electronic survey instrument such as that which is used for student course evaluations university-wide) when a student enters their program and again just prior to graduation. Just as with the student evaluation instrument, departments could add questions specific to their programs that will assist them in assessing department-specific courses or student learning outcomes or other experiences (internships, for example). This would then become part of their annual assessment report required by the Office of Academic Affairs. This information could be useful not only for assessing USP 2015, but how the major contributes to the fulfillment of the baccalaureate degree student learning outcomes.
Phase 3 Assessment (2018-2020)

With the assessment activities in Phase 1 concluded and discussions related to the assessment of the “Personal and Social Responsibility” category underway in Phase 2, we suggest that Phase 3 begin in fall 2018. In Phase 3, UW needs to examine the assessment efforts within departments and programs to determine how departmental assessment efforts play role in USP 2015 assessment. The critical point to remember is that the student learning outcomes are baccalaureate degree student learning outcomes, meaning USP 2015 was to introduce students to these outcomes and students would continue to work on the attainment of these outcomes within their student major. As such, UW needs to answer two overarching questions: What role will the departments and programs play in addressing the thirteen baccalaureate degree student learning outcomes within their majors? How will departments and programs assess the attainment of these student learning outcomes within their majors?

USP 2015 is a foundation for all students, but these baccalaureate degree outcomes need to be solidified in upper division course work within the major. This brings UW to an interesting crossroads as departments and programs are already responsible for assessing their own student learning outcomes required of their majors. Certainly, we do not want to create assessment processes that are solely administrative processes. Furthermore, we do not want to create processes that produce undue burdens to departments and programs. Therefore, the primary issue is how to align the USP 2015 assessment process with current departmental processes to assess the majors so that we minimize the work involved, yet maximize the useful information gleaned from assessment. Certainly some of the tools outlined in Phase 2, if adopted, could provide assessment information for both purposes.

Conclusion

The purpose of this document was to provide a comprehensive plan for the assessment of USP 2015 that will be implemented beginning in August 2015. This document clearly provides more detail with regard to the Phase 1 Assessment process (2015-2017) than it does for Phases 2 and 3. As noted within the document, this was intentional. We did, however, envision this document serving as a blueprint for assessing USP 2015 moving forward, providing a solid foundation for assessing the “Breadth of Knowledge” and “Intellectual and Practical Skills” categories and assisting UW in fulfilling its obligations to the HLC, yet providing flexibility as circumstances change beyond the first three years.

This document also outlines many of the still unresolved issues with assessing USP 2015, primarily how to best assess the more difficult to assess student learning outcomes and how best to integrate the assessment of USP 2015 into the assessment work that departments and programs are already doing. We recognize that these remain serious challenges. But we are confident that UW will resolve these issues in future years. We should also note that all USP 2015 assessment issues should be resolved prior to the next accreditation visit by the HLC in 2020. The HLC fully expects that institutions have robust assessment processes in place for all academic programs and that they are using the results of these assessments for institutional improvement. Not completing this three-phase assessment process by 2019 will leave UW vulnerable to criticism by the HLC.
The appendices that follow provide additional information about each of the national tests and instruments discussed in this report. This includes more information on skills assessed or items examined to determine whether a particular aspect of a student learning outcome is being met. The appendices also include the standardized rubrics developed for the examination of student work for all student learning outcomes in the “Breadth of Knowledge” and “Intellectual and Personal Skills” categories.

Finally, we recommend that all future decisions about USP 2015 assessment be vetted through the University Assessment Coordinators Committee as this committee has representation from all six academic colleges and other critical academic support areas at UW and reports directly to the Office of Academic Affairs. We also encourage the sharing of this report with the Faculty Senate and the USP Committee.

Specific questions about the content of this report can be directed to Karen Williams or Erika Prager in the Office of Academic Affairs.
Appendices

CLA Skills

Skills assessed in total for mastery: below basic, basic, proficient, or advanced.

Skills assessed:

• Reading and analyzing documents
• Extracting evidence
• Making judgments about evidence
• Making arguments
• Drawing conclusions
• Suggesting other evidence or counterarguments
• Understanding difference between correlation and causality
• Interpreting graphs and tables
• Addressing ambiguous data and outliers
• Communicating effectively in the English language

CAT Items

Skills assessed by individual test questions and scenarios.

Evaluating Information

• Separate factual information from inferences.
• Interpret numerical relationships in graphs.
• Understand the limitations of correlational data.
• Evaluate evidence and identify inappropriate conclusions.

Creative Thinking

• Identify alternative interpretations for data or observations.
• Identify new information that might support or contradict a hypothesis.
• Explain how new information can change a problem.

Learning and Problem Solving

• Separate relevant from irrelevant information.
• Integrate information to solve problems.
• Learn and apply new information.
• Use mathematical skills to solve real-world problems.

Communication

• Communicate ideas effectively.
NSSE & FSSE Items

All items assessed individually.

Standard NSSE
1b. Prepared two or more drafts of a paper or assignment before turning it in.
1c. Came to class without completing readings or assignments.
1e. Asked another student to help you understand course material.
1f. Explained course material to one or more students.
1g. Prepared for exams by discussing or working through course material with other students.
1h. Worked with other students on course projects or assignments.
1i. Gave a course presentation.
2a. Combined ideas from different courses when completing assignments.
2b. Connected learning to societal problems or issues.
2c. Included diverse perspectives (political, religious, racial/ethnic, gender, etc.) in course discussions or assignments.
2d. Examined strengths and weaknesses of your own views on a topic or issue.
2e. Tried to connect better understand someone else’s views by imagining how an issue looks from his or her perspective.
2f. Learned something that changed the way you understand an issue or concept.
2g. Connected ideas from your courses to your experiences and knowledge.
4a. Coursework emphasizes: Memorizing course material.
4b. Coursework emphasizes: Applying facts, theories, or methods to practical problems or new situations.
4c. Coursework emphasizes: Analyzing an idea, experience, or line of reasoning in depth by examining its parts.
4d. Coursework emphasizes: Evaluating a point of view, decision, or information source.
4e. Coursework emphasizes: Forming a new idea or understanding from various pieces of information.
6a. Reached conclusions based on your own analysis of numerical information (numbers, graphs, statistics, etc.).
6b. Used numerical information to examine a real-world problem or issue (unemployment, climate change, public health, etc.).
6c. Evaluated what others have concluded from numerical information.
7a. Number of written papers or reports of fewer than five pages.
7b. Number of written papers or reports between 5 and 19 pages.
7c. Number of written papers or reports 20 pages or more.
8a. Discussions with people of a race or ethnicity other than your own.
8b. Discussions with people from an economic background other than your own.
8c. Discussions with people with different religious beliefs than your own.
8d. Discussions with people with different political views than your own.
9a. Identified key information from reading assignments.
9b. Reviewed your notes after class.
9c. Summarized what you learned in class or from course materials.
11a. Participate in an internship, co-op, field experience, student teaching, or clinical placement.
11b. Hold a formal leadership role in a student organization or group.
11c. Participate in a learning community or some other formal program where groups of students take two or more classes together.
11d. Participate in a study abroad program.
11e. Work with a faculty member on a research project.
12. Number courses that have included a community-based project (service-learning).
14d. Encouraging contact among students from different backgrounds (social, racial/ethnic, religious, etc.).
14f. Providing support for your overall well-being (recreation, health care, counseling, etc.).
15a. Preparing for class (studying, reading, writing, doing homework or lab work, analyzing data, rehearsing, and other academic activities).
15e. Hours spent doing community service or volunteer work.
16. Time spent preparing for class in a typical week, how much is on assigned reading?
17a. Experience writing clearly and effectively.
17b. Experience speaking clearly and effectively.
17c. Experience thinking critically and analytically.
17d. Experience analyzing numerical and statistical information.
17f. Experience working effectively with others.
17g. Experience developing or clarifying a personal code of values and ethics.
17h. Experience understanding people of other backgrounds (economic, racial/ethnic, political, religious, nationality, etc.).
17i. Experience solving complex real-world problems.
17j. Experience being an informed and active citizen.

NSSE Experiences with Writing Module
1a. Talked with a classmate, friend, or family member to develop ideas before they started the assignment.
1b. Received feedback from a classmate, friend, or family member about a draft before turning in the final assignment.
1c. Gave feedback to a classmate about a draft or outline he or she had written
1d. Summarized material they read, such as articles, books, or online publications.
1e. Analyzed or evaluate something they read, researched, or observed.
1f. Described their methods or findings related to data they collected in lab or field work, a survey project, etc.
1g. Argued a position using evidence or reasoning.
1h. Explained in writing the meaning or numerical or statistical data.
1i. Wrote in the style and format of a specific field (engineering, history, psychology, etc.)
1j. Addressed a real or imagined audience such as their classmates, a politician, non-experts, etc.

Standard FSSE Items
1a. Participation in an internship, co-op, field experience, student teaching, or clinical placement.
1b. Hold a formal leadership role in a student organization or group.
1d. Participation in a study abroad program.
1g. Participation in community-based project (service-learning) as part of course.
2a. Students spending significant amounts of time studying and on academic work.
2d. Encouraging contact among students from different backgrounds (social, racial/ethnic, religious, etc.)
10g. Provide feedback to students on drafts or works in progress.
17. # hours expect typical student to spend preparing for course (studying, reading, writing, doing homework or lab work, analyzing data, rehearsing, and other academic activities).
18. # hours do you think the typical student actually spends preparing for your selected course (studying, reading, writing, doing homework or lab work, analyzing data, rehearsing, and other academic activities)?
19a. How many hours do you expect the typical student to spend on assigned reading?
19b. How much of the assigned reading in your selected course section do you think the typical student completes?
20d. Importance of doing community service or volunteer work.
22b. Importance of preparing two or more drafts of a paper or assignment before turning it in.
22c. Importance of coming to class having completed readings or assignments.
22d. Importance of reaching conclusions based on his or her own analysis of numerical information (numbers, graphs, statistics, etc.).
22f. Importance of evaluating what others have concluded from numerical information.
23a. Importance of combining ideas from different courses when completing assignments.
23b. Importance of connecting his or her learning to societal problems or issues.
23c. Importance of including diverse perspectives (political, religious, racial/ethnic, gender, etc.) in course discussions or assignments.
23f. Importance of earning something that changes the way he or she understands an issue or concept.
23g. Importance of connecting ideas from your course to his or her prior experiences and knowledge.
25b. Encourage explaining course material to other students.
25c. Encourage preparing for exams by discussing or working through course material with other students.
25d. Encourage working with other students on course projects or assignments.
25e. Encourage identifying key information from reading assignments.
25f. Encourage review of notes after class.
26a. Opportunity to talk with people of a race or ethnicity other than their own.
26b. Opportunity to talk people from an economic background other than their own.
26c. Opportunity to talk people with religious beliefs other than their own.
26d. Opportunity to talk people with political views other than their own.
26e. Opportunity to talk people with a sexual orientation other than their own.
27a. Coursework emphasizes memorizing course material.
27b. Coursework emphasizes applying facts, theories, or methods to practical problems or new situations.
27c. Coursework emphasizes analyzing an idea, experience, or line of reasoning in depth by examining its parts.
27d. Coursework emphasizes evaluating a point of view, decision, or information source.
27e. Coursework emphasizes forming a new idea or understanding from various pieces of information.
28a. Does selected course section include assigned papers, reports, or other writing tasks?
28b. Does selected course section include assigned papers, reports, or other writing tasks? # up to 5 pages
28c. Does selected course section include assigned papers, reports, or other writing tasks? # 6 to 10 pages
28d. Does your selected course section include assigned papers, reports, or other writing tasks? # 11 pages or more
29a. Course develops writing clearly and effectively.
29b. Course develops speaking clearly and effectively.
29c. Course develops thinking critically and analytically.
29d. Course develops analyzing numerical and statistical information.
29f. Course develops working effectively with others.
29g. Course develops or clarifies a personal code of values and ethics.
29h. Course develops understanding people of other backgrounds (economic, racial/ethnic, political, religious, nationality, etc.).
29i. Course develops solving complex real-world problems.

**FSSE Experiences with Writing Module**
1a. Talk with a classmate, friend, or family member to develop ideas before they started the assignment.
1b. Receive feedback from a classmate, friend, or family member about a draft before turning in the final assignment.
1c. Give feedback to a classmate about a draft or outline he or she had written
1d. Summarize material they read, such as articles, books, or online publications.
1e. Analyze or evaluate something they read, researched, or observed.
1f. Describe their methods or findings related to data they collected in lab or field work, a survey project, etc.
1g. Argue a position using evidence or reasoning.
1h. Explain in writing the meaning or numerical or statistical data.
1i. Write in the style and format of a specific field (engineering, history, psychology, etc.).
1j. Address a real or imagined audience such as their classmates, a politician, non-experts, etc.
GPI Items
1. When I notice cultural differences, my culture tends to have the better approach.
2. I can explain my personal values to people who are different from me.
3. Most of my friends are from my own ethnic background.
4. I am informed of current issues that impact international relations.
5. I feel threatened around people from backgrounds very different from my own.
6. I understand the reasons and causes of conflict among nations of different cultures.
7. I work for the rights of others.
8. I understand how various cultures of this world interact socially.
9. I consider different cultural perspectives when evaluating global problems.
10. I know how to analyze the basic characteristics of a culture.
11. I frequently interact with people from a race/ethnic group different from my own.
12. I am accepting of people with different religious and spiritual traditions.
13. I intentionally involve people from many cultural backgrounds in my life.
14. I rarely question what I have been taught about the world around me.
15. I enjoy when my friends from other cultures teach me about our cultural differences.
16. I am open to people who strive to live lives very different from my own lifestyle.
17. I frequently interact with people from a country different from my own.
18. # courses taken - Multicultural course addressing issues of race, ethnicity, gender, class, religion, or sexual orientation.
19. # courses taken - Foreign language course.
20. # courses taken - World history course.
21. # courses taken - Service learning course.
22. # courses taken - Course focused on significant global/international issues and problems.
23. # courses taken - Course that includes opportunities for intensive dialogue among students with different backgrounds and beliefs.
24. Discussed course topics, ideas, or concepts with a faculty member outside of class.
25. Discussed your academic performance with a faculty member.
26. The faculty challenged students' views and perspectives on a topic during class.
27. The faculty presented issues and problems in class from different cultural perspectives.
28. Participated in events or activities sponsored by groups reflecting a cultural heritage different from your own.
29. Participated in leadership programs that stress collaboration and team work.
30. Participated in community service activities.
32. Followed an international event/crisis (e.g., through newspaper, social media, or other media source).
33. Discussed current events with other students.
Rubrics for the Examination of Student Work

Rubrics for the student learning outcomes required of the following USP 2015 categories are included.

Human Culture (H)
Physical & Natural Worlds (PN)
UW & Wyoming Constitutions (V)
Communication 1 (COM1)
Communication 2 (COM2)
Communication 3 (COM3)
Critical & Creative Thinking (FYS)
Quantitative Reasoning (Q)