

## UVU Annual Academic Program Assessment Report

<b>Contact Name:</b> Dr. Frederick White	
<b>School/College:</b> College of Humanities and Social Sciences/Innovation Academy	<b>Department:</b> N/A
<b>Program Name:</b> Integrated Studies, B.A./B.S.	
<b>Purpose</b> <i>Academic program assessment is an important aspect of student learning at UVU. Faculty have a central role in assessing student learning and improving instructional programs. Assessment efforts inform academic and learning-support planning and practices to continuously improve student learning outcomes. Academic program assessment plans will reflect a three-year cycle for evaluation of a program's learning outcomes.</i>	

<b>Assessment Schedule</b> 2023-2024
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<b>Program Learning Outcome</b> PLO1: Graduates are able to research and analyze information to develop interdisciplinary projects. PLO2: Graduates can communicate clearly and persuasively in writing and in speech.
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<b>Indicate the number of students who were included in the evaluation.</b> A representational selection of seven projects and eight theses.	<b>Indicate the courses that map to this program learning outcome.</b> IS 4980 (Capstone I) and IS 4990 (Capstone II) - but because these are the final two courses, the assessment actually says something about our other courses as well IS 2000 (Knowledge Integrated) and our Special Topics courses (IS 300R and IS 350R).
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<b>What Essential Learning Outcomes map to this program learning outcome?</b> <i>Include the Essential Learning Outcomes specified on the UVU Annual Academic Program Assessment Plan.</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Communication</li> <li><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Critical Thinking</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Digital Literacy</li> <li><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Ethical Reasoning</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Inclusion</li> <li><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Information Literacy</li> <li><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Quantitative Literacy</li> <li><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Scientific Literacy</li> </ul>
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### **Analysis of Assessment Results and Implications**

1. Information literacy instruction. Students need specific instruction on the need to include peer-reviewed sources and how to find and evaluate such sources (information literacy skills). While not all of the sources for such theses and projects need to be peer-reviewed academic journal articles, each of these theses and projects would benefit from incorporating more peer reviewed work into their theses and projects.
2. Clear instruction on the number of peer-reviewed journal articles that theses and projects should reference. This stands out as a gap that can be filled through instruction and ongoing guidance/mentorship throughout the writing process.
3. Clear instruction on communicating about interdisciplinary work. Some of the best thesis and project introductions identified and commented on the skills and knowledge from each of their disciplines, but most did not. I would like to see something in the intro about the disciplinary knowledge and skills that the student is using to address their topic/research question. This could be part of the instructions to students.
4. Encourage use of research questions. Many students chose a topic for their thesis but did not have a stated research question. Some of the projects did not have a clearly stated purpose or summary. This hindered students' ability to stay focused and, as PLO2 aims for, "communicate clearly and persuasively in writing."

### **Planning Improvements**

In a department meeting in January 2024, program faculty discussed the recommendations for the future. We had already (as a department) decided to make changes to our PLOs to update them. So, some of the recommendation will be addressed as soon as these changes can be made to the PLOs. Below is a formal response crafted by one of the program faculty members, Dr. Scott Abbott.

Some thoughts on various types of work that have been completed successfully for the capstone:

- Traditional academic papers. These most often include a good literature review of relevant peer-reviewed work. The literature review then provides context to analyze primary sources.
- Projects like setting up a business, inventing a dental device, designing a house...examples of what has been successfully done...also require relevant information, but perhaps not as formally as a traditional academic paper. The requirements to complete the project will drive what kinds of research will need to be done. "What do I need to know to do this?" is the driving question.
- Personal essays...and there have been a good number of these successfully completed...also require lots of information. How have other good essays been structured? the essay writer should ask. Are there essays I particularly admire that can serve as models? Most importantly, what personal experiences will serve as the basis of the essay?
- Essays, as opposed to academic studies (see above), on topics like Terry Tempest Williams' recent essay on Great Salt Lake ("I Am Haunted by What I Have Seen at Great Salt Lake," Essay by Terry Tempest Williams, photos by Fazal Sheikh; link here as well: <https://www.parsintl.com/eprints/115576.pdf>) require lots of knowledge about the topic, but are researched and structured as essays.
- Projects like a set of paintings, a musical recital, or a collection of poems, have their own structures and possibilities. Like all the other forms, they too will benefit from the study of relevant models, an account of which might well be a good addendum to the creative work itself.

It is evident that all good work for Capstone 1 and 2 will involve research and analysis, requiring in each case decisions on structure and methodology. Each thesis or project has its own requirements, systematic steps that must be taken over the course of the two semesters of the capstone class. Ongoing work with the IS instructor and the two discipline mentors will make sure that the work progresses as needed. The best work for this final program requirement invariably grows out of an interest in or even love for the topic, a desire to know more about it, and a clear sense that the work will develop skills that will provide opportunities for employment and/or further study in graduate programs.