2018-19 Strategic Plan
Integrated Studies Department

Mission statement

Unit Mission Statement:
"[Integrated Studies] is a process of answering a question, solving a problem, or addressing a topic that is too broad or complex to be dealt with adequately by a single discipline, and draws on the disciplines with the goal of integrating their insights to construct a more comprehensive understanding." (Repko & Szostak, Introduction to Interdisciplinary Studies, 2014*)* Topics courses in Integrated Studies model this process for students, usually on the basis of the professor's ongoing research. In the two capstone courses, through one-on-one mentoring by an IS professor enhanced by mentoring from professors from each disciplinary emphasis, students produce an interdisciplinary senior thesis. Graduates from our department have used their hands-on experience with the thesis to secure employment in fields related to the thesis, to start businesses, and to go on to graduate and professional programs (medical school, law school, masters in business administration, social work, public administration, etc.)

Special program characteristics:
- Students engage in Interdisciplinary work that culminates in a rigorous senior thesis or project aimed to help students transition to graduate/professional school or toward careers.
- Students receive one-on-one mentoring from multiple faculty members throughout the senior thesis process.
- Students work closely with departmental academic advisors to meet student-centered objectives set out in an advising syllabus.
- Students completing the Integrated Studies degree have developed skills in thinking, writing, speaking, problem solving, collaborative work, gathering and analyzing data, and have done so on the foundation of solid (but not exhaustive) disciplinary emphases.
- Faculty do campus-wide interdisciplinary work that includes team teaching and collaborative projects across disciplines.

Objectives

Objective Name: Program Rigor
Objective (1)**:** Increase and Demonstrate Program Rigor & Selectivity
Supported UVU Objectives:
Primary Objective: Serious 1: Outstanding Teaching
Additional Objective: Serious 2: Culture of Scholarship
Additional Objective: Serious 4: High-Quality Programs and Services
Supported UVU Objective Rationale: Increasing and demonstrating program rigor and selectivity meets the UVU objectives by ensuring continuous quality improvement measured at the senior thesis level via

an external review. A culture of scholarship is developed as students are encouraged to engage in a competitive academic experience by participating in conferences such as NCUR and UCUR, submitting work to campus journals, engaging in collaborative research projects, etc. Increasing and demonstrating the program's rigor ensures that Integrated Studies remains a high-quality program that serves the needs of a diverse and dedicated student population.

Objective Name: Increase Program Headcount
Objective (2)**:** Increase matriculation so headcount remains above 100 during the low-point that occurs after Spring graduation.
Supported UVU Objectives:
Primary Objective: Serious 3: Retain Students, Faculty, and Staff
Additional Objective: Student Success 1: Academic Success
Supported UVU Objective Rationale: Increasing program headcount meets the UVU objective of retaining students. Strategies are being employed to reduce the number of students who leave the program without graduating. This is also related to academic success because more students will complete their program of study and graduate.

Objective Name: Community Building
Objective (3)**:** Help students in the Integrated Studies program feel connected to the program and to fellow students.
Supported UVU Objectives:
Primary Objective: Student Success 2: University Experience
Additional Objective: Engaged 1: Engage Students
Additional Objective: Inclusive 3: Inviting and Safe Environment
Supported UVU Objective Rationale: Building a strong community of Integrated Studies students will help improve students' experience here at UVU and encourage them to become engaged learners with their cohort of fellow students. The Integrated Studies program will seek to provide an inviting environment where diverse students can strive to push the boundaries of education and find innovative ways to solve complex problems they are passionate about.

Objective Name: Ongoing Thesis & Curriculum Improvement
Objective (4)**:** Faculty & staff of the Integrated Studies program incorporate theory and best practices to ensure that the curriculum is interdisciplinary and helps students to successfully transition toward post-graduation goals. During meetings in Fall of 18, faculty are reviewing the core curriculum to ensure that it fits together in a logical way that prepares students for the senior thesis.
Supported UVU Objectives:
Primary Objective: Serious 1: Outstanding Teaching
Additional Objective: Student Success 3: Lifelong Learning
Additional Objective: Operate Ethically and Effectively 2: Planning
Supported UVU Objective Rationale: Ongoing thesis and curriculum improvement is at the very heart of outstanding teaching. The continuous self-review process that faculty undergo while teaching courses ensures that students receive a high-quality experience. One of the objectives identified by faculty is that Integrated Studies topics courses (IS 300R & IS 350R) will nourish students' "intellectual curiosity" in an

interdisciplinary way, instilling in students an attitude of lifelong learning. This objective is closely connected to operating ethically and effectively; faculty and staff feel accountable for providing a program informed by research on interdisciplinary theory and best teaching and advising practices.

Objective Name: Asserting Program Identity
Objective (5)**:** In order to help students get the most out of their education in the Integrated Studies program, the faculty and staff will focus on clearly communicating the program's history, direction, and connection to a rich, international community of interdisciplinary thinkers and programs.
Supported UVU Objectives:
Primary Objective: Serious 4: High Quality Programs and Services
Additional Objective: Engaged 1: Engage Students
Supported UVU Objective Rationale: Asserting the program's identity helps the program achieve high quality by ensuring that students have a clear vision of the program's focus. The Integrated Studies program functions best when students understand the value of an interdisciplinary education and how they can apply what they've learned to the world outside of academia. Integrated Studies students can engage in crossing disciplinary boundaries to solve complex problems in their own lives and communities.

Assessment Indicators
Assessment Indicator Name: 1 Year Retention Measure
Assessment Indicator: The number of students who have been retained by (or graduated from) the program within the last 12-month period will be gathered.
Assessed Objective (2)**:** Increase Program Headcount
Rationale: This measurement provides an indication of how often students are unable to complete our program or choose to transfer to other programs. Increasing this number will result in fewer students leaving the program.
Threshold of Objective Achievement: The rate of retention should be equal to or greater than the level at the previous year: 55.7% in 2016-2017
Data Year: 2017-2018
Results: The one-year retention rate for 2017-2018 is 69.4%

Assessment Indicator Name: Graduate Survey Report
Assessment Indicator: A program graduate survey is provided to Integrated Studies students who are graduating in the Fall or Spring. Discussion about incorporating the survey into curriculum to increase the response rate may take place in the future. The survey serves two functions: 1) to provide anonymous student feedback about the quality and experience of the program and 2) to give students an opportunity to reflect on their experience in the program and make a smooth transition to success after graduation.
Assessed Objective: Community Building (3), Asserting Program Identity (5), & Ongoing Thesis & Curriculum Improvement (4)
Rationale: The report on the graduate survey provides both qualitative and quantitative measures of the student experience in the program *as reported by students.*This data will take various forms, but the substance of the graduate survey seeks to measure the effectiveness of the program's advising, teaching, curriculum, and community elements.

Threshold of Objective Achievement: Because this metric is complex and consists of many data points as well as qualitative feedback, the best threshold of objective achievement is having 1 or more program changes that were catalyzed by the feedback provided from the report.

Data Year: 2017-2018

Results: See Appendix A (Graduate Survey Report). This year the faculty have updated their syllabi and are working collaboratively to ensure that students have a clearer understanding of the value of the IS 300R and IS 350R courses. This was a direct result of the feedback provided by the survey that some students did not see the connection between these courses and their chosen emphases.

Assessment Indicator Name: Post-Graduate Employment and Graduate School Admission Data

Assessment Indicator: The advisors of the Integrated Studies Program have developed strategies for collecting data about student success after graduation. These data come in two varieties: graduate school acceptance/completion as well as career trajectories, compiled into a single report.

Assessed Objective: Program Rigor (1) & Increase Program Headcount (2)

Rationale: Having clear data about what students do after graduation helps them to make informed decisions about pursuing the program. Demonstrating the success of the program's alumni can make the program more appealing, bolstering recruitment efforts.

Threshold of Objective Achievement: The individualized nature of Interdisciplinary Programs results in student populations with a variety of career and graduate program admission goals. The rate of graduate school admission should be greater than the national average for similar institutions (open-enrollment, public, non-profit). In the future, an objective measure of the ratio of students who meet their graduate school or career goal will be considered. Example: ⅔ of students who express an interest in going to graduate school are accepted.

Data Year: 2008-2018

Results: See Appendix B (Post Graduate Outcomes Report). The career trajectories of students led them to various jobs in a large number of sectors of the economy. Integrated Studies alumni found work in education, dental, marketing, management, social work, technology, entrepreneurship and many other fields. According to a 2017 report on admission and success in graduate programs for the united states (cited in appendix B), the national average for graduate school admission within 10 years of completing an undergraduate program is 40% During the 10 year-study period, Integrated Studies alumni were accepted to a graduate/professional school at a rate of 47%.

Assessment Indicator Name: Senior Thesis External Evaluator Report

Assessment Indicator: Every 5 years, the Integrated Studies Program invites an external evaluator to assess the quality of student senior thesis work. The evaluator reviews a randomly-generated sample of thesis work spanning the 5-year period in question and provides commendations and recommendations, which are used for program improvement.

Assessed Objective: Ongoing Thesis & Curriculum Improvement (4)

Rationale: The feedback provided by the external evaluator is used to inform faculty decisions about how to teach core Integrated Studies courses, particularly the Capstone courses (IS 4980 & IS 4990), but also the IS 300R/350R topics courses.

The senior thesis is a rigorous requirement (30-60 pages, generally, and orally defended before a committee) which challenges students to solve complex problems in innovative ways.

Threshold of Objective Achievement: Because the thesis evaluation is qualitative, a qualitative threshold of success must be used. Success is achieved if the evaluator indicates that the overall quality of the thesis work has improved or, if the quality has not improved, that the program takes steps to implement the evaluator's recommendations for improvement.

Data Year: 2013-2016

Results: See Appendix C (Outside Evaluation of Senior Theses).The external evaluator, Dr. Schoemaker, indicated the quality of thesis projects had "greatly improved," that "the disparity between good and bad projects has been narrowed considerably," and that "It is clear that the faculty and administrators of the Integrated Studies Program have executed several of the recommendations from previous assessments."

Assessment Indicator Name: Active Student Headcount

Assessment Indicator: The advisors for the Integrated Studies program maintain an up-to-date database of students actively pursuing the program. The number of students on this report before and after graduation will be recorded and presented here to give indicators of both high and low points in program headcount.

Assessed Objective: Increase Program Headcount (2)

Rationale: This indicator measures the assessed objective directly, there is no clearer way of determining if the goal is being met.

Threshold of Objective Achievement: Low-point headcount exceeds 100 students.

Data Year: NA

Results: This is a new objective that the program will begin measuring this year. Consequently there is no past data available. The first two samples for this indicator will be taken at the end of Fall 2018 and Spring 2019 semesters.