

University Assessment Committee - Liberal Studies Subcommittee

Summary Report of the Local Assessment of IUP's  
Expected Learning Outcomes for the Academic Year 2008-09

Prepared by Dr. Kevin McKee and Dr. David Pistole, Subcommittee Co-Chairs



*Procurement of Assignments:*

A Subcommittee constructed document (Appendix C) was electronically delivered to all Department Chairpersons as an initial step. This document explained the assessment strategy and the Subcommittee's goal of obtaining writing samples from senior-level students within department's capstone courses. If a department did not offer a capstone course, assignments from senior-level courses of majors-only students were accepted. The purposes of first contacting Chairperson's were to provide them notification this assessment was about to begin, and to also seek their cooperation in identifying appropriate capstone/senior-level courses from which assignments might be obtained. Clearly noted in this Subcommittee document was that any faculty member willing to provide assignments would be doing so voluntarily. After notifying the Chairpersons, Subcommittee members were assigned to a college. Their purpose was to contact each Chairperson within that college to answer any questions he/she might have

*Review of Assignments*

Seven Subcommittee members received a packet of 42 assignments and two members received a packet with 52 assignments to rate in all 9 categories noted in the rubrics. The rater was charged with identifying the level at which a document sati





have little awareness of moral (or socio-political) principles relevant to the subject as well as little awareness of the moral (or socio-political) concerns that should be prompted by the subject under discussion. Finally, 8% of our seniors have no awareness of moral (or socio-political) principles relevant to the subject and no awareness of the moral (or socio-political) concerns that should be prompted by the subject under discussion.

**Learning Outcome 3** – Respect for the Identities, Histories and Culture of Others (n = 289 assessments)

The rubric for the Respect for the Identities, Histories and Culture of Others of Student Learning Outcome 3 included one trait: The recognition of different perspectives and the awareness of personal cultural position. Based on these criteria, 29% of IUP seniors demonstrated skills at the Advanced level, 36% at the Proficient level, 24% at the Developing level and 10% at the Undeveloped level. Thus, 65% of our IUP seniors have their awareness and arguments shaped by the needs of others (still bettering self), while 24% have an awareness of other arguments but feel that their own position is best. Finally, 10% of our seniors show a lack of awareness of different perspectives.

#### Limitations

These findings may be limited by the following:

### Summary

An important finding from this year's assessment was that the use of capstone/senior level courses resulted in higher levels in each of the three Student Learning Outcomes and more specifically in each of the three (nine total) subgroups of each level as compared to the use of LBST 499 courses. The increases were from a minimum of 10% to a maximum 49%. These findings support the supposition of last year's group that the students take their major courses more seriously than the LBST synthesis courses.

The results of our assessment of the first learning outcome, **Informed Learners**, indicate that our seniors are receiving very good training in the Natural and Social Science mode and the Humanities mode. The Arts mode appears to follow the trends of the other two modes but because of low n numbers it is difficult to make any reliable predictions. Seventy percent and 71% of our students are performing at the Advanced or Proficient levels in the Natural and Social Science and Humanities modes respectively versus 50% from last year's assessment. In



A final note is that although the report lumps all colleges together in its analysis there are separate analyses of the assessment data for individual colleges. These data are available upon request.

APPENDIX A

Expected Student Learning Outcomes

## APPENDIX B

### Rubrics for Expected Student Learning Outcomes

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Section I: Informed Learners understand nature and society through forms of inquiry fundamental to the sciences, the humanities, and the arts. Learners are informed by knowledge and ways of knowing that extend beyond core concepts enabling them to link theory and practice.

## APPENDIX B

### Rubrics for Expected Student Learning Outcomes

Section II: Empowered Learners are critical thinkers who demonstrate intellectual agility and creativity and the ability to manage or create change. They are able to derive meaning from experience and

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Section III: Responsible Learners are engaged citizens of a diverse democratic society who have a deep sense of social responsibility and ethical judgment. They are responsible for their personal actions and civic values.

	<b>Acknowledgment of Sources (Academic Integrity)</b>	<b>Sense of Social Justice</b>	<b>Respect for Identities, Histories, &amp; Culture of Others</b>
	Trait 1 – Documentation and acknowledgment of sources.  Trait 2 – Differentiation of original thought and ideas of others	Trait 1 – Understanding of moral principals relevant to subject.  Trait 2 – Ability to draw action guiding inferences from principals	Trait 1 – Recognition of different perspectives and awareness of personal cultural position.
<b>Advanced</b>	T.1. Provides complete and accurate citations throughout the work. Clearly acknowledges the influence of sources on the work.  T.2. Clearly differentiates between original thought and ideas drawn from other sources.	T.1. Articulates moral (or socio-political) principals relevant to subject.  T.2. Implications of said principals for subject under discussion are well considered.	T. 1. Uses awareness of historical and/or contemporary issues to benefit other groups.
<b>Proficient</b>	T.1. Provides adequate and generally accurate citations throughout the work. Attributes different opinions and evidence to sources.  T.2. Adequately differentiates between own ideas and those from cited material.	T.1. Articulates moral (or socio-political) principals relevant to subject.  T.2. Implications of said principals for subject under discussion are examined with limited success.	T.1. Awareness and arguments are shaped by needs of others (still bettering self).
<b>Developing</b>	T.1. Provides some citations, but the practice is inconsistent and the format is sometimes inaccurate. Occasionally attributes different opinions and evidence to sources.  T.2. Occasionally differentiates between own ideas and those from other sources.	T.1. Little awareness of moral (or socio-political) principals relevant to subject.  T.2. Little awareness of the moral (or socio-political) concerns that should be prompted by subject under discussion.	T. 1. Awareness of other arguments but own position is best.
<b>Undeveloped</b>	T.1. Makes limited or no use of		

## APPENDIX C: Document sent to Chairpersons

To: Department Chairpersons and Faculty Teaching Capstone/Senior-Level Courses  
From: University Assessment Committee, Liberal Studies Subcommittee  
Co-Chairs: Kevin McKee (HPED), David Pistole (Biology)

### Overview

The Liberal Studies Subcommittee of the University Assessment Committee (UAC) evaluates facets of IUP's Liberal Studies program and disseminates its findings to the University's Liberal Studies Committee and the Provost's Office. This spring our subcommittee is replicating a component of last year's assessment plan by evaluating senior-level writing assignments to assist in determining the extent to which they meet the Expected Student Learning Outcomes approved by University Senate in May of 2006. Based on recommendations from last year's committee, this year's committee is seeking work from department-level senior capstone courses from the Fall 2008 and Spring 2009 semesters. We are asking faculty involved in these courses to provide written work for this evaluation. For departments that did not offer a capstone course this year, written work originating from another departmental senior (400)-level course would be acceptable for submission and assessment. In this instance the course should consist of department majors only; courses with mixed major enrollment are not applicable.

### Anonymity\*

To ensure anonymity all work submitted will have the names of instructors and students removed prior to review by subcommittee members. The removal process can be one of two methods:

- 1) participating faculty delete (white out) names prior to submitting
- 2) UAC Liberal Studies Co-Chairs and/or staff of t

