

2013

## University Studies Annual Assessment 2012-2013

Portland State University. University Studies Program

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**PORTLAND STATE UNIVERSITY**  
annual assessment report 2012 - 2013





University Studies gathers information on students' learning and experiences in University Studies courses in order to improve our practice and our students' outcomes. We use surveys, small group discussions, and review of student and course portfolios in our assessment efforts. The tools and methods used to assess student learning are faculty driven and developed. The information gathered is used by individual faculty, faculty teams, program levels and the program as a whole to gauge program effectiveness and inform program decisions.

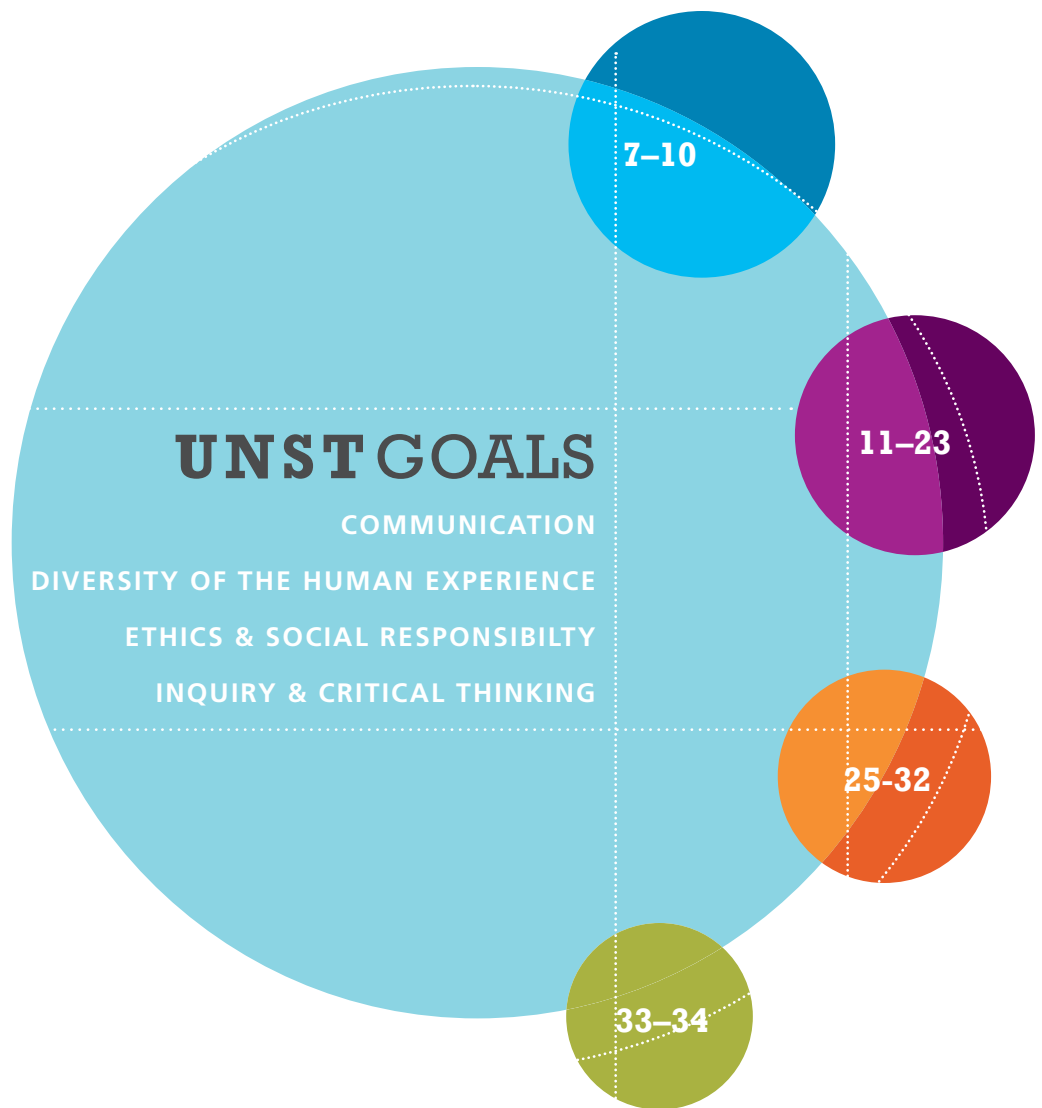
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# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

During the 2012–2013 academic year, the University Studies (UNST) program continued to use existing survey instruments and course evaluations to conduct assessment at the Freshman, Sophomore and Senior levels. Direct assessment of student learning related to University Studies goals included review of student portfolios at the Freshman-level, research papers at the sophomore level and course portfolios at the Capstone level. Qualitative analysis of student comments supplemented the findings from Capstone surveys and Course ePortfolio review.

From student responses to UNST course evaluation surveys it is clear that University Studies goals are being addressed at all levels of the program. All of the surveys asked students whether they had opportunities to engage in learning related to University Studies goals. On all but two items, Freshman Inquiry (FRINQ), Sophomore Inquiry (SINQ) and Capstone students' average agreement rating was 4.0 or higher on a 5-point agreement scale (4 = Agree 5 = Strongly agree), remaining stable or increasing from last year. In FRINQ and SINQ, student ratings remained at a consistently high level. For the 2012–13 school year, although the mean score remains high, fewer Capstone students agreed that their courses had explored issues of diversity or helped them understand local social issues.

At the FRINQ level, student portfolios were reviewed using the Diversity, Writing, and Quantitative Literacy rubrics. The portfolio review suggests that students' learning in diversity has improved over the last three reviews (2009, 2011, 2013). After improving steadily across previous reviews, students' writing scores leveled off in 2013. Students' quantitative literacy scores had increased between 2009 and 2011, but dropped again in 2013.

At the SINQ level, one new Cluster began implementing an assessment plan. The Families and Society SINQ/Cluster developed a common rubric to score a key assignment and created a set of best practices to share with faculty across sections of the SINQ course. Other SINQ/Cluster groups made progress toward creating common assignments, reviewed student papers, and convened

faculty meetings which focused on coherence across SINQ courses. At the Capstone level this year, reviewers assessed Capstone course ePortfolios related to the diversity learning goal. This review revealed that the majority of courses provide opportunities for students to meet our learning goals. We also discovered that while students are asked to reflect on and analyze diversity in most courses, deeper analysis could be prompted by more specific reflection instructions.

Finally, the UNST writing coordinator has been working with FRINQ and SINQ mentors and faculty for the last few years to more fully implement writing as a process in UNST courses. As part of this work, a faculty group has clarified the writing outcomes for FRINQ and SINQ. During Spring 2013, a group of ePortfolio reviewers convened to discuss the revised outcomes and how they align with our current ePortfolio. That conversation suggested that there are aspects of the clarified expectations for writing that we may not be able to assess using the ePortfolio, but with a new rubric aligned more closely with the outcomes, we could evaluate many aspects of our writing outcomes through an ePortfolio review process.



## TOOLS AND METHODS

### Prior Learning Survey

**Purpose:** The Prior Learning Survey asked about students' academic experiences prior to attending PSU, reasons for and concerns about attending college, and early college experiences and plans. The survey results provide information to individual faculty about their students and to the program about the overall preparation and needs of the incoming freshman class.

**Method:** During the first two weeks of Fall 2012, Freshman Inquiry students completed a Prior Learning Assessment. This on-line survey was administered during FRINQ mentor sessions. 1,089 students completed the survey for a 91% response rate.

### FRINQ End-of-Year Survey

**Purpose:** The FRINQ End-of-Year Survey asked students to rate their experiences in their FRINQ course over the 2012–2013 academic year. Students responded to questions about the course format, faculty pedagogical practices, and mentor contribution to the course. The survey also asked about experiences with advising, comfort on campus and plans for the fall term. The results provide information to individual faculty about their course and to the program about students' overall experience in FRINQ.

**Method:** During the final three weeks of Spring term 2013, FRINQ students completed the End-of-Year Survey. This on-line survey was administered during mentor sessions. 787 students responded to the survey for a response rate of 77%.

### FRINQ Portfolio Review

**Purpose:** The FRINQ Portfolio Review process scores student portfolios against rubrics developed to measure student learning related to University Studies goals. The results provide information to faculty teams about student learning in FRINQ themes and to the program about students' overall learning in FRINQ.

**Method:** During their yearlong FRINQ courses, students develop electronic portfolios representing their work and reflection relating to the four University Studies goals. For each goal, students provide two forms of evidence showing their learning related to the goal. For examples of student ePortfolios see:

[sites.google.com/a/pdx.edu/eportresources/Home/ePortfolio-Showcase](https://sites.google.com/a/pdx.edu/eportresources/Home/ePortfolio-Showcase)

During Spring 2013, students were asked for permission to evaluate their portfolios as part of program assessment for University Studies. 228 student portfolios were randomly selected for review. When electronic portfolios with bad URLs were excluded, we ended up reviewing 218 portfolios. This year, the portfolio review process focused on the Communication (Writing and Quantitative Literacy) and Diversity goals. Each goal was assessed using a 6-point rubric, where 6 is a score expected of a graduating senior.

Rubrics are available at [www.pdx.edu/unst/university-studies-goals](http://www.pdx.edu/unst/university-studies-goals)

Portfolio review takes place in June, after Spring grades have been posted. Forty portfolio reviewers, representing faculty and graduate students from a broad array of departments across Portland State University, spend one day per goal assessing student portfolios. The morning of each day is spent orienting reviewers to the rubric, assessing practice portfolios, and calibrating reviewers so that they are reviewing portfolios similarly. After reviewers are calibrated, each portfolio is reviewed by two reviewers. When reviewers' scores are the same or one point apart, the portfolio receives a score that is the average of the two ratings. If the reviewers' scores differ by more than 1 point, a third reviewer looks at the portfolio and scores it. If the third score differs from the first two, a conference is called among the reviewers to determine a final score. Inter-rater agreement for the rubrics were: Writing, 82%; Diversity, 71%; and Quantitative Literacy, 86%.



# FRESHMAN INQUIRY ASSESSMENT

## DATA & FINDINGS: FRINQ END-OF-YEAR SURVEY

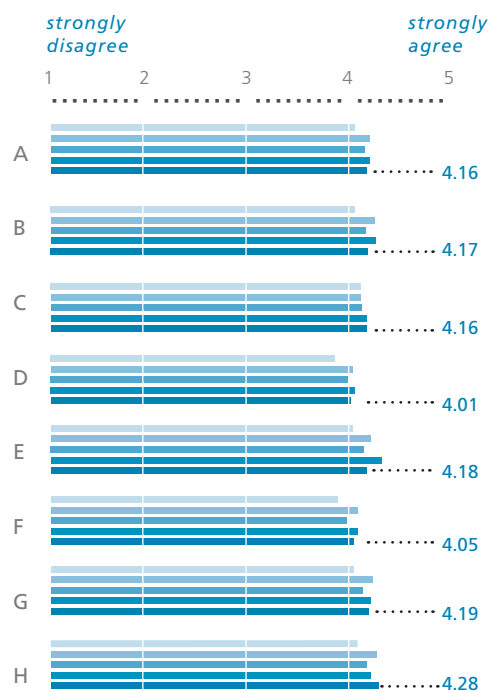
### KEY

- A Apply course material to improve critical thinking
- B Acquire skills in working with others as a member of a team
- C Explore issues of diversity such as race, class, gender, sexual orientation, ethnicity
- D Develop skills in expressing myself orally
- E Develop skills in expressing myself in writing
- F Learn how to find and use resources for answering or solving problems
- G Learn to analyze and critically evaluate ideas, arguments, and multiple points of view
- H Explore ethical issues

YEARS '08-09 '09-10 '10-11 '11-12 '12-13

MA = MODERATE AGREEMENT HA = HIGH AGREEMENT

### The mean responses for FRINQ course End-of-Year Surveys



### The moderate & high agreement means for FRINQ course End-of-Year Surveys

	'08-09		'09-10		'10-11		'11-12		'12-13	
	MA	HA	MA	HA	MA	HA	MA	HA	MA	HA
A	18.9	78.4	6.1	91.8	23.3	76.7	11.4	88.6	17.1	82.9
B	24.3	75.7	16.3	87.8	23.3	72.1	8.6	91.4	17.1	80.0
C	29.7	67.6	22.4	73.5	23.3	69.8	28.6	71.4	22.9	77.1
D	48.6	48.6	38.8	63.3	37.2	58.1	34.3	62.9	34.3	65.7
E	21.6	75.7	10.2	89.8	20.9	76.7	8.6	91.4	25.7	74.3
F	40.5	56.8	24.5	75.5	34.9	62.8	22.9	74.3	40.0	60.0
G	18.9	78.4	8.2	93.9	18.6	81.4	14.3	82.9	14.3	85.7
H	24.3	73.0	8.2	91.8	23.3	76.7	20	80	8.6	91.4

\*In courses with high agreement 75–100% of students agreed or strongly agreed with the statement. Moderate agreement represents 50–74% of students and low agreement indicates that less than half of students agreed with the statement.

# FRESHMAN INQUIRY ASSESSMENT

## DATA & FINDINGS: FRINQ END-OF-YEAR SURVEY

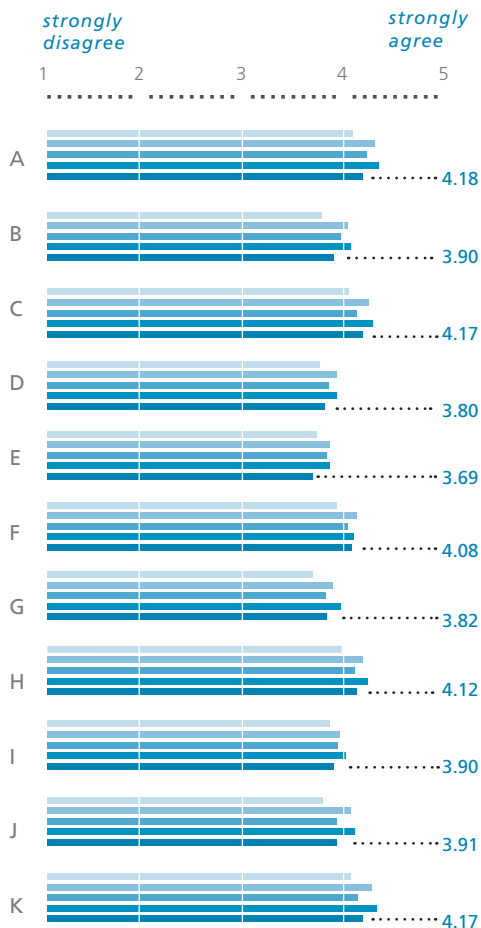
### KEY

- A Displayed a personal interest in students and their learning
- B Scheduled course work in ways which encouraged students to stay up to date in their work
- C Formed "teams" or "discussion groups" to facilitate learning
- D Made it clear how each topic fit into the course
- E Explained course material clearly and concisely
- F Related course material to real life situations
- G Inspired students to set and achieve goals which really challenged them
- H Asked students to share ideas and experiences with others whose backgrounds and viewpoints differ from their own
- I Provided timely & frequent feedback on tests, reports, etc. to help students improve
- J Encouraged student-faculty interaction outside of class
- K Used a variety of methods: papers, presentations, class projects, exams, etc. to evaluate student progress

YEARS '08-09 '09-10 '10-11 '11-12 '12-13

MA = MODERATE AGREEMENT HA = HIGH AGREEMENT

### The mean responses for FRINQ FACULTY course End-of-Year Surveys.



### The moderate & high agreement means for FRINQ FACULTY course End-of-Year Surveys.

	'08-09		'09-10		'10-11		'11-12		'12-13	
	MA	HA	MA	HA	MA	HA	MA	HA	MA	HA
A	27.0	67.6	12.2	87.8	18.6	79.1	14.3	85.7	28.6	71.4
B	56.8	35.1	46.9	57.1	30.2	65.1	31.4	62.9	37.1	45.7
C	29.7	67.6	18.4	81.6	25.6	72.1	14.3	85.7	17.1	77.1
D	51.4	35.1	49.0	42.9	39.5	44.2	42.9	45.7	51.4	31.4
E	54.1	35.1	38.8	51.0	25.6	48.8	40	40	45.7	22.9
F	43.2	45.9	30.6	71.4	44.2	51.2	31.4	65.7	40.0	60.0
G	32.4	40.5	42.9	46.9	46.5	34.9	40	51.4	51.4	28.6
H	18.9	75.7	16.3	81.6	34.9	65.1	25.7	74.3	28.6	71.4
I	27.0	59.5	28.6	61.2	34.9	53.5	45.7	51.4	37.1	48.6
J	32.4	54.1	24.5	73.5	25.6	58.1	42.9	57.1	48.6	45.7
K	16.2	81.1	10.2	89.8	20.9	76.7	11.4	88.6	11.4	88.6

\*In courses with high agreement 75–100% of students agreed or strongly agreed with the statement. Moderate agreement represents 50–74% of students and low agreement indicates that less than half of students agreed with the statement.

## SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

### Course Evaluation

In general, students agreed that they had the opportunities to address all four of the University Studies goals in their FRINQ courses. Means on these items ranged from 4.01 to 4.28 on a 5-point agreement scale. For all items, mean scores remained relatively stable from the 2009–10 to the 2012–13 school year, with means consistently above 4. Students also generally agreed with statements about their faculty members’ teaching practices. All items had means above 3.9 on a 5-point scale except items related to faculty members explaining materials clearly and making clear connections between course topics.

Another way to look at course evaluation data is to look at the percentage of courses where there were high levels of agreement among students regarding UNST goals and faculty teaching practices. For 91% of UNST courses, there was high agreement among students that they had opportunities to explore ethical issues. However, fewer than half of our FRINQ courses reached high agreement that their faculty explained course material clearly, made clear how topics fit into the course, or provided timely and frequent feedback.

## DATA AND FINDINGS - FRINQ PORTFOLIO REVIEW

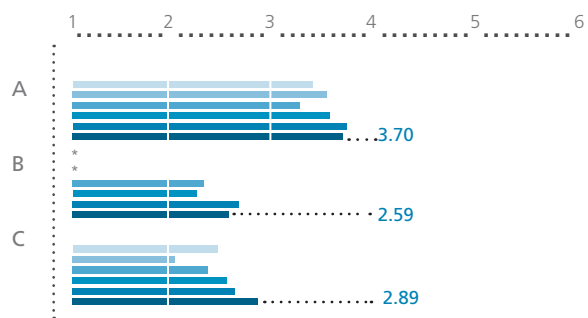
**KEY** UNIVERSITY STUDIES GOALS

- A Writing
- B \*Quantitative Literacy
- C Diversity

\* Comparison with previous years are not appropriate because the QL rubric was adjusted during 2007. The changes contribute to a more comprehensive rubric, but they do not allow for comparison across years.

YEARS    '02–03    '04–05    '06–07    '08–09    '10–11    '12–13

### UNIVERSITY STUDIES GOALS Mean portfolio scores



### FRINQ Portfolio Review

The mean writing score has increased over the last three reviews and reached its highest ever in 2011 (3.74). This year, the writing mean score remained high (3.7). The mean quantitative literacy score increased between 2009 and 2011 and dropped slightly in 2013 (2.59). The mean diversity score has increased steadily since 2005 and reached its highest score in 2013 (2.89).

# SOPHOMORE INQUIRY ASSESSMENT

## TOOLS AND METHODS

### SINQ End-of-Term Survey

**Purpose:** The SINQ End-of-Term Survey asked students to rate their experiences in their SINQ course. Students responded to questions about the course format, faculty pedagogical practices, and mentor contribution to the course. The results provide information to individual faculty about their course and to the program about students' overall experience in SINQ.

**Method:** During the final three weeks of each term during the 2012–2013 academic year, SINQ students completed the End-of-Term Survey. This on-line survey was administered during mentor sessions. 2794 students responded to the survey.

### Sophomore Inquiry/Cluster Activity & Assessment Reports

#### Global Perspectives

**Purpose:** The SINQ End-of-Term Survey asked students to rate their experiences in their SINQ course. Students responded to questions about the course format, faculty pedagogical practices, and mentor contribution to the course. The results provide information to individual faculty about their course and to the program about students' overall experience in SINQ.

The Global Perspectives (GP) SINQ evaluations includes questions that assess how well the course covered themes that are central to the learning expectations in the SINQ course. The questions were designed to address the course content, the students' reasons for taking the course and the students' plans to pursue academic activities related to the Global Perspectives SINQ course.

**Method:** During the final three weeks of each term during the 2012–13 academic year, SINQ students completed the End-of-Term Survey. This on-line survey was administered during mentor sessions. 248 students responded from Global Perspectives courses. 2794 students responded overall.

#### Interpreting the Past Research Paper Assessment

**Purpose:** The Interpreting the Past (ItP) SINQ chose to assess student writing during the 2011–12 school year. Specifically, the SINQ/Cluster coordinator was interested in understanding how students were performing on the research paper, which is an integral component of the SINQ course.

**Method:** The ItP SINQ/Cluster coordinator worked with the UNST Writing Coordinator to develop an analytic rubric representing the expectations for student writing in the ItP SINQ. The rubric included five categories, with each category represented by 4 levels of achievement. During Spring term, student papers were collected from five ItP courses. A total of 25 student papers were reviewed by SINQ faculty, the writing coordinator, the assessment director and a librarian. Each student paper was reviewed by two reviewers and given a score (1 through 4) on each of 5 writing elements. When there was disagreement, the paper was reviewed by a third reviewer.

#### Leading Social Change SINQ End-of-Term

**Purpose:** The SINQ End-of-Term Survey asked students to rate their experiences in their SINQ course. Students responded to questions about the course format, faculty pedagogical practices, and mentor contribution to the course. The results provide information to individual faculty about their course and to the program about students' overall experience in SINQ.

**Method:** During the final three weeks of each term during the 2012–13 academic year, SINQ students completed the End-of-Term Survey. This on-line survey was administered during mentor sessions. 153 students responded from Leading Social Change (LSC) courses. 2794 students responded overall.

#### Other LSC Activities

**Purpose:** The Leading Social Change SINQ faculty members represent three different departments—ELP, UNST, and PA. A formal introduction of faculty was necessary to build collaborative opportunities, share teaching insights, course content and materials, discuss alignment with student learning outcomes based on both UNST and LSC goals, and plan for assessment (list not exhaustive).

Continued...

# SOPHOMORE INQUIRY ASSESSMENT

## TOOLS AND METHODS

### Other LSC Activities Continued

**Method:** During Fall 2012 term all of the current SINQ faculty (Robin Baker, Greg Dardis, J.R. “Jones” Estes, Phyuusin Myint), cluster coordinator (Rita Sumner), and guest (Annie Knepler, UNST Writing Coordinator) met for introductions and sharing information and syllabi. Annie Knepler gave an overview about her role as writing coordinator, and provided examples and ideas for assessment planning.

Subsequent to the meeting, the cluster coordinator set up a faculty sandbox/shell in D2L to share information (current syllabi, documents, guidelines), and to use as a forum for general communication among SINQ faculty.

September 2013, Kevin Kecskes was added to the faculty list on the D2L shell because of his role in leading assessment for the Public Administration Civic Engagement Minor.

September 19, 2013 (prior to the start of Fall term) the SINQ faculty met along with Annie Knepler, UNST Writing Coordinator. The intent of the meeting was to discuss and refine an assessment plan for AY 2013–14. Dr. Knepler was added because of her expertise in guiding assessment of projects such as common writing assignments. Her input provided valuable information to aid in faculty decision making for planning the upcoming year.

The SINQ faculty agenda items included:

1. Discuss SINQ End-of-Term assessment data contained in this document
2. Review the SINQ end of term survey questions and determine if additional questions would be helpful to gain additional student perceptions from the specific Leading Social Change SINQ student learning outcomes
3. Determine course alignment assessment strategy
4. Settle on a plan of what the group can actually accomplish this upcoming year

### Families and Society

**Purpose:** During the first year of the Families and Society implementation, there was an emphasis on understanding the student experience, working toward common practices across SINQ courses and developing common assessment practices.

**Method:** Families and Society has added cluster-specific questions to the SINQ end-of-term survey reflecting cluster learning outcomes and asking open-ended questions about the student experience in the courses. The cluster coordinator convened regular meetings of the SINQ faculty to discuss a common assignment and develop a shared rubric for assessment. He has also developed best practices documents for F&S assignments that were shared among faculty.

# SOPHOMORE INQUIRY ASSESSMENT

## DATA & FINDINGS: SINQ END-OF-TERM SURVEY

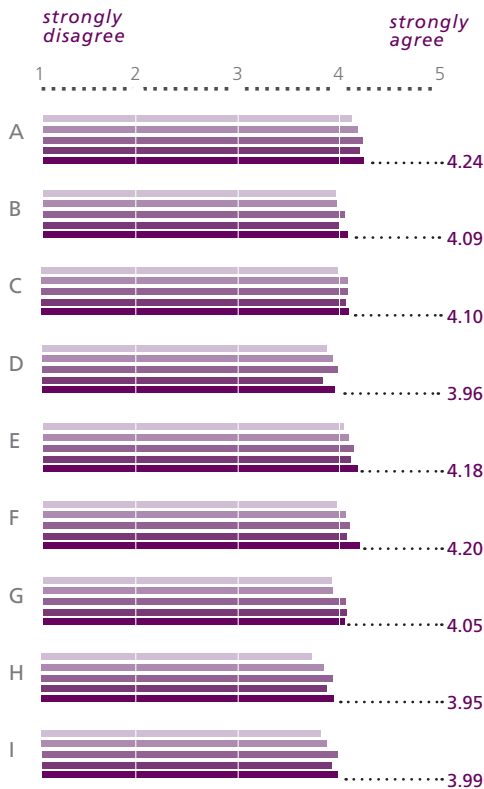
### KEY

- A** The course provided opportunities to learn to analyze & critically evaluate ideas, arguments, and multiple points of view
- B** The course provided opportunities to develop skills in working with others as a member of a team
- C** The course provided opportunities to explore issues of diversity such as race, class, gender, sexual orientation, ethnicity
- D** The course provided opportunities to develop skills in expressing myself orally
- E** The course provided opportunities to develop skills in expressing myself in writing
- F** The course provided opportunities to explore ethical issues and dilemmas
- G** It was clear how the work from the mentor session connected to the overall course
- H** I understand how this course fits into my PSU general education requirements
- I** Overall, I was satisfied with my experience in this class

YEARS    '08-09    '09-10    '10-11    '11-12    '12-13

MA = MODERATE AGREEMENT    HA = HIGH AGREEMENT

### The mean responses for SINQ STUDENTS course End-of-Year Surveys



### The moderate & high agreement means for SINQ STUDENTS course End-of-Year Surveys

	'08-09		'09-10		'10-11		'11-12		'12-13	
	MA	HA	MA	HA	MA	HA	MA	HA	MA	HA
A	21.8	74.4	15.4	81.1	16.8	81.8	13.2	84.3	11.9	86.7
B	20.3	70.7	31.5	62.2	20.3	67.8	20.1	65.4	20.7	68.1
C	28.6	57.1	23.8	65	28.7	61.5	27	62.3	28.9	65.2
D	36.8	50.4	39.2	54.5	25.9	62.9	32.2	50.4	36.7	52.5
E	30.8	66.2	23.8	72.7	23.8	74.8	24.5	73	22.2	75.6
F	35.3	57.9	23.8	66.4	28.7	67.8	28.3	67.3	22.2	75.6
G	39.8	54.1	36.4	55.2	26.6	67.8	30.8	64.8	40.7	54.1
H	48.1	40.6	41.3	49.7	46.2	47.6	41.5	51.6	51.9	43
I	33.1	49.6	32.2	55.2	34.3	57.3	34.6	54.7	37.0	55.6

\*In courses with high agreement 75-100% of students agreed or strongly agreed with the statement. Moderate agreement represents 50-74% of students and low agreement indicates that less than half of students agreed with the statement.

# SOPHOMORE INQUIRY ASSESSMENT

DATA & FINDINGS: SINQ END-OF-TERM SURVEY

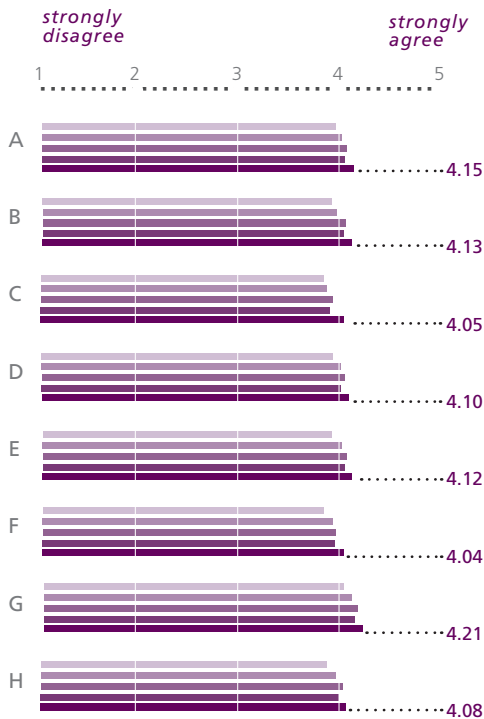
## KEY

- A Displayed a personal interest in students and their learning
- B Scheduled course work (class activities, tests, projects) in ways which encouraged students to stay up to date in their work
- B Provided timely and frequent feedback on test, reports, projects, etc. to help students improve
- D Used a variety of methods-papers, presentations, class projects, exams, etc. to evaluate student progress
- E Clearly stated the learning objectives for the overall course
- F Clearly stated the criteria for grading
- G Created an atmosphere that encouraged active student participation
- H Used activities and assignments that allowed me to feel personally engaged in my learning

YEARS '08-09 '09-10 '10-11 '11-12 '12-13

MA = MODERATE AGREEMENT HA = HIGH AGREEMENT

### The mean responses for SINQ STUDENTS course End-of-Year Surveys



### The moderate & high agreement means for SINQ FACULTY course End-of-Year Surveys

	'08-09		'09-10		'10-11		'11-12		'12-13	
	MA	HA	MA	HA	MA	HA	MA	HA	MA	HA
A	29.3	61.7	29.4	64.3	27.3	68.5	37.7	58.5	28.9	68.1
B	28.6	61.7	28.7	61.5	21.7	72.7	23.3	71.7	23.7	70.4
C	38.3	51.1	30.8	51.0	32.9	55.9	34.6	54.1	27.4	61.5
D	34.6	58.6	33.6	62.9	33.6	61.5	32.7	61.6	34.1	62.2
E	29.3	58.6	29.4	62.9	23.8	68.5	22	70.4	17.8	73.3
F	30.8	54.1	34.3	57.3	40.6	51.7	32.7	59.1	27.4	61.5
G	24.8	67.7	25.2	69.2	21.7	74.1	22.7	73.6	25.2	71.1
H	36.8	50.4	33.6	57.3	37.8	57.3	38.4	54.1	31.9	60.0

\*In courses with high agreement 75–100% of students agreed or strongly agreed with the statement. Moderate agreement represents 50–74% of students and low agreement indicates that less than half of students agreed with the statement.

# SOPHOMORE INQUIRY ASSESSMENT

DATA & FINDINGS: SINQ END-OF-TERM SURVEY

## SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

In general, students agreed that they had the opportunities to address all four of the University Studies goals in their SINQ courses. Means on these items ranged from 4.09–4.24 on a 5-point agreement scale. Compared with scores over the last five years, SINQ students in '2012–'13 had higher mean ratings across all of the items related to the UNST learning goals. In '2012–'13, students also had higher mean ratings related to increasing skills with team work. When looking at the proportion of courses where students showed consistent agreement with 'goal' items, there was no appreciable change between '2009–'10 and '2010–'11.

Students also generally agreed with statements about their faculty members' teaching practices. All items had means above 4 on a 5-point scale. Students were most likely to agree that faculty created an atmosphere that encouraged active participation ( $M = 4.21$ ). Mean scores for teaching items increased across all items. When looking at the proportion of courses where students show consistent agreement with teaching-related items, there was an increase between 2011–12 and 2012–13 in the number of courses where most students agreed that the faculty showed a personal interest in their learning, provided timely and frequent feedback, and used activities and assignments that helped students feel personally engaged in their learning.



# SOPHOMORE INQUIRY ASSESSMENT

## GLOBAL PERSPECTIVES END-OF-TERM SURVEY

### Students taking the Summer course were using it to fulfill:

UNIVERSITY STUDIES REQUIREMENT - 80.6% // BLACK STUDIES REQUIREMENT - 2.3% // INTERNATIONAL STUDIES REQUIREMENT - 23%

Please tell us how strongly you agree or disagree with the following statements about this course:

### This course has enhanced my understanding of:

3.97	70.5	GLOBALIZATION
3.99	71.8	DEVELOPMENT
4.06	75.1	TRADITION & MODERNITY
4.13	77.8	NATIONALISM / THE NATION-STATE
4.13	75.6	COLONIALISM & IMPERIALISM
4.40	84.3	HISTORY AS IT SHAPES THE PRESENT

### KEY

MEAN Students with high agreement: 75-100% of students agreed or strongly agreed with the statement.

### Q & A

- + Do you plan on taking any upper division courses related to this cluster or region? **YES - 59%**
- + Do you plan to complete the Global Perspectives Cluster? **YES - 27.2%**
- + Do you plan to study abroad while at Portland State? **YES - 42.9%**
- + Are you currently taking or do you plan to take language courses other than English? **YES - 84.8%**

Students reported planning to study Arabic, Chinese, Farsi, French, German, Italian, Japanese, Korean, Latin, Russian, and Spanish.

### KEY

- A The course provided opportunities to learn to analyze & critically evaluate ideas, arguments and multiple points of view
- B The course provided opportunities to develop skills in working with others as a member of a team
- C The course provided opportunities to explore issues of diversity such as race, class, gender, sexual orientation, ethnicity
- D The course provided opportunities to develop skills in expressing myself orally
- E The course provided opportunities to develop skills in expressing myself in writing
- F The course provided opportunities to explore ethical issues and dilemmas
- G It was clear how the work from the mentor session connected to the overall course
- H The course provided opportunities to develop skills in expressing myself in writing
- I I understand how this course fits into my PSU general education requirements
- J Overall, I was satisfied with my experience in this class

### Comparative Learning Experience course End-of-Year Surveys GP SINQ to OVERALL

MEAN \* STANDARD DEVIATION

	Overall		Global Perspectives	
A	4.24	0.88	4.22	0.83
B	4.09	0.96	3.70	1.06
C	4.10	1.01	4.22	0.92
D	3.96	1.00	3.92	0.95
E	4.18	0.90	4.11	0.88
F	4.20	0.93	4.20	0.88
G	3.95	1.11	4.02	1.06
H	4.05	1.07	3.68	1.06
I	3.79	1.03	3.90	1.08
J	3.99	1.07	4.01	0.97

\*Ratings made on a scale of 1=Strongly disagree to 5=Strongly Agree.

# SOPHOMORE INQUIRY ASSESSMENT

GLOBAL PERSPECTIVES END-OF-TERM SURVEY

## KEY

- A Displayed a personal interest in students and their learning
- B Scheduled course work (class activities, tests, projects) in ways which encouraged students to stay up to date in their work
- C Provided timely and frequent feedback on test, reports, projects, etc. to help students improve
- D Used a variety of methods: papers, presentations, class projects, exams, etc. to evaluate student progress
- E Clearly stated the learning objectives for the overall course
- F Clearly stated the criteria for grading
- G Created an atmosphere that encouraged active student participation
- H Used activities and assignments that allowed me to feel personally engaged in my learning

## Comparative Faculty End-of-Year Surveys GP SINQ to OVERALL

MEAN \* STANDARD DEVIATION

	Overall		Global Perspectives	
A	4.15	0.92	4.12	0.86
B	4.13	0.96	4.06	0.95
C	4.05	1.04	4.04	1.01
D	4.10	0.93	4.05	0.90
E	4.12	0.99	4.10	0.91
F	4.04	1.04	4.00	1.02
G	4.21	0.95	4.18	0.89
H	4.08	1.00	3.98	0.96

\*Ratings made on a scale of 1=Strongly disagree to 5=Strongly Agree.

# SOPHOMORE INQUIRY ASSESSMENT

## LEADING SOCIAL CHANGE END-OF-TERM ASSESSMENT DATA

### KEY

- A The course provided opportunities to learn to analyze & critically evaluate ideas, arguments, and multiple points of view
- B The course provided opportunities to develop skills in working with others as a member of a team
- C The course provided opportunities to explore issues of diversity such as race, class, gender, sexual orientation, ethnicity
- D The course provided opportunities to develop skills in expressing myself orally
- E The course provided opportunities to develop skills in expressing myself in writing
- F The course provided opportunities to explore ethical issues and dilemmas
- G It was clear how the work from the mentor session connected to the overall course
- H The course provided opportunities to develop skills in expressing myself in writing
- I I understand how this course fits into my PSU general education requirements
- J Overall, I was satisfied with my experience in this class

### Comparative Learning Experience course End-of-Year Surveys LSC SINQ to OVERALL

MEAN \* STANDARD DEVIATION

	Overall		Leading Social Change	
A	4.24	0.88	4.03	0.95
B	4.09	0.96	4.30	0.89
C	4.10	1.01	3.84	1.12
D	3.96	1.00	4.03	0.90
E	4.18	0.90	4.05	0.90
F	4.20	0.93	4.00	0.99
G	3.95	1.11	3.92	1.02
H	4.05	1.07	3.85	1.04
I	3.79	1.03	3.87	1.05
J	3.99	1.07	3.92	0.97

Ratings made on a scale of 1=Strongly disagree to 5=Strongly Agree.

### KEY

- A Displayed a personal interest in students and their learning
- B Scheduled course work (class activities, tests, projects) in ways which encouraged students to stay up to date in their work
- C Provided timely and frequent feedback on test, reports, projects, etc. to help students improve
- D Used a variety of methods: papers, presentations; class projects, exams, etc. to evaluate student progress
- E Clearly stated the learning objectives for the overall course
- F Clearly stated the criteria for grading
- G Created an atmosphere that encouraged active student participation
- H Used activities and assignments that allowed me to feel personally engaged in my learning

### Comparative Faculty End-of-Year Surveys LSC SINQ to OVERALL

MEAN \* STANDARD DEVIATION

	Overall		Leading Social Change	
A	4.15	0.92	4.21	0.94
B	4.13	0.96	4.13	0.94
C	4.05	1.04	3.99	1.02
D	4.10	0.93	4.21	0.85
E	4.12	0.99	4.11	1.01
F	4.04	1.04	4.05	1.04
G	4.21	0.95	4.28	0.94
H	4.08	1.00	4.09	0.98

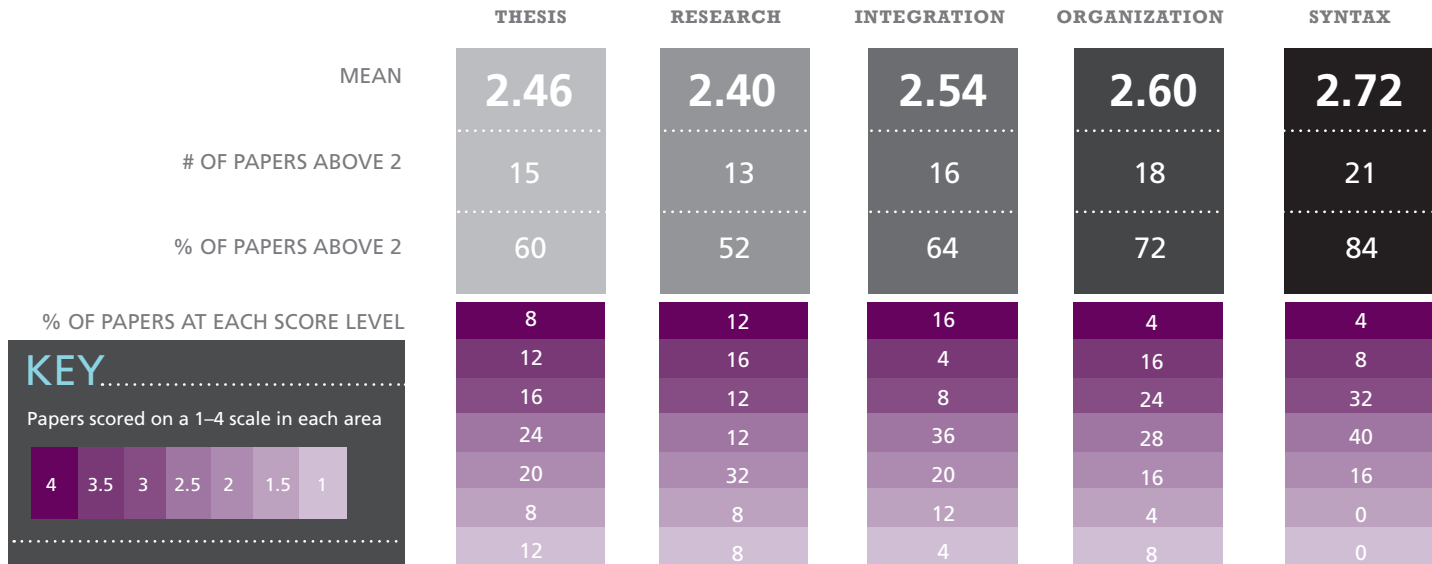
\*Ratings made on a scale of 1=Strongly disagree to 5=Strongly Agree.

# SOPHOMORE INQUIRY ASSESSMENT

## INTERPRETING THE PAST RESEARCH PAPER ASSESSMENT

NUMBER OF PAPERS REVIEWED = 25

Papers scored on a 1–4 scale in each area



## SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

Overall, the categories with the highest mean scores were Organization (2.60) and Syntax (2.72). For Organization, 72% of papers scored above a 2 (on a 4-point scale). Similarly, for Syntax, 84% of student papers were scored above a 2. The mean student score for Research was the lowest of the five categories (2.40). Only 52% of the student papers were scored above a 2 in the Research category. The mean student score for Research in 2010–11 (sample size 68) was the same (2.40); however, 60.3% of student papers scored above a 2 in 2010–11. Mean Integration score improved somewhat from 2.31 in 2010–11 to 2.54 in 2011–12, with 50% scoring above a 2 in 2010–11, and 64% scoring above a 2 in 2011–12.

# SOPHOMORE INQUIRY ASSESSMENT

## DATA & FINDINGS: SINQ FAMILIES AND SOCIETY

### WORK AND REFLECTION

During the 2012–13 academic year, the first for the newly revised Families and Society cluster, there was a focus on consistency across new SINQs including sharing best practices and developing a shared rubric for a key assignment. The following table indicates SINQ/Cluster assessment and quality assurance activities for the year.

Assessment Goal	Accomplishments 2012/13	Outcomes/Data/or continue goal
SINQ Evaluation Survey	Cluster coherence questions integrated in course evaluation. Implemented shared syllabus template and course objectives.	Reviewed data to assess integration of Cluster Goals w/in and across SINQ courses
SINQ Reflective Portfolio	Not implemented across all SINQ's. Continued shared assignment	Reflective Questions included in reading discussions and shared assignment
SINQ Shared Assignment "Perspectives"	Oriented all SINQ faculty to the common rubric for "Perspectives" paper	Reviewed some papers with individual faculty. Did not engage in cross-rater session in 2012–13. Request budget for F&S SINQ and Cluster course writing/assessment workshop 5'14.
SINQ Best Practices Guide	Shared best practices in all assignment with all current faculty. Shared assignment docs and syllabus templates with all current faculty.	Plan to integrate with Cluster web page w/ faculty portal, or D2L common page.
SINQ Instructor/Course Evaluations	Reviewed instructor evaluations quarterly and w/ UNST staff annually	Used course evaluation data to inform conversations with instructors.
SINQ Instructors/Quality Assurance	Met with new instructors: 3x/quarter. With all instructors: once/quarter.	N/A
Cluster Courses Assessment	Deferred assessment of Cluster courses to AY 2013–14	Plan to implement cross-Cluster course assessment
Cluster Courses Capacity	Approval of additional Cluster Courses and renumbering of current courses. Dropped courses from Cluster.	See current Cluster list w/ additions

## REFLECTION

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### SINQ/Cluster Activity and Assessment Faculty Reflection and Future Plans

## GLOBAL PERSPECTIVES

-Stephen Frenkel

### *Online SINQs*

During 2013–14, we are planning to begin offering a handful of fully-online global perspectives SINQs. In the fall there two (Middle East and Asia) out of the five SINQs will be offered online. We plan to offer a few more during the year. While there are no plans to offer many, the hope will be that all summer global perspectives SINQs will be online.

### *Plans for 2014*

**Potential new SINQ.** During fall and winter 2013–14, I will be talking to faculty associated with Global Perspectives to gauge their interest in adding a new (non-regional) SINQ to the cluster. The initial idea is to think about adding a Globalization-themed course. This sort of course would fit well into the existing global perspectives learning objectives and could be taught by faculty from a number of different (and new) departments.

**Drop Some Cluster Courses:** During 2013–14, I will explore the possibility of dropping a few Global Perspectives Courses that are a poor fit for the cluster's learning objectives. These courses were part of the cluster at its inception because they were associated with the regional clusters and not due to their fit. All are also in other clusters.

**Add a few "non-regional" cluster classes:** During 2013–14 I'll identify and explore the possibility of adding a few new cluster courses. These are regularly-taught 300-level, non-regional "global" courses. These were not initially part of Global Perspectives because all courses had a regional focus at that time. With the more global focus, these courses are not appropriate for the cluster.

**Sit in/review SINQs.** During 2013–14 I'll continue my practice of visiting the various Global Perspectives SINQs. (Last year I visited all new instructors and a few of the ongoing ones). During these sessions I typically spend at least part of the time doing UNST advising. In addition, I work directly on content with all new SINQ instructors.

### *Reflection on the SINQ Assessment Exercise*

Looking over the SINQ assessment exercise by instructor for 2012–13, I have relatively little to say. In general the numbers seem acceptable and indicate the courses are essentially meeting the basic learning objectives. Because there is such variety in the courses (5 different SINQs) the results are what I would expect. I would like to continue with the questions/assessment for 2013–14.

## REFLECTION

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### LEADING SOCIAL CHANGE

-Rita Sumner

#### **FINDINGS**

Where the student data for LSC differed from the mean SINQ aggregate by 0.10 or more, the item was highlighted. These items were discussed raising the level awareness and reflection in terms of classroom practice. More conversations will occur in the future and will be summarized at a later date.

#### **STUDENT LEARNING EXPERIENCE**

*(criteria: mean 0.10 or more difference)*

**Areas of strength:** Working as a member of a team

**Areas for improvement:** Apply critical analysis and multiple points of view; explore diversity; explore ethical dilemmas; experience a sense of community with classmates

#### **SINQ FACULTY**

*(criteria: mean 0.10 or more difference)*

**Areas of strength:** Use of variety of methods for evaluation of students

**Areas for improvement:** None meeting criteria

#### **PLANS FOR NEXT YEAR**

##### **LEADING SOCIAL CHANGE CLUSTER**

For AY 2013–14, the cluster coordinator will compose a letter of introduction to relevant department Chairs and faculty who are scheduled to teach cluster courses as a way of personal introduction and as a network-building opportunity and method to initiate information sharing about student learning outcomes for both UNST and LSC. Included will be a discussion regarding the need for developing an assessment plan for the AY 2014–15. I intend to send these letters out either prior to the start or during the early part of the term. This process will be repeated for each academic term 2013–14.

#### **LEADING SOCIAL CHANGE SINQ**

For AY 2013–14, the SINQ faculty and Cluster Coordinator will meet as a follow up to the September 19, 2013 SINQ meeting. The assessment proposal discussed September 19, 2013 was determined to be overly ambitious for AY 2013–14. The SINQ faculty will meet again fall term to engage in additional reflection and shared experience on strengths/weaknesses suggested in the data, propose possible questions to add to UNST student SINQ end of term survey, and share strategies, practices, and content across SINQ classes.

## REFLECTION

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In this year's assessment data there was high agreement among students in 75% of SINQ sections that they had opportunities to develop their writing skills, which is consistent over the last several years. The program continues to emphasize writing with both faculty and mentors as SINQ courses meet a students' lower division writing requirement. In contrast, one area that had improved somewhat but has decreased again is that there was only high agreement among students in 55% of sections that it was clear to them how the work from mentor session connected to main session. This relatively low rating suggests an opportunity for faculty and mentor development activities for the coming year. The Director of Upper Division clusters will work with the Director of Mentor programs to focus on this topic over the coming year.

Another emphasis for the SINQ/Cluster sections of the UNST program over the last several years has been the revision and re-proposal of Clusters. A section of the proposal requires an assessment plan. Currently, 7 clusters have been through this process and have been working on assessment activities specific to the topics in their clusters. The activities across clusters range from developing new course evaluation questions and new common assignments to convening faculty for conversations about course alignment. As we move forward, we will move toward all groups evaluating student work in some way to inform their practice and improve student learning across the courses.





# SENIOR CAPSTONE ASSESSMENT

## TOOLS AND METHODS

### Summative End-of-Term Course Evaluations Capstone Student Experience

#### Quantitative

**Purpose:** The Capstone Student Experience Survey asked about students' experiences in UNST Capstone courses as well as instructor pedagogical approaches and course topics. The survey results provide information to individual faculty about their courses and to the program about the overall student experience in Capstones.

**Method:** Students enrolled in Capstone courses complete paper-based course evaluations in class at the end of their course. During the 2011–12 academic year, 2670 students completed surveys.

#### Qualitative

**Purpose:** Each year the Capstone Office analyzes students written comments from the end of term course evaluations in order to learn about the lived-experience our students have in Capstone courses. The data is collected to assist individual faculty in improving the teaching and learning in their courses and it allows us to document students' most important learnings as well as their suggestions.

**Method:** The Capstone Office created a data base which randomized all of the students' comments from 2012-2013. 200 random comments were selected for analysis from the question regarding what were the students most important learnings and 200 random comments were selected representing students' suggestions for improvements. As in previous years, two PSU researchers analyzed the comments separately according to the procedures outlined by Crewswell, 1994.

### Capstone Small Group Instructional Diagnostic (SGID)

**Purpose:** Each term, an SGID is conducted in 20% of Capstone courses. These small group feedback sessions are conducted during the middle of the term in order to provide formative feedback to the Capstone faculty.

**Method:** An experienced Capstone faculty member goes into a Capstone course taught by a different faculty member and conducts a focus-group like discussion. The SGID covers course content, community work, suggestions for improvement and the UNST learning goals. SGID data collected for the 2012–13 academic year were analyzed by Heather Petzold and Celine Fitzmaurice, Capstone faculty to identify themes across courses. Student comments were organized by category and ranked according to the number of times each category was mentioned.

### Capstone Course Portfolio Review Portfolio Assessment: Diversity

**Purpose:** Capstone course portfolios were developed as a method to assess student learning at the Senior Capstone level of the University Studies program. We developed course-based portfolios for Capstones which include syllabi, assignment instructions, examples of student work produced in the course, and faculty reflection as a way to capture and display the complexity of student learning in a community-based group-focused course.

**Method:** Capstone instructors were invited to create course portfolios during the 2012–13 academic year. Capstone instructors were offered a \$250 stipend to provide the materials needed for the portfolios as well as complete a reflection about how they incorporate diversity into their courses. Sixteen course portfolios were constructed for assessment. These represent approximately 20% of the courses and students in the Capstone program during the school year).

To assess the course portfolios, a group consisting of the Capstone Director, the Director of Assessment and a Capstone faculty member constructed a framework for evaluating diversity in these course portfolios. This framework included a list of the types of learning related to diversity that occur in Capstone courses and a scoring guide that included information on scoring portfolios as inadequate, adequate, or exemplary. On the portfolio review day, two Capstone faculty members and the Director of Assessment reviewed the 16 portfolios, with each portfolio being scored twice. In addition to an overall rating, reviewers rated each element of the portfolio as well to give the program additional information and to identify components that could be used as examples for other faculty.

# SENIOR CAPSTONE ASSESSMENT

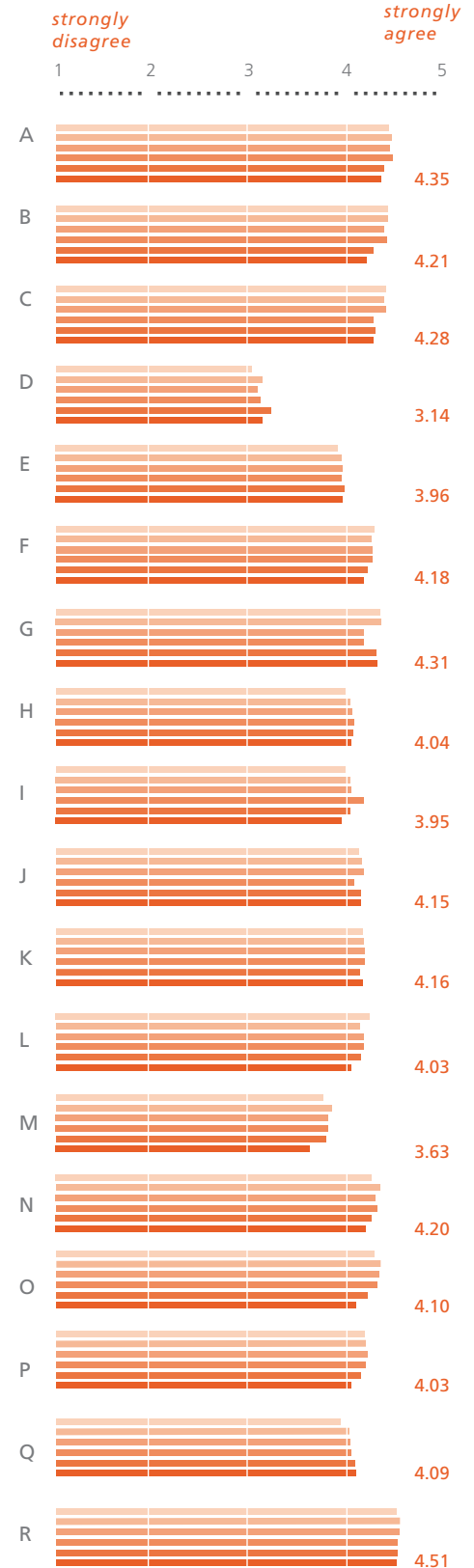
## SUMMATIVE END-OF-TERM COURSE EVALUATIONS

### 2011-2012 CAPSTONE Course Evaluations CAPSTONE LEARNING EXPERIENCE

#### KEY

YEARS '07-08 '08-09 '09-10 '10-11 '11-12 '12-13

- A The community work I did helped me to better understand the course content in this Capstone.
- B I feel that the community work I did through this course benefited the community.
- C I felt a personal responsibility to meet the needs of the community partner of this course.
- D I was already volunteering in the community before taking this course.
- E I improved my ability to solve problems in this course.
- F This course helped me understand others who are different from me.
- G My participation in this Capstone helped me to connect what I learned to real life situations.
- H This course enhanced my communication skills (writing, public speaking, etc.).
- I I will continue to volunteer or participate in the community after this course.
- J This course enhanced my ability to work with others in a team.
- K In this course I improved my ability to analyze views from multiple viewpoints.
- L This course explored issues of diversity (such as race, class, gender, sexual orientation).
- M I believe this course deepened my understanding of political issues.
- N The syllabus clearly described how the course content connected to the community work.
- O I believe this course deepened my understanding of local social issues.
- P I now have a better understanding of how to make a difference in my community.
- Q I had the opportunity to apply skills and knowledge gained from my major.
- R I had the opportunity to engage with students from different fields of specialization.



# SENIOR CAPSTONE ASSESSMENT

## SUMMATIVE END-OF-TERM COURSE EVALUATIONS

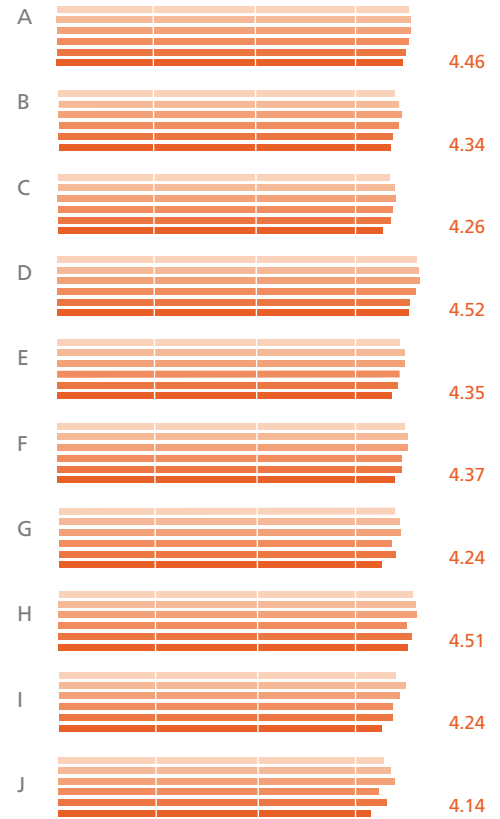
### 2011-2012 CAPSTONE Course Evaluations CAPSTONE INSTRUCTOR - MEAN SCORES

#### KEY

YEARS '07-08 '08-09 '09-10 '10-11 '11-12 '12-13

- A Showed a personal interest in my learning
- B Scheduled work at an appropriate pace
- C Provided clear instructions for assignments
- D Created an atmosphere that encouraged active participation
- E Presented course material clearly
- F Created an atmosphere that helped me feel personally engaged in my learning
- G Provided helpful feedback
- H Related course material to real-life situations
- I Encouraged interaction outside of class
- J Provided clear grading criteria

strongly disagree 1 2 3 4 5 strongly agree



# SENIOR CAPSTONE ASSESSMENT

## SUMMATIVE END-OF-TERM COURSE EVALUATIONS

KEY ..... YEARS '07-08 '08-09 '09-10 '10-11 '11-12 '12-13

- A Reflective journals
- B Required class attendance
- C Collaborative projects
- D Readings on racial and ethnic issues
- E Extensive lecturing
- F Readings on women and gender issues
- G Group decision-making
- H Readings on civic responsibility
- I Student presentations
- J Discussions on political issues
- K Discussions on social issues
- L Class discussions
- M Exams
- N E-communications tools
- O Portfolio

### 2011-2012 CAPSTONE Course Evaluations

COURSE DESIGN QUESTION: Within your Capstone, what forms of learning did the instructor use?

A	75.7	76	67	69.6	47.9	*
B	81.5	81	78	80.5	86.5	*
C	74.3	83	77	80.8	80.8	*
D	53.9	55	53	55.7	57.7	*
E	17.3	19	18	18.8	46.9	*
F	40.2	41	39	39.5	38.3	*
G	78.6	81	81	81.2	87.8	*
H	69.3	74	73	72.9	69.3	*
I	73.4	76	72	75.9	80.1	*
J	51.8	56	53	55.0	51.7	*
K	83.45	87	88	87.8	86.3	*
L	79.2	95	93	94.7	60.0	*
M	4.1	5	4	3.6	44.1	*
N	58.5	49	52	51.8	44.7	*
O	16.4	18	18	18.7	25.8	*

\* Data were corrupted for these questions for 2 terms this year. The glitch has been fixed, but comparisons with previous years are not appropriate.

## SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

### quantitative

In 2011-12, UNST began offering discipline-based Capstone courses which involve developing new models for delivery of Capstone courses. We anticipated that the student course evaluations might fluctuate as we worked on discovering the best approach for these courses.

- Capstone students continue to agree that their courses emphasize the university studies goals. However, between 2011-12 and 2012-13, there were decreases in students' agreement that their courses addressed diversity. Between the 2010-11 and 2012-13 academic years, there were decreases in students' level of agreement that their community work benefited the community. Students were also less likely to agree that their Capstone course deepened their understanding of community issues.
- Because there has been substantial work in our traditional Capstones over the last several years toward the diversity learning outcome, we looked specifically at the results for traditional Capstones on this item. Compared with 2010-11, students in 2011-12 and 2012-13 reported higher levels of agreement that their courses covered issues of diversity.

### qualitative

The bulk of comments indicated thoughtful engagement with the experience of being a Capstone student, whether students were reporting on what was most meaningful to their learning or offering suggestions for change. This indicates that students take seriously the opportunity to reflect on their time in the Capstone and offer their thoughts to their instructors and to program administrators about what works well in Capstone courses and what might be shifted to create even more beneficial learning-through-serving opportunities.

# SENIOR CAPSTONE ASSESSMENT SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

## Small Group Instructional Diagnostic

SGID data for the 2012–13 academic year was analyzed by Heather Petzold and Celine Fitzmaurice. Data for the SBA 495 capstone was captured separately.

### *What aspects of this course are helping you to better understand the course content in this Capstone?*

**General:** Students identified readings and class discussions as contributing significantly to their academic learning in capstones. As well, students noted that good communication with the faculty member enhanced their academic learning. Guest speakers and hands-on learning were also reported in helping students to better understand the academic content in the classroom. Finally, many students appreciated the opportunity to engage in reflective journal writing.

**SBA:** SBA students pointed to case studies as one of the main contributors to their academic learning. Many students also reported appreciation for instructors who possessed real world experience and the skills to share this experience in an effective way in the classroom. SBA students placed a high value on their work with clients including interaction with clients and time spent working on their community-based projects. Finally, students appreciated readings they could apply directly to their project work.

### *What aspects of this course are helping you to prepare you for your community work?*

**General:** Students noted that direct exposure to the community partner (i.e. through site visits and class visits from the community partner) helped prepare them for their community work. Guest speaker's knowledge and expertise was also significant in helping students feel more prepared for this work. Students indicated an appreciation for group discussions and felt they were helpful towards better processing their time in the community. Finally, students appreciated working with instructors who were passionate about the course themes and were accessible and willing to guide them as they embarked on their community placements.

**SBA:** SBA students noted that it was helpful to have time in class to work and communicate with their group members. Students also appreciated the opportunity to interact with their clients both in and outside of the class period. Many students noted that the lectures helped prepare them to do their community work and they liked the opportunity to apply what they learned in the classroom to their community projects.

### *What could be changed to improve this course?*

**General:** Students were eager for clear assignment expectations and greater organization of materials in capstone courses. Students requested a number of changes related to the community partnership. For example, they would like more background on the population being served, improved coordination with the community partner, and more interaction with the community partner and the population being served. They would also like more guidance related to the service-learning placement. Finally, students would like the classroom time to be more structured.

**SBA:** SBA students requested less busy work in their capstone. Instead, students would like to see more class time devoted to their group projects and direct time with their clients. As well, students would like to work with better-prepared community partners so as to improve communication and expectations. Students also requested a clearer syllabus.

### *What specific suggestions do you have to bring about these changes?*

**General:** Students recommended that the instructor and the community partner provide clearer expectations for their service-learning assignment and final project. Students had some suggestions for improvements to the course content to include less reflection papers and less busy work. Finally, students recommended that the instructor refine the syllabus to provide more clarity around assignments and expectations.

**SBA:** students suggested changing the course design by assigning fewer assignments and allowing more time with clients. Students requested more specific direction and instruction related to their final projects and recommended the instructor assign more current and relevant readings. Students also expressed an interest in providing applied learning that would allow them more opportunities to make a difference in their community.

*Continued...*

# SENIOR CAPSTONE ASSESSMENT

## SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

*In what ways does this course enhance your understanding of the University Studies goal areas (Communication, Social Responsibility, Critical Thinking and Diversity of Human Experience)?*

### General:

**Communication-** Students noted that group work and class discussion enhanced their understanding of this goal.

**Diversity-** Students noted that community service activities and direct contact with community members enhanced their understanding of this goal.

**Social Responsibility-** Students mentioned their classroom learning community as the key contributor to their understanding of this goal.

**Critical Thinking-** Students mentioned course readings, discussions, and research and development activities as contributing to their understanding of this goal.

### SBA:

**Communication-** Students mentioned working in groups, communication with clients, presentations, and write-ups as activities that enhanced their understanding of this goal.

**Diversity-** Students noted that working in interdisciplinary groups and working with clients enhanced their understanding of this goal.

**Social Responsibility-** Students noted that community work, case studies and group work contributed to their understanding of this goal.

**Critical Thinking-** Students noted that applied work, case studies, research, and course readings enhanced their understanding of this goal.

## Capstone Student Experience Survey: Qualitative

### Results for Capstone Most Important Learning in Capstone Courses

In response to the first question, about the elements of the course that has been most important to learning, student responses cluster around several different themes: First, many students point directly to the positive impact of their instructor and, more broadly, to the pedagogical features of the course (e.g., class discussion, reflection, smaller class size than lecture courses and the particular way that course content was delivered in this service-learning experience, among other things) that they experience to have been significant—and, at times, significantly different—in their Capstone course as a unique University requirement. For example, one student described the “one-on one feedback from the

instructor to guide the group’s work for the [community partner],” while another stated that “[t]he professor did an amazing job of making the info relatable” as key elements of their learning. Students also remarked that they found Capstone instructors to be inspiring role models.

**Second,** students named the work they did navigating their service with their community partners and applying theory learned in the classroom to their service as another key element of their learning. Among the comments which spoke to this theme is this one: “Understanding the benefits of bilingual education on students and community. The hands on experience [with my community partner] directly correlated to the materials provided. The experience was amazing. I gained so many community contacts and resources.”

**Third,** students articulated how working in a group across difference allowed them to gain skills in communication, project and personnel management, community-building, and gaining confidence to operate in settings marked by diversity. One student commented that they found valuable “how to complete a program and materials with a group. [T]hough the information we covered was extremely interesting and I will carry it with me, the experience and lessons learned when making such an intense group project was so completely different [from anything] I’ve ever done before.”

Students specifically remarked on all four of the University Studies goals within this section of most important learning. Over 15% of the students directly commented on how they improved their communication skills especially in real world settings. They identified better listening skills and stronger presentation skills as two direct outcomes from the Capstone. Students stated how they deepened their appreciation of human diversity in settings ranging from bilingual classrooms and after school programs to prisons. Students documented their sense of social responsibility and self efficacy as they remarked that their most important learnings related to the fact that “we can make a difference in our community. We can also be agents of change.” Finally students stated that Capstones deepened their critical thinking skills especially as they critically analyzed social issues and institutions in our society.

Of students who reported positive learnings as a part of their Capstone experiences—which was the vast majority of respondents—a majority of their comments spoke to the unique character of Capstones as contributing to their learning, coupled with the skill of their instructors to design and facilitate complex courses involving both in-class elements and community partnerships.

## Results for Suggestions for Improvement of Capstone Courses

Interestingly, many students (over 15%), when asked what would have made their Capstone experience better, report that no changes to the course are needed and that they could not think of a change to improve the course; significantly, in response to a question explicitly asking about improvement. Within those comments were also explicit compliments of the faculty and the value of the course. The comments which did call for improvement, many respondents indicated that they wished they had had more time interacting with their community partner and its constituents. For example, responses like “more prison visits!”, “more involvement with the neighborhood associations and community,” and “more time with the kids” would have improved their experiences—which suggest that students experienced a clear sense of the value that their community work had to their own learning.

A third theme that emerged from the respondents involved the organization of the course and how instructors might better structure the course experience to maximize student learning. For example, one student reported that they thought “the course design is pretty open-ended, [and] it would have helped if there was a more structured project outline for those more inclined to following direct instructions. This course partially relied of student’s [sic] to self-organize...” Within this theme of organization were specific suggestions for improving syllabi within a specific type of Capstone (discipline-application Capstones). Students thought refining of the syllabi could improve the overall structure of the course.

## Capstone Course Portfolios

### Capstone Course Portfolio Assessment: Diversity

The course portfolios demonstrated that by and large students are given opportunities to engage in and demonstrate learning related to diversity. Fourteen out of 16 courses were assessed as adequately meeting expectations for addressing diversity.

For courses that were assessed as inadequate, the materials compiled in the portfolio did not clearly reflect the type of learning opportunities or goals that were defined.

Reviewers noted that across many courses, students were being asked to think about diversity through reflective assignments, but sometimes only addressed the letter of the assignment instructions. There seemed to be opportunities missed for asking students to think more deeply about their own identities or about how the community issues their Capstones addressed affected the populations they encountered. The reviewers agreed that more explicit or scaffolded reflection assignments could provide evidence of the kinds of learning we were looking for. We want to emphasize that while Capstone courses should incorporate all four UNST goals, it is difficult to focus on all of the goals equally in one course. The courses that did not provide adequate learning opportunities related to diversity likely focus more heavily on other UNST goals.



# SENIOR CAPSTONE ASSESSMENT

## REFLECTION

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### Capstone Student Experience Questionnaire: Qualitative

#### Recommendations

Capstone students are clearly engaged in positive learning experiences in Capstone courses and have remarked on the quality of instruction in these courses and the seminar size of the classes which lead to more participatory pedagogy than other courses. In addition, students experience effective teaching strategies and leave Capstone courses feeling empowered to act on their newly acquired knowledge and sense of civic engagement.

The Capstone Office can draw upon these data when planning for future faculty development. For example since students mentioned class discussions as one of their most important sources of learning, the Capstone Office is dedicating our Fall Retreat to “Deepening Meaningful Class Dialogue/ Discussion”. Veteran Capstone instructors will facilitate a retreat to share best practices. In our pursuit to expand the number of on-line Capstones in the next year we will also dedicate a portion of the Fall Retreat to how to “Deepen Class Discussions On-line”.

While many Capstone students were satisfied with their courses, the themes for improvement related to course structure will be specifically addressed. Vicki Reitenauer will work with faculty who teach the discipline-application Capstones. She will explore ways to improve the syllabus and structure in these courses. In addition Celine Fitzmaurice will work 1:1 with any other faculty member where this concern was expressed in their course evaluations.

Finally, with the anticipated growth in on-line Capstones, Zapoura Calvert will work with the Capstone Office to analyze the end of term evaluations for on-line courses and work 1:1 with our on-line faculty to ensure high quality teaching and learning in these courses.

# WRITING OUTCOMES ASSESSMENT

## TOOLS AND METHODS

**Purpose:** In the 2012–13 academic year, the University Writing Committee and the UNST Council endorsed a set of writing outcomes for Freshman and Sophomore Inquiry course. These outcomes, which help to clarify UNST’s communication goal and provide clearer guidance to instructors, were developed in Spring 2012 by a group of UNST faculty from a variety of disciplines. Though the outcomes serve to clarify rather than change the nature of UNST’s existing communications goal, they do prompt us to revisit our current writing assessment and offer opportunities for more robust writing assessment. UNST has a well-established ePortfolio assessment process in place based on a previously developed holistic rubric. However, the holistic rubric used for ePortfolio writing assessment is in need of revisions. The Writing Outcome Review, conducted during UNST’s June 2013 ePortfolio assessment, was developed to help us work towards those revisions. The review also helped clarify how the current assessment process might need to be adapted to more clearly address the new outcomes.

**Method:** During the 2013 ePortfolio review, a group of faculty and a mentor led by the UNST writing coordinator met for one afternoon to explore possible ways to integrate the outcomes into our current assessment practices. Since our time together as a group was limited, we decided that we would use our current ePortfolios to look for evidence of only the following four outcomes:

- Students will practice communicating to a variety of audiences, demonstrating an awareness of the structure, genre, and conventions for different rhetorical situations.
- Students will make use of the writing process, including brainstorming, drafting, workshopping, revising, editing, and proofreading work.
- Students will practice finding, evaluating, synthesizing, and analyzing a variety of primary and secondary sources, and using appropriate means of documentation for those sources.
- Students will apply knowledge of writing and rhetoric to multiple formats, including presentations, websites, and portfolios.

The UNST Writing Coordinator developed an analytic rubric using a four-point scale for each of these four outcomes. Furthermore, we decided to ask the faculty to look for evidence of the outcome across a FRINQ theme rather than in individual ePortfolios, and each faculty was to look at two to three ePortfolios in four different themes. Though we knew that we would not be able to collect any substantial or reliable baseline data in the time we had, we chose this method in order to test possibilities for further assessment and to generate conversation amongst the faculty about how to integrate the outcomes. Faculty were asked to score each theme using the rubrics, and they were given space to document their notes on the process. Faculty were encouraged to consider the following questions:

- To what extent do you see evidence (either in the work or the assignments provided) that students are working towards that outcome?
- To what extent does the evidence we currently collect allow us to assess any of these outcomes?
- How might we translate these outcomes into workable rubrics or better incorporate them into our existing holistic writing rubric?

We left 50 minutes for discussion afterwards, in which faculty discussed their responses to these questions.

# WRITING OUTCOMES ASSESSMENT

## REFLECTION

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### Given the review and discussion, what are the findings of this process?

As noted above, though participants were asked to provide a score for the grouped ePortfolios they looked at in each theme, the score was meant to primarily prompt discussion of the outcomes and how we might incorporate them into our current assessment. Therefore, the findings summarize some of the key points of conversation that followed the scoring. The group's conversation led to a number of ideas and suggestions for integrating the new writing outcomes, but also pointed to some limitations of only using the ePortfolios to conduct this assessment.

There was also some general discussion of how the themes varied in terms of their emphasis on different types and forms of writing. Furthermore, the assignments and topics in some themes seemed to lend themselves towards specific outcomes. For example, the Work of Art ePortfolios tended to offer more variety in of types of writing and modes of communication. This had to do with the visual nature of the topic and the emphasis on expression and creativity. This led to a discussion about what different themes could learn from each other given the developed expertise of the faculty teaching in those themes.

Several faculty noted the difficulty of assessing some of the outcomes given the current ePortfolio directions. Some of the outcomes may not be documented in the ePortfolios, even though they may actually be something that students are learning in the class. The primary example of this was the outcome emphasizing the writing process. Currently, some students are encouraged to include drafts or different elements of their assignments, others write about process in their reflection, and many include assignments that may (or may not) indicate the writing process. However, we don't always see evidence of the full writing process when it exists. There was some discussion of whether or not students should include drafts in their ePortfolio, and there were mixed opinions on this, though most faculty agreed that it could be helpful to both students and faculty. Ultimately, whether or not students should include drafts or other aspects of an assignment outside of the final product, depends on the purpose of and audience for the ePortfolio.

This led to a discussion of other ways we might assess for outcomes. For example, for some of the outcomes we might look more closely at class assignments and syllabi. Although the ePortfolio process currently focuses on FRINQ, there are also rich possibilities for SINQ faculty to assess various outcomes within their themed courses. This is a process that some clusters have already begun.

One result of the discussion was the need for the outcomes to be integrated into a revised holistic rubric for writing in UNST. It was already agreed that the rubric for writing in UNST was in need of revision in order to make it more current, accurate, and easier to follow. Several of the newly developed outcomes are already present in the language of the current rubric, but revisions would help make the outcomes more transparent and help us integrate them into our current program.

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As a final note, faculty emphasized the need for more attention to the ePortfolio process itself. One of the writing outcomes we explored focused on the need for students to write and communicate in multiple formats, and ePortfolios are an obvious format in which students can display varied types of work (essays, presentations, videos, podcasts, etc). However, both students and faculty need more support in order to make full use of the available technologies.

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### Plans for Next Year

Update the UNST writing rubric to more closely reflect the clarified outcomes.

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