Executive Summary

This report on the University Studies program (UNST) at Portland State University has three purposes: 1) To describe the scope of University Studies program currently, 2) To discuss what has occurred in developing student learning outcomes within the goals of University Studies, and 3) To describe the curriculum and faculty development activities within University Studies.

Program Scope:

- Even though students enter and leave University Studies at various times in their careers at PSU, in the 1999-00 academic year, almost 60% of enrolled students took a University Studies course.
- In the 1999-00 academic year, 397 UNST courses and 489 upper division cluster courses were offered.
- 70-75% of University Studies courses are taught by full-time faculty including 100% of Freshman Inquiry courses.
- There has been an increase in the proportion of courses taught by fixed term faculty and a decrease in tenured/emeritus faculty at all levels of University Studies.

Student Learning Outcomes:

- Student portfolios have been chosen as the means by which student learning outcomes will be measured, beginning with Freshman Inquiry and extending through the Capstone experience.
- Rubrics have been and are continuing to be developed for assessing the demonstration of student learning in each of the goal areas of University Studies at the various levels of the program.
- Rubrics were pilot tested in summer 1999 and used in 2000 for assessing a sample of Freshman Inquiry student portfolios.
- Based on the analysis of the Freshman Inquiry student portfolios in summer 2000, students are achieving acceptable scores in all goal areas.
- Strong majorities of students who have taken University Studies courses report through end-of-course evaluations that they have enhanced their learning in most areas of the four goals for the program.
- One of the first faculty research projects on University Studies outcomes, found that UNST students had indeed incorporated the goals of the program in their role identification as students.
- In a study conducted by the School of Business Administration of their majors, students who had gone through the freshman and/or sophomore levels of UNST scored significantly higher on their writing test than students who had not been part of UNST.
- Student learning outcome rubrics need additional refinement and testing for reliability and validity, including non-UNST faculty.
- University Studies, like departments across the campus, is one of the initial pilot academic units in the university's assessment implementation project for the campus in 2000-01.

Faculty/Curriculum Development:

- Through extensive classroom observation, focus groups, and discussions, valuable information has been gathered and used to provide workshops and feedback to enhance instructional effectiveness throughout the University Studies program.
- Annual workshops and retreats are organized around areas identified by students and faculty as areas for program improvement.
- Non-intended benefits have emerged through the faculty and curriculum development processes: building classroom community, working in groups, and working effectively with community partners.

Recommendations:

- The faculty at each level of the University Studies program needs to establish student learning objectives, assignments and measures for demonstrating attainment of the objectives, and criteria for performance appropriate at the particular level.
- Assessment of the peer mentor program. A systematic examination of the roles and effectiveness of the mentor portion of the program needs to be undertaken.
- The program should continue its efforts to establish an assessment ethic with the expectation that ALL faculty view student learning assessment as part of their teaching and scholarship assignment.
- The University Studies program should participate in a campus-wide activity that documents and assesses the overarching learning outcomes of students who are enrolled in the various undergraduate degree programs on our campus.
- Existing efforts to support faculty scholarship in the assessment of teaching and learning related to the University Studies program should be enhanced.

In the most settled of circumstances, assessment plans tend to evolve. Assessment of the University Studies program has evolved during a period of great change. These changes have been both internal as the University Studies program was implemented over a four-year period, and external with the maturation of the assessment movement nationally. Early efforts to understand the program can more accurately be described as evaluation rather than assessment, and have largely been based on qualitative investigation. As time has passed, a greater proportion of University Studies' "assessment energy" has been devoted to assessment based on university exit interviews, learning outcomes, and direct evidence of student performance.

As the campus focuses its attention on assessing student learning outcomes in every program, so too University Studies is refocusing its attention. University Studies is one of the 2000-01 pilot units included in the President's Assessment Initiative being coordinated through the Center for Academic Excellence. The valuable work of curriculum and faculty development will continue and will be increasingly linked to enhancing student learning of the goals of the general education of University Studies.

I. Introduction

This **Progress Report on University Studies: 2000** has been prepared in response to a request from the University Curriculum Committee and the University Faculty Senate for information on the status of the implementation of University Studies and the assessment of the program since its inception. This report will not replicate the January 1998 *University Studies, 1994-97 Progress Report*. The current report focuses on two primary aspects of the University Studies program: 1) A description of the efforts to develop measures to document student learning outcomes, and 2) continuing efforts to engage in faculty development to enhance teaching across the curriculum.

Although it was not fully comprehended at the time the Portland State University Faculty Senate approved the adoption of University Studies as the primary general education program for all PSU students, University Studies was a transforming event. University Studies was a sharp departure from the traditional approach to general education among institutions of higher education in the United States. It was a change in approach to the curriculum from making decisions based on subject matter deemed necessary for an educated person, to an approach centered on the abilities, knowledge and skills that would be needed for educated people to function in a modern society as life-long learners. Unappreciated fully at the time, it was a step that would have to change the culture of the institution to be successful.

Given the magnitude of the transformation being undertaken, the accomplishments are impressive. An almost entirely new curriculum has been constructed from scratch over the course of four years. It is a curriculum firmly grounded in the massive research that was finally available to higher education by the early 1990s -- research on effective student learning, effective teaching, and critical research on the changing student populations we serve.

In this report, we will describe the evaluation that has taken place over a six-year period. This work was driven in the early years of program implementation by the needs of program planners and faculty members in the program to understand what needed to happen in the classroom for the program to achieve its educational goals. The conclusions that have been drawn from these investigations and the use that this information has been put to will be discussed.

It should be noted that this work, although not properly seen in itself as assessment, makes it possible to base current and future assessment efforts on a detailed understanding of how students experience the program. This is the kind of "first phase" investigation that is widely understood by evaluation researchers to be enormously valuable. Due to a complex combination of factors, including the absence until recently of an institution-wide focal point for assessment, we are gifted with a richness of first-phase data.

Now that the University Studies program is fully implemented it is time for the PSU community to examine the efficacy of the program at it relates to student learning outcomes for each of the program's four goals. The purpose of this document is to report on the current state of assessment activities for the University Studies program and

to summarize ways in which assessment activities have been used to inform program management. This report also includes sections that attempt to draw conclusions regarding student learning from existing assessment data. Finally, this report ends with a series of recommendations for future assessment strategies that will document student-learning gains as they relate to the four major goals of the program.

II. Program Description

Overview: The What and The Who

The University Studies program is the largest general education curriculum at Portland State University. Currently 86 per cent of the undergraduate students enrolled at PSU are completing their general education requirements through the University Studies program. The purpose of the University Studies program is to facilitate the acquisition of knowledge, abilities, and attitudes that will form a foundation for lifelong learning among its students. The University Studies program is designed to advance four primary goals of student learning across the levels of the program: [Appendix A presents an overview of the program levels, goals and measurement strategies]

Goals of Portland State University's University Studies Program

- Inquiry and Critical Thinking: Students will learn various modes of inquiry through interdiscplinary curricula—problem-posing, investigating, conceptualizing—in order to become active, self-motivated, and empowered learners
- Communication: Students will enhance their capacity to communicate in various ways—writing, graphics, numeracy, and other visual and oral means—to collaborate effectively with others in group work, and to be competent in appropriate communication technologies.
- The Variety of Human Experience: Students will enhance their appreciation for and understanding of the rich complexity of the human experience through the study of differences in ethnic and cultural perspectives, class, race, gender, sexual orientation, and ability.
- Ethical Issues and Social Responsibility: Students will expand their understanding of the impact and value of individuals and their choices on society, both intellectually and socially, through group projects and collaboration in learning communities.

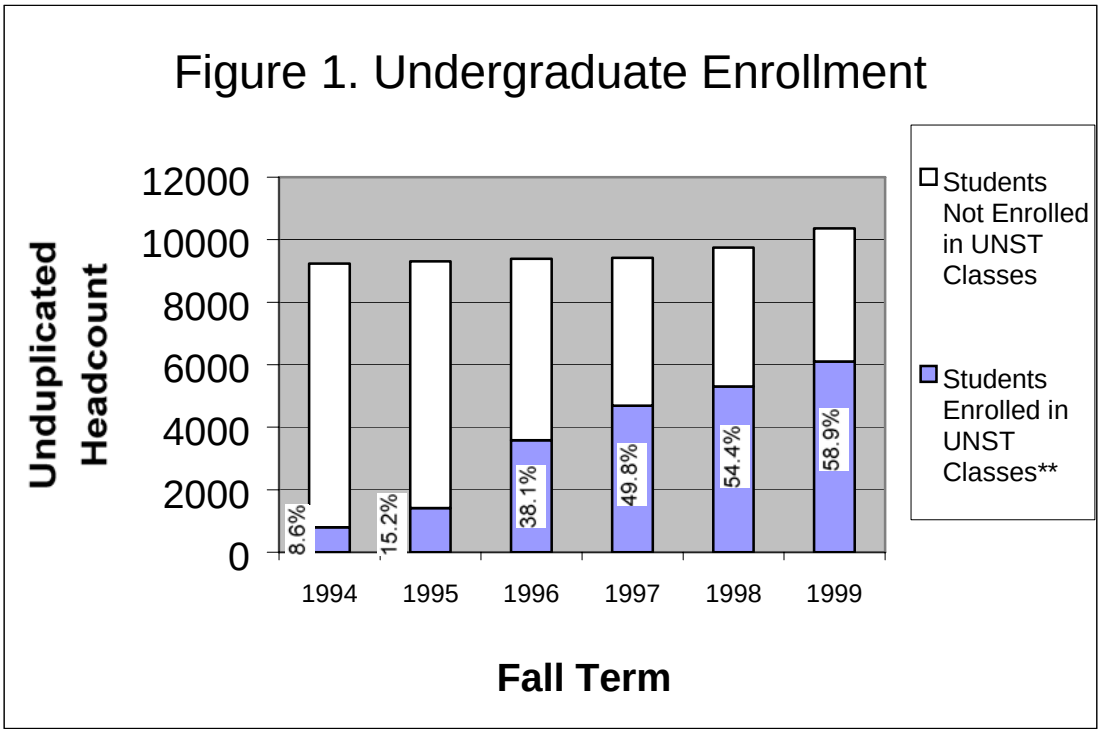
The Freshman Inquiry program was a new construction designed to address four overarching goals through team-taught, interdisciplinary thematic courses supported by undergraduate student mentors. Freshman Inquiry demands a tremendous engagement from the faculty and students involved. Faculty members integrate diverse subject expertise, diverse personalities, multiple goals for student learning, and diverse pedagogical styles. This fifteen-credit course is challenged to accomplish a great deal in its year-long endeavor with a broad range of variably prepared students. In addition to implementing Freshman Inquiry for PSU students, it also implemented the curriculum at Clackamas Community College and at two area high schools in an effort to explore the possibilities for improving transitions to the university.

New Sophomore Inquiry interdisciplinary courses were developed as gateways to upper division clusters of courses to help guide students in their choice of majors. Even the cluster courses, offered by disciplinary departments, were modified to reinforce the goals of University Studies and to complement the topics of the cluster themes.

The Capstone courses built upon faculty and community partnerships to create opportunities for students in interdisciplinary teams to focus their learning on actual, community issues and projects; to bring their expertise and knowledge to bear on problems to help the community outside the university. The *2000 Oregon Employer Survey*, conducted by the Oregon Employment Department, indicated that employers of our students expressed the biggest needs among new employees were the abilities to: problem solve, use computer software, engage in effective interpersonal communication, demonstrate a work ethic, leadership and supervisory skill, reading and writing, math, and knowledge in Spanish or another language. No surprises here, but PSU has the advantage of a general studies curriculum built around goals designed to educate students in most of these abilities regardless of their chosen disciplinary or career path.

Curriculum

University Studies is a large and diverse program of study. Figure 1 shows the growth in the number of students participating in University Studies since it began in 1994. In the most recent Fall (1999) term for which we have data, almost 60 per cent of undergraduate students were involved in at least one University Studies class.



Compiled by the Office of Institutional Research and Planning

Table 1 presents the number and variety of courses offered as part of University Studies since its inception in 1994. In the 1999-00 academic year, 397 classes carrying an UNST designation were offered. Every college and school was involved to some degree in the delivery of the program. In addition, 489 upper division cluster courses were offered through the various departments. Clearly, University Studies spans the campus.

Table 1. Number* of UNST Sections and Cluster Sections Taught by College/School/Department

		UNST Classes**							Clusters**				
	Department	1994/95	1995/96	1996/97	1997/98	1998/99	1999/00	TOTAL***	1996/97	1997/98	1998/99	1999/00	TOTAL
INSTITUTIONAL TOTAL		**80**	**170**	**192**	**314**	**333**	**397**	**1,567**	**203**	**337**	**387**	**489**	**1,416**
Other University Depts		**11**	**21**	**15**	**20**	**41**	**67**	**175**		**1**			**1**
College of Liberal Arts & Sciences		**41**	**95**	**113**	**188**	**171**	**171**	**779**	**179**	**274**	**312**	**407**	**1,172**
	Anthropology		1		4	5	5	15	3	10	17	16	46
	Biology		2	2	1		3	8	2	6	1	2	11
	Black Studies	6	6	5	10	5	2	34	11	19	23	18	71
	Center for Science Education	3	19	20	15	12	15	84	33	23	25	28	109
	Chemistry						4	4	1	2	1		4
	Child & Family Studies			1	10	4	3	18					0
	CLAS-Gen Ed	2		2	3		2	9					0
	Economics					2		2	4	7	9	10	30
	English	9	17	28	44	41	41	180	28	26	37	55	146
	Environmental Programs			1	6	1		8				2	2
	Foreign Languages & Literatures				7	9	6	22	2	12	19	24	57
	Geography	3	5	4	4	1	5	22	2	5	9	19	35
	Geology				4	6	7	17	2	4	6	6	18
	History	3	9	15	29	26	23	105	27	52	49	64	192
	International Studies				4	3		7	1	8	9	14	32
	Mathematical Sciences	6	12	1	7	7	6	39	1				1
	Philosophy		7	6	6	7	8	34	23	22	23	25	93
	Physics	5	6	6	6	5	3	31			1	4	5
	Psychology		1	5	6	5	5	22	7	12	12	22	53
	Sociology	1	6	9	5	7	5	33	14	22	27	33	96
	Speech Communication	3		3	6	13	17	42	5	24	22	32	83
	Women's Studies		4	5	11	12	11	43	13	20	22	33	88
College of Engineering and Applied Science		**3**	**2**	**0**	**15**	**19**	**9**	**48**	**1**	**0**	**0**	**1**	**2**
	Civil Engineering				2	3	2	7					0
	Computer Science	3	2		2	4	2	13					0
	Electrical Engineering				2	2		4	1				1
	Mech Engineering				9	10	5	24				1	1
School of Business Administration			**1**	**2**	**3**	**7**	**7**	**20**	**1**				**1**
Graduate School of Education		**3**	**3**		**3**	**2**	**13**	**24**	**1**	**3**	**3**	**4**	**11**

Table 1. Number* of UNST Sections and Cluster Sections Taught by College/School/Department (cont.)

		UNST Classes**							Clusters**				
	Department	1994/95	1995/96	1996/97	1997/98	1998/99	1999/00	TOTAL***	1996/97	1997/98	1998/99	1999/00	TOTAL****
School of Fine & Performing Arts		**9**	**14**	**12**	**13**	**12**	**23**	**0**	**8**	**30**	**36**	**32**	**106**
	Architecture						1	1	2	3	2	3	10
	Art	3	6	7	6	6	9	37	6	16	25	17	64
	Music	3	3	3			7	16			1	3	4
	Theater Arts	3	5	2	7	6	6	29		11	8	9	28
Graduate School of Social Work				**1**	**5**	**2**	**3**	**11**		**1**		**1**	**2**
College of Urban & Public Affairs		**3**	**9**	**12**	**18**	**24**	**34**	**100**	**12**	**27**	**31**	**41**	**111**
	Public Health Ed./Public Health St.				4	4	5	13	1	5	8	9	23
	Administration of Justice	3	6	6	4		3	22		2	2	5	9
	Political Science					1	2	3	4	6	7	11	28
	Public Administration					1	4	5				1	1
	Research Institutes			4	5	7	9	25					
	School of Urban Studies & Planning		3	2	5	11	11	32	7	14	14	15	50
University Studies		**10**	**14**	**20**	**32**	**40**	**56**	**172**					
University Honors			**3**	**4**	**4**	**2**	**2**	**15**	**1**	**1**	**5**	**3**	**10**
XSs/Cont Ed			**8**	**13**	**13**	**13**	**12**	**59**					

Compiled by the Office of Institutional Research and Planning

Tables 2 and 3 present information on the faculty who teach the University Studies program. As Table 2 indicates, over the last three academic years the proportion of full-time faculty teaching both UNST courses and cluster courses has declined, reflecting a national trend of reliance on more part-time faculty by higher education institutions. There is an increasing reliance on fixed term faculty in both parts of the program and a sharp decline in the involvement of tenured/emeritus faculty.

Table 2. Status Information of Those Teaching UNST and Cluster Classes

UNST* Classes			
Academic Year**	1997-1998	1998-1999	1999-2000
FT/PT status			
% full-time	92.2%	82.9%	71.5%
Tenure Status			
Tenured/Emeritus	47.8%	35.0%	28.5%
Tenure-track	13.9%	12.2%	10.8%
Fixed***	36.5%	52.8%	58.9%
Aver. Length of service at PSU			
Mean years	12.4	12.7	11.2
Median	7	9	8
Cluster Classes			
Academic Year**	1997-1998	1998-1999	1999-2000
FT/PT status			
% full-time	88.5%	85.5%	74.8%
Tenure Status			
Tenured/Emeritus	61.1%	58.6%	46.0%
Tenure-track	12.2%	12.5%	15.8%
Fixed	26.7%	28.9%	38.2%
Aver. Length of service at PSU			
Mean years	12.4	12.7	11.2
Median	7	9	8

* Includes CEAS capstone classes

** Summer term to Spring term

*** A large part of the growth in fixed term positions is due to increasing numbers of capstone classes taught by community partners.

Compiled by the Office of Institutional Research and Planning

Table 3 presents the same data by levels within University Studies. The Freshman Inquiry level, the critical entry to the university, provides all of its instruction by full-time faculty members. Both Sophomore Inquiry and Capstones reflect the increasing reliance on part-time faculty. All levels reflect the decline in tenured/emeritus faculty

involvement in the program with the most involvement in the Freshman Inquiry level and the least in the Capstone level. All levels reflect a moderate degree of experience among the faculty, i.e. University Studies instruction is being provided by faculty who are experienced teachers.

Table 3. Status Information of Those Teaching UNST By Level

FRINQ 100 level			
Academic Year**	1997-98	1998-99	1999-00
FT/PT status: % full-time	3.0%	100.0%	100.0%
Tenure Status			
Tenured/Emeritus	33.3%	33.3%	28.1%
Tenure-track	27.3%	14.8%	18.8%
Fixed***	39.4%	51.9%	53.1%
Aver. Length of service/PSU			
Mean years	9.33	10.37	8.7
Median	5	8	7
SINQ 200 Level			
Academic Year**	1997-98	1998-99	1999-00
FT/PT status: % full-time	93.5%	92.9%	84.8%
Tenure Status			
Tenured/Emeritus	50.0%	35.7%	33.8%
Tenure-track	10.9%	10.7%	15.4%
Fixed***	39.1%	53.6%	50.8%
Aver. Length of service/PSU			
Mean years	11.26	8.5	9.7
Median	7.5	6	7
Capstones 400 Level			
Academic Year**	1997-98	1998-99	1999-00
FT/PT status: % full-time	84.8%	67.9%	56.6%
Tenure Status			
Tenured/Emeritus	53.3%	32.1%	23.2%
Tenure-track	8.9%	11.3%	8.5%
Fixed***	37.8%	56.6%	68.3%
Aver. Length of service/PSU			
Mean years	11.6	8.7	7.1
Median	8.5	6	4

Compiled by the Office of Institutional Research and Planning

III. Evaluation of University Studies Goals and Student Learning Outcomes

- **Freshman Inquiry Portfolio Review**

The University Studies curriculum offers several natural places for the compilation of student work that can be used for assessment purposes. Program administrators are committed to performance-based assessment measures and have begun designing a comprehensive strategy that centers on electronic student portfolios that are assembled throughout a student's undergraduate career. To date, portfolio assessment has been piloted in Freshman Inquiry. Reported below are the findings of faculty and graduate students who participated in the Freshman Inquiry Summer Portfolio Review.

The Summer Portfolio Review is a performance-based program assessment of the four major University Studies goals: critical thinking; communications; appreciation of human diversity; and ethics and social responsibility. The University Studies communications goal was addressed using a writing rubric. This assessment was initiated in the summer of 1999, and was completed for the first time in the summer of 2000. The major product of this review is a Report to the Teams, which was made available to each team for use at their summer team assessment meeting.

All Freshman Inquiry classes share a common end-of-year portfolio assignment that was developed over a period of three years. Although Freshman Inquiry instructors use this assignment somewhat variably, it is used in every class, and in a uniform enough manner to allow for a programmatic assessment.

A random sampling of these portfolios that was stratified for each class formed the analysis set. Portfolios were selected using a random number generator and a numbered list of students from each Freshman Inquiry class. Five student names and one alternate (and instructions for choosing a second alternate, if necessary) were given to each instructor. Alternate names were used if one or more of the original five students chosen appeared on the class list, but did not complete the course. Compliance with the randomization procedure was virtually one hundred percent. One instructor handed in only four portfolios in error, and so the total sample consists of 139 portfolios.

Seventeen of these 139 portfolios are in electronic form. In addition to the 139 portfolios in the PSU sample, ten portfolios from the Senior Inquiry program at Westview High School were submitted. These ten were not analyzed as part the portfolio assessment but are available for future comparison of student performance in our high school programs to that in our Freshman Inquiry classes.

The scoring guides (rubrics) used in the Summer Portfolio Review were internally developed. A previous attempt to use an externally developed rubric for critical thinking was not successful because the rubric was not contextually relevant the PSU student work. The new rubric for critical thinking was not completely developed by the time of this summer's review, and the review itself stood as a development process for this rubric. The same must be said of the new rubric for writing, which will undoubtedly be further developed by the new Director of Writing. The rubrics for appreciation of

diversity and for ethics and social responsibility were developed prior to the summer pilot review in a process that involved both University Studies staff and faculty with expertise in the appropriate areas.

The portfolio review and scoring took place June 19, 20 and 22, 2000. Four scoring groups were assembled, three consisting of Freshman Inquiry faculty who scored portfolios in the goal areas of diversity, critical thinking and ethics and social responsibility, and a fourth group that consisted of Graduate Assistants from the English Department who scored the portfolios in the area of writing. Two reviewers scored each portfolio. The reviewers determined student proficiency in each of the goal areas based on the work presented in the portfolio using the appropriate scoring rubrics as guides. The scores from the two reviewers were added to each other and reported as the "raw composite score" for that goal.

The results of the Summer 2000 Freshman Inquiry Portfolio Review were compiled into a report that was present to the Freshman Inquiry faculty at their fall planning meeting. Reproduced in this section are Figures 2-5 that contain charts of cumulative portfolio composite scores for each freshman inquiry course theme in each of the four goal areas.

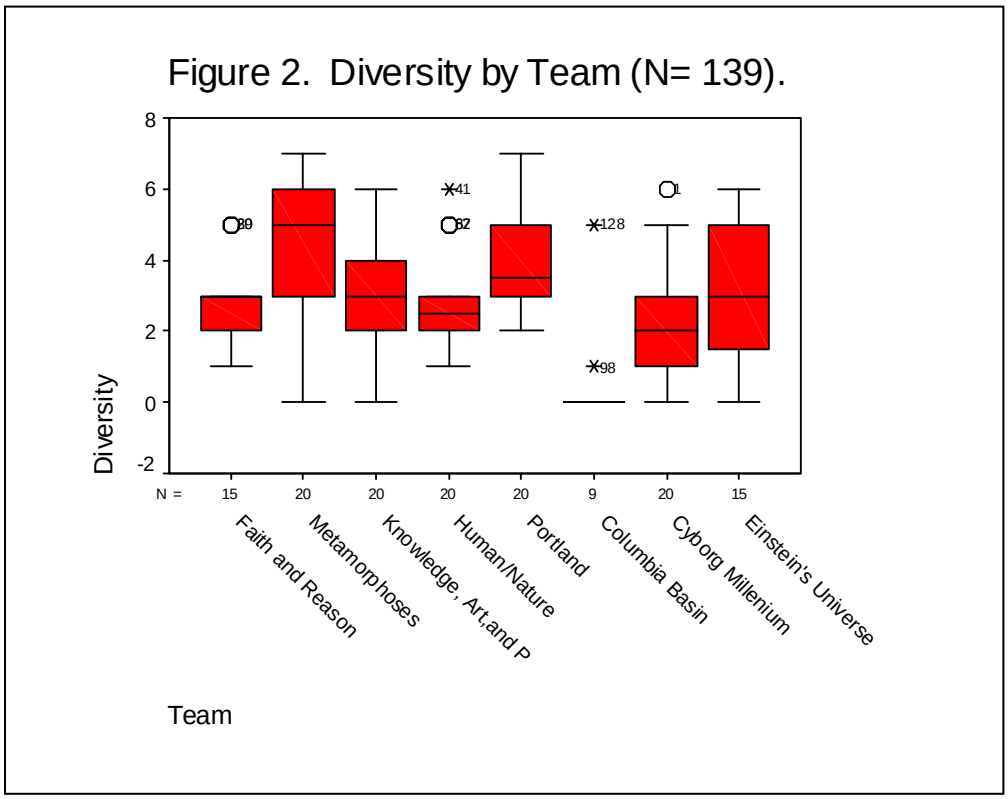


Figure 3. Ethics and Social Responsibility by Team (N=139).

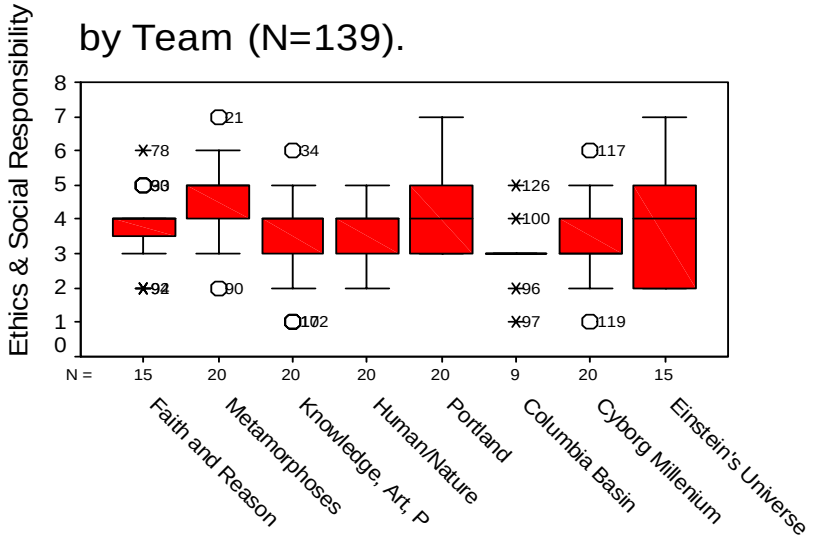


Figure 4. Writing by Team (N=139).

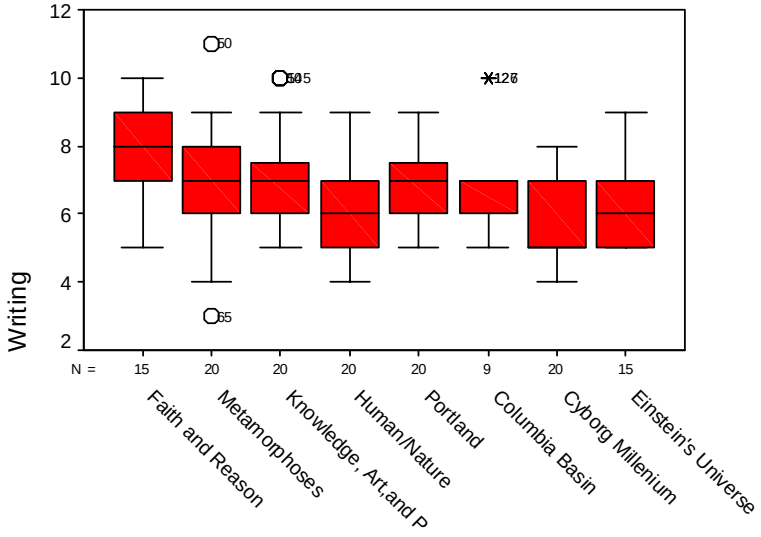
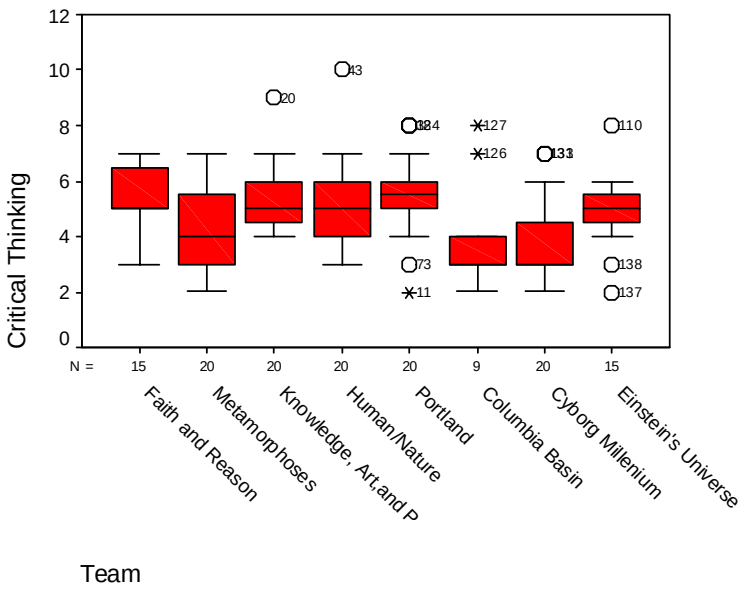


Figure 5. Critical Thinking by Team (N=139).



Precise interpretation of these data is difficult for several significant mitigating reasons. These are discussed at the end of this section. However there are some gross observations and conclusions that do seem worthy of discussion at this time.

- In three of the four goal areas student scores generally fell in the mid-range of the proficiency scales. Students consistently scored below the mid-point proficiency in the goal area of critical thinking.
- The highest variability of scores was in the goal area of diversity with student portfolios from the Metamorphoses and Portland themes scoring consistently higher than students from Faith and Reason, Human/Nature and Cyborg Millennium themes. The standard deviation of scores in the goal area was 1.76
- The lowest variability of scores was reported in the Ethics and Social Responsibility goal area. The median score for all of the portfolios was 4 and the calculated mean was 3.81. The scores from this goal also showed the smallest standard deviation 1.27.
- The writing scores for the fifteen portfolios that were reviewed from the Faith and Reason theme were significantly higher than the writing scores for most of the other themes. The writing rubric had a 6-point scale with the lowest possible score being 1.0. The possible range of composite scores was therefore 2-12. Thus the Faith and Reason composite median score of 8 (mean score = 8.07) corresponded to an average rubric score of 4.0. Since the writing rubric score was in effect offset by one, this reported writing score was approximately at the mid-point of the writing rubric.
- Reviews of the student portfolios in the goal area of Critical Thinking consistently had a composite score below six (total median = 5, total mean = 4.87). Within the themes, Faith and Reason had the highest mean score of 5.40 and Cyborg Millennium and Columbia Basin had the lowest mean scores of 3.90 and 4.00.

Mitigating Factors for Freshman Inquiry Portfolio Review

There are three important caveats that pertain to the portfolio review; however, all three lead to productive lines of discussion and inquiry for the improvement of our program assessment.

The first caveat is that the portfolio review was conducted without reference to an expert standard, i.e. there was no calibration of the scorers to an established standard that would allow comparisons to any external benchmarks or to data from any other institution. Future discussions of University Studies program assessment will compare the rubrics used at PSU with similar rubrics and results from other institutions.

The second caveat is that three of the four scoring groups consisted mainly of Freshman Inquiry faculty (the scoring group for writing was comprised mainly of Graduate Assistants from the English Department). The possibility exists that Freshman Inquiry faculty may score these portfolios differently than Portland State faculty not teaching in the program. In Fall 2000 non-University Studies faculty will be invited to review a sample of the portfolios.

The third caveat is that our definitions of success – that is, for each goal, the percent of students expected to achieve above a specified minimum score by the end of Freshman Inquiry – have been developed within University Studies. The portfolio review holds great promise, however, for tying Freshman Inquiry to bodies outside of University Studies. The Diversity Council, for instance, is a natural place for the development of a performance goal for diversity. The Director of Writing can do the same for the writing goal. Ad-hoc faculty panels could be organized to establish performance goals for the critical thinking goal and for the ethics and social responsibility goal. Faculty panels need only be shown what our faculty meant by each score and with that standard as a given, decide on performance outcomes. This assessment function is the beginning of a process that can lead to greater campus ownership of not only standards for performance, but also definitions of the curricular goals themselves.

- **Reports from teams on how to use portfolio review data**

Following the June 2000 review of Freshman Inquiry portfolios, each Freshman Inquiry team was required to review information from the portfolio review and, if available, from the end-of-year course evaluations. Each team reported to the Freshman Inquiry Coordinator, specific, planned course revisions based on the assessment information. Four of the seven teams reported specific plans to improve teaching to the diversity goal while three teams were satisfied with student abilities to address diversity of human experience issues. In particular, the "Columbia Basin" team noted that although they had taught to this goal, they had not designed written assignments that would serve to document this teaching in the student portfolios. The "Cyborg Millenium" team stated: "We will develop a plan that explicitly connects [the diversity goal] to our assignments, activities and readings." The "Metamorphosis" team linked their success in meeting the diversity goal partly to drawing exactly this kind of explicit connection for students

between the University Studies goal and each specific assignment that faculty connected to this goal.

Most assessment data in the goal area of communications has focused on writing. Based on information from the portfolio review, the "Human Nature" team has chosen to focus on improving their teaching of writing. However, other team discussions focused on the numeracy portion of the goal. As a result of the 2000 Freshman Inquiry Portfolio team assessment discussions, both the "Faith and Reason" and "Metamorphosis" teams have included an additional numeracy unit beginning Fall 2000.

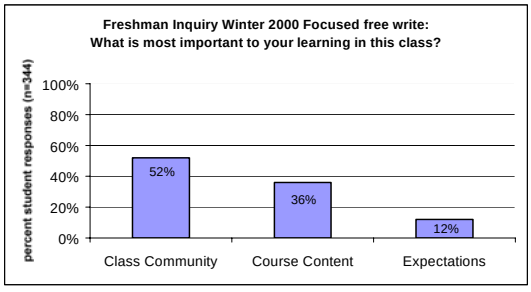
In the summer 2000 meeting, the "Metamorphosis" team decided to focus on the critical thinking goal. To this end, they instituted a major re-working of the fall term course, revising the texts and focusing more clearly on central concepts. They also added more science content in the first and second quarter courses. This team raised questions about the critical thinking rubric, which is scheduled for revision this year.

Based on the portfolio review data, the "Columbia Basin" team decided to design additional assignments related to the ethics and social responsibility goal. The "Cyborg" team noted that the significant attention that they paid to this goal was not reflected in the portfolios, and will make the link between classroom activities and written assignments in this area more explicit.

- **Focused free write data from Freshman Inquiry**

An evaluation known as the In Class Student Interviews (ICSI) has been used in Freshman Inquiry since AY 1998-99. These in-class evaluations have been performed in approximately 60 Freshman Inquiry, 5 Transfer Transition, and 2 Sophomore Inquiry classes. The ICSI consisted of a focused free-write response to two questions: 1) What about this class has been most useful to you for your learning goals? and, 2) What are you finding to be obstacles to your learning? The free-write was followed with a fifteen minute class discussion. Following content analysis, a summary report for each class was produced. The report was shared with the faculty and sometimes the mentor during an individual meeting with program staff members.

Figure 6
Freshman Inquiry Winter 2000 Focused Free Write



When asked what was most important to their learning, over half of all Freshman Inquiry students said it was the community they developed in the classroom. Students were learning to form communities in their Freshman Inquiry classes and testified that they were better able to think critically and reflect on what they had learned within those communities. Students in Freshman and Sophomore Inquiry also felt it was important to have time to reflect on what they were learning in class. Whether that was a class discussion about the assigned reading, or a small group dialogue, they felt that having time to process, understand, and make sense of coursework was a deciding factor in their satisfaction with their classes and their judgment of their own learning.

- **Course evaluation questions**

For Freshman and Sophomore Inquiry, 11 questions directly or indirectly address the four learning goals:

Table 4
Student Frinq and Sinq course evaluation questions pertaining to four broad learning goals

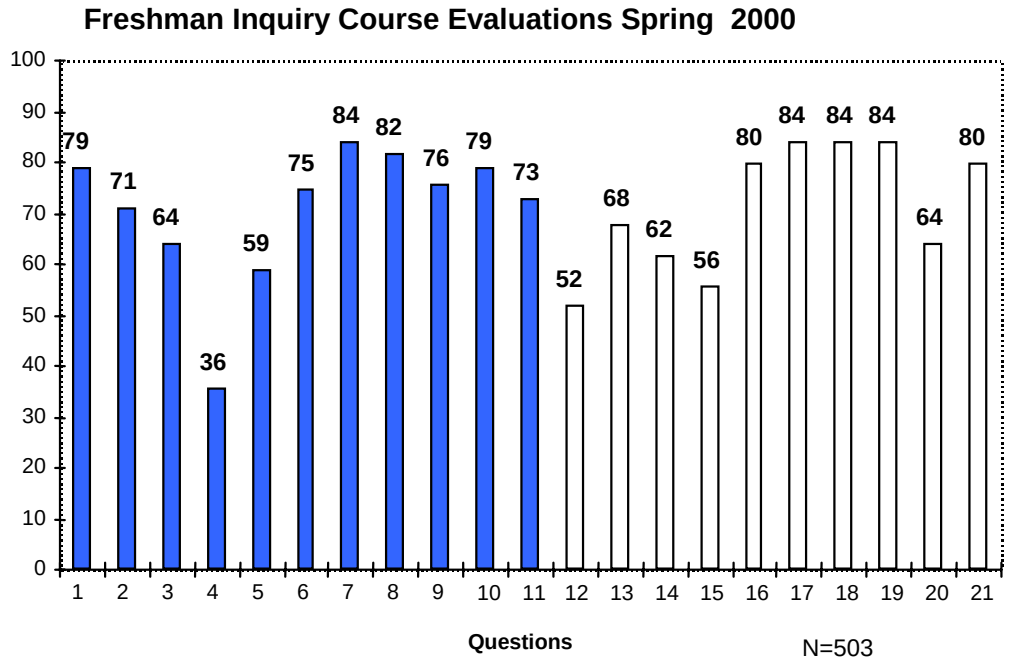
Question:	**Fring Q#**	**Sinq Q#**
In this course, I have had the opportunity to:		
Improve my writing skills.	2	3
Improve my oral communication skills.	3	4
Use numbers to communication information.	4	5
Use charts, tables, or graphs to communicate information.	5	6
Create visual images to communicate information.	6	7
Work with other students in a cooperative manner.	7	8
Explore various perspectives on important topics.	8	9
Learn about the differences and similarities in the human experience.	9	10
Explore ethical issues.	10	11
Examine my ideas about social responsibility.	11	12

- **Course evaluation data questions 2-11 for Freshman Inquiry**

At the close of Spring 2000, end of course evaluations were administered in 25 Freshman Inquiry classes. A total of 503 students responded. The figure on the following page shows the percentage of students who agreed or strongly agreed with each item. It is important to note that these course evaluations were administered during a period of controversy about University Studies. It is possible that these scores are biased as a result that controversy.

The most important assessment information concerns whether students had the opportunity to acquire skills related to the four goals of the University Studies curriculum. A total of 79% of the students agreed or strongly agreed they had the opportunity to improve their critical thinking skills. Similarly, the great majority of students agreed or strongly agreed that the course had given them the opportunity to improve other skills pertaining to the four University Studies goals. The sole exceptions to this general conclusion pertained to the use of numbers and charts, graphs, or tables to communicate information. These clearly are less well addressed by Freshman Inquiry. However, examining the evaluation data from Sophomore Inquiry (presented below) suggests that at least skills pertaining to numbers may be more effectively addressed in that course sequence.

Figure 7
Freshman Inquiry course evaluation data for Spring 2000*



* percentage of strongly agree and agree responses for each question.

- **Learning objectives data from Freshman Inquiry course evaluations**

Beginning in Spring 2000, the Freshman Inquiry course evaluations included a section that each instructor could use to elicit answers from his or her students regarding the fulfillment of the learning objectives set for that particular course. This model has also been used with success in the School of Business.

The new end-of-course evaluation form lists, on the back, ten items labeled only "Item 1" through "Item 10." Each instructor displays a copy of the learning objectives for his or her particular course, and students report whether they agree or disagree that they have

met each of those learning objectives. For instance, for the "Faith and Reason" Freshman Inquiry trailer team, one objective will be: [As a result of my work in this course:] "I can name three characteristics of mythological texts." The learning outcomes specified for other Freshman Inquiry themes reflect specific objectives related to their course content. Since the first round of objectives were drawn from the course proposals approved a year and a half earlier by the University Curriculum Committee, teams began the 2000-2001 academic year by more tightly defining learning objectives.

- **Course evaluation data questions 3-12 for Sophomore Inquiry**

Over the last two years, course evaluations have become a regular part of University Studies evaluation practices. Starting with Freshman Inquiry and moving to Sophomore Inquiry and then to the Capstones, program planners have utilized a standard course evaluation form, refining it each year.

The summary results below are from 1537 students, representing approximately sixty percent of all students enrolled in Sophomore Inquiry during the fall 1999, winter 2000 and spring 2000. Of those students, 850 responded during fall 1999 and winter 2000 terms to an open-ended prompt, "Please comment on what you have learned this term and how useful the class has been to your general education." Analysis shows that 72% of all responses were positive, and 28% were negative. For instance, with regard to their Sophomore Inquiry course:

  - 84% agreed or strongly agreed that the class provided them with the opportunity to explore various perspectives on a topic;
  - 76% agreed or strongly agreed that the class provided them with the opportunity to explore ethical issues;
  - 74% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that they had had the opportunity to expand their written communication skills;
  - 74% agreed or strongly agreed that the class met its stated goals and objectives; and
  - 73% of all students agreed or strongly agreed that the course had allowed them to expand their critical thinking skills.

- **Course evaluation data for Capstones**

As discussed above, one of the key innovations of the University Studies curriculum was the Capstone experiences. The Capstones are notable in that they emphasize community-based and hands-on learning experiences that are integrated with the remainder of the University Studies curriculum through the four overarching goals. Currently, student performance data are being gathered through Capstone student portfolios that will provide strong indicators of the effects of these experiences on student learning. At the time of this report, this project was still underway.

Some information about the effects of the Capstones can be inferred from student reports about their experiences working with their community partners. Table 5 presents student

ratings on several end-of-course evaluation items pertaining to the student goals. These items were scored using the same five–point Likert scale ratings described above.

Most students appear to describe their Capstone experience as valuable. At least 60% of the students responded affirmatively to most of the 15 questions, with many of scores exceeding 75%. One interesting finding is that 33% of the students indicated that they were volunteering in the community before taking the course, while 59% indicated that they would volunteer after taking the course. Although these data reflect intentions rather than actual behaviors and, to some degree, reflect impression management, they suggest that the programs may have increased their community involvement. Further, the only other items not favorably endorsed by at least 60% of the students concerned the effects of the experience on the students' career goals and on their own biases and prejudices. The pattern of responses to the remainder of the items strongly suggests that the Capstones effectively connected course material with community experiences.

Table 5
Capstone course evaluation questions pertaining to learning goals

Question:	**% Strongly Agree/Agree**
My participation in this Capstone helped me to connect what I learned to real life situations.	79%
The community work helped me to better understand the lectures and readings in this course.	57%
I was already volunteering in the community before taking this course.	33%
I feel that the community work that I did through this course benefited the community.	73%
I felt a responsibility to meet the needs of the community partner of this course.	80%
I will continue to volunteer or participate in the community after this course.	59%
The community work in this course assisted me in clarifying my career goals.	47%
The community work involved in this course made me more aware of my own biases and prejudices.	49%
The work I performed in the community enhanced my ability to communicate more effectively with multiple audiences	69%
The community aspect of the course helped me develop my problem solving skills.	65%
The goals and objectives of this course and its connection to the community work I did were reflected in the course syllabus.	75%
The various disciplines and majors of the students in the class helped the team work together in understanding the community issues represented in this Capstone.	69%
Students in this class had the opportunity to discuss and reflect on our work in the community and were able to connect this with the assigned readings and other course materials.	71%
There was a reflective component to this course that enhanced my understanding of my personal strengths and weaknesses.	72%
Through this course I was made aware of my social and ethical responsibility to myself and to others.	63%

- **High schools course evaluations**

University Studies has engaged in a collaborative project with Grant and Westview High Schools that is an exploration of reform through shared curriculum and faculty development. The project began in 1995 at Westview High School and in 1996 at Grant and consists of teaching the Freshman Inquiry course to high school seniors. The course at both high schools is "Embracing Einstein's Universe: Language, Culture and Relativity." The high school courses meet for 95 minutes, five days a week. At the high schools the interdisciplinary teaching teams combine high school and university faculty with university peer mentors. Since the program's inception, ten high school faculty, five PSU faculty and twenty-two mentors have been involved. During that time over 600 students have completed the course. Of that number approximately 20% attend PSU as their institution of choice.

Any motivated student wishing to work at a college level may take the high school course. It is not an AP course. The opportunity offers support and experience to students who are interested in the challenge of interdisciplinary study and who may be unsure of their ability to achieve college level standards. The high school program is designed to:

- Increase access to higher education for all students.
- Raise academic standards through curricular design.
- Demonstrate student performance in specified program goals.
- Smooth transitions among educational institutions.
- Increase faculty interaction and share development throughout K-16 education.
- Integrate assessment in curricular design for improved teaching and learning and for program evaluation.

Table 6 presents the Westview and Grant end-of-course evaluations for Spring 2000 for the 11 course evaluation questions that specifically address the learning objectives. The third column of the table shows the PSU means for Freshman Inquiry during the same term. As the table shows, the course evaluation scores for the two high school classes are generally quite high and in most cases are equal to or exceed the comparable PSU means. Lower scores were noted for some of the learning objective items, particularly those addressing oral communication, the use of numbers in communication, the use of charts, tables, or graphs in communication, and those examining ethical issues. However, across all of the items, these data begin to show the potential effect of aligning high school educational experiences with the University Studies curriculum. In future years, the college level performance and achievement outcomes of students who have participated in the high school program will be compared with students coming from traditional educational environments.

Table 6			
End of Course Evaluations/ Spring, 2000 Westview High School, Grant High School and PSU			
	WHS	***GHS***	***PSU***
Questions	**(*N*=73)**	**(*N*=49)**	**(*N*=503)**
1. Improve my critical thinking skills.	100%	75%	79%
2. Improve my writing skills	85%	80%	71%
3. Improve my oral communication skills	36%	27%	64%
4. Use numbers to communicate information	33%	10%	36%
5. Use charts, tables, or graphs to communicate information	29%	16%	59%
6. Create visual images to communicate information	54%	59%	75%
7. Work with other students in a cooperative manner	97%	86%	84%
8. Explore various perspectives on important topics	96%	86%	82%
9. Learn about the differences and similarities in the human experience.	96%	73%	76%
10. Explore ethical issues	36%	88%	79%
11. Examine my ideas about social responsibility	93%	90%	73%

- **External Findings Related to University Studies Student Outcomes**

As assessment activities have matured and students have progressed through the University Studies program, other efforts are beginning to measure the impact of the program on student learning outcomes. In Spring 2000, the School of Business Administration conducted an analysis of writing as part of their School assessment plan. They found that students who had taken the Freshman or Sophomore Inquiry courses scored better on their writing rubrics than students who had not taken the University Studies course sequences.

In one of the first scholarship of teaching articles on the impact of University Studies, the author compared a group of students in the Capstone courses with students who had not participated in the University Studies program on their identity of themselves as students. The author found that University Studies had indeed influenced the role identification and self-concept of students as students. He found that the Capstone experience served not only as a socialization agent, but that role identification occurred on all four goal

dimensions of the program, although to varying degrees. This study supports the impact on students of the program in terms of both growth in the goal areas, as well as a more fundamental role definition change that has the potential to persist after the student has graduated. [Collier, Peter J. "The Effects of Completing a Capstone Course on Student Identity," *Sociology of Education 2000*, vol. 73 (October): 285-299]

IV. Evaluation for Program Implementation and Improvement

A student-centered approach to assessment demands an understanding of the cognitive, emotional, and social aspects of the student experience. Although many elements of the college student experience are established in the literature on student development, it is ideal for an institution's planners to understand how developmental issues play out among their institution's students in the context of their particular local curriculum. This is doubly important at Portland State, where the general education curriculum is different than that at most other institutions. Evaluations conducted at all levels of the four-year University Studies curriculum have been key in building this local understanding.

- **Classroom Observation**

Classroom observation is a rich method for witnessing and understanding the learning that goes on in University Studies classes. Observation has given a great deal of critical information about what works best to accomplish the program goals, and insight into the ways students relate to the classes and to their education. Since program inception, approximately 950 hours of classroom observation have taken place, including observation of an entire Freshman Inquiry theme (class, mentor session and team meetings) during AY 1996-97, three Sophomore Inquiry classes, five Transfer Transition classes, and six additional Freshman Inquiry classes during AY 1997-98, AY 1998-99 & AY 1999-00.

This information has been used to form the basis of faculty development presentations at University Studies retreats, to address instructional problems in classes, and to better understand the common themes among classes that are by design also quite different. Not all issues facing an individual class are shared by all other classes, and not all issues are the same from term to term or year to year in any one class. At the same time, there are definite themes that effect the learning potential and educational experience for students, faculty and mentors. The most significant themes are:

- learning through speaking as paramount for student learning;
- inquiry based learning requires a willingness to take risks;
- the experience of learning communities that include professors;
- the importance of the physical classroom environment;
- the close relationship to the Freshman Inquiry professor; and
- the power of student reflection to deepen learning.

Students learn to question assumptions and take risks in learning through a wide variety of pedagogies, some directly focused and some subtle. There are moments where a class

begins to shift its attention from the front of the room to the other students (does this happen at a certain point in the term or year, is it more common with a certain instructor, is it a function of the amount of time spent in class discussion and/or small group work?) There are moments where several students who have never spoken will suddenly jump into a discussion (was it the topic, the presentation of the material, a controversial comment in class, a better way of asking a question?)

On a number of occasions a student has expressed his/her appreciation of a class discussion that encouraged new ways of thinking, while at the time of the discussion this same student sat quietly, not participating. Just as the classroom observer learns through observation, so do the students. Not all students are able to speak off the top of their heads, some need time for reflection before offering their contribution to a dialogue. When an environment that encourages all students to participate is created in a classroom, students will begin to take risks in speaking up (for those who are quiet) and in listening (for those who often tend to dominate.)

Communities develop over time so observing a class each day allows one to see the role of playful interaction before class, the transformation that can occur when students realize their importance in the class dynamic, and the importance of allowing small group as well as large class discussion. Even the way the chairs are arranged can often greatly effect the quality of class interaction.

Students have their own language for what we call the University Studies goals. The goals are a process as well as an outcome. Through observation and reflection on what is happening in the classes we have all realized that it is very difficult to put your finger directly on a moment where critical thinking is going on. It is possible to witness the growth in an individual or group of students as they move from viewing a text simplistically ("I didn't like it, the author was confusing") to learning to study a text ("What did she mean on page 54? I think she may be trying to say…"). Rather than talking about diversity, students will say they have a better ability to listen to another's point of view, that they had never thought about something before, that they are questioning ideas they have never thought twice about.

- **CCES for Freshman Inquiry (all years) and Sophomore Inquiry (98/99)**

The College Classroom Environment Scales (CCES), an instrument developed at University of Georgia, have been administered in all Freshman Inquiry classes since the first year of program implementation. Program administrators have found this instrument to be a valid measure, when compared to direct knowledge of the teaching styles and proclivities of our various instructors, of the measured elements of classroom environment.

The CCES is normally used for evaluation and faculty development. The CCES forms are scanned in the Office of Institutional Research and Planning, and a report prepared for each individual faculty member.

Two overall questions are asked on a scale of 0-5, 0 = very worst; 5 = very best:

1. How valuable has this class been as part of your total education?
2. Compared to all the college teachers you have had, how effective has this teacher been as an instructor?

Eighty-one percent (486) of all students rated the instructor effectiveness at 3 or higher with fifty-six percent at a 4 or 5. Two percent (12) rated the instructor effectiveness at a rate of 0. In 1999-2000, sixty-eight percent (480) of all students rated their Freshman Inquiry class at a value of 3 or above with thirty-six percent at a 4 or 5. Five percent (30) of all students rated the value of their class at 0.

There are six sub-scales on the instrument which include measures for:

Learning Climate (CLC)
Inimical Ambience (IA)
Professorial Concern (PC)
Academic Rigor (AR)
Affiliation (AF)
Structure (ST)

The mean scores on the sub-scales among PSU Freshman Inquiry students from 1996 through 1999 are listed below with scores collected from other colleges and universities to establish benchmarks when the instrument was developed in 1994.

Table 7
College Classroom Environment Scale Comparison

	PSU (1996-99)	**Mean Scores Liberal Arts Colleges**	**Research Universities**
CLC	3.28	2.73	2.92
IA**	2.25	2.12	2.08
PL	3.88	3.80	3.49
AR	3.74	3.34	3.26
AF	3.63	3.50	3.20
ST	3.46	3.81	3.82

- From Winston and Vahala, 1994
- Data were collected from introductory classes
- Only southeastern institutions were used in the study

** Low score is desirable on this dimension

Students at PSU view the University Studies Freshman Inquiry sequence as more rigorous, a more professor supportive and stronger learning climate than students at a sample of southeastern liberal arts or research institutions

- **Capstone Focus Groups**

Exit interviews of students completing their Capstone courses captured the reflections of students who have experienced University Studies from their entrance point (as first-year or transfer students) to the end of the program in the Capstone. A total of 141 students in 14 Capstone classes were interviewed during Winter and Spring 1999-00. Several themes about the student experience emerged from these interviews.

When students were asked about their experience working with their community partner, it was apparent that some classes had better working relationships with the community partner than others. In the classes where there were problems in this area, the students felt that the communication between the university, the faculty member and the partner needed to be improved. They said this was a necessary component of a successful Capstone experience.

In general, students felt somewhat prepared for their experience in the community. Some students felt uncomfortable at the beginning but as soon as the expectations of them became clear they felt less so. The majority of students said that the most important learning experience of their class consisted of completing their community project. They felt that their contribution to the community was a direct application of what they had learned in their assigned course work. They felt that their contribution benefited the community and this was a major highlight for them.

Students were asked how many years of the University Studies program they had completed prior to their Capstone experience. Very few (approximately 14%) had been through the entire University Studies program. More had transferred into the program at the Junior course cluster level than at the Sophomore Inquiry level. This made it difficult to make any kind of judgment as to how much of their previous coursework in University Studies had proved to be beneficial in preparing them for their Capstone classes. We also found that even at the Capstone level many students did not have an understanding of University Studies. Most of the students were not aware of the program goals. However, when the goals were explained to them, the majority said that those goals were met in their Capstone classes. In particular, students who had taken Freshman Inquiry, Sophomore Inquiry or Transfer Transition classes reported that the group work skills developed in those classes contributed to their ability to work as a team in completing their final Capstone projects.

Many students voiced their dissatisfaction with the amount of work required for the class. Forty-two percent of all Capstone students surveyed this year said their job requires them to work twenty hours or more per week. Students have difficulty meeting with each other for their projects outside of the allotted class time. Arranging times for all to be available often proves to be one of the biggest difficulties facing Capstone students. A few Capstone classes were problematic for some students because of communication problems, lack of clarity in what the expectations were, coursework which students felt was not at all connected with their final product, and lack of class structure.

The following is a list of suggestions students had for improving the Capstone experience:

- Clear communication between PSU and the community partner as to what the expectations of students will be;
- Close connection between what is done during class time with the work done in the community;
- Faculty who follow their syllabus and have an organized structure to the course; and faculty who are present and available to students during the entire term.

V. What is the relationship between the participation in the University Studies Curriculum and overall performance?

Innovative curricula, such as the University Studies program, are inextricably linked to student achievement outcomes in the remainder of a students' educational experience. For example, one of the implicit assumptions of the University Studies program is that it will produce beneficial changes in students' performance in their majors. Thus, it is particularly important to document the effects of the University Studies program on students' cumulative academic performance and their patterns of taking credit hours and courses. The data in this section of the report show changes in patterns of cumulative student performance and work patterns for several cohorts of PSU students before, during, and after the introduction of the University Studies curriculum.

- **GPA**

Table 8 shows the cumulative GPA upon graduation for several cohorts of PSU students, before and after implementation of the University Studies curriculum. The general pattern of findings is striking: Since implementation of the University Studies curriculum, students' graduating GPAs have increased by nearly .50 on the standard 4.0 scale. There are several potential explanations of these findings including differential rates of attrition, changes in the characteristics of incoming classes, grade inflation, history effects (e.g., changes that were implemented prior to University Studies), etc. but they provide another piece of evidence supporting the curriculum. In future work, the critical challenge will be to separate performance in the University Studies courses from performance in the major.

- **Credit Hours**

Table 9 plots the 1992 – 1997 cohorts' cumulated institutional credit hours upon graduation. Students are graduating with fewer total credit hours, suggesting that students are able to proceed through their program of study in a more purposeful manner than previously.

- **Course taking patterns**

Tables 10-14 present summaries of course taking patterns for PSU students for the 1992-1997 cohorts. Compared to cohorts of full-time freshmen prior to the implementation of Freshman Inquiry, cohorts of full-time freshmen in Freshman Inquiry are taking similar percentages of their first year classes at the lower division level. Of course, 25-30% of these full-time freshmen's classes are Freshman Inquiry courses, but even when UNST courses are excluded from the distribution, the proportion of lower division classes continues to constitute nearly 95% of students' courses.

Distribution of First-year Courses by School or College

Freshman Inquiry students (including full- and part-time, and freshmen and transfers) take the majority of their classes (67%-72%) in the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences during the first year. Within the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences and excluding Freshman Inquiry courses, 30-40% of Freshman Inquiry students take science classes.

University Studies students are taking more courses in the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences, the School of Engineering and Applied Science and the School of Fine and Performing Arts than students under the previous general education program. University Studies students also take a slightly higher proportion of their coursework in the sciences and other interdisciplinary studies programs than students under the previous general education program

Table 8
1992 and 93 FRESHMAN COHORTS VS UNIVERSITY STUDIES PROGRAM FRINQ COHORTS: CUMULATED GPA ON GRADUATION

GPA	PRE-UNST				UNST FRINQ							
	92 Cohort* (n=714)		93 Cohort* (n=852)		94 Cohort* (n=782)		95 Cohort** (n=836)		96 Cohort*** (n=881)		97 Cohort**** (n=817)	
	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%
TOTAL	**202**	**28.3**	**242**	**28.4**	**228**	**29.2**	**187**	**22.4**	**82**	**9.3**	**8**	**1.0**
2.00 - 2.49	39	5.5	18	2.1	9	1.2	6	0.7	--	--	--	--
2.50 - 2.99	68	9.5	82	9.6	59	7.5	45	5.4	9	1.0	1	0.1
3.00 - 3.49	62	8.7	90	10.6	113	14.5	88	10.5	40	4.5	2	0.2
3.50 - 4.00	33	4.6	52	6.1	47	6.0	48	5.7	33	3.7	5	0.6
AVERAGE GPA	**3.09**		**3.12**		**3.18**		**3.23**		**3.39**		**3.56**	

* 6-year cumulated GPA.
** 5-year cumulated GPA.
*** 4-year cumulated GPA.
**** 3-year cumulated GPA.
Source: End-of-year degree files.
Compiled by the Office of Institutional Research and Planning

Table 9
1992 and 93 FRESHMAN COHORTS VS UNIVERSITY STUDIES PROGRAM FRINQ COHORTS: CUMULATED INSTITUTIONAL CREDIT HOURS ON GRADUATION

CREDIT HOURS	PRE-UNST				UNST FRINQ							
	92 Cohort* (n=714)		93 Cohort* (n=852)		94 Cohort* (n=782)		95 Cohort** (n=836)		96 Cohort*** (n=881)		97 Cohort**** (n=817)	
	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%
TOTAL	**202**	**28.3**	**243**	**28.5**	**228**	**29.2**	**187**	**22.4**	**82**	**9.3**	**8**	**1.0**
0 - 50	--	--	--	--	2	0.3	1	0.1	--	--	--	--
51 - 100	2	0.3	5	0.6	5	0.6	2	0.2	9	1.0	1	0.1
101 - 150	17	2.4	20	2.3	13	1.7	11	1.3	40	4.5	2	0.2
151 - 179	40	5.6	46	5.4	33	4.2	40	4.8	33	3.7	5	0.6
180 - 205	119	16.7	131	15.4	110	14.1	101	12.1	--	--	--	--
206 & UP	24	3.4	41	4.8	65	8.3	32	3.8	--	--	--	--
AVERAGE CREDIT HOURS	**186**		**183**		**188**		**183**		**172**		**174**	

* 6-year cumulated institutional credit hours.
** 5-year cumulated institutional credit hours.
*** 4-year cumulated institutional credit hours.
**** 3-year cumulated institutional credit hours.
Source: End-of-year degree files.
Compiled by the Office of Institutional Research and Planning

Table 10

Percentage of Lower-Division Courses That FRINQ Full-time Freshman Take During the First Year

	Level of Courses		
Cohort Year	100	200	Lower-
1992*	58.2%	38.9%	97.1%
1993*	57.8%	38.4%	96.2%
1994	68.0%	28.5%	96.5%
1995	71.3%	24.8%	96.1%
1996	65.3%	30.9%	96.2%
1997	67.1%	29.3%	96.4%
1998	63.9%	31.2%	95.1%
1999	65.8%	29.6%	95.4%

*Entering Students Comparable to FRINQ Cohorts

Compiled by the Office of Institutional Research and Planning

Table 11

Percentage of Lower-Division Courses That FRINQ Full-time Freshman Take During the First Year, Excluding UNST Courses

	Level of Courses		
Cohort Year	100	200	Lower-Division
1994	58.5%	36.9%	95.4%
1995	62.6%	32.3%	94.9%
1996	53.8%	41.1%	94.9%
1997	56.0%	39.1%	95.1%
1998	52.6%	41.1%	93.7%
1999	55.4%	38.6%	94.0%

Compiled by the Office of Institutional Research and Planning

Table 12

Percentage of Courses by School or College of FRINQ Cohorts

Cohort Year	N of Courses	CLAS	SBA	CUPA	SEAS	SFPA	GSE	Other
1992*	8622	66.8%	2.7%	15.0%	2.9%	11.5%	0.2%	0.8%
1993*	10205	66.2%	1.8%	14.4%	2.9%	13.4%	0.2%	1.0%
1994	7804	72.1%	2.4%	11.3%	2.6%	11.1%	0.0%	0.5%
1995	8301	67.1%	1.9%	13.6%	2.1%	14.6%	0.1%	0.7%
1996	8428	71.5%	2.1%	11.6%	3.2%	10.9%	0.0%	0.7%
1997	8091	69.1%	2.1%	10.5%	3.4%	13.8%	0.1%	1.0%
1998	8652	69.5%	2.9%	11.6%	3.7%	11.5%	0.1%	0.8%
1999	9405	67.8%	2.9%	11.7%	3.3%	13.5%	0.1%	0.7%

*Entering Students Comparable to FRINQ Cohorts

Compiled by the Office of Institutional Research and Planning

Table 13

Percentage of Courses within the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences of Entering Student/FRINQ Cohorts

Cohort Year	N of Courses	Arts & Letters	Science	Social Science	Other—Interdscpln. Studies	Honors Program	FRINQ
1992*	5762	38.1%	31.6%	24.2%	2.7%	3.4%	
1993*	6755	36.0%	36.0%	23.3%	2.1%	2.6%	
1994	5630	19.0%	29.5%	16.0%	1.6%	0.2%	33.9%
1995	5567	20.8%	24.7%	15.3%	2.6%	0.1%	36.6%
1996	6030	18.6%	29.4%	12.8%	2.6%	0.0%	36.7%
1997	5591	22.6%	24.9%	12.6%	2.2%	0.1%	37.6%
1998	6011	21.8%	27.4%	12.7%	1.9%	0.1%	36.1%
1999	6376	21.5%	25.0%	15.0%	2.6%	0.0%	35.8%

*Entering Students Comparable to FRINQ Cohorts

Compiled by the Office of Institutional Research and Planning

Table 14

Percentage of Courses, Excluding FRINQ, within the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences of Entering Student/FRINQ Cohorts

Cohort Year	N of Courses	Arts & Letters	Science	Social Science	Other—Interdscpln. Studies	Honors Program
1992*	5762	38.1%	31.6%	24.2%	2.7%	3.4%
1993*	6755	36.0%	36.0%	23.3%	2.1%	2.6%
1994	3724	28.7%	44.5%	24.1%	2.4%	0.3%
1995	3532	32.8%	38.9%	24.1%	4.0%	0.1%
1996	3817	29.4%	46.4%	20.2%	4.1%	0.0%
1997	3490	36.3%	39.9%	20.3%	3.5%	0.1%
1998	3840	34.1%	42.9%	19.9%	3.0%	0.1%
1999	4092	33.5%	39.0%	23.4%	4.0%	0.1%

*Entering Students Comparable to FRINQ Cohorts

Compiled by the Office of Institutional Research and Planning

VI. Recommendations

Current assessment practices in the University Studies program have been effectively employed by program planners for the implementation of the curriculum and for the purposes of designing faculty and program development activities. Now the challenge for the University Studies program, along with the rest of the instructional units on campus, is to better demonstrate the efficacy of the program as it relates to specific student learning outcomes. In general this will require faculty to be more purposeful in their teaching when they address specific learning objectives.

Recommendations for a fully implemented assessment program for the University Studies program.

- The faculty at each level of the University Studies program needs to establish student learning objectives, assignments and measures for demonstrating attainment of the objectives, and criteria for performance appropriate at the particular level.

  Discussion: The four goals of general education encompassed in University Studies are broad and daunting. It is essential that through the assessment process that there is a clarification of the specific goals and objectives that can reasonably and well be accomplished through University Studies. In addition, the evidence suggests that some goals and objectives are more appropriately addressed in Freshman Inquiry; whereas others are most likely better treated in Sophomore Inquiry, the Clusters, or the Capstone courses. In particular, serious attention needs to be devoted to assessing the Sophomore Inquiry and Cluster levels of UNST. The permeability of the campus as students move in and out of the curriculum will continue to pose problems for analysis. Sorting, winnowing and refining the goals through the assessment process will assist faculty members in focusing their instructional energies. It will also help students understand what is expected of them, and bring greater coherence to the program and how it relates to other programs and majors across the campus in our larger enterprise of educating our baccalaureate graduates.

- Assessment of the peer mentor program. A systematic examination of the roles and effectiveness of the mentor portion of the program needs to be undertaken.

  Discussion: An innovative and integral part of the University Studies program is the mentor program at the Freshman and Sophomore Inquiry levels. The mentor program, based on interviews with the mentors, is a valuable contribution to the growth and development of the mentors themselves, a well as a valuable assistance to the students and faculty of University Studies. Greater clarity and documentation of the role and effectiveness of mentors would be a welcome addition to the program.

- The program should continue its efforts to establish an assessment ethic with the expectation that ALL faculty view student learning assessment as part of their teaching and scholarship assignment.

Discussion: Because the University Studies program so comprehensively spans the curriculum, and because faculty from so many departments, colleges and schools are involved in the program, it becomes necessary for every faculty member, including cluster faculty, to not only be engaged in the assessment of student learning outcomes for their course, but also in relation to the overall program goals.

- The University Studies program should participate in a campus-wide activity that documents and assesses the overarching learning outcomes of students who are enrolled in the various undergraduate degree programs on our campus.

  Discussion: As the goals of University Studies are articulated, meeting with faculty counterparts in other departments and programs could be extremely useful to articulate how the specific student learning expectations among the disciplinary programs and general education compliment each other. This type of dialog could advance the overall campus conversation on what we want our baccalaureate graduates to know and be able to do when they graduate.

- Existing efforts to support faculty scholarship in the assessment of teaching and learning related to the University Studies program should be enhanced.

  Discussion: We have one example of a faculty member who has analyzed data on student performance related to University Studies. We have a rich opportunity for faculty research and scholarship on the impact of a major curricular change on student learning and on the culture of an institution and its faculty. Sharing what we learn could be beneficial to colleagues across the country.

Appendix A

University Studies learning goals, learning objectives, pedagogical strategies, and assessment methods

Appendix A
University Studies learning goals, learning objectives, pedagogical strategies, and assessment methods.

Inquiry and Critical Thinking Goal: To provide an integrated educational experience that will be supportive of and complement programs and majors and which will contribute to ongoing, lifelong inquiry and learning after completing undergraduate education at Portland State University.			
	At what levels of UnSt is goal addressed? Freshman Inquiry (Frinq) Sophomore Inquiry (Sinq) Upper Division Cluster courses (Cluster) Capstone (Capstone)	**How is goal addressed?** (Assignments, discussions, mentor session, projects, journals, papers, lectures, etc.)	**Method of assessment and evidence of student learning** (May be anecdotal, measured evidence or unknown)
Assist development of critical reasoning and the ability to engage in inquiry.	Frinq (Monica Halka assignment) Some Sinqs Some Clusters Capstones	Class discussion Papers Reading assignments	NA Grading Summaries or NA Portfolio, rubrics
Assist development of the capability to evaluate differing theories, modes of inquiry, systems of knowledge, and knowledge claims.	Frinq (Richard Beyler #1 LO) Some Sinqs Some clusters Some capstones	Lecture Class discussion Reading assignments Papers	NA NA Summaries or NA Grading
Achieve an intelligent acquaintance with a range of modes and styles of inquiry and social construction.	Frinq Some Sinqs Some clusters Some Capstones	Lecture Readings Class discussion	NA Summaries or NA NA
Assist development of the ability to understand and critically evaluate information presented in the form of graphics and other visual media.	Some Frinqs (Paul Latiolais assignment) Few Sinqs Few Clusters Few Capstones	Lecture Readings Class discussion Presentations Projects	NA Summaries or NA NA Grading Grading

Assist development of the ability to use writing as a way of thinking, of discovering ideas, and of making meaning as well as expressing it.	Some Frinqs (Ellen Broido assignment) Some Sinqs Few Clusters Some Capstones	Journal writing In class focused free writes Drafts of papers	Read entries Read free writes Peer review, faculty review, grading
Assist development of the ability to critically evaluate numerical information.	Some Frinqs Few Sinqs Few Clusters Few Capstones	Lecture Readings Class discussion Presentations projects	NA Summaries or NA NA Grading, group evaluation, class evaluation
Enhance student familiarity with science and scientific inquiry.	Some Frinqs (Don Howard assignment) Few Sinqs Few Clusters Few Capstones	Lectures Guest presenters Class demonstrations Presentations Projects Readings	NA NA NA Grading, group evaluation, class evaluation Grading, group evaluation, class evaluation Summaries or NA
Enhance student familiarity with and capabilities to employ current technologies to facilitate learning and inquiry.	Frinq (Paul Latiolais assignment) Some Sinqs Few Clusters Few Capstones	Mentor session Assignments Presentations Projects Papers	Completing assigned tasks, grading Grading Grading, group evaluation, class evaluation Grading, group evaluation, class evaluation Grading, peer review
Enhance awareness of and appreciation for the interconnections among the specialized areas of knowledge encompassed by disciplines and programs.	Some Frinqs Few Sinqs Few Clusters Capstones	Guest presenters Readings	NA Summaries or NA

Provide awareness of choices among academic disciplines and programs.	Few Frinqs Few Sinqs Few Clusters Some Capstones	Assignments Class discussion	Grading NA
Provide students with an opportunity to explore applications of their chosen fields of study.	Few Frinqs Few Sinqs Some Clusters Capstones	Assignments Projects Presentations Final products	Grading Grading, group or class evaluations Grading, group or class evaluations Grading, peer review, community input

Communication Goal: to provide an integrated educational experience that will have as a primary focus enhancement of the ability to communicate what has been learned.			
	At what levels of UnSt is goal addressed? Freshman Inquiry (Frinq) Sophomore Inquiry (Sinq) Upper Division Cluster courses (Cluster) Capstone (Capstone)	**How is goal addressed?** (Assignments, discussions, mentor session, projects, journals, papers, lectures, etc.)	**Method of assessment and evidence of student learning** (May be anecdotal, measured evidence or unknown)
Enhance student ability to express what is intended in several forms of written and oral communication.	Frinq (Ellen Broido assignment; R. Beyler LO) Sinq – written Some Sinqs – oral Clusters – written Few Clusters – oral Capstone – may be either or both	Papers – creative, research Presentations Class discussions Free writes Journals	Grading, peer review, feedback Grading, class and group evaluation NA Feedback or NA Feedback or NA
Assist students to develop the ability to create and use graphics and other forms of visual communication.	Some Frinqs Few Sinqs Few Clusters Some Capstones	Papers Reading Projects Presentations Demonstrations Guest presenters	Grading, peer review Discussion Grading, class and group evaluation Grading, class and group evaluation Discussion Discussion, put to use
Enhance students' ability to communicate quantitative concepts.	Some Frinqs (Paul Latiolais assignment) Few Sinqs Few Clusters Some Capstones	Papers Projects Presentations Final products	Grading, class and group evaluation Grading, class and group evaluation Grading, class and group evaluation Grading, class and group evaluation, community partner input
Develop students' ability to employ current technologies to assist communication.	Frinq Some Sinq (except writing) Few Clusters (except writing) Some Capstones	Mentor session Presentations Projects	Complete assigned tasks

Human Experience Goal: To provide an integrated education that will increase understanding of the human experience. This includes emphasis upon scientific, social, multicultural, environmental, and artistic components to that experience and the full realization of human potential as individuals and communities.			
	At what levels of UnSt is goal addressed? Freshman Inquiry (Frinq) Sophomore Inquiry (Sinq) Upper Division Cluster courses (Cluster) Capstone (Capstone)	**How is goal addressed?** (Assignments, discussions, mentor session, projects, journals, papers, lectures, etc.)	**Method of assessment and evidence of student learning** (May be anecdotal, measured evidence or unknown)
Enhance awareness and appreciation of societal diversity in the local, national, and global communities.	Frinq (Ellen Broido assignment) Few Sinqs Few Clusters Capstones	Class discussion Readings Projects Community involvement	NA Summaries Grading, feedback Feedback, grading, group evaluation
Explore the evolution of human civilization from differing disciplinary and cultural perspectives.	Some Frinqs (Richard Beyler #4 LO) Some Sinqs Some Clusters Some Capstones	Guest presenters Lectures	
Explore the course and implications of scientific and technological change.	Some Frinqs (Richard Beyler #5 LO) Few Sinqs Few Clusters Few Capstones		
Develop an appreciation of the aesthetic and intellectual components of the human experience in literature and the arts.	Some Frinqs (Richard Beyler #4 LO) Few Sinqs Few Clusters Few Capstones		
Explore the relationship between physical, intellectual, emotional, and social well-being including the means by which self-actualization is developed and maintained throughout life.	Few Frinqs Few Sinqs Few Clusters Few Capstones		

Explore and appreciate the aesthetics of artistic expression and the contributions of the fine and performing arts and of human movement/sport/play to the quality of life.	Some Frinqs Few Sinqs Few Clusters Some Capstones		
Develop the capacity to adapt to life challenges and to foster human development (including intellectual, physical, social and emotional dimensions) amongst self and others throughout the life span.	Frinq Some Sinqs Some Clusters Capstones		

Ethical Issues and Social Responsibility Goal: Provide an integrated educational experience that develops an appreciation for and understanding of the relationships among personal, societal, and global well-being and the personal implications of such issues as the basis of ethical judgment, societal diversity, and the expectations of social responsibility.			
	At what levels of UnSt is goal addressed? Freshman Inquiry (Frinq) Sophomore Inquiry (Sinq) Upper Division Cluster courses (Cluster) Capstone	**How is goal addressed?** (Assignments, discussions, mentor session, projects, journals, papers, lectures, etc.)	**Method of assessment and evidence of student learning** (May be anecdotal, measured evidence or unknown)
Appreciate the impact of life choices on personal, social, and environmental health.	Some Frinqs Some Sinqs Some Clusters Some Capstones	Group work Projects Readings, assignments	Group evaluation, grading Group evaluation, grading Summaries, grading
Gain an understanding of ethical dilemmas confronted by individuals, groups, and communities and the foundations upon which resolution might be possible.	Some Frinqs (Jamie Ross assignment) Few Sinqs Some Clusters Capstones	Group work Projects Community relationships Reading, assignments	Group evaluation, grading Group evaluation, grading Feedback, project evaluation Summaries, grading
Practice and test one's capacities to engage the ethical, interactive, and organizational challenges of the present era.	Few Frinqs (Ellen Broido assignment) Few Sinqs Some Clusters Capstones	Group work Projects Community involvement	Group evaluation, grading Group evaluation, grading Feedback, project evaluation
Explore the personal implications and responsibilities in creating an ethical and safe familial environment, neighborhood, work environment, society, and global community.	Some Frinqs Few Sinqs Few Clusters Capstones	Classroom agreements Group work Projects Community involvement Guest presenters	Feedback Group evaluation, grading Group evaluation, grading Feedback, project evaluation Feedback

Explore and appreciate the role of diversity in achieving environmental, social, and personal health.	Some Frinqs (Richard Beyler #2 LO) Few Sinqs Few Clusters Some Capstones	Group work Community involvement	Group evaluation, grading Feedback
Gain familiarity with the values, foundations, and responsibilities of democratic society.	Few Frinqs Few Sinqs Few Clusters Few Capstones	Group work	Group evaluation, grading