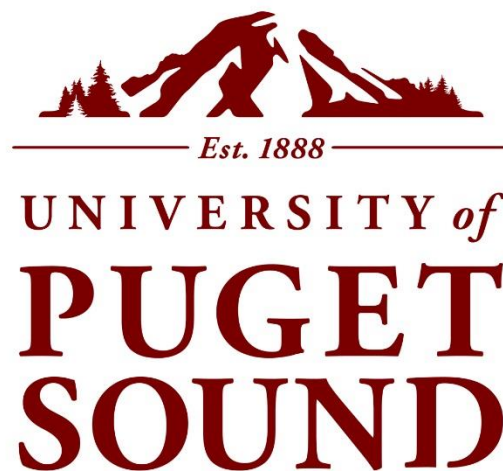


Accreditation
Demonstration Project Report
for the
Northwest Commission on
Colleges and Universities



March 2017

Preface

This report is the result of University of Puget Sound's work as part of the collaborative Demonstration Project organized by the Northwest Commission on Colleges and Universities (NWCCU). As stated in the March 4, 2015 Memorandum of Understanding (see Attachment 1), we understand the goal of the project has been "to cooperatively determine how best to provide evidence of the assessment of student learning outcomes and mission fulfillment and sustainability" and, accordingly, we have collaborated with the commission and the three other participating institutions—Columbia Basin College, University of Montana, and University of Oregon. This report represents Puget Sound's fulfillment of the commitment made to deliver "a comprehensive written report addressing the components of Standard Five, *Mission Fulfillment and Sustainability*, and an explication of a set of 'best practices' focused on program and institutional outcomes with a special emphasis on student learning outcomes." In preparing this report, we were guided by the August 9, 2016 template provided by the project director. With approval of the project director, we have combined Chapters 4 and 5 from the report template into a single Chapter 4 titled "Analysis and Use of Assessment Evidence." The combined chapter is structured as a series of stories that, in our view, demonstrate a robust commitment to continuous improvement.

Since the December 2014 project kickoff meeting, we have enjoyed and valued collaborating with colleagues from the commission and the three other institutions. We have benefitted from the collaboration among a variety of institution types. As a result of the work we have done in the context of the project, we are confident that we are fulfilling our mission at an acceptable level while at the same time noting areas to which continued or additional attention is warranted. In this report, we strive to be particularly reflective, authentic, and open. We thank the commission and our colleagues at Columbia Basin, Montana, and Oregon for the opportunity to do so. Those of us who took part in Demonstration Project meetings will genuinely miss the invigorating and thought-provoking discussions.

Note: In Appendix A, we provide a glossary for language and acronyms that are particular to Puget Sound. In Appendix B, we provide a response to Recommendation #1 from our Spring 2013 Year Three evaluation as requested by the commission.

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Chapter 1 Overview of the Institutional Context

About University of Puget Sound

Established in 1888, University of Puget Sound is a 2,600-student independent residential national liberal arts college, with three small graduate programs, located in Tacoma, Washington. Graduates include Rhodes and Fulbright scholars, notables in the arts and culture, entrepreneurs and elected officials, and leaders in business and finance locally and throughout the world. A low student-faculty ratio provides Puget Sound students with personal attention from a faculty with a strong commitment to teaching in more than 50 traditional and interdisciplinary areas of study. Puget Sound is the only nationally ranked independent undergraduate liberal arts college in Western Washington, and one of just five independent colleges in the Pacific Northwest, granted a charter by Phi Beta Kappa, the nation's most prestigious academic honor society. Founded by what is now the United Methodist Church, Puget Sound is governed today by a wholly independent Board of Trustees and maintains a relationship with the United Methodist Church based on its shared history and values held in common, including the importance of access to a high quality education, academic freedom, social justice, environmental stewardship, and global focus.

The university's primary goal is to provide an outstanding liberal arts education that prepares students for creative and useful lives. The undergraduate academic program is based on a core curriculum for all students and includes a wide selection of majors in the liberal arts. (A complete listing of degrees is given in Appendix C.) The university also provides distinctive graduate programs in education, occupational therapy, and physical therapy.

Mission

The mission of the university is to develop in its students' capacities for critical analysis, aesthetic appreciation, sound judgment, and apt expression that will sustain a lifetime of intellectual curiosity, active inquiry, and reasoned independence. A Puget Sound education, both academic and cocurricular, encourages a rich knowledge of self and others; an appreciation of commonality and difference; the full, open, and civil discussion of ideas; thoughtful moral discourse; and integration of learning, preparing the university's graduates to meet the highest tests of democratic citizenship. Such an education seeks to liberate each person's fullest intellectual and human potential to assist in the unfolding of creative and useful lives.

Faculty and Students

The faculty and board of trustees support a program committed to comprehensive liberal learning and academic excellence. The full-time faculty of approximately 240 is first and foremost a teaching faculty, selected not only for expertise in various subject areas, but also for the desire and ability to promote deep understanding and critical thinking. Students benefit from classes taught by committed faculty members who welcome students not only into their classrooms, but also into the scholarly community of the campus. Faculty members maintain active intellectual lives that nourish their own scholarly development and their work with students.

Puget Sound is large enough to offer the advantages of multiple perspectives, sophisticated technologies, and a rich array of programs, yet small enough to preserve a relaxed, friendly atmosphere. Students come to Puget Sound with diverse backgrounds and interests from nearly every state in the nation and from several foreign countries.

As noted in Puget Sound's Diversity and Inclusion Vision Statement, "We are a campus community that values the intrinsic worth of its members, recognizes our shared qualities, and embraces our differences. We make appreciation of all persons a key characteristic of this community, foster a spirit of openness

and active engagement, and strive to be diverse and inclusive in every aspect of campus life.” The limited size of the student body, the residential campus, and the commitment of the faculty to intensive, rigorous education create a highly engaging experience and strong sense of community.

The Academic Program

Through its undergraduate core curriculum, as well as its major and minor programs, Puget Sound is committed to providing a liberal arts education of enduring value. Such an education enables students to adapt, to change careers, and to assume ever greater responsibilities as new opportunities arise. It also enables students to lead interesting and personally satisfying lives, and prepares them to contribute to and address effectively and constructively the challenges of a continually changing society. In Chapter 2, we describe the principles on which design of the academic program is based.

Chapter 2 Definition of Institutional Mission Fulfillment

University of Puget Sound's mission provides a foundation for our core themes, educational goals, and Curriculum Statement. These, in turn, influence our cocurricular vision. In recent years, Puget Sound has been attentive to the High-Impact Educational Practices (HIP), articulated by George Kuh and the American Association of Colleges and Universities' LEAP project¹, as effective means to high-quality student learning outcomes related to mission fulfillment.

2.1 Mission, Curricular Goals, and Cocurricular Goals

The university's mission statement reads:

University of Puget Sound is an independent predominantly residential undergraduate liberal arts college with selected graduate programs building effectively on a liberal arts foundation. The university, as a community of learning, maintains a strong commitment to teaching excellence, scholarly engagement, and fruitful student-faculty interaction.

The mission of the university is to develop in its students capacities for critical analysis, aesthetic appreciation, sound judgment, and apt expression that will sustain a lifetime of intellectual curiosity, active inquiry, and reasoned independence. A Puget Sound education, both academic and cocurricular, encourages a rich knowledge of self and others; an appreciation of commonality and difference; the full, open, and civil discussion of ideas; thoughtful moral discourse; and the integration of learning, preparing the university's graduates to meet the highest tests of democratic citizenship. Such an education seeks to liberate each person's fullest intellectual and human potential to assist in the unfolding of creative and useful lives.

The mission includes essential learning outcome elements ("critical analysis, aesthetic appreciation, sound judgment, and apt expression") that are foundational for achieving holistic lifelong goals leading, ideally, to "the unfolding of creative and useful lives."

The faculty's educational theory for delivery of this mission is articulated in the Curriculum Statement (see Attachment 2), which begins with these general considerations:

University of Puget Sound as an academic community provides a meeting place for those committed to the generation, study, analysis, and exchange of ideas. The intellectual purposes of the university are of paramount importance. At the same time, the university recognizes that the life of the mind creates a context for the personal and professional growth of individuals as whole persons. The university thus encourages both formal thought and self-reflection, and offers a curriculum supporting the exploration of diverse ideas, values, and cultures.

An undergraduate liberal arts education should provide the foundation for a lifetime of intellectual inquiry by grounding undergraduates well in a field of specialization, developing their ability to write with clarity and power, deepening their understanding of the structures and issues of the contemporary world, and broadening their perspective on enduring human concerns and cultural change. Such an education should prepare a person to pursue interests and ideas with confidence and independence, to meet the demands of a career, and to cope with the complexity of modern life.

¹ Kuh, George D., *High-Impact Educational Practices: What They Are, Who Has Access to Them, and Why They Matter*, American Association of Colleges and Universities, 2008.

These general considerations are captured in a set of educational goals to be emphasized in the undergraduate curriculum:²

1. The ability to think logically and analytically
2. The ability to communicate clearly and effectively, both orally and in writing
3. Intellectual autonomy and the accompanying capacity to learn independently of a formal educational structure
4. An understanding of the interrelationship of knowledge
5. Familiarity with diverse fields of knowledge
6. Solid grounding in the special field of the student's choosing
7. An acknowledged set of personal values
8. Informed appreciation of self and others as part of a broader humanity in the world environment

The first seven of these educational goals were adopted in 1976, and the eighth was added in 1991. While the university mission statement has been reviewed and reaffirmed as part of Puget Sound's most recent accreditation report, no systematic review of the educational goals had taken place since the eighth was added, so such a review has been a major component of our work in the Demonstration Project. Details on this review are given in Chapter 4 (see p. 21).

Puget Sound's graduation requirements call for 32 units³ to include to the following:

- Core curriculum requirements (eight units)
- Foreign language requirement (up to two units)
- Knowledge, Identity, and Power requirement (one unit that might also satisfy other requirements)
- Upper-division requirement: At least three academic units outside the requirements of the first major, and outside the department/program of the first major, at the upper-division level, which is understood to be 300- or 400-level courses, or 200-level courses with at least two prerequisites.
- Requirements in an academic major (nine to 16 units, depending on the major)

General education at Puget Sound, thus, includes the core curriculum, the foreign language requirement, the upper-division requirement, and the Knowledge, Identity, and Power requirement.

The core curriculum and the faculty's goals for it are articulated in the Curriculum Statement:

The faculty of University of Puget Sound have designed the core curriculum to give undergraduates an integrated and demanding introduction to the life of the mind and to established methods of intellectual inquiry. The Puget Sound undergraduate's core experience begins with two first-year seminars that guide the student through an in-depth exploration of a focused area of interest and that sharpen the student's skills in constructing persuasive arguments. In the first three years of their Puget Sound college career, students also study five "Approaches to Knowing": fine arts, humanities, mathematics, natural science, and social science. These core areas develop the student's understanding of different disciplinary

² These are the current educational goals as stated in the faculty's Curriculum Statement. A significant part of our Demonstration Project effort has been to carry out a study of faculty perspectives on these educational goals that has informed a review, leading to proposed revisions. Details are given in Chapter 4.

³ Puget Sound operates on a unit system in which most courses carry 1.0 unit of academic credit. For purposes of transferring credit, one unit is equivalent to six quarter hours or four semester hours.

perspectives on society, culture, and the physical world, and explore both the strengths of those disciplinary approaches and their limitations. Connections, an upper-level integrative course, challenges the traditional boundaries of disciplines and examines the benefits and limits of interdisciplinary approaches to knowledge.

Further, in accordance with the stated educational goals of University of Puget Sound, core curriculum requirements have been established: (a) to improve each student's grasp of the intellectual tools necessary for the understanding and communication of ideas; (b) to enable each student to understand herself or himself as a thinking person capable of making ethical and aesthetic choices; (c) to help each student comprehend the diversity of intellectual approaches to understanding human society and the physical world; and (d) to increase each student's awareness of his or her place in those broader contexts.

The first-year seminars were revised with the new Seminars in Scholarly Inquiry framework first implemented in the 2013–14 academic year. More details on the continuous improvement process leading to this revision are given in a later section (see p. 34).

Students can satisfy the foreign language requirement in one of three ways:

- Successfully complete two semesters of a foreign language at the 101/102 college level, or one semester of a foreign language at the 200 level or above;
- Pass a University of Puget Sound-approved foreign language proficiency exam at the third-year high school or first-year college level;
- Receive a score of 4 or 5 on an Advanced Placement foreign language exam, or a score of 5, 6, or 7 on the International Baccalaureate Higher Level foreign language exam.

In addition, there are provisions to address situations in which a student has a documented learning disability that impacts language learning.

The Knowledge, Identity, and Power (KNOW) requirement was introduced recently, first effective for students matriculating in the 2015–16 academic year. Learning objectives for the KNOW requirement are articulated in the Curriculum Statement:

Courses in Knowledge, Identity, and Power (KNOW) provide a distinct site for students to develop their understanding of the dynamics and consequences of power differentials, inequalities, and divisions among social groups, and the relationship of these issues to the representation and production of knowledge. In these courses, students also develop their capacity to communicate meaningfully about issues of power, disparity, and diversity of experiences and identities.

Guidelines outlined in the Curriculum Statement mandate that these courses should “promote critical engagement with the causes, nature, and consequences of individual, institutional, cultural, and/or structural dynamics of disparity, power, and privilege” and “provide opportunities for students to engage in dialogue about issues of knowledge, identity, and power, and consider linkages between their social positions and course themes related to these issues.” More details on the continuous improvement process leading to introduction of this new requirement are given in Chapter 4.

The Division of Student Affairs (DSA) also has articulated a mission statement and student learning goals to serve the university mission and faculty educational goals (see Table 1):

The Division of Student Affairs supports the educational mission of the university, encouraging the development of students as citizen leaders in a global society. We are educational partners

with faculty, staff, and students, providing a seamless web of services, while role modeling integrity, collaboration, respect for human diversity, fairness, and social responsibility.

A Puget Sound education fosters effective communication. By engaging in discourse and self-expression through DSA programs and services, students will be able to (a) utilize effective verbal communication skills; (b) utilize effective written communication skills; and (c) choose communication strategies depending on context, audience, and goals.

A Puget Sound education fosters critical thinking. By engaging in active inquiry and logical analysis through DSA programs and services, students will be able to (a) examine their personal values and choices; (b) demonstrate how to think independently; (c) analyze information from multiple perspectives; (d) solve problems and accomplish goals; (e) identify connections between academic and cocurricular learning; and (f) integrate concepts of learning into their lives beyond Puget Sound.

A Puget Sound education fosters identity development. By engaging with diverse identities and perspectives through DSA programs and services, students will be able to (a) develop knowledge of self and others; (b) examine their own values; (c) practice acting with integrity; and (d) establish self-reliance.

A Puget Sound education fosters active citizenship. By engaging with the university, local, and global communities through DSA programs and services, students will be able to (a) explore the concepts of commonality and difference; (b) demonstrate how to be a collaborative participant in the development of inclusive communities; and (c) apply/employ/utilize social consciousness when making decisions.

The DSA mission and goals are encapsulated in Figure 1.

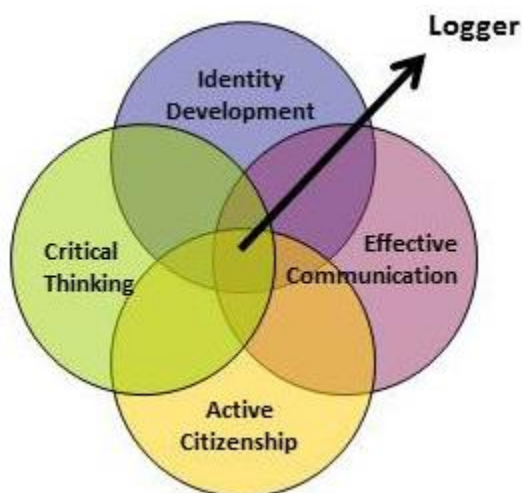


Figure 1. Division of Student Affairs Mission and Student Learning Goals

2.2 Core Themes and Essential Learning Dimensions

In its Year One self-study, Puget Sound defined core themes of academic excellence, rich knowledge of self and others, and engaged citizenship. Our Year Three self-study included these descriptions:

Academic excellence: Put simply, at Puget Sound we engage students in high-quality learning, intellectual exploration, and academic conversation in the liberal arts and selected professional fields. We seek to inspire students to excellent academic work, and we aspire to demonstrate

excellence in all aspects of our work with them, from the classroom to the athletic field, and from the dining hall to the residence hall. Students demonstrate academic excellence through five objectives: by becoming (1) effective critical thinkers and (2) able advocates, both in writing and speaking; by developing (3) familiarity with a variety of fields and interests, and an understanding of interrelationship among those fields and interests; and by achieving both the (4) depth of knowledge in a major field and (5) intellectual independence requisite for a bachelor's or first professional degree.

Rich knowledge of self and others: Twenty-first century students live in a global community, and they encounter daily the opportunities and challenges of interpersonal, intercultural, and international relationships and undertakings. In this context, we seek to model strong understanding of self and connectedness to others; to uphold our commitments to a campus community that values inclusivity and integrity; and to foster opportunities for creative and useful work, both individually and with others. Students demonstrate rich knowledge of self and others by addressing four objectives: (1) developing informed appreciation of and enacting respect for diversity; (2) attending and producing creative and analytical works; (3) participating in team endeavors in the curriculum and cocurriculum; and (4) completing internships and other pre-service placements, community-based learning assignments, and volunteer service projects.

Engaged citizenship: Liberal arts education has long been recognized as education for citizenship. Puget Sound affirms its participation in that tradition and, as such, seeks to be a community of citizens who are civically engaged, environmentally responsible, and globally focused. Notably, our commitments are not merely to prepare students for such engagement as flourishing and productive members of society, but to welcome their participation as campus and community citizens from matriculation as first-year students through lifelong relationships as alumni. Puget Sound encourages the application of knowledge to novel situations for the good of the community and society. Students demonstrate capacities for engaged citizenship by addressing three objectives: (1) developing the deliberative skills necessary for the full, open, and civil discussion of ideas; (2) participating in governance, community programs, and projects that address issues of institutional, regional, or national significance; and (3) enacting commitments to sustainability, broadly defined.

Within the context of the Demonstration Project's focus on general education, we reexamined the mission statement, core themes, educational goals, student affairs goals, and High-Impact Practices to develop a concise, yet representative, set of essential learning dimensions: *apt expression*, *critical analysis*, and *rich knowledge of self and others*. We also consider *engaged citizenship* to be a higher-level goal for which the three essential learning outcomes are, well, essential. We view the High-Impact Practices as a mechanism to deliver on our mission; as structures by which students may succeed in the essential learning dimensions. The essential learning dimensions allow us to connect elements of the mission, core themes, educational goals, and student affairs goals in alignment as mapped in Table 1.

	Essential Learning Dimensions			Holistic Lifelong Goal
	Apt Expression	Critical Analysis	Rich Knowledge of Self and Others	Engaged Citizenship
Mission Elements	apt expression the full, open, and civil discussion of ideas thoughtful moral discourse	critical analysis sound judgment intellectual curiosity active inquiry integration of learning	reasoned independence rich knowledge of self and others appreciation of commonality and difference liberate each person's fullest intellectual and human potential to assist in the unfolding of creative and useful lives	meet the highest tests of democratic citizenship liberate each person's fullest intellectual and human potential to assist in the unfolding of creative and useful lives
Core Themes	Academic Excellence	Academic Excellence	Rich Knowledge of Self and Others	Engaged Citizenship
Current Educational Goals	2. Communicate clearly and effectively, both orally and in writing.	1. Think logically, analytically, and independently. 3. Intellectual autonomy and the accompanying capacity to learn independently of a formal educational structure. 4. An understanding of the interrelationships of knowledge. 5. Familiarity with diverse fields of knowledge.	3. Intellectual autonomy and the accompanying capacity to learn independently of a formal educational structure. 7. An acknowledged set of personal values. 8. Informed appreciation of self and others as part of a broader humanity in the world environment.	All
Proposed Educational Goals	2. Communicate clearly and effectively, both orally and in writing.	1. Think critically. 3. Develop and apply knowledge both independently and collaboratively. 4. Familiarity with diverse fields of knowledge and the ability to draw connections among them.	3. Develop and apply knowledge both independently and collaboratively. 6. Informed awareness of self and one's influence in the world.	All
Student Affairs Goals	Effective Communication	Critical Thinking	Identity Development	All including Active Citizenship
High Impact Practices	First-Year Seminars & Experiences Writing Intensive Courses Collaborative Assignments & Projects Undergraduate Research Capstone Courses & Projects	First-Year Seminars & Experiences Common Intellectual Experiences Learning Communities Capstone Courses & Projects	Learning Communities Collaborative Assignments & Projects Diversity/Global Learning Service & Community-Based Learning Internships	All

Table 1. Connections among Mission, Core Themes, Goals, and High-Impact Educational Practices

2.3 Framework for Evaluation of Mission Fulfillment

Figure 2 (see p. 12) gives a schematic view of a route from mission to evaluation of mission fulfillment, along with connections to NWCCU accreditation standards. The route starts with a theory of education as it is expressed in our mission statement and educational goals. From the mission and educational goals, we determine essential learning dimensions. For the purposes of the Demonstration Project, with its emphasis on general education, we focus on apt expression, critical analysis, and rich knowledge of self and others. The curriculum and cocurriculum are then designed around these essential learning dimensions. This design, and our work to deliver on this design, are intimately connected to resources and capacity.

Figure 3 (see p. 13) shows a few representative elements of the curriculum and cocurriculum relating to the essential learning dimensions of apt expression, critical analysis, and rich knowledge of self and others, all of which come directly from the language of our mission. For example, “apt expression” is introduced (I) to first-year students through the sequenced Seminars in Scholarly Inquiry (SSI) courses; is developed (D) through writing in the major; and is mastered (M) through the capstone experience. At the same time, feedback regarding the student’s ability to demonstrate “apt expression” informs our work in modifying the curriculum to better fulfill our mission. None of the curriculum stands on its own, however, and while the SSIs are a mechanism for delivering “apt expression,” they also play a role in introducing students to “critical analysis,” which is further developed throughout the curriculum, including through the Connections requirement.

Returning to Figure 2, the route continues with the ways in which students experience the delivered curriculum and cocurriculum. While the designed and delivered curriculum and cocurriculum provide a path to guide students toward achievement along essential learning dimensions, each student has primary responsibility for his or her own set of experiences along that path. The individual combination of experiences leads to that student’s achievement along essential learning dimensions. In short, as we say colloquially, a Puget Sound education is not something you get; it is something you do and someone you become.

Our processes for gathering evidence to be used for assessment cover the design and delivery of the Puget Sound environment, student experiences within that environment, and the outcomes that result from those student experiences. An overview of those processes is given in Chapter 3; details on analysis and use of assessment evidence are given in Chapter 4. Evaluation of mission fulfillment and continuous improvement are driven by evidence-based discussions and decisions.

Our Year Three accreditation report laid out a mission fulfillment framework built around our core themes (academic excellence, rich knowledge of self and others, engaged citizenship). That model has three layers: the environment we design and deliver, the experiences of students within that environment, and the outcomes that result from those experiences. The main data source for that mission fulfillment framework is the National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE), with the underlying theory being that measuring extent of High-Impact Practices can serve as a proxy for outcomes. The Year Three report also included a separate framework for achievement of core theme objectives built around indicators and evidence. The peer evaluation team responding to our Year Three report noted, “While the articulation of core themes, objectives, indicators, and assessments is comprehensive, there is some risk that completing this process could be overwhelming.”

Through our work with the Demonstration Project, we have moved toward a mission fulfillment framework that focuses largely on outcomes as a way of addressing the question, “To what extent are we fulfilling our mission?” With this in mind, we have streamlined the framework for mission fulfillment to focus on student achievement. At the same time, we are maintaining separate attention to assessing

the Puget Sound environment and student experiences within it, as understanding these elements is essential to addressing the question, “How do we get better at fulfilling our mission?”

Our goal in establishing a model for evaluating extent of mission fulfillment is to have a meaningful high-level check on the university’s direction and approach. In doing so, we need to balance between something that is broad enough to be representative and simple enough to be grasped essentially all at once. To that end, our model for evaluating extent of mission fulfillment focuses on three questions:

- Are our students persisting to graduation at an acceptable rate?
- Are our students achieving along essential learning dimensions at an acceptable level?
- Are our students progressing toward lifelong holistic goals in an acceptable way?

Accordingly, we have developed a framework for evaluating mission fulfillment that has three components:

1. Student persistence to graduation
2. Student achievement along essential learning dimensions based in general education:
 - a. Apt expression
 - b. Critical analysis
 - c. Rich knowledge of self and others
3. Student progress toward a lifetime of engaged citizenship

Maintaining or exceeding an acceptable threshold in the first component—student persistence to graduation—is a necessary condition for student achievements in the other two components. As a residential liberal arts college, we generally think of our students as matriculating and graduating with a cohort while also recognizing that, for good reasons, some students will leave or be delayed, and others will join. Accordingly, our acceptable thresholds for student persistence to graduation should be relatively high within the full range of higher education institution types.

The second component—student achievement along essential learning dimensions—is the heart of the matter, particularly within the context of the Demonstration Project’s focus on general education. As noted above, the three dimensions we use are common to the university’s mission statement, the faculty’s educational goals, and the goals articulated by the Division of Student Affairs. As a liberal arts institution, we see these essential learning dimensions as foundational elements upon which progress toward holistic lifelong goals are built. The third component—progress toward a lifetime of engaged citizenship—represents one such holistic lifelong goal. As students graduate, we can try to understand their preparation for and progress toward engaged citizenship. Understanding how that plays out over a lifetime is a much more difficult proposition so, for the purposes of evaluating mission fulfillment, we focus on where students are as they graduate.

For each component, we identify a small set of representative measures or indicators that give a high-level view of where we stand in terms of mission fulfillment. For some of the measures, our point of comparison is peer institutions while for others the point of comparison is an internal threshold. Full details are in Chapter 5, following the overview of processes for gathering and analyzing assessment evidence in Chapter 3 and case studies of evidence-based continuous improvement in Chapter 4.

Since 2006, the university has been guided toward enhanced fulfillment of its mission by the *Defining Moments* strategic plan. The plan was presented to the board of trustees by President Ronald Thomas at the February 2006 meeting, where it received full approval and endorsement. The plan represented the culmination of more than a year of work by members of the Puget Sound community—administration, faculty, staff, students, alumni, trustees, and community partners—who sought to identify and celebrate the key elements of the Puget Sound experience, and to identify strategic needs and goals for the coming decade. The plan is phrased in terms four objectives, each with a set of strategies, exemplified below:

- Innovate: Enhance and distinguish the Puget Sound experience
 - Develop resources for embracing curricular innovation focused on environmental, international, and civic concerns
 - Create new faculty lines to enhance faculty recruitment and retention, strengthen targeted programs at the intersection of disciplines, and generate opportunities for faculty research and student mentoring across disciplines
 - Strengthen and promote academic achievements and partnerships in the arts and music, education, health sciences, and business and leadership that engage regional issues for their national significance and recognition
- Inspire: Build an inspiring physical environment for learning
 - Complete the integrated science center and Slater Museum of Natural History
 - Build a center for health sciences as a distinctive academic and clinical asset uniting psychology, exercise science, and physical and occupational therapy
 - Create Commencement Walk to integrate the north and south sectors of campus and establish a new grand campus entrance and approach
 - Expand and improve recreation facilities to promote health and fitness for the campus community
- Engage: Forge lifelong relationships
 - Reorient the alumni office from a program-based operation to a strategic center for cultivating mutually beneficial relationships
 - Develop and manage a network of volunteer opportunities to generate an array of connections and services for alumni, parents, and friends
 - Enhance external and internal campus programs and communications to reflect and promote our mission, vision, values, and strategic goals
- Invest: Strengthen our financial position
 - Meet student financial need through increased annual giving and endowment
 - Strategically deploy the university's endowment asset allocation, spending policy, and leverage capacity
 - Implement an inspiring and successful comprehensive campaign to support the advancement of the university for many years to come

The full expression of the strategic plan, including outcomes, strategies, research, and benchmarks is available in Attachment 3. In Chapter 5, we provide a status report on *Defining Moments* in the context of adaptability and sustainability. We also note that, in conjunction with the arrival of President Isiaah Crawford and reaching the end of the envisioned lifespan for *Defining Moments*, we are now in the preliminary stages of developing a next strategic plan.

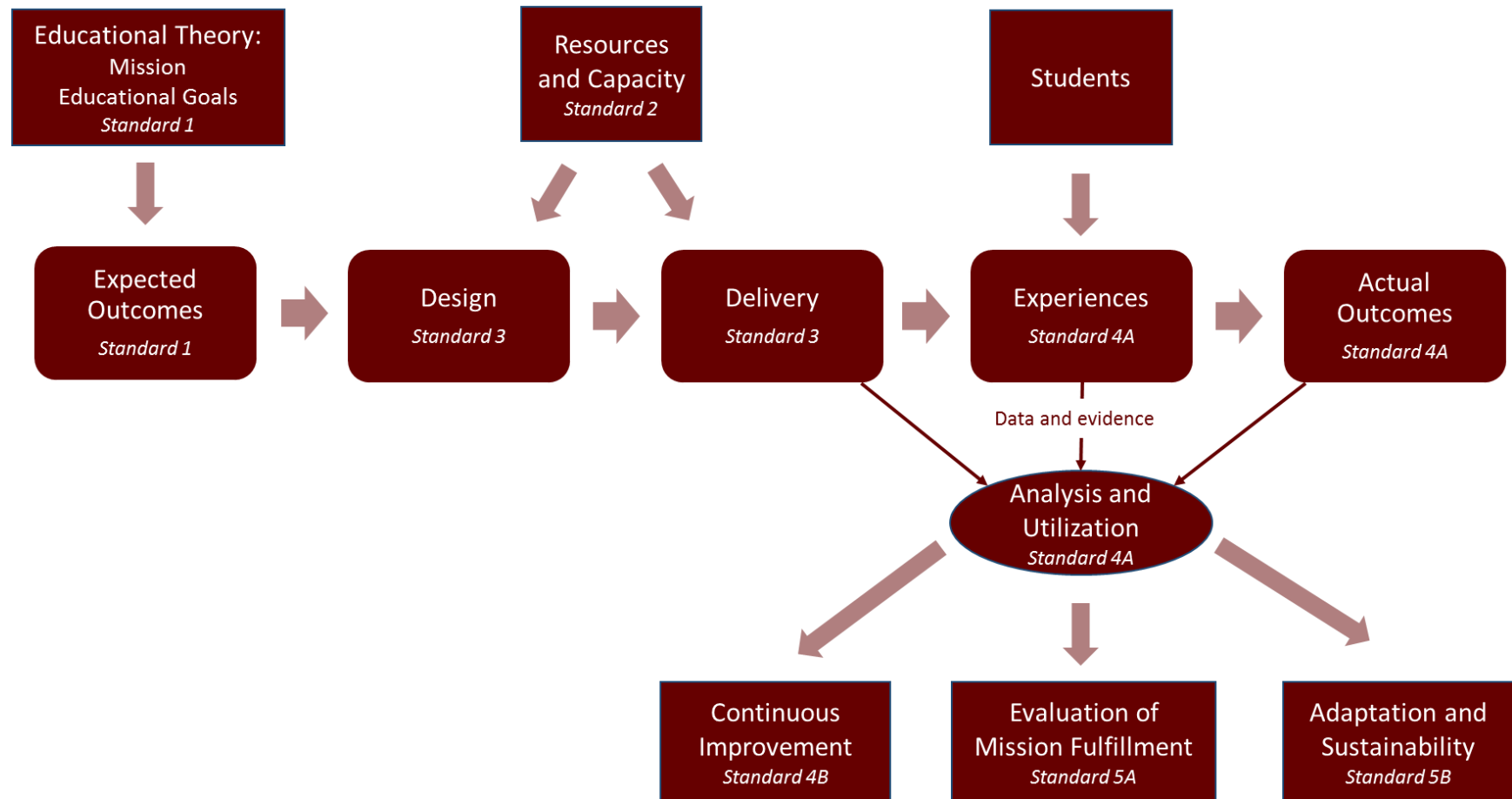


Figure 2. Schematic View of Flow from Mission to Evaluation of Mission Fulfillment

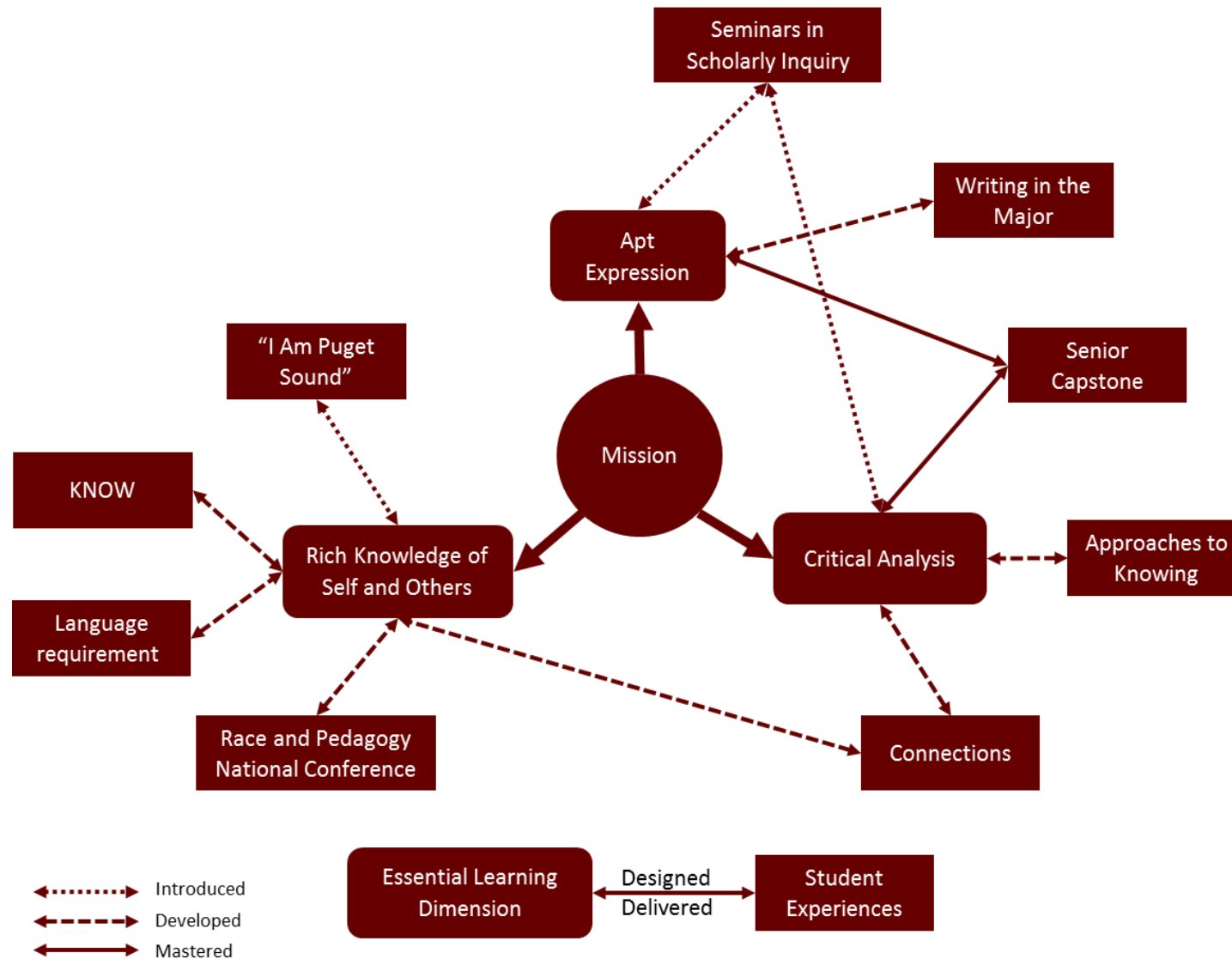


Figure 3. Schematic View of Connecting Mission to Design of Curriculum and Cocurriculum Through Essential Learning Dimensions

Chapter 3 Overview of General Processes for Evidence-Based Assessment

3.1 Institutional Assessment Processes

Puget Sound employs a range of processes for evidence-based assessment across the university. Our wide approach allows us to determine student progress from multiple sources, as shown in Table 2. The university makes every attempt to use both direct and indirect assessment methodologies, and, as a residential college, our assessments are both curricular and cocurricular.

	Curricular	Cocurricular
Direct	Longitudinal Writing Across the Curriculum study Department writing assessments (e.g., biology, economics, politics and government) Trends in majors/minors Student research symposium evaluation Research Practices Survey	Observations in Counseling, Health and Wellness Residential seminar grades/retention Fraternity and sorority academic performance
Indirect	Senior Surveys/Spring Surveys Core curriculum focus groups Research Practices Survey National Surveys (e.g. NSSE)	Senior/Spring surveys Six-week survey (first-year/sophomore) Campus Climate survey National Surveys (e.g. NSSE) Student affairs learning goals assessment Student affairs focus groups

Table 2. Institutional Assessment Instruments and Processes

Our direct assessment instruments allow us to examine student progress through student work artifacts. Our primary direct assessment is our longitudinal Writing Across the Curriculum (WAC) study, which has been in place since 1998. This is a cyclical study, undertaken roughly every five years, that involves identifying 150 incoming first-year students, and collecting their written work for the subsequent four years. In the fifth year, a small group of faculty members come together to evaluate student writing progress. This is a direct assessment of “apt expression,” as seen in our mission fulfillment model. A discussion of the data and action taken on campus as a result of this assessment is detailed in Chapter 4. In addition to this university-wide writing assessment, individual departments (e.g., biology, economics, politics and government) conduct assessments of student writing within their disciplines through capstone projects, such as senior theses.

Another instrument used for direct curricular assessment is the Research Practices Survey (RPS). This survey asks students to share their perceptions regarding information literacy, and also tests that ability by asking students to answer questions about topics such as the validity of sources. Students take this survey as first-year students, and again as seniors, on a three-year cycle, allowing the university to determine students’ growth over time in this mission-driven area of “critical analysis,” which is introduced through first-year seminars.

In addition to these direct assessments of the curriculum, the university has initiatives to collect direct evidence of student growth in the Division of Student Affairs (DSA). Each area of DSA (e.g., residence life; student activities; Counseling, Health, and Wellness Services; student conduct) has an assessment

plan based on the DSA mission and goals, which are drawn directly from Puget Sound's educational goals (see Table 1). The Divisional Assessment Work Group (DAWG) has been meeting to identify the best way to use both direct and indirect measures to assess student learning. For example, the Office of Student Conduct collects student reflections as part of its restorative justice program, and is developing a rubric that will be used as a direct measure of student learning in identity development and critical thinking (see Attachment 4), and Counseling, Health, and Wellness Services is assessing the effectiveness of communication among its student employees through observation of their work (see Attachment 5).

Other direct assessment of the cocurriculum includes student academic progress and persistence through Puget Sound's residential seminars. While all first-year students are required to enroll in a Seminar in Scholarly Inquiry (SSI) and an advising seminar, students have the option of enrolling in one that provides a shared residential community. Each year, we examine the grades and persistence of students who are in those residential seminars in order to assess the impact of living and studying together, especially around a shared academic interest. This does not map directly to a specific learning outcome, but is a High-Impact Practice. We assert that conditions for success (such as residential placement) need to be monitored in order to ensure that the environment is maximized for student achievement of the outcomes that denote mission fulfillment. A similar assessment is conducted to measure the impact of Greek life on academic progress.

Indirect measures are almost wholly surveys and focus groups. Through both local and national surveys, we are able to gauge both mission fulfillment and continuous improvement. Puget Sound has developed a cycle for assessment via surveys and focus groups on a rotating basis, as shown in Table 3 (see p. 16).

National surveys, such as the National Survey of Student Engagement and Beginning of College Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE and BCSSE), the Higher Education Research Institute's Freshman Survey (CIRP TFS), the Higher Education Data Sharing Consortium (HEDS) Senior Survey, and the Research Practices Survey (which provides both direct and indirect assessment), are conducted on a three-year cycle. These instruments provide us with first-year to senior comparison and/or peer benchmarks. Puget Sound also conducts local surveys; first-year students and sophomores take a survey in their sixth week to gauge acclimation, students take a Spring Survey each year, and every three years, we conduct a survey of students, faculty, and staff regarding the campus climate for diversity.

In recent years, both the Spring Survey and senior focus groups have included questions or activities to assess our eight educational goals. The survey questions ask students to assess their own growth on a 1 to 100-point continuum that ranges from "I do not understand this" to "I am able to apply these skills and abilities in my academic work outside of class." Graduating seniors are also asked to discuss the educational goals in focus groups. At least three focus groups of about 10 seniors each discuss which goals they feel were enhanced the most by their time at Puget Sound, and the specific experiences that contributed to that growth. Similarly, they discuss areas where they did not experience as much growth. These assessments are conducted annually.

	2015–16	2016–17	2017–18	2018–19	2019–20	2020–21	2021–22	2022–23	2023–24
First-Year	HCRC (Su) CIRP (F) 6-week (F) SPRING (S) LibQual (W)	HCRC (Su) BCSSE (F) NSSE (S) NCHA (early W)	HCRC (Su) RPS (Su) 6-week (F) SPRING (S) CORE (early W)	HCRC (Su) CIRP (F) 6-week (F) SPRING(S) LibQual (F)	HCRC (Su) BCSSE (F) NSSE (S) NCHA (early W)	HCRC (Su) RPS (Su) 6-week (F) SPRING (S) CORE (early W)	HCRC (Su) CIRP (F) 6-week (F) SPRING(S) LibQual (F)	HCRC (Su) BCSSE (F) NSSE (S) NCHA (early W)	HCRC (Su) RPS (Su) 6-week (F) SPRING (S) CORE (early W)
Sophomore	6-week (F) SPRING (S) LibQual (W)	6-week (F) SPRING (S) NCHA (early W)	SPRING (S) CORE (early W)	6-week (F) SPRING (S) LibQual (F)	6-week (F) SPRING (S) NCHA (early W)	SPRING (S) CORE (early W)	6-week (F) SPRING (S) LibQual (F)	6-week (F) SPRING (S) NCHA (early W)	SPRING (S) CORE (early W)
Junior	SPRING (S) LibQual (W)	SPRING (S) NCHA (early W)	SPRING (S) CORE (early W)	SPRING (S) LibQual (F)	SPRING (S) NCHA (early W)	SPRING (S) CORE (early W)	SPRING (S) LibQual (F)	SPRING (S) NCHA (early W)	SPRING (S) CORE (early W)
Senior	HEDS (S) Senior (S) LibQual (W)	NSSE (S) Senior (S) NCHA (early W)	RPS (S) Senior (S) CORE (early W)	HEDS (S) Senior (S) LibQual (F)	NSSE (S) Senior (S) NCHA (early W)	RPS (S) Senior (S) CORE (early W)	HEDS (S) Senior (S) LibQual (F)	NSSE (S) Senior (S) NCHA (early W)	RPS (S) Senior (S) CORE (early W)
Spring Survey Contents	Academic Department: FREN, GERM, GQS, HUM, LAS, MATH/CS, PHYS CORE: Natural Sci, Humanistic, Artistic Educational Goals Athletics	Academic Department: BIOE, CHEM, CLSC, EPDM, GDS, NRSC CORE: SSI, Soc Sci Educational Goals Internship	Academic Department: ART, COMM, IPE, EDUC, HIST, HON CORE: FL, Upper Div Educational Goals Campus Climate Housing	Academic Department: AFAM, BUS, CWLT, HISP, SOAN, MUSIC CORE: Math, Connections Educational Goals Athletics	Academic Department: ASIA, GEOL, LTS, ENGL, OT, THTR CORE: KNOW, SSI Educational Goals	Academic Department: ECON, PSYCH, PE, PT, STS CORE: Holistic Educational Goals Campus Climate Housing	Academic Department: BIOL, EXSC, NRSC, PHIL, PG, REL, SIM CORE: Natural Sci, Humanistic Educational Goals Athletics	Academic Department: FREN, GERM, HUM, LAS, MATH/CS, PHYS CORE: SSI Educational Goals	Academic Department: BIOE, CHEM, CLSC, CWLT, EPDM, GDS CORE: Artistic, Soc Sci Educational Goals Internship

Table 3. Student Survey Cycle and Relation to Curriculum Review Cycle. The set of surveys administered to each student cohort is indicated by shading along a diagonal. Key: (F)=Fall; (W)=Winter; (S)=Spring, (Su)=Summer; HCRC = Human Research Capital Corporation (Consultant); CIRP = Cooperative Institutional Research Program, UCLA (National); 6-week = six-week survey (Local); SPRING = Spring Survey (Local); LibQual = LibQual Survey (National); BCSSE = Beginning of College Survey of Student Engagement (National); NSSE = National Survey of Student Engagement (National); NCHA = National College Health Assessment (National); RPS = Research Practices Survey (National); CORE = Core Drug and Alcohol Survey (National)

3.2 Curriculum Assessment Processes

The Puget Sound curriculum includes several components for which the faculty has shared responsibility beyond a single department or program. These include the core curriculum; the Knowledge, Identity, and Power requirement; the foreign language requirement; and the upper-division course requirement. While it is not uncommon to hear faculty members refer to all three generically as “the core,” we have adopted the phrase “shared curriculum” as a more accurate and meaningful description.

Each component of the shared curriculum is reviewed on a regular cycle. A schematic view is given in Figure 4 (see p. 20). Taking “apt expression” as an example, direct assessment of writing across the curriculum is done through our longitudinal Writing Across the Curriculum assessment, described in Chapter 4. Writing in the major is assessed both through regular departmental curriculum reviews and the longitudinal Writing Across the Curriculum assessment, and mastery of writing in the discipline is assessed through both student self-report and departmental assessment of the capstone, often a senior thesis.

Prior to 2015–16, we used a five-year cycle; last year, we began transitioning to a seven-year cycle, shown in Table 4, in order to allow the Faculty Senate more time to follow up on any recommendations generated during each review. This current cycle started in 2015–16.

Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5	Year 6	Year 7
Natural Scientific Approaches (core)	Social Scientific Approaches (core)	Seminars in Scholarly Inquiry (core first-year seminars)	Foreign language requirement	Mathematical Approaches (core)	Knowledge, Identity, and Power requirement	Comprehensive review
Artistic Approaches (core)	Humanistic Approaches (core)		Upper-division requirement	Connections (core)		

Table 4. Seven-Year Review Cycle for Curriculum Committee Review of Shared Curriculum

As an indirect assessment of the core curriculum, the Office of Institutional Research works with the Curriculum Committee to develop both surveys and focus group protocols, as shown previously in Table 3 (see p. 16). Each year, one or two areas of the core curriculum are reviewed. Questions are developed in alignment with the faculty’s Curriculum Statement, which describes and defines the learning objectives and the guidelines for each area of the core. The data is collected in the spring prior to the review, and the Office of Institutional Research provides both a written and verbal report to the full Curriculum Committee in the subsequent fall. (See Attachment 6 for the fall 2016 example.) This process provides the Curriculum Committee with data to consider as members assess the particular core area and write their review report.

The Curriculum Committee assigns each review to a subcommittee (known as a working group) with this guidance in the document “Guidelines for Working Groups Conducting Core Area Reviews” (see Attachment 7):

The working group (WG) should make use of the full range of available information. Begin by reviewing the university’s Curriculum Statement, which expresses the goals or objectives of the core as a whole, as well as the published learning objectives and guidelines for the particular core area the WG is reviewing. One of the key questions for the review is: How well is this core area meeting its objectives? Evidence to be considered includes: (1) syllabi for all courses taught in the core area, (2) evidence of student views of the effectiveness of the core area, as collected

by the university's Office of Institutional Research through surveys and interviews, (3) written responses by faculty members who teach in the core area to a questionnaire distributed by the WG, (4) oral comments made by the faculty members who teach in the core area in a discussion held by the WG, and (5) data on classes offered in the core area, including number of sections and class sizes, which the registrar's office can compile at the WG's request.

The Curriculum Committee also reviews each department or program curriculum on a periodic basis (previously every five years, now transitioning to every seven years). For each review, the department completes a self-study based on established guidelines documented in "Department and Program Curriculum Review – A Self-Study Guide" (see Attachment 8), which it submits to the Curriculum Committee along with current versions of syllabi for all courses. Within the Curriculum Committee, each curriculum review is managed by a working group using a process outlined in the document "Guidelines for Working Groups Conducting Department, Program, or School Seven-Year Reviews" (see Attachment 9).

While Puget Sound has engaged the faculty in curricular assessment efforts for many years, this work has been streamlined in the last three years, after staff members from the associate deans' office and the Office of Institutional Research attended an American Association of Colleges and Universities (AAC&U) assessment conference in February 2014. They created an organic work group called Student Learning Outcomes Team (or S.L.O.). The team has worked to address the culture of assessment on campus and look for areas of strength, overlap, and disconnect within departmental assessment efforts.

In addition to those indirect assessments of the core curriculum and educational goals mentioned above, the university has embarked on work to strengthen assessment within the academic departments and to align those assessment processes with institutional goals. An important aspect of our educational program is the ongoing analysis of how well our curriculum fulfills the ideals and goals of the college's mission, educational goals, and the expected learning outcomes articulated by each department and program. Analysis based on learning outcomes plays a crucial role in assessing our programs while maintaining faculty autonomy and creativity.

Each year departments and programs engage in an annual assessment of their expected learning outcomes through an annual assessment report. Departments and programs are provided with guidelines (see Appendix D) that ask them to identify outcomes, describe how they measure student success toward those outcomes, and name actions they have taken toward those outcomes. This assessment should drive development and implementation of curricula, and completing this assessment annually can support and inform self-studies completed for periodic Curriculum Committee reviews.

To address departmental assessment strengths, areas of overlap, and areas of disconnect, the S.L.O. team has evaluated the annual assessment reports submitted each summer by academic departments. This evaluation has resulted in multiple outcomes. The S.L.O. team has been able to fine tune the annual assessment report template to assist departments in writing their reports. At the same time, the S.L.O. team has been able to evaluate ways in which the annual assessment report can feed into the five-/seven-year review submitted to the Curriculum Committee. The Curriculum Committee does include one specific question about learning outcomes in the required guidelines, and the S.L.O. team has been able to leverage that aspect of the departmental review to use the annual assessment report as a support not only for that question but other aspects of the departmental review report, as well.

One of the overarching goals for this work is to assist academic departments in evaluating whether or not their stated outcomes are clearly stated, measurable, and linked to the department goals, Puget Sound mission, and educational goals. This work will allow departments to use their annual assessment reports to inform their curricular review work.

Support for the academic departments also comes directly from the Office of Institutional Research, which works with them to develop a set of survey questions that are directly linked to the department-articulated outcomes. This survey data provides the department with student perceptions of their progress toward the department outcomes. The Office of Institutional Research also provides a packet of data detailing enrollment trends and alumni participation in postbaccalaureate education (from the National Student Clearinghouse⁴). See Attachment 10 for an example provided to and used by the biology department in preparing a curriculum self-study currently being reviewed by the Curriculum Committee. The biology self-study is provided as Attachment 11.

In addition to the Curriculum Committee review, the S.L.O. team analyzed the biology department's most recent annual assessment report and its relation to the curriculum self-study. From this, the team determined and discussed with biology faculty several examples of exemplary assessment efforts from the department, where stated outcomes aligned with department goals, the mission, and the educational goals. The team also pinpointed some questions that would help the department strengthen its efforts heading into the next assessment cycle and in preparation for the annual assessment report it will submit at the end of this current academic year.

Other assessment is through regular and ad hoc institutionwide surveys, and office-specific ad hoc focus groups. Ad hoc requests tend to be much more focused, and respond to questions related to 1) the contribution of study abroad experience to educational goals, 2) library space and academic success, or 3) the relationship between participation in athletics and campuswide engagement.

The combination of direct and indirect assessments, as well as a variety of methodologies (surveys, focus groups, evaluation of student writing, etc.) across the institution, provides triangulation to ensure that our methodology is not driving our results, but rather, that there is reliability to our results. In the next chapter, we share some stories to provide concrete evidence of how these methods of assessment provide data that Puget Sound uses to make decisions about continued enhancement of mission fulfillment.

⁴ The Office of Institutional Research has learned that the National Student Clearinghouse (NSC) does not have complete data. Some institutions do not permit the NSC to share information, thus, we know that data from NSC underreports our student postgraduation enrollment (for example, The University of Chicago does not permit data to be shared, thus any of our graduates enrolled at or with an advanced degree from The University of Chicago are not included.) Nonetheless, NSC is the best source of data we have, and it is better to have some information than none; there is an institutional effort underway to gather more complete data from other sources and/or vendors.

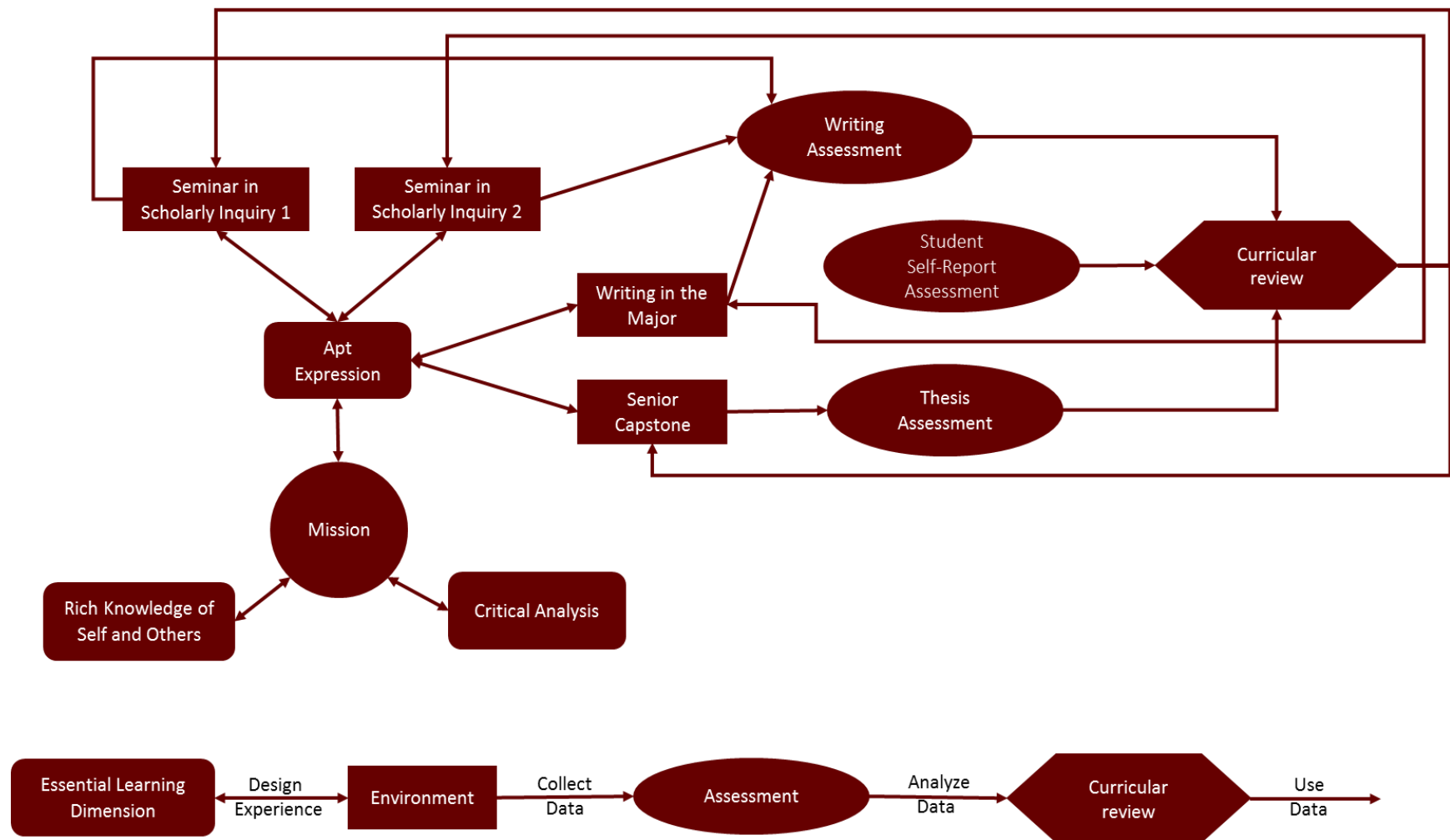


Figure 4. Schematic View of Assessment to Inform Evaluation of Mission Fulfillment

Chapter 4 Analysis and Use of Assessment Evidence

In this chapter, we examine our analysis and use of assessment evidence by showcasing a series of stories or case studies. The stories we have chosen are significant and representative of our processes for continuous improvement. We start with a story about setting the stage for assessment, namely defining outcomes in a way that results in broad understanding and acceptance across campus. Other stories that follow are about curricular and cocurricular changes aimed at improving achievement along essential learning outcomes. Each of the stories connects, in one way or another, to the essential learning dimensions and lifelong holistic goals components of our mission fulfillment framework, as described in Section 2.3. Here is an overview:

- In Section 4.1, we detail a review of the faculty's educational goals as articulated in the Curriculum Statement. That review is in the final stages, with proposed revisions being considered by the Faculty Senate.
- In Section 4.2, we describe the longitudinal Writing Across the Curriculum assessment and responses to recommendations from the most recent iteration. The focus here is on apt expression, specifically in the form of writing.
- In Section 4.3, we look at substantial revision to the first-year writing seminars, including ways in which we are monitoring impacts of those revisions. First-year seminars focus on apt expression and various aspects of critical analysis, including information literacy and developing arguments.
- In Section 4.4, we discuss responses to the most recent review of the Connections core requirement. This core area includes focus on aspects of critical analysis such as integrating and synthesizing a variety of approaches to a subject or problem.
- In Section 4.5, we examine how we understand where we stand on matters of inclusion and equity, and changes we have implemented or are implementing as a result. Prominent among those changes is the introduction of the new Knowledge, Identity, and Power graduation requirement. All of this bears directly on the essential learning dimension of rich knowledge of self and others.
- Finally, in Section 4.6, we describe a current initiative to expand experiential learning in an explicit and intentional way. Apt expression, critical analysis, rich knowledge of self and others, and engaged citizenship are strong themes in our approach to experiential learning.

Each of the last five stories is framed around three questions:

- What did we see?
- What did we do?
- How will we understand the impacts?

Taken together, the stories demonstrate robust processes for continuous improvement that are hallmarks of Puget Sound's culture and history.

4.1 Educational Goals

The faculty's articulation of expected learning outcomes is contained in the Curriculum Statement through a set of eight educational goals:

1. The ability to think logically and analytically
2. The ability to communicate clearly and effectively, both orally and in writing
3. Intellectual autonomy and the accompanying capacity to learn independently of a formal educational structure
4. An understanding of the interrelationship of knowledge
5. Familiarity with diverse fields of knowledge
6. Solid grounding in the special field of the student's choosing

7. An acknowledged set of personal values
8. Informed appreciation of self and others as part of a broader humanity in the world environment

The first seven goals were adopted in 1976, with the eighth added in 1991. In principle, these goals inform design of the Puget Sound curriculum. A 2015 Curriculum Committee survey on the core curriculum included a question asking faculty members to “indicate the extent to which the core curriculum contributes to the achievement of each educational goal,” along with opportunity for open response. Results revealed that faculty members had limited awareness of the educational goals and varying opinions about the value of the educational goals so, in practice, the current educational goals might not be serving well as a guide for curriculum design.⁵ Given this and the fact that the educational goals have not been reviewed since 1991, the associate deans’ office and the Office of Institutional Research began conversations about the potential value of a review and formulated a proposal. In August 2015, the Faculty Senate was informed about a joint project, to be carried out by a team from the two offices, to understand and characterize faculty views on educational goals for the university. More complete details on the project are available in the final project report, which was presented to the Faculty Senate in April 2016 (see Attachment 12). A summary is presented here:

In September 2015, the research team finalized a protocol for faculty discussion group sessions and began scheduling sessions for the period September to November. In total, the team convened 18 discussion groups of faculty members, meeting with an average of eight colleagues in each group. Seventy percent of regular faculty were able to participate.

In each session, faculty members were guided through a process in which the group brainstormed goals for Puget Sound graduates, compared the brainstormed goals to the eight current educational goals, and discussed the relationships they perceived among individual goals. As part of the group work, each individual faculty member indicated the relative importance he or she assigned to each goal, with choices of “critical,” “valuable,” and “not necessary,” which were later converted to numerical scores of 2, 1, and 0. To identify trends in discussion group responses, the research team compiled the goals (both brainstormed and current) into 33 clusters and synthesized those clusters into four broad categories: skills development, knowledge, personal development, and awareness and engagement. The clusters and categories are shown in Table 5 (see p. 25). For each cluster, the table also gives (a) the average score of all the brainstormed goals in that cluster and (b) the proportion of groups having at least one brainstormed goal in that cluster. Figure 5 (see p. 26) is a scatterplot for the 33 clusters by average score and proportion of groups. We provide these notes and observations based on the table and scatterplot:⁶

- The current educational goals are mentioned in 100% of the groups. This is a consequence of the protocol design, since we introduced those goals in every session.
- Clusters in the “skills development” category account for eight of the top 10 average scores. The other two clusters in the top 10 are “balance respect and challenge” from the “awareness and engagement” category and “solid grounding in special field (Goal 6)” from the “knowledge” category. There is a small gap below the top 10 group to the next highest average score (specifically, between 1.77 and 1.72).
- The “balance respect and challenge” cluster has a relatively high average score while being mentioned in just under half of the groups.

⁵ This is not a surprising result, given that over 50% of the tenure-line faculty (103 of 192 positions) has been hired since 2005–06, and illustrates the importance of periodic, focused review of foundational documents—even in the context of robust, ongoing curricular review and improvement.

⁶ Clusters referenced explicitly in these observations are labeled in Figure 5.

- Clusters in the “personal development” category account for three of the bottom four average scores, and six of the bottom eight average scores. There is a relatively large gap between the bottom four and the next lowest (specifically, between 1.15 and 1.29), and a gap between the bottom eight and the next lowest (specifically, between 1.34 and 1.41).
- The “confidence” cluster is in a high proportion of groups (89%) with an average score of 1.29, so closer to “valuable” than to “critical.”
- The low average score for the “values (Goal 7)” cluster is partly explained by the number of wording issues associated with Goal 7.
- The “professional prep” cluster is low in both average score and in proportion of groups, as is the “power and privilege” cluster. These two clusters are the only ones outside of the “personal development” category with average score less than 1.34.
- Six of our eight current educational goals are in quadrant two (higher score). Note that prevalence is not relevant, as all groups were presented with the current educational goals and asked to consider them. Of the two remaining clusters, one had the lowest average score of all the clusters (“personal values,” with a score of 0.94).
- Excluding the current educational goals, and looking only at the clusters that emerged from the faculty brainstormed goals:
 - Clusters in the “skills development” category are heavily represented in the upper-right (higher score, higher prevalence).
 - The upper-right quadrant (higher score, higher prevalence) emphasizes clusters that touch on critical thinking.
 - The upper-left quadrant (higher score, lower prevalence) is more broadly representative of the four clusters.
 - The lower-left (lower score, lower prevalence) and lower-right (lower score, higher prevalence) quadrants are heavily represented by the “personal development” cluster.

The research team identified three strong themes in faculty responses to the current set of educational goals:

- Desire for more active language
- A vision of “critical thinking” that goes well beyond the current language of “think logically and analytically”
- Dissatisfaction with “an acknowledged set of personal values” as a goal (least likely to be identified as critical to a Puget Sound education and most likely to be identified as needing rewording)

Faculty members also identified their primary role as fostering critical thinking and other intellectual skills in their students. Faculty members valued many learning outcomes related to students’ personal growth, but expressed a strong sense of being unprepared to guide students’ development in those areas.⁷

The report was presented to the Faculty Senate by the research team on April 11, 2016. At its April 25 meeting, the Faculty Senate passed a motion creating an Ad Hoc Committee on Educational Goals with the charge to “review the Report on Faculty Perspectives on Education Goals and, if deemed appropriate, propose revisions to the university’s educational goals. The committee shall be composed of at least three faculty members, including faculty representatives from the Student Life Committee, the Curriculum Committee, and the Faculty Senate. An associate dean and someone from institutional

⁷ The team also noted that the Spring Survey asks students to rate their growth for each educational goal. We see improvement in most areas between the first and senior year with the possible exception of “personal values.”

research will be nonvoting members of the committee." Professor of Philosophy Bill Beardsley (a member of the Faculty Senate at the time) agreed to convene the committee.

The ad hoc committee was convened in September 2016 with members Bill Beardsley, Robin Jacobson (Faculty Senate), Alan Krause (Curriculum Committee), Brad Reich (Student Life Committee), Ellen Peters (Office of Institutional Research), and Martin Jackson (Office of the Associate Deans). The committee met eight times in the fall term and once in January 2017 using a variety of sources as a basis for proposed changes to the university's educational goals. The committee presented its report to the Faculty Senate on Feb. 20, 2017. The report (see Attachment 13) recommends consideration of a revised set of educational goals:

A student completing the undergraduate curriculum will be able to:

1. think critically;
2. communicate clearly and effectively, both orally and in writing; and
3. develop and apply knowledge both independently and collaboratively,

and will have developed:

4. familiarity with diverse fields of knowledge and the ability to draw connections among them;
5. solid grounding in the field of the student's choosing; and
6. informed awareness of self and one's influence in the world.

The Faculty Senate supported the revised goals with the exception of "informed awareness of self and one's influence in the world." The senate expressed concern about the clarity of this goal and that it might not capture the bi-directionality of influence and awareness that the subcommittee intended. The senate will work on refining the wording of this goal. Academic Vice President and Dean of the University Kris Bartanen arranged a workshop at the February 2017 board of trustees meeting to share this work and solicit feedback. Trustees expressed thoughts about the sixth goal similar to those of the Faculty Senate. The Faculty Senate as a whole is working to refine the sixth goal and will then bring a proposal forward to the full faculty for consideration.

This work has led to an improved general shared understanding of the educational goals of the institution, and provides a strong foundation for assessment both of our shared curriculum and within academic departments and programs.

Category	Cluster	Average Score	Proportion of Groups
Skills Development ■	1. Think logically and analytically	1.81	100%*
	2. Communicate clearly and effectively	1.89	100%*
	3. Intellectual autonomy	1.79	100%*
	Application of stuff	1.45	61%
	Argument	1.68	50%
	Collaborate	1.45	44%
	Contextualize	1.78	44%
	Develop specific skills	1.61	50%
	Judgment	1.53	39%
	Nuance/complexity/ambiguity	1.79	61%
	Problem solving	1.79	67%
	Professional prep	1.15	22%
	Question	1.82	72%
	Read	1.78	17%
	Understand/use data	1.64	33%
Knowledge ◆	4. Interrelationship of knowledge	1.46	100%*
	5. Diverse fields of knowledge	1.62	100%*
	6. Solid grounding in the special field	1.77	100%*
	Science	1.61	11%
	Understanding stuff	1.58	72%
Personal Development ▲	7. Personal values	0.94	100%*
	Autonomy/independence	1.41	67%
	Beauty/aesthetic	1.13	22%
	Care about others	1.32	39%
	Confidence	1.29	89%
	Creativity	1.70	44%
	Emotional growth/maturity	1.47	72%
	Humility	1.49	50%
	Open-minded/flexible/adaptable	1.66	44%
	Passion for learning	1.72	44%
	Passion/purpose/concern	1.11	39%
	Perseverance/stamina	1.49	61%
	Responsibility	1.34	50%
	Risk-taking/courage	1.47	50%
	Self-understanding	1.53	67%
	Values	1.46	44%
Awareness and Engagement ●	8. Informed appreciation of self and others	1.60	100%*
	Acknowledge/respect/understand difference	1.68	78%
	Balance respect and challenge	1.83	44%
	Engage the world	1.42	83%
	Power/privilege	1.34	28%

Table 5. Average Score and Proportion of Groups for Clusters. Note that protocol design results in Proportion of Groups of 100% for each of the eight educational goals.

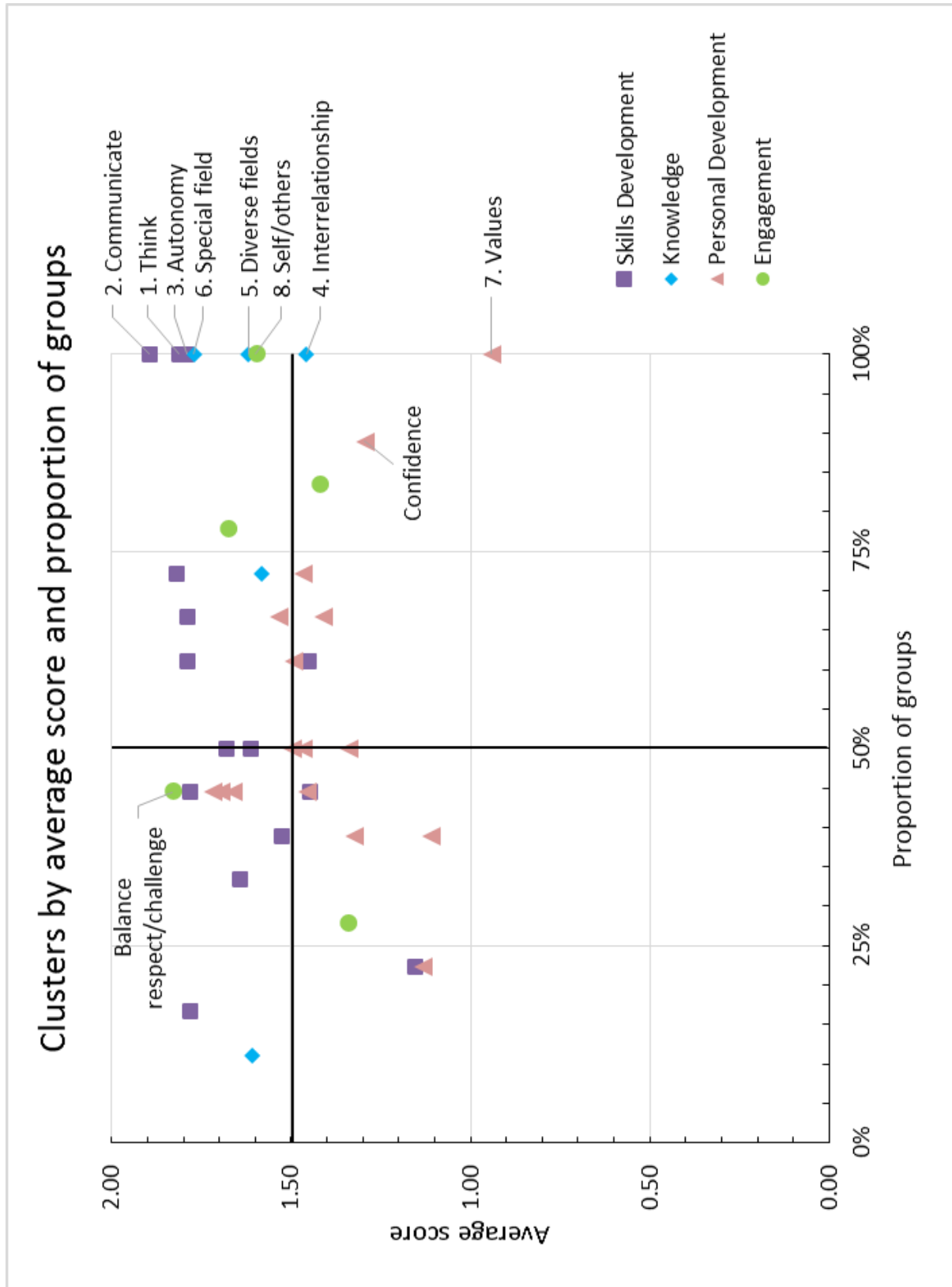


Figure 5. Scatterplot for Clusters by Average Score and Proportion of Groups

4.2 Writing Across the Curriculum⁸

What did we see?

Introduction

From K-12 through higher education, assessment of writing is both necessary and problematic. Measuring something as complex as writing improvement in a way that is reliable, valid, and authentic has challenged both faculty and administrators. To measure students' writing ability, many colleges have relied on standardized, timed tests. (The College Learning Assessment is just one example of such tests.) While the tests produce quantifiable results, they are not authentic in that they do not consider the texts that students write as part of their coursework, when they care about their writing and have time to think about it and revise. In addition, many of these large-scale assessments use raters who are trained to focus on surface features of the writing. Few, if any, of these raters are faculty members. To avoid the problems associated with standardized tests, some colleges use portfolios to measure students' writing; the portfolios are preferable to testing, but generally do not provide quantifiable results that are both reliable and valid.

To avoid the problems with both kinds of assessment, we at Puget Sound have developed methodology that seeks to produce reliable and valid writing assessment using authentic texts. By adding focus groups and questionnaires, we have developed a more complete picture of writing at Puget Sound and of the Writing Across the Curriculum (WAC) program. In the Puget Sound model, the writing that students produce in their classes is evaluated by Puget Sound faculty members who have been trained in norming sessions to evaluate the student portfolios. The quantitative results are enhanced by what the students in the study have said about their experiences with academic writing at Puget Sound.

To evaluate the WAC program for the fifth time in approximately 15 years, we asked the question: Is there evidence to suggest that students who graduate from Puget Sound become better writers as they progress from matriculation to graduation? The most recent study, conducted with the student cohort that graduated in 2012, shows that, in general, the quality of student writing improves over the course of four years of classes at Puget Sound. Analysis of data for this study was done in 2012–13, and results were presented in fall 2013. Papers are currently being collected for the next iteration which will focus on the 2018 cohort.

This report explains the methodology used in the study and presents the quantitative and qualitative results. While it is not feasible to design a study that could be used to determine if a causal connection exists between the writing program and improvement in student writing, it does seem reasonable to conclude that the WAC program contributes to this improvement. Student responses to questionnaires and in focus groups suggest reasons for the improvement in student writing during the time they attend Puget Sound.

Study Design

The 2012 cohort study yielded a positive conclusion that is consistent with the results of the four previous assessments, conducted with cohorts graduating in 1998, 2001, 2004, and 2007. Although the design of the study as a whole has undergone some modifications through the years, the evidence from

⁸ This section draws from the December 2013 writing study report written by Julie Neff-Lippman (director, Center for Writing, Learning, and Teaching, now retired) and Matt Pickard (instructor, mathematics and computer science).

all five cohort studies suggests that, in general, the quality of student writing improves over the course of four years of classes at Puget Sound.

All five studies used a similar data collection and evaluation procedure: Randomly selected students who agreed to participate in the study submitted a copy of every paper they wrote for their classes at the university during the time period of the study. At the end of the study, two papers were selected from each student's first-year folder and two from the student's senior folder. All identifying marks were removed from the papers, and they were placed in coded folders. The two folders for each student, containing two papers each, were submitted for evaluation. Generally, papers that were selected for evaluation were approximately three to six pages in length. A conscious effort was made to select papers that were written for courses from different disciplines. This was possible to do in most cases.

The assessment process used for each of the five studies followed the same format. Fifteen or 18 faculty members, depending on the number of portfolios, were selected from a variety of disciplines and academic ranks to serve as evaluators. These faculty members participated in a norming session designed to prepare them for assessing the portfolios using an ordinal scale of scores that range from 1 to 6. The evaluators judged the papers without knowing the name of the student or the student's class standing, and worked in teams of three. Each team comprised faculty members from different disciplinary areas, one each from the humanities, social sciences, and natural sciences. The papers in each portfolio were read by at least two of the three evaluators. The first evaluator to read the papers in a particular portfolio would assign the portfolio a score from 1 to 6, with the qualitative descriptions of poor, weak, fair, good, very good, and excellent. A second evaluator would also read the papers in the portfolio and assign a score to the portfolio without knowing the score assigned by the first evaluator. If the two scores matched, the portfolio was assigned this score. Otherwise, the third evaluator would read the two papers and if her assessment matched either of the assessments of the first two evaluators, that score was assigned as the portfolio score. If the three evaluators arrived at three different scores, they would discuss the merits and weaknesses of the papers in the portfolio in order to arrive at an agreed-upon score for the portfolio. Thus, each student participant received a portfolio score as a measure of the quality of his or her writing.

The 2012 cohort study had 50 participants who submitted papers for all four years they attended Puget Sound. Two portfolios were prepared for each student, one consisting of two papers from his or her first year and one consisting of two papers from his or her senior year. One feature difference that separates the 2012 cohort study from its predecessors is that 18 of the 50 student participants also submitted their thesis (capstone or longer) papers to be evaluated. These longer papers were evaluated at a different point in time than were the first-year and senior portfolios that contained two shorter papers each. The same ordinal scale was used to evaluate the longer papers, although the evaluators, in the case of the longer papers, were encouraged to consider specifically if the student supplied adequate support for and analysis of his or her thesis as part of the scoring of the paper. The groups of evaluators during the two different evaluations were not exactly the same. The evaluators of the longer papers were a subset of those who participated in the later evaluation of the senior and first-year portfolios. An attempt was made to include at least one person who evaluated the longer papers in each of the groups who evaluated the first-year and senior portfolios.

Results

At the beginning of the study, in the fall of 2008, 141 first-year students were randomly selected and invited to submit papers for the study. By the end of spring semester 2012, 50 students were still submitting papers (35% compliance rate). These 50 students constitute the sample of students from the entering class of 2008 whose papers were evaluated. Each student had two portfolios that were submitted for evaluation: one including two papers from the student's first year and one including two

papers from the student's senior year. The first-year and senior portfolios for those 50 students who did participate in the study served as the basis of the paired difference approach to the question of whether students become better writers over the four years they spend at Puget Sound obtaining a bachelor's degree.

The results of the assessment are summarized in a couple of ways. Table 6 contains counts that represent the number of students who were assigned a particular combination of portfolio scores in their first year and senior years. For example, the entry in row 3, column 4 is 6. This means six students who received a portfolio score of 3 as first-year students, received a portfolio score of 4 as seniors. These six students would have a paired difference of 1 (senior portfolio score - first-year portfolio score). The main diagonal that goes from the top left corner of the table to the bottom right has the counts of those students who received the same portfolio score in their first year as they did in their senior year (and thus, they had a paired difference of 0). The counts above this diagonal are for those students who improved, and the counts below the main diagonal are for those students who regressed. There are 26 students (52%) above the main diagonal, nine (18%) along the main diagonal, and 15 (30%) below it. In addition to this observation, four students (8%) improved with a paired difference of 3, five students (10%) improved by two points, 17 students (34%) improved by one point, nine students (18%) showed no improvement, 13 students (26%) dropped by a point, and two students (4%) dropped by two points. (These last two students received a 5 and a 6 on their first-year portfolios.)

		Seniors						
		1	2	3	4	5	6	Total
First-Year	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
	2	0	0	4	1	3	0	8
	3	0	5	2	6	1	1	15
	4	0	0	6	7	7	3	23
	5	0	0	1	1	0	0	2
	6	0	0	0	1	1	0	2
	Total	0	5	13	16	12	4	50

Table 6. Transition Matrix of Portfolio Scores

Figure 6 shows what fraction of the students who received a certain portfolio score as first-year students received another portfolio score as seniors. For example, 15 students received a portfolio score of 3 as first-year students. Of those 15 students, five students regressed to a 2 as seniors, two students remained at a 3, six students improved to a portfolio score of 4, one student advanced to a portfolio score of 5, and one student improved to a portfolio score of 6 as a senior. Due to the small sample of students at each portfolio score level, it would not be wise to use the fractions in the diagram as good estimates of transition probabilities. To obtain reasonable estimates would require a larger collection of students at each of the possible portfolio scores.

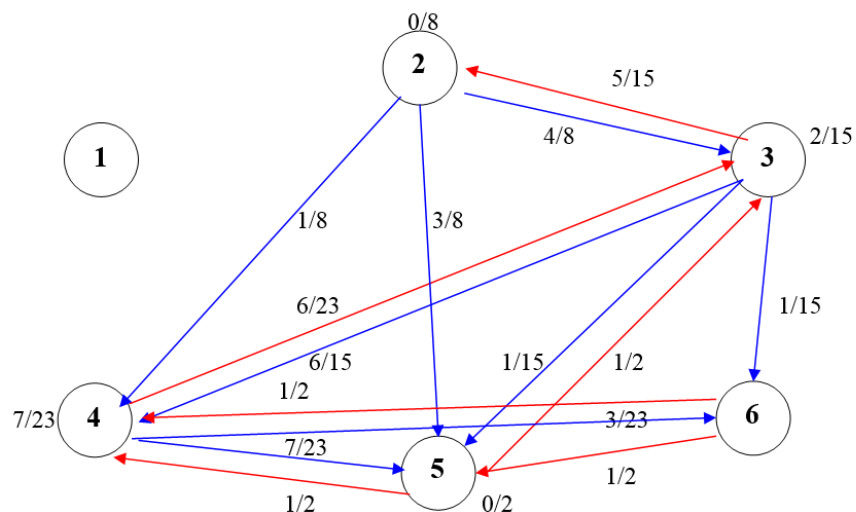


Figure 6. Transition Diagram for Portfolio Scores

The distributions of first-year and senior portfolio scores were analyzed using several statistical tests, including two tests for marginal homogeneity and one test on paired differences. Complete details are in the full study report (see Attachment 14). The first marginal homogeneity test compares the distribution of portfolio scores of the participants as seniors versus the distribution of portfolio scores of the participants as first-year students; the resulting p-value is 0.008. The second test compares the mean portfolio score for the seniors to the mean portfolio score for the first-year students; the resulting p-value is 0.012. The third test compares the mean of the paired differences to zero and shows that the evidence (p-value of 0.011) is statistically significant enough to say that the mean paired difference in scores from the first year to senior year for the entire class is likely greater than zero, indicating improvement in the portfolio scores from first to senior year. (The only difference between the second and third tests is in the way the standard error of the statistic is computed, otherwise the two tests are essentially the same.) The 95 percent confidence interval estimate of the mean paired difference indicates that the true mean paired difference in portfolio scores for the entire class is between 0.07 and 0.81 points. Given that the portfolio scores are on an ordinal scale, it is not advisable to try to interpret too precisely what the magnitude of the true mean paired difference tells us; the most we can say is that it shows that the difference between the senior and first-year portfolio scores on average tended to favor the seniors.

While we cannot claim a cause-and-effect relationship between writing improvement and a Puget Sound education, the focus groups (held in fall 2011) and the questionnaires (administered in spring 2012) suggest reasons that student writing improved. We invited all of the study participants to take part in the focus groups. About two-thirds of the students said they would like to join the focus groups, but because of scheduling conflicts were unable to do so. Twenty seniors from our study did participate in the discussion of their academic writing experiences over the previous three and a half years. In the questionnaires, study participants responded to questions about their experiences with their longer papers. From their responses, we gained insight into the changes in their writing processes and their attitudes toward their own writing. We learned about the culture of writing at Puget Sound and what faculty members do that hinders or helps not only students' growth in writing ability but how engaged they are with their academic writing. Evidence from the focus groups and questionnaires informed recommendations described below.

Conclusion

The evidence from the 2012 cohort study demonstrates that student writing at Puget Sound, in general, improves from matriculation to graduation. These findings are consistent with the findings of the four earlier studies of student writing. All five studies indicate that the quality of student writing is positively associated with the amount of time students spend taking classes at Puget Sound. While we cannot draw a cause-and-effect relationship between any of the factors, plausible explanations for the gains students make in their writing exist.

First, because the entire university community places emphasis on writing, students do a great deal of it. It is difficult to imagine anyone becoming a better writer without engaging in writing. In addition, students are exposed to a wide range of challenging written material and ways of reasoning. Through challenging assignments, they are asked to write about class material, not just in the first year, but in all four years. In addition, faculty set high standards for writing and are willing to be available for individual meetings with students. Many faculty provide useful, detailed feedback that encourages students to attend to their writing. Students also may receive feedback on their writing from others—other faculty, writing advisors, peers, family members, and friends. Because of the writing instruction and feedback they receive, students develop a complex writing process that involves strategies for research and revision. The system of support and challenge leads students to growing confidence in their writing ability. Of course, the students' growing maturity from their first year to their senior year contributes to their progress, but growth in brain development, as has been explained by Puget Sound Professors of Psychology Cathy Hale and David Moore in presentations to faculty, is enhanced when brains are challenged. On average, students who attend Puget Sound do show evidence of improvement in their writing by the time they graduate, and they report that their writing experiences have made them stronger, more confident writers with complex strategies for completing a variety of writing tasks. Generally, the students in the focus groups and who responded to the questionnaires are enthusiastic about their experiences with writing at Puget Sound. One student said, "The focus on writing, close reading, thinking has made me proud to go to school here."

Despite the evidence of student success with writing, the university and the WAC program continually face challenges: How do we keep faculty members committed to the time-intensive work of assigning, teaching, and evaluating writing when new faculty members join the university each year? How do we help students understand the importance of the conventions that govern disciplinary writing, and how do we help them become successful writers across disciplines? How do we support those few students whose papers are still falling in the lower half of the scale with scores of 2 or 3?

What did we do?

Writing assignments: While students were clear about the kinds of writing assignments that engage them in their education, some of their assignments could have been more challenging and engaging. Writing the clear, challenging, appropriately open-ended question or prompt is never easy, especially for faculty new to teaching in a writing-intensive liberal arts curriculum. Developing good writing assignments and prompts has been a topic or the main focus of a number of "Wednesday at 4" sessions.⁹

⁹ Wednesdays at 4, sponsored by the Center for Writing, Learning, and Teaching, are weekly informal gatherings of faculty and other colleagues across campus designed to foster improvement of teaching and learning. Each session has a topic chosen by the organizing committee. A typical session starts with brief comments by a small panel followed by informal discussion.

- Reflecting on the SSI2s (April 16, 2014)
- How Do Students Read Assignments (Nov. 5, 2014)
- Assigning and Assessing Reflective Writing (Nov. 18, 2015)
- What Do Faculty Tell Us About SSI1 (March 2, 2016)
- Designing Effective Group and Collaborative Assignments (March 30, 2016)

Each summer, the CWLT holds a faculty workshop on writing pedagogy. Topics for recent years have been

- July 2014 Writing Workshop: Teaching Writing in the Scientific and Quantitative Fields
- May 2015 Writing Workshop: Exploring Knowledge, Identity, and Power in Writing Assignments
- May 2016 Writing Workshop: Structuring and Sequencing Assignments for Deep Learning

In addition, each year the Center for Writing, Learning, and Teaching (CWLT) leads a Writing Across the Curriculum workshop as part of New Faculty Orientation. In all of these workshops, design of good writing assignments and prompts has been a significant theme.

Writing across disciplines: Students' response to managing writing tasks across disciplines was troublesome, especially since helping students understand the "why" of conventions is not difficult. In this study, students were more frustrated with disciplinary conventions and with what they characterized as "arbitrary" faculty requirements than they had been in the past. Making students aware of the underlying differences might help students become more comfortable with writing in various disciplinary communities. CWLT director Julie Christoph is available to facilitate development of department writing curricula and has done so with several departments in recent years (biology in July 2014; politics and government in May 2016). Puget Sound's new writing handbook, *Sound Writing*, includes a chapter on disciplinary writing that is currently in development. Departments and programs have been provided with guidelines to prompt thinking about material for this chapter and a CWLT peer writing advisor is working with each department to draft a section. Over the past three years, CWLT peer writing advisors have undertaken research on student attitudes toward writing in the sciences, and have presented at national and international conferences. This year, one of these projects resulted in conversations between the student researcher and the chair of the biology department about the findings with the goal of promoting conversation among biology faculty members about the writing culture in the department.

Senior research and summer research projects: While the longer papers were not statistically stronger than either first-year or senior papers, the students' learning and engagement with these projects suggest that more students should have the opportunity for such projects. The university has been successful with efforts to increase research opportunities for students, and currently has robust programs for summer research awards (in amounts ranging from \$3,250 to \$4,000) in the sciences, mathematics, arts, humanities, and social sciences. The CWLT offers support in a variety of forms, including peer writing advisor assistance for students who are writing summer research proposals and feedback on final written reports from a faculty writing advisor.

Support for faculty who are advising students writing major research papers: According to the student responses to the longer projects, faculty made a difference in how successful students felt they were in improving their writing. Ways in which faculty can effectively mentor students who are writing major research papers were shared at the April 9, 2014, Wednesday at 4 session titled "Senior Theses at Puget Sound: Learning From Each Other and From Our Writing Across the Curriculum Assessment."

Writing support groups: Many graduate schools require that students be involved in a writing group that helps them stay on task with their dissertations. Puget Sound thesis writers, especially those who are not writing as part of a senior seminar, might also benefit from such groups, which could help

provide feedback and keep the students on task. The CWLT is now in its third year of sponsoring the Sunday Thesis Hour, a time for students writing theses to gather and share ideas or work independently. Sessions are facilitated by a peer writing advisor. In addition, the CWLT director and faculty writing advisors have developed workshops to conduct in departmental thesis courses.

Help from the library: Those who were writing longer papers were happy with the help they received from our reference librarians. However, few students mentioned the library or librarians. Making students more aware of library resources might help students with their projects and could take some pressure off the faculty advisors. In recent years, our librarians have made a concerted effort to increase awareness among students of library resources. This begins early in students' careers, with intentional connections to the first-year seminars. Librarians offer consultations with faculty on designing and sequencing assignments within a syllabus that allow students to practice and demonstrate new information literacy competencies. In addition, librarians teach one or more hands-on sessions in the library for 63 percent of the SSI1 courses and 92 percent of the SSI2 courses. Students enrolled in SSI courses schedule an average of 200 individual research consultations per year with our librarians. Librarians have also created customized online research guides for almost every SSI currently taught. Last year saw the introduction of the new peer research advisor position, which offers drop-in research help to first-year students during evening hours 10 hours a week. Training on library resources is also provided to CWLT writing liaisons and subject tutors; all tutors meet with research librarians in the first few weeks of fall to learn more about resources available in order to make better referrals.

At the capstone level, librarians teach advanced research sessions to almost all senior thesis or senior essay courses across the curriculum. They typically meet at least once with the students enrolled in such courses. Librarians have been especially involved with senior capstone projects in the disciplines of African American studies, economics, gender and queer studies, history, honors, international political economy, music, religious studies, sociology and anthropology, and science, technology, and society.

Longer appointments at CWLT: While students were positive about the help they received from the writing center, some said that they would like the opportunity for longer appointments at CWLT. A system whereby students could make longer appointments would help satisfy this need and would take pressure off the faculty. Such a system has been considered, but not implemented due to considerations of balancing the total number of students served with the amount of support for any one student. If appointments are longer, then fewer students can be served (within existing resources). With currently available resources, maintaining a reasonable balance weighs against longer appointments.

How will we understand the impacts?

Writing Across the Curriculum is well established at Puget Sound and, consequently, robust structures and mechanisms for ongoing assessment have been in place for some time. Another iteration of the longitudinal Writing Across the Curriculum study is underway with papers being collected from a sample of students scheduled to graduate in spring 2018. Student surveys and focus groups routinely include questions regarding writing in relation to the Educational Goal Two ("communicate clearly and effectively, both orally and in writing"). The Center for Writing, Learning, and Teaching and—starting recently—the Committee to Support the Shared Curriculum regularly review evidence and consider ways to improve writing pedagogy. Department and program curriculum reviews all include attention to the question of how writing is developed within the major.

4.3 First-Year Seminars¹⁰

What did we see?

The design of our first-year seminars grew out of the particular needs and opportunities for students and instructors at Puget Sound. The current Seminar in Scholarly Inquiry structure, whose evolution is described in the following paragraphs, is the product of more than 15 years of collaborative work among the faculty and librarians.

The current iteration of the first-year seminar program has been in effect since 2013. From 2003 to 2013, the program comprised two seminars that were offered each semester and were not sequenced: a Writing and Rhetoric seminar (with the following learning objective: “Students in these seminars develop the intellectual habits and language capabilities to construct persuasive arguments and to write and speak effectively, and with integrity, for academic and civic purposes”) and a Scholarly and Creative Inquiry seminar (with the objective “to introduce students to the processes of scholarly and creative inquiry through direct participation in that inquiry”).

The revisions leading to the current iteration of the seminars were a product of our ongoing assessment work. As outlined in Chapter 3, Puget Sound regularly assesses the work of the first-year seminars in several ways, which we detail here:

- Writing-related and first-year-seminar-related questions on campuswide student surveys, administered by the Office of Institutional Research: There are a few standard questions that have been repeated over time, as well as the opportunity to insert time-sensitive questions when needed.
- The Beginning of College Survey of Student Engagement (BCSSE) and National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE), administered by the Office of Institutional Research: These are national surveys administered at the end of the first and senior year of college, respectively, asking about participation in educationally purposeful activities, level of academic challenge experienced in college, perceptions of the college environment, estimates of educational and personal growth, and background/demographic information.
- Shared curriculum reviews conducted by the Curriculum Committee, a standing faculty committee: The Curriculum Committee gathers data from a variety of sources, including student and faculty surveys, and then hosts a meeting at which faculty discuss what is working and what could be improved. Based on data, faculty input, and internal discussions, the committee produces a report that is reviewed by the Faculty Senate and academic vice president.
- The Research Practices Survey, administered annually by Institutional Research and Collins Memorial Library, our campus library: The Research Practices Survey (RPS) is a multidimensional instrument that asks students about their experiences with and dispositions toward research and measures their skills and knowledge of key information literacy elements, including academic integrity and the selection and evaluation of sources. The RPS is administered to incoming first-year students before they arrive on campus; a second time toward the end of their first year; and then again close to the end of their senior year.
- Longitudinal Writing Across the Curriculum assessment through the Center for Writing, Learning, and Teaching, conducted with six cohorts, since 1994: About a quarter of the incoming class every five years is invited to submit all papers written over four years and to participate in an exit focus group just prior to graduation. After the cohort graduates, faculty from across the

¹⁰ This section is based on Puget Sound’s application to the Conference on College Composition and Communication’s Writing Program Certificate of Excellence prepared by Julie Christoph, Peggy Burge, and Martin Jackson in August 2015.

disciplines norm their assessments using a holistic rubric and then assess anonymous papers from cohort students' first and final years at Puget Sound, to see whether writing improves over four years at Puget Sound.

Roughly once per year, faculty at the Center for Writing, Learning, and Teaching (and, more recently, the Committee to Support the Shared Curriculum) invite faculty teaching the seminars to gather and to talk about what is going well and where improvement might be needed. If and when there is collective agreement that substantial changes are needed, interested faculty members may access funding through an internal curriculum development grant made possible by a Burlington Northern endowed fund to assist in closing the feedback loop on information from ongoing assessments.

Summer 2011 was a time at which faculty felt change was needed. In academic year 2010–11, Professor of English Julie Christoph led focus groups with faculty members teaching the seminars, and applied for funding for a summer workshop to rethink the seminars, which had, to some degree, devolved into a “skills” seminar and an “ideas” seminar. The perceived separation of skills and ideas was problematic: student outcomes were uneven in both courses, and faculty shied away from teaching the Writing and Rhetoric “skills” course. At the summer 2011 workshop, participants (including faculty and librarians) systematically reviewed Puget Sound assessments of the seminars, the first-year experience in residential seminars and information literacy, and longitudinal Writing Across the Curriculum assessments over the four years at Puget Sound, as well as staffing trends in the seminars over the previous eight years (attending to department and to ongoing vs. contract faculty). The workshop participants also looked at results from an environmental scan of first-year academic programs at all of Puget Sound's comparison institutions (a total of 53 institutions, at that time) and reviewed relevant best practices statements by the Council of Writing Program Administrators and by the American Library Association, as well as research on adolescent brain development and longitudinal studies of college student writing development. The workshop participants identified problems due to the lack of sequencing of the two semesters and insufficient instruction in information literacy principles and practices.

What did we do?

The summer 2011 workshop culminated in the writing of the current Seminars in Scholarly Inquiry (SSI) format, which was approved by the full faculty in fall 2011. Like the old Writing and Rhetoric/Seminar in Scholarly Inquiry format, these seminars are theme-based and taught by faculty across the disciplines, but the SSIs are also sequenced, and intentionally integrate “skills” and “ideas” in both semesters.

The current sequenced, theme-based design of the first-year seminars accords with findings from ethnographic and longitudinal studies of student learning, which offer examples of the complex, circuitous, recursive routes of student learning.

The writing curriculum and pedagogy at Puget Sound is guided by expectations that our students:

- will find academic writing to be different in college than in high school;
- will need guidance and practice in discerning salient elements of the rhetorical contexts for reading, writing, speaking, and researching in college;
- will benefit from recursive writing and revision processes, supported by ongoing peer review;
- will regress somewhat in certain areas of their work when they encounter a new kind of writing or intellectual task, until they become familiar with the new genre;
- will work most successfully when they are invested in the work—that “how” to write is not compelling unless “what” they are writing about is compelling to them;
- are risk averse when doing research and demonstrate shallow engagement with sources unless encouraged to do otherwise;

- can, with scaffolding, do sophisticated work; and
- are developmentally at a time of great change (the vast majority of students in the first-year seminars are aged 18–19) that can be supported with complex “ill-structured” problems that promote reflective judgment.

The sequenced, recursive, theme-based nature of these courses is designed to help students develop strategies to approach complex problems in a variety of college-level contexts.

The seminars also aim to promote a strong sense of membership within the living/learning community at Puget Sound. Students in the seminars go together as a cohort through our campus’s weeklong first-year orientation. Faculty members are responsible for academic advising at Puget Sound, and many of the first-year seminars are academic advising sections in which all of the students enter as the advisees of the course instructor. In those sections, especially, students meet individually with the faculty member several times during the semester to talk about short- and long-term planning; these conversations tend to foster closer relationships between faculty and students, and facilitate faculty adapting course assignments and course content to the specific needs and interests of students in the class. Some seminars are residential seminars, in which students live together on the same residence hall floor and participate together in course-related field trips and other enhancements.

Students in the first-year seminars also engage with a variety of well-trained peer mentors. Each seminar is paired with a writing liaison, a student who works in the writing center and who introduces students to the writing center. The writing liaison also works with the faculty member on tasks of the faculty member’s choosing—such as offering feedback on the writing prompts, helping to lead writing workshops, or meeting individually with students for short writing appointments. This role is similar to that of a writing fellow, but writing liaisons do not write comments on student drafts and, instead, serve to introduce students to the writing center and to lead more informal interactions with students in the class. Students in advising sections of the first-year seminars also work with peer advisors (through the Office of Academic Advising); students in residential seminars also work with resident assistants (through the Office of Residence Life), who may facilitate out-of-class activities related to the class, such as film viewings in the residence hall or field trips to local theater, lectures, or museums).

We see all Puget Sound students as individual learners who can learn from the strengths and weaknesses of their peers in myriad areas, and the first-year seminars promote collaborative learning and normalize help-seeking behaviors for all, based on self-knowledge. We expect that, in any given seminar class, students will bring diverse strengths and weaknesses to the classroom community and that they will learn best from opportunities to see and learn from their peers’ work. A Puget Sound education promotes, among other things, “a rich knowledge of self and others” and “an appreciation of commonality and difference”—to use words from our mission statement. However, this mission is aspirational; students’ sense of self and others is a work in progress, and first-year students are likely at times to misjudge their needs and abilities. To support students when they have not yet found needed support, Puget Sound has a Student Alert Group (SAG) program, through which faculty and staff members can create alerts when they see that a student is struggling in some area (whether academic, financial, social, health, or other). Members of SAG meet weekly and are in email contact with each other to be able to reach out to offer appropriate support to students—through professional staff members, as well as through peer mentors.

How will we understand the impacts?

In spring 2014, at the end of the year in which the new SSI structure was introduced, we conducted a preliminary study of writing in first-year seminars. The study used a variation of the protocol from the longitudinal Writing Across the Curriculum study. Faculty rated student writing samples gathered from

the last year of the old Writing and Rhetoric/Scholarly and Creative Inquiry (WR/SCIS) structure (gathered as part of the 2012 cohort study) and the initial year of the new SSI structure. In this variation, faculty rated each paper on both specific elements (higher-order concerns, lower-order concerns, framing questions, and information literacy) and assigned an overall holistic score on a 1 to 6 scale. Figure 7 shows score distributions for first and last papers from each of fall and spring under both the WR/SCIS structure and the new SSI structure. While these results were preliminary, we were encouraged to see more growth over time (throughout each semester and from first paper of fall to last paper of spring) under the new SSI structure.

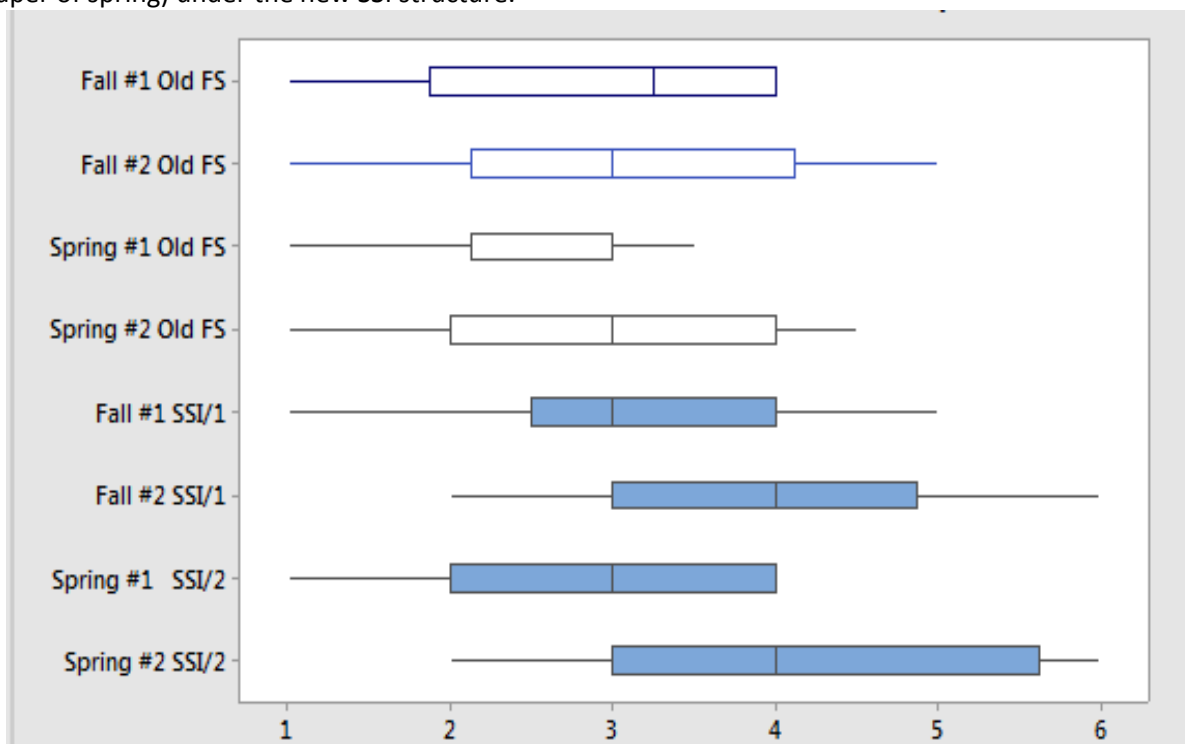


Figure 7. Box Plots for Score Distributions. From top to bottom of the vertical axis: (a) first paper of the fall semester under old WR/SCIS structure, (b) last paper of fall semester under old structure, (c) first paper of spring semester under old structure, (d) last paper of spring semester under old structure, (e) first paper of the fall semester under new SSI structure, (f) last paper of fall semester under new structure, (g) first paper of spring semester under new structure, and (h) last paper of spring semester under new structure. FS=Old First-Year Seminar Framework (WR/SCIS).

In 2015–16, the Committee to Support the Shared Curriculum (CSSC) surveyed faculty teaching SSI (with a 100 percent response rate for faculty teaching SSI1 in fall 2015, and an 85 percent response rate for those teaching SSI2 in spring 2016). The surveys revealed good consistency across SSI sections regarding approaches to writing and information literacy. Among the SSI1 faculty, 63 percent assign three or four formal papers, and an additional 20 percent assign five papers; 84 percent of the faculty ask students to analyze and interpret both primary and secondary sources. For SSI2, almost all assigned a final research paper of at least seven pages, with most requiring 10 or more pages. In terms of information literacy, 96 percent asked students to identify and retrieve secondary sources, while 87 percent asked students to evaluate sources for reliability and appropriateness. The survey revealed a wider range of practices relating to oral literacy. While most of the respondents require at least one formal oral presentation, 15 percent do not require any. Results from the SSI1 survey were discussed at the March 2, 2016, Wednesday at 4 session, and results from both surveys were discussed at the May 2016 writing

workshop. Overall, the survey results and discussions indicate that the new first-year seminar structure has resulted in improved sequencing and more consistency across sections with clearer focus on fungible skills and information literacy. The results also revealed a need for additional attention to faculty development around teaching oral literacy. As will be discussed in Chapter 5, this is consistent with findings from other sources.

The Committee to Support the Shared Curriculum will continue to gather and analyze data (including questions specific to first-year seminars asked of both first-year and senior students on the Spring Survey) and use that data to inform faculty development programming. In 2017–18, the Curriculum Committee will undertake a review of the seminars as part of the regular shared curriculum review cycle. The committee is currently working with the Office of Institutional Research to formulate questions for student surveys and focus groups.

As part of the effort to ensure consistency across all SSI sections, and in response to faculty requests for more assistance with sentence-level concerns in student writing, Professor of English Julie Christoph conducted a study in 2010–11 to ascertain faculty interest in adopting a campus writing handbook. A variety of handbooks were piloted in seven sections of first-year seminars in spring 2011, and Hacker and Sommers' *A Writer's Reference* was selected as the one most appropriate for Puget Sound. In fall 2011, *A Writer's Reference* was piloted in 12 sections of first-year seminars. In spring 2012, the faculty unanimously voted to adopt the writing handbook, for use initially in the first-year seminars and eventually throughout the curriculum. A custom edition that included material advice compiled from faculty on writing and speaking effectively in Puget Sound classes, peer advice on writing across the disciplines, and advice from librarians and students about information literacy became standard, effective fall 2012. To help understand use and effectiveness of the writing handbook, relevant questions were included in the 2015 and 2016 Spring Surveys. In spring 2015, faculty for three SSI sections volunteered to introduce students only to the online version of *A Writer's Reference*; at the end of the semester, students in those sections took part in focus groups to explore their experience with the online version. After evaluating strengths and weaknesses, we decided to produce and maintain our own writing handbook that would be better aligned with Puget Sound's goals for and approaches to writing, reading, speaking, and research. In summer 2016, a team of three students, led by Center for Writing, Learning, and Teaching (CWLT) director Julie Christoph drafted a near-complete version, now titled *Sound Writing*, which was piloted in 12 sections of SSI1 in fall 2016. Toward the end of the semester, feedback from students in those sections was gathered via a survey and focus group. At the Nov. 16, 2016, Wednesday at 4 session and again in January 2017, faculty teaching those sections gathered to share ideas and feedback. This feedback from students and faculty is now being used in continued development of *Sound Writing*, which will be in full use as Puget Sound's standard writing handbook beginning fall 2017.

4.4 Connections

In alignment with our mission, core themes, and education goals around critical thinking, integration of learning, and academic excellence, the Puget Sound Curriculum Statement asserts that students: "develop their understanding of the interrelationship of fields of knowledge by exploring connections and contrasts between various disciplines with respect to disciplinary methodology and subject matter." In compliance with this, students are required, after completion of the other core requirements, to take a Connections course. Connections courses draw upon the curricula of either established disciplines or the university's interdisciplinary programs. These courses may involve the collaboration of faculty from more than one department or the efforts of individual faculty with interdisciplinary expertise and interests.

In the Connections course, students engage the interdisciplinary process by:

- identifying multiple disciplinary approaches to a subject;
- analyzing the subject from these perspectives;
- participating in cross-disciplinary dialogue; and
- exploring the integration or synthesis of these approaches to foster understanding of the subject.

What did we see?

As part of the regular curriculum assessment cycle, the 2012–13 Curriculum Committee reviewed the interdisciplinary Connections core that serves as the capstone of our general education curriculum. Data was gathered through the cycle of assessment of the core curriculum described in Chapter 3. Questions about the Connections core were included on the Senior Survey in 2012, and focus groups were held that spring with seniors in order to provide context and nuance to the survey responses (see report in Attachment 15).

Results from the survey and focus groups show that overall, students understand and embrace the interdisciplinary approach; they find value in approaching a topic from multiple perspectives, and are able to apply this approach to other in- and out-of-class experiences. One student articulated the value of the Connections core as “looking at one very specific thing, but all of the different ways to talk about it, and how they relate, and what conflicts arise from different academic perspectives applied to one issue.”

Students perceive that they used multiple perspectives to analyze subjects related to coursework and projects for Connections courses; that they approached challenges and used more than one discipline to propose solutions (see Table 7). While students noted that the introduction of multiple perspectives was influential to student learning, they also felt that the interdisciplinary approach did not always allow for depth in each discipline that was included in the Connections course. For example, some students cited that they were not challenged to grow in areas outside their major/minor. Students often split up group work according to their expertise; this was efficient, but not necessarily challenging.

At the same time, students appreciated dialogue representing multiple perspectives, and they particularly enjoyed calling on their own expertise as part of the conversation. This self-reflection reinforced learning for many students, and the value of this course being required after all the other core requirements have been completed.

Overall, the Connections core influenced students’ ways of thinking in multiple arenas. Many spoke of how their faculty member and their peers gave them new perspectives on their approach to academic work in their major/minor area(s) of study: “You get a wider range of students in each class from different disciplines, so not only are you learning about different disciplines from a professor who is looking at an issue from different ways, you also have students who are coming at it with very different perspectives because of different focuses in their major. You can have a more dynamic conversation than you might if everyone were from one area.”

Thinking back to the course you took to fulfill your Connections core requirement, to what extent did that course enhance your ability to:				
	Very much	Quite a bit	Some	Very little
Understand connections among different things you were learning	32.8%	33.4%	25.3%	8.5%
Analyze a subject from multiple approaches	33.4%	31.4%	24.6%	10.6%

Table 7. Results from 2012 Senior Survey Questions about the Connections Core

In 2013, the Curriculum Committee reviewed the upper-division requirement, and found some significant overlap with the Connections requirement. In addition to the core curriculum, students are required to take three upper-division courses outside of their major, and many students use the Connections course as one of these three upper-division courses.

While students see value in the Connections requirement, there were two key observations: 1) Some students were frustrated by a lack of depth, and 2) students were using the Connections course to fulfill another requirement, which, while permissible, may be preventing them from the full benefit of the curricular requirements.

In addition to these observations, there were a few logistical considerations: there were not enough Connections courses being offered, and those that were offered had an enrollment cap of 44, which was too high; many of the courses were being taught by only one faculty member, limiting the full depth that could be explored with team-taught courses; and finally, the Curriculum Committee noted the lack of a systematic process for following up on core review recommendations.

What did we do?

The Curriculum Committee work group that had primary responsibility for the review concluded that there are levels of satisfaction and achievement on the part of both faculty and students, who regularly cite the opportunity to bring together multiple disciplinary perspectives around a single topic as one of the highlights of their Puget Sound experience. At the same time, reviews have revealed some confusion and concern about how a Connections course should operate. Some confusion and concern related to the Connections rubric itself, while some related to the challenges (whether for faculty or students) of teaching and learning multiple disciplinary perspectives in an upper-level course.

Using funds from a Teagle mini-grant for capstone assessment to explore ways to address these challenges, a small group of faculty members developed an approach designed to help strengthen the inter- or multidisciplinary nature of Connections courses. In the approach, a faculty member preparing a new Connections course or revising an existing one is paired with another faculty member who will provide feedback on the course—or a significant unit, section, or set of materials in the course—from his or her area of expertise. Six pairs of faculty attended an introductory workshop in May 2013, which led to the formation of a new standing committee, the Committee to Support the Shared Curriculum (CSSC). The charge of the CSSC is to act on the results of core curriculum reviews.

How will we understand the impacts?

The Committee to Support the Shared Curriculum is now in place to gather, analyze, and act on evidence. Among that evidence will be regular Senior Surveys and focus groups conducted by the Office of Institutional Research to help understand student ability to engage in the interdisciplinary process. The Student Learning Outcomes (S.L.O.) team is also considering ways of developing a rubric (likely using relevant AAC&U VALUE Rubrics as a starting point) as a basis for more direct assessment of this core area.¹¹ The Curriculum Committee is scheduled to review Connections in 2019–20 as part of its regular review cycle for the shared curriculum.

4.5 Diversity and Inclusion

The university's Educational Goal Eight, "informed appreciation of self and others as a part of a broader humanity in the world environment," is drawn from our mission and falls within our third core theme, "rich knowledge of self and others." Our mission also includes the phrase "an appreciation of commonality and difference."

¹¹ <https://www.aacu.org/value/rubrics>

The development and maintenance of a civil and diverse community is a challenge that Puget Sound has addressed head on. In 2013, we hired Dean of Diversity and Inclusion and Chief Diversity Officer Michael Benitez. Building on the work of his predecessor, Dean Benitez made strong use of the Diversity Advisory Council (DAC) to leverage survey results from two Campus Climate Surveys. In addition, data from the National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE), institutional surveys, focus groups, and student data have informed our continuous improvement in this area. A necessary process in helping advance effective and transformative diversity work on campus is assessing and gauging the landscape in order to identify, act on, and address diversity issues and challenges.

What did we see?

Survey results indicated an overall greater awareness of difference, more tolerance, and fewer reported incidents. This was particularly true in the classroom, where there appeared to be healthy dialogue about difference and a willingness to have some sensitive conversations. Our campus is more inclusive now and in 2012 than it was in 2006, and with this awareness comes a different set of challenges. As we become more willing to share our differences, we also make ourselves vulnerable to unintentional discrimination. We have made great progress in recognizing incidents of marginalization; nonetheless, there are still times and places where they happen. It appears that the instances in which discriminatory remarks are made tend to be “among friends,” where we may not be as sensitive to the impact of our statements. We may have no intention to harm, and yet the perception of that harm still has consequences.

At first blush, our survey results suggested improvement—a smaller percentage of students reported feeling discriminated against in 2012 than in 2006, as shown in Figure 8. We know though, that our population is predominantly white, heterosexual, politically liberal, and unlikely to subscribe to a specific religious doctrine, and the survey results reflect the voice of that population. While we see improvement, we determined that we needed to be attentive to those who did experience discrimination.

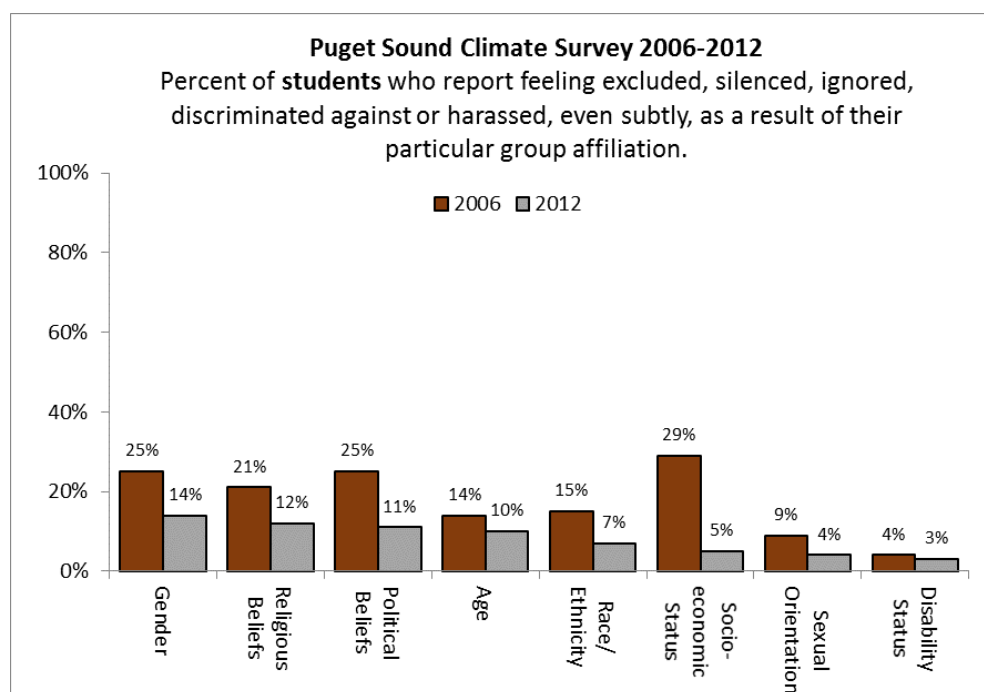


Figure 8. From Puget Sound Climate Survey 2006–12

We engaged in a community participatory methodology¹² to share the broad survey results with the Puget Sound community, convening student, faculty, staff, administration, and the board in numerous small conversations to provide feedback to the DAC for further analysis of the data. The community responses led us to focus on five themes for in-depth campus work and discussion:

Race/Ethnicity. Members of the Puget Sound community perceived a lack of structural diversity, student success challenges due to isolation and microaggressions, a disconnect between student expectations and experiences about exploring issues of race and ethnicity, and the absence of consistent/dependable engagement by students with multicultural learning.

Gender. Members of the Puget Sound community relayed concerns about sexual harassment/assault, the institutional binary framing of gender, the challenge of balancing work and personal life (specific to issues that are perceived as women's issues such as child care), and a general lack of respect of women.

Socioeconomic Status. Community members at Puget Sound noted a climate of classism and alienation of those with lower socio-economic status, and a general lack of awareness around the experiences of students and staff of lower socio-economic backgrounds. This lack of awareness led to assumptions and perceptions that were not always true.

Religion: The devaluation of religion and/or spirituality was shared by members of the community, chilling the expression of religious beliefs. Students, faculty and staff noted the intersections and tensions between religious beliefs and sexual orientation as a particular challenge.

Political Affiliation: Puget Sound has not been a welcoming place for politically conservative individuals, and that was made clear by community members who desired a stronger balance of engagement for liberal and conservative viewpoints.

These forums provided opportunity for discussion, exploration, sharing, and the broadening of understanding about our identities.

In addition to these findings from our Campus Climate Survey, we examined data from the National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE); the results for Puget Sound are included in our detailed NSSE analysis (Attachment 16). While we demonstrate mission fulfillment through NSSE data that is consistent with our peers, we note that seniors' discussions with people of different religious views and race/ethnicity were less frequent at Puget Sound than at the peer institutions. Of Puget Sound seniors, 56 percent reported they "often" or "very often" had discussions with others of different religious views, compared to 74 percent of the peer group respondents. Fifty-three percent reported "often" or "very often" having discussions with students of a different race or ethnicity than their own, compared to 74 percent for the peer group. There was no such gap between Puget Sound first-year students and peer group first-year students.

Curricular Requirement

In addition to the climate survey and NSSE, which demonstrated a need for a more holistic and comprehensive approach to diversity efforts at Puget Sound, the Office of Institutional Research conducted focus groups with seniors that included discussion about a potential new Knowledge,

¹² Culturally responsive research methodology is the conjoined work of both the researcher and participant(s) of carving out a liberatory research pathway toward mutual respect and freedom from domination. The cloth from which this conceptual framework is born is the resistance to research conventions where the researcher unilaterally dominates and exerts power over the participants. (Berryman, M., Soo Hoo, S., & Nevin, A. (2013). *Culturally Responsive Methodologies*. Bingley BD16 1WA, UK: Emerald Group Publishing.)

Identity, and Power requirement. In response to a request by the faculty committee proposing this curricular change, the Office of Institutional Research provided the results to that committee. The student feedback supported curricular change.

In each of the three student focus groups, there was nearly unanimous agreement that a requirement addressing these topics should be introduced into the curriculum. Students stressed there should not be a loophole to avoid fulfilling such a requirement, and some suggested that no course covering a dominant Western culture be included.

Students expressed that they do have exposure to these topics, but not in an intentional way. Most students felt that it was an important part of a liberal arts education; important enough that there was expression of frustration that it was not already a requirement. When asked about particular courses that exposed students to these topics, most students could easily name one or more courses that included important themes related to social diversity.

The focus group facilitators asked students to address curriculum- and course-related components of a potential requirement. That said, students volunteered information about the cocurricular aspect of this experience. Most students were insistent that the learning needed in this area required both in- and out-of-class components. Students referenced their work in the Tacoma community, whether through employment, volunteering, or other social endeavors, as providing important context to their understanding of their own identity within a social structure. Students shared that courses they had already taken related to social diversity had better prepared them for engagement with the world outside Puget Sound; they stressed that campus, Tacoma, the state, nation, and world were all important environments for learning about and grappling with issues of social diversity.

Lastly, students were asked to spend five to seven minutes together in discussion, coming back to tell facilitators what this requirement should look like. The overwhelming response from the students was that there should be a requirement. Consistent with the vision of the faculty committee, the students suggested that all courses that incorporate a component of the requirement be tagged. These tagged courses may also meet other requirements, thereby serving as an overlay, allowing students to complete the new requirement without an additional course. The majority of the students felt strongly that there needed to be out-of-class experiences to complement what was being learned in the classroom:

It would be good to have a wakeup call (first year), and also have a chance for critical thinking (higher level).

It is important to have a lot of different options, so that people do not feel forced to take courses they do not want to. You are not going to learn anything if you do not think it is relevant to you.

Part of the point of a liberal arts education, it is supposed to influence you beyond graduation, with communication skills, and impacts on your world view, and this requirement would support that.

As a result of these findings, Puget Sound has taken several actions toward continuous improvement as described in the following subsections.

What did we do?

Curricular Changes

Knowledge, Identity, and Power Requirement

In addition to the data above, there were other moments that pointed to the need for a requirement around diversity in the curriculum. A 2008 student group, Coalition Against Injustice and Racism, noted

the lack of focus on structural inequity in the university's diversity statement and in the curriculum, even as the institution hosted a National Conference on Race and Pedagogy through the Race and Pedagogy Initiative (now Institute). In 2009–10, the Diversity Advisory Council noted 198 courses engaged at least one facet of social diversity, yet there was no shared definition for the concepts of diversity, equity, inequity, and social justice, and the depth of coverage in those courses was unclear.

In 2012–13, the faculty Committee on Diversity conducted research and gathered information from peer institutions, departmental reviews, student surveys and focus groups, and discussions with faculty members. Those results pointed to a strong student desire for strengthening the curriculum with regard to diversity, weak results compared to peer institutions, and the need for faculty development. In summer 2013, a working group developed a set of guidelines for a new requirement, and that group led discussions with the full faculty throughout the 2013–14 academic year, culminating in the passage of the Knowledge, Identity, and Power (KNOW) overlay requirement by the faculty. The requirement became effective for students entering fall 2015, and the Committee to Support the Shared Curriculum (CSSC) began providing faculty development related to the teaching of KNOW overlay courses. The discussion about this requirement was broad and deep, and the effect of those conversations is likely one reason for our improved metrics around students' understanding of the importance of living in a diverse community (see Figure 9 and Figure 10).

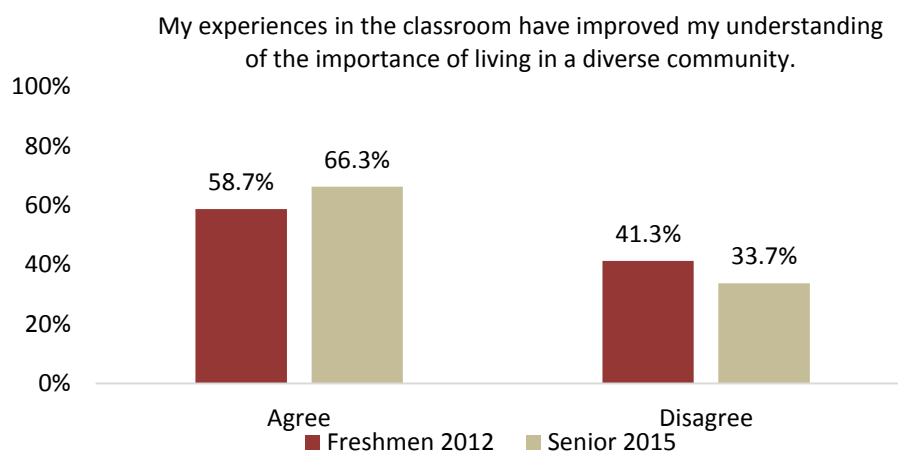


Figure 9. From the Campus Climate Survey

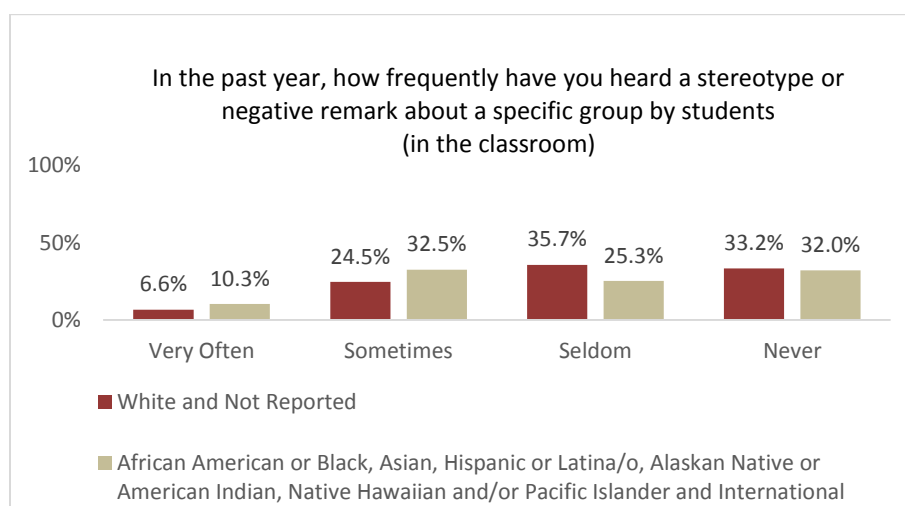


Figure 10. From the Campus Climate Survey

It is our hope that when the class that entered in 2015 graduates, the gap between our minoritized¹³ and nonminoritized students will narrow with regard to hearing negative remarks in the classroom.

African American Studies Major

The African American Studies Program at Puget Sound dates to 1995. Beginning with 1996–97, the program offered an interdisciplinary minor with courses drawn from a variety of departments and programs across arts, humanities, and social sciences. As resources grew—including tenure-line faculty positions and the founding of the Race and Pedagogy Initiative (now Institute)—increasing consideration was given to developing a major in African American studies. These considerations aligned with the “innovate” goal of *Defining Moments* and the Diversity Strategic Plan (at the time, Strategic Goal II, Objective B: “Support continued development of curriculum and scholarship that addresses issues of social diversity, pedagogy, and multiculturalism”). Serious planning for a major began in 2010. The program advisory committee followed a careful, deliberate, and inclusive strategy in gathering evidence and ideas to inform the design of a major. With support from an internal curriculum development fund (the endowed Burlington Northern fund) in summer 2014, the advisory committee completed a full proposal for the new major that was submitted to the Curriculum Committee in spring 2015. Following its initial review, the Curriculum Committee posed a series of questions to the advisory committee asking for additional details to clarify learning outcomes, assessment plans, proposed new courses, potential impact on other departments and programs, and sustainability. In summer 2015, the advisory committee considered those questions and, in fall 2015, submitted a revised proposal that addressed the Curriculum Committee’s questions. The revised proposal was reviewed by the Curriculum Committee and, after some additional communication with the advisory committee, approved in spring 2016. The new major was approved by the NWCCU in fall 2016, and is now available as an option to satisfy the major field of study requirement for a Bachelor of Arts degree.

Latina/o Studies Program

In 2012, Puget Sound began developing an interdisciplinary Latina/o Studies Program with goals of complementing a strategic focus on interdisciplinary study, fostering a more diverse academic program, and expanding attention to global issues. The move was in line with both the “innovate” objective of the *Defining Moments* strategic plan and Strategic Goal II, Objective B of the Diversity Strategic Plan. Professor Oriel Siu was hired into a Hispanic studies tenure-line position to serve as initial director of the new program. (Professor Siu’s first year was 2012–13, when Hispanic studies was part of the Department of Foreign Languages and Literature; the department split into separate departments of French studies, German studies, and Hispanic studies, effective 2014–15.) With support from a Mellon Foundation grant, a Latina/o studies advisory committee developed a minor that was reviewed and approved by the Curriculum Committee to first be offered in 2013–14.

Cocurricular Changes

Logger Diversity Summit

Beginning in Summer 2013, the Division of Student Affairs dedicated a day of training, now called Logger Diversity Summit, for all student leaders prior to the start of orientation. Including all student residential life staff, Orientation leaders, peer tutors and advisors, and student government leaders, this group of more than 200 hundred students works in large and small groups to gain skills in courageous conversations, inclusive language, and inclusive behavior and intervention. Through this training, they serve as models for new and returning students to both raise awareness and support a more welcoming community.

¹³ Minoritized identities include those who identify with a race/ethnicity of African American or Black, Asian, Hispanic or Latino/a, Alaskan Native or American Indian, and/or Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander.

Sexual and Gender Violence Prevention Programming

This has been an area of particular success. Open-ended responses on the 2012 climate survey called for greater attention to sexual assault issues, and the climate survey in 2015 included a new section on that issue. The call for revised policies has been met with forums and workshops to better understand the student need. A Sexual Assault Work Group (SAWG) was formed, with a final report released in August 2013. Since then, Puget Sound has:

- strengthened the required sexual harassment training for faculty and staff members, including student staff members, in particular, clarifying roles as mandatory reporters.
- incentivized staff attendance at in-person Green Dot training.
- formed a Sexual and Gender Violence Committee to foster a community of care, respect, and safety through coordinated community efforts in response to gender and sexual violence.
- developed a website that consolidates information about gender and sexual violence (pugetsound.edu/sexual-misconduct-resource-center)

These efforts have been noticed. In the 2014 climate survey, student comments celebrated our Green Dot training program, and asked for more of it: “Green dot is a good and very important program that should be more heavily emphasized.”

Anti-Bias/Hate Education

The Associated Students of University of Puget Sound (ASUPS), Puget Sound’s student government body, developed an anti-bias and hate campaign video and messaging across campus, focused particularly on vandalism that included things like swastikas scratched on desks.

We have seen an increase in reports of this kind of micro- and other aggression; our goal is certainly the opposite (see Table 8). It is hard to tell if the increase is due to greater sensitivity on the part of those who are reporting, greater trust in the process, or an actual increase in incidents. Given the higher number of student reports, coupled with the education efforts, we suspect the increase is due to greater awareness on the part of students. We will continue to monitor this through reports from our Bias-Hate Education Response Team.

Category	2013–14	2014–15	2015–16
Reported Incidents	58	56	70
Themes			
Gender identity/ sexual orientation	44	39	56
Race/Ethnicity	11	14	12
Religion	6	5	4
Disability	0	2	0
Nationality	0	1	0
Political affiliation	0	0	1
Reporter			
Staff	15	19	12
Faculty	5	3	3
Student	38	34	55

Table 8. Bias/Hate Incident Reports from BHERT Final Reports, Office of Diversity and Inclusion. Note: A single report may include more than one theme.

*Policy and Other Structural Changes**Faculty Hiring*

The university has made a commitment to improve the number of newly hired faculty of color. In the last three years, at least half of all tenure-line hires have been faculty of color. This is our benchmark, and we are pleased to be keeping pace with seven of eight new tenure-line hires for fall 2017 representing minoritized racial and ethnic identities. An opportunity hiring policy was implemented to support greater diversity in the tenure-line faculty and has been employed for one search in each of the past two years. We are striving for a demographic makeup of our faculty that is proportionate to the population of the United States.

New Admission Recruitment Programs to Bring in a More Diverse Student Body

Recognizing that Tacoma is the most diverse city in Washington, in Fall 2015 the university began actively recruiting Tacoma Public School students, preferentially packaging financial aid for those who meet our admission requirements. In 2013, five incoming freshmen were from Tacoma public schools; in 2014 there were eight, in 2015 there were 15, and in 2016 an additional 23. In that time, students self-reporting as minoritized identities has increased from 20 percent to 52 percent of students enrolling from Tacoma Public Schools.

Puget Sound has offered a Summer Academic Challenge program since the early 1990s. It was designed in partnership with Tacoma Public Schools to promote academic excellence for middle and high school students who are traditionally underrepresented in higher education. The university developed a program to encourage those students to enroll at Puget Sound, providing additional financial aid and creating a cohort program supported by faculty mentors, a weeklong summer bridge program (Logger Summer Institute), and academic year meetings and programming. Prior to the inception of the program, in fall 2015, it was rare that a student who participated in Summer Academic Challenge in middle and/or high school matriculated at Puget Sound. In fall 2015 and 2016, five and three students matriculated, respectively. All were from minoritized racial and ethnic identities.

Sustained work by the board of trustees, including three workshops on the subject of diversity and a year-long study by the Enrollment Work Group, has yielded new partnerships that reflect our desire to increase the diversity of the student body. The university became the first in the Pacific Northwest to partner with the Posse Foundation, a commitment to bring ten students leaders from underrepresented backgrounds to Puget Sound from the San Francisco Bay area each year. The first cohort entered in Fall 2016; they are supported by the Posse Foundation during their senior year of high school and supported here with a faculty mentor and weekly on campus programming.

Again, we strive for our student body demographics to be proportionate to the population of the United States. (See Figure 11 for relevant enrollment data.) This is another area where we are making progress, and look forward to continued growth.

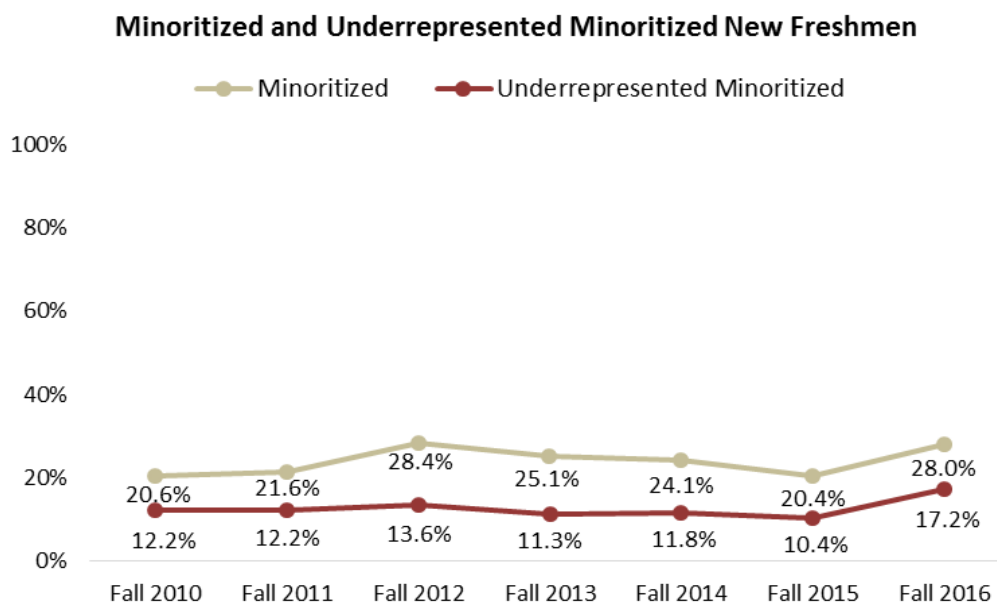


Figure 11. Enrollment Trends

All Gender Bathrooms

The climate survey did not ask explicitly about all gender bathrooms, however, the survey provided significant opportunity for students to share narrative about their experiences, and it was clear that the need for all gender bathrooms was great.

There are now 24 all gender bathrooms across campus; our goal is for all students, regardless of gender identity, have their needs met and to find our facilities humane.

How will we understand the impacts?

We monitor the campus climate for diversity regularly through our comprehensive Campus Climate Survey, administered every three years. In the intervening years, we share the data from that survey with the community to gain deeper insights and reflection about actions that can be more proactive in nature. We anticipate that the initiatives we have undertaken will move us closer to not only our benchmarks, but to an institution that is truly welcoming for students of all identities and affiliations. We do know, anecdotally, that student awareness is more significant than in prior years. There is more student-initiated programming regarding diversity; students are making their voices heard through rallies and participation in forums around themes of equity and inclusion; and the student government has reallocated funding to better support marginalized groups.

On the curricular side, a Knowledge, Identity, and Power (KNOW) page on the university website is dedicated to the KNOW requirement. Surveys of the faculty who have taught KNOW courses will continue to inform our delivery of these courses, and faculty development for those who are teaching KNOW courses is currently in place. KNOW is slated for assessment from the student perspective in 2019, when the first class to fall under the requirement graduates.

In addition, Puget Sound is home to the distinctive Race and Pedagogy Institute (RPI), a collaboration of University of Puget Sound and the South Sound community that integrates intellectual assets of the campus into a mutual and reciprocal partnership with local community experience and expertise, and pursues the vision of educating students and teachers at all levels to think critically about race and to act to eliminate racism. Led by Professors Dexter Gordon and Grace Livingston and an interdisciplinary

leadership team, RPI hosts a national conference every four years, bringing significant voices to faculty, students, staff, and the community, including Cornell West, Lani Guinier, Angela Davis, Winona LaDuke, to name a few. Through ongoing work on the campus and in partnership with the community, including the Community Partners Forum, the presence of RPI on our campus provides another crucial mechanism and support for critical examination of issues of diversity and inclusion.

Diversity is an area of continued growth for us as we work toward graduating students with a rich knowledge of self and others in fulfilling our mission, as discussed in Chapter 5. Internally, we have set out on a path of continuous improvement where our community is representative of the population as a whole, and where the Campus Climate Survey results for our students with minoritized and other marginalized identities do not differ from other students. We have a distance to go in that area, and hope that as the initiatives above weave their way into our culture, we will see the improvement we seek.

4.6 Experiential Learning

What did we see?

In the post-recession environment in which students and families are increasingly interested in the applicability of a liberal arts education and the “return on investment” of a private college education, President Ronald Thomas charged a work group of faculty and staff leaders in 2012–13 to consider “big ideas” for improvement of the Puget Sound educational experience. The most significant recommendation from that group was to enhance opportunities for experiential learning on and beyond the campus.

Due at least in part to growth in the number of students earning funded summer research stipends (arts, humanities, and social science funding was added in 2008 to complement the long-standing summer science program), a vibrant Career and Employment Services office, and development of faculty-led civic scholarship projects over the past decade, we are able to point to an array of opportunities and outstanding achievements by students. These “pockets of greatness” stand in contrast to our National Survey of Student Engagement data that show, relative to comparison schools, Puget Sound students report less participation in community-based projects; practicum, fieldwork, internships, co-op, or clinical experiences; study abroad; community service; research with faculty; and capstone experiences. For example:

- Seniors self-reporting that they had participated in a practicum, internship, field experience, co-op experience, or clinical assignment:
 - 2014 Puget Sound 57% (N=92), 2014 National Peers 76%
 - 2011 Puget Sound 54% (N=89), 2011 National Peers 73%
 - 2008 Puget Sound 61% (N=146), 2008 National Peers 74%
- Seniors self-reporting that they had participated in study abroad:
 - 2014 Puget Sound 41% (N=69), 2014 National Peers 55%
 - 2011 Puget Sound 39% (N=66), 2011 National Peers 56%
 - 2008 Puget Sound 44% (N=108), 2008 National Peers 55%

Further, the number of students enrolled in academic internships (courses numbered 497 or 498) and co-op credit (courses numbered 499) has dropped by 80 percent over the past 10 years, as shown in Table 9.

Academic Year	497/498	499	Total
1997–98	116	24	140
1998–99	128	20	148
1999–2000	52	19	71
2000–01	82	14	96
2001–02	109	22	131
2002–03	72	14	86
2003–04	71	24	95
2004–05	82	11	93
2005–06	85	19	104
2006–07	67	8	75
2007–08	42	6	48
2008–09	42	4	46
2009–10	37	8	45
2010–11	22	10	32
2011–12*	16	7	23
2012–13 ⁺	17	5	21
2013–14 ⁺	16	4	20
2014–15	19	3	22
2015–16	14	4	18

Table 9. Enrollments for Academic Internships and Co-op Credit.

What did we do?

We began to formally address this area for improvement in 2013–14 when the university president commissioned the Experiential Learning Work Group under the direction of Puget Sound’s academic vice president to “investigate ways in which we could ensure that all students who graduate from Puget Sound would have a coherent four-year experience with a meaningful set of experiential learning activities integrated within it that would prepare them for productive lives after college.” Informed by work occurring in other liberal arts colleges and beyond, a preliminary assessment of campus needs and resources to achieve the vision emerged from the work of the group. The work made clear that we need strong faculty leadership and involvement, as well as organizational change, to achieve five important objectives:

- (1) Coordinate the many assets in experiential learning we currently offer.
- (2) Expand and strengthen those assets inside and outside the curriculum.
- (3) Make those assets more visible and accessible to students from the first year onward.
- (4) Integrate those assets into the academic experience of each student.
- (5) Develop a culture of reflection that will inform academic advising and student engagement with experiential learning throughout students’ time at Puget Sound.

Eighteen specific recommendations were generated to achieve these objectives (see Attachment 17). A successful proposal to the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation was crafted in 2014–15, and we are now in year two of the three-year funded startup of the experiential learning program. It is led by a new associate dean for experiential learning and civic scholarship, Renee Houston, professor of communication studies. She has coordinated a faculty-staff leadership team, complemented by a larger faculty advisory board drawing on interests and talents from both undergraduate and graduate programs; implemented two new summer internship programs, including one with stipends for students who would not otherwise be able to participate in an unpaid internship; and developed programmatic and personnel (student and staff) support toward curricular and cocurricular objectives. In all, 10 of 18 objectives are in progress.

How will we understand the impacts?

One of the recommendations of the Experiential Learning Work Group was: “Charge a task group from [the Office of] Institutional Research and Career and Employment Services to plan how to coordinate survey research and bolster efforts to achieve strong response rates for student and alumni surveys.” Toward that end, we have continued to monitor NSSE results and integrate attention to experiential learning objectives into the cycle of campus surveys discussed above and the Destination Survey administered by Career and Employment Services.

The 2014 NSSE considered six specific types of undergraduate activities as High-Impact Practices (HIPs, see George Kuh, 2008), three of which are applicable for both first-year students and seniors. Nearly all of them classify as experiential learning activities at Puget Sound: participation in 1) a learning community, 2) service learning, 3) research with faculty, 4) internship or field experience, 5) study abroad, and/or 6) a culminating senior experience. Overall, 2014 results show Puget Sound first-year students performed on par with the peer group in frequency of participation in HIPs, whereas Puget Sound seniors lagged behind the peer group (see Table 10). The most common type of HIP reported by Puget Sound first-year students was service learning. Among Puget Sound seniors, greatest participation was reported in culminating senior experiences, such as a capstone course, senior project, or thesis; their greatest deficit compared to the peer group was reported participation in internships and service learning experiences. (We note that the NSSE survey does not use the phrases “civic scholarship” or “experiential learning” so these are assessments that need to be supplemented by internal data.) We will continue to monitor experiential learning via the NSSE and other assessment tools.

2014 NSSE Survey: Percentage of Students Who Participated in a High-Impact Practice		
First-Year Student	Puget Sound	Peers
Learning Community	13%	10%
Service Learning	36%	41%
Research with Faculty	4%	5%
Participated in at least one HIP	45%	47%
Senior		
Learning Community	17%	26%
Service Learning	41%	58%
Research with Faculty	40%	53%
Internship or Field Experience	57%	76%
Study Abroad	41%	55%
Culminating Senior Experience	77%	79%
Participated in at least one HIP	96%	98%

Table 10. Results for High-Impact Practices from 2014 National Survey of Student Engagement.

There are also additional “subplots” to the experiential learning story: capstone projects, study abroad, student leadership, and student engagement with faculty. We elected to undertake a deeper analysis of 2014 NSSE results, the outcome of which was a more nuanced understanding of the Puget Sound student experience.

- In 2013–15, Puget Sound participated in a collaborative Teagle Foundation funded project on capstone or culminating experiences. During that period, we focused attention of academic department chairs and program directors on capstone experiences in their majors, including capstones as valuable sites for assessment of student learning outcomes. We have also worked to offer additional symposiums on campus for presentation of student projects. The 2014 NSSE results showing Puget Sound seniors’ greatest participation in culminating senior experiences, such as a capstone course, senior project, or thesis is useful. While the participation of our seniors is on par with peers, we will continue to monitor participation in this critical High-Impact Practice.
- Both institutional data tracked by the Office of International Programs and NSSE data cited above show declines in study abroad participation, and Puget Sound seniors reporting lower participation in study abroad than the peer group. We are cognizant of multiple factors that may be contributing to this gap, including recessionary and safety concerns. To explore this area further, the International Education Committee collaborated with the Office of Institutional Research on a study abroad survey, the results of which showed half of respondents identified completion of their academic program as a barrier and half identified finances as a barrier. The academic vice president has charged a 2016–17 Study Abroad Work Group to recommend potential study abroad financial aid policy or curricular policy changes that would sustainably maximize student participation levels.
- The deeper look at the 2014 NSSE results also shows that Puget Sound first-year students and seniors reported participation in leadership roles at the same rate as the peer group respondents, and these leaders reported more frequent participation in experiential learning than nonleaders (see Figure 12 and Figure 13). For example, Puget Sound first-year leaders were more likely to have participated, or planned to participate, in a learning community compared to nonleaders, and Puget Sound senior leaders tended to participate in a greater number of HIPs

than nonleaders. Puget Sound first-year leaders were more likely to perform regular community service or volunteer work than nonleaders, and senior leaders reported participating in internship-type experiences at significantly greater rates than nonleaders. We plan to incorporate this information into forward planning for two relatively young leadership cohort programs on the campus, one in athletics (Athletic Leadership Club) and one in student affairs (Leadership Development and Engagement Initiative).

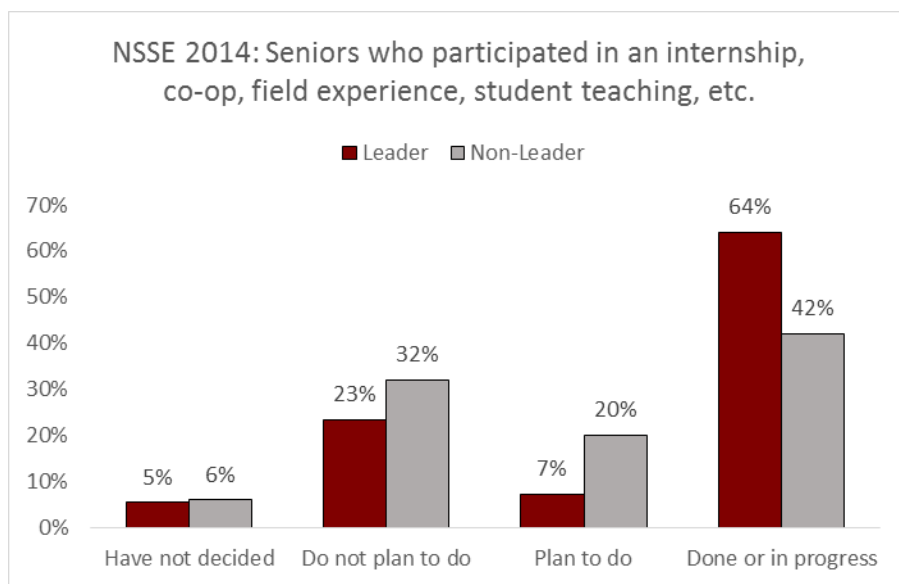


Figure 12. National Survey of Student Engagement

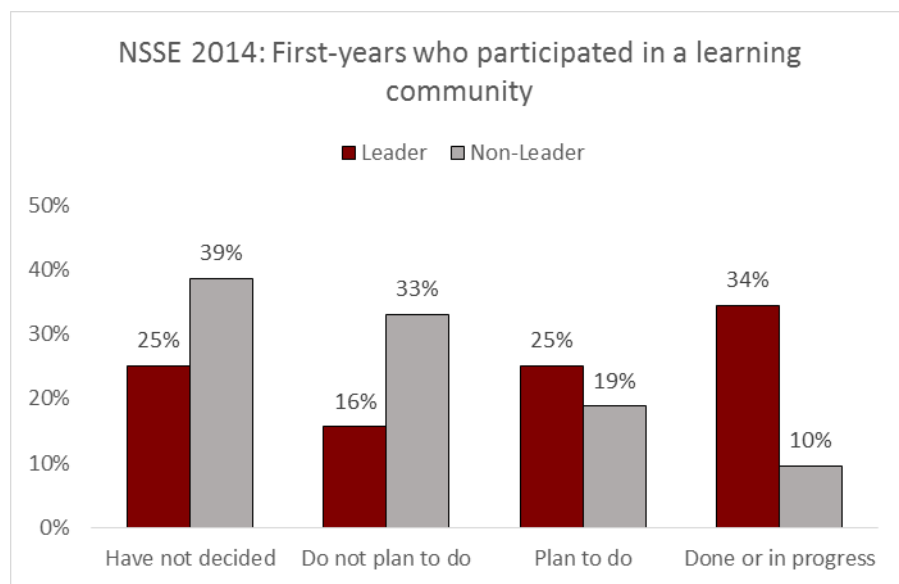


Figure 13. National Survey of Student Engagement

- The Student-Faculty (SF) Interaction Engagement Indicator is a composite score based on student responses to four NSSE items. The items ask about the frequency of certain student-faculty interactions as a response to the prompt, “During the current school year, about how often have you: 1) worked on activities other than coursework with a faculty member, or

discussed 2) career plans, 3) course material, or 4) academic performance with a faculty member.” Overall, Puget Sound seniors less frequently worked with faculty on activities other than coursework compared to seniors at the 14 peer group institutions. However, Puget Sound senior leaders, seniors doing volunteer work or community service, and seniors with internships more frequently worked with faculty on activities outside of class than seniors not engaged in leadership or volunteer work or community service. A larger proportion of Puget Sound first-year students and seniors than respondents at peer institutions reported *never* engaging in activities with faculty outside of coursework. With regard to career plans, Puget Sound first-year leaders and those involved with volunteer work or community service more frequently discussed their plans with faculty than nonleaders and those not involved in volunteer work or community service. Furthermore, Puget Sound first-year students involved in volunteer work or community service more frequently discussed both course material and academic performance with faculty than those not involved in volunteer work or community service. We plan to add consideration of this data to (a) work of the Experiential Learning Faculty Advisory Board, (b) spring 2017 faculty advisor training, and (c) leadership programs and initiatives noted above.

We are cognizant of our assessment data, implement recommendations informed by that data, and track and analyze results on an ongoing basis in an environment in which the question “How can we do this better?” is woven deeply into the fabric of the campus.

Chapter 5 Evaluation of Mission Fulfillment

Having examined recent and ongoing examples of evidence-based continuous improvement, we now turn to the question of how well we are fulfilling our mission at this point in time. In Chapter 2, we outlined a framework for evaluating mission fulfillment based on the theory of liberal arts education that emerges from our mission statement, core themes, and related goals. We now fill out that framework with specific indicators, most based on the processes and instruments described in Chapter 3, relevant to each component.

Through our work with the educational goals (Section 4.1), we clarify the intended learning outcomes. This shared understanding across campus is the basis for mission fulfillment; delivery of the curriculum and cocurriculum can only fulfill the mission if there is a shared understanding of what we are delivering. One goal that was in place well before the work of the Demonstration Project is written expression. In addition to the longitudinal work (Section 4.2) that has led to our revision of the first-year seminars (a High-Impact Practice), we also monitor apt expression in our mission fulfillment model through national survey results that compare us to our peers.

Section 4.3 focuses on continuous improvement regarding our first-year seminars connected to the essential learning outcomes of apt expression and critical analysis. Bookending that is our Connections requirement (Section 4.4), which serves as a capstone (another High-Impact Practice) for the core curriculum. Critical analysis includes a set of skills, abilities, and characteristics that are infused in our mission (see Table 1). Through national surveys and peer comparison, we monitor our mission fulfillment, while paying deepest attention to the degree that our students are strengthening their critical analysis skills through our new sequenced Seminars for Scholarly Inquiry and new support for Connections.

Our third essential learning dimension, rich knowledge of self and others, is similarly infused in our mission, and delivered through the curriculum and cocurriculum, as detailed in Section 4.5, Diversity and Inclusion, and Section 4.6, Experiential Learning. There are numerous pathways through which we are working toward continuous improvement, and again, we use national surveys and peer comparisons to demonstrate mission fulfillment. We are clear though, that this is an area of growth for us, and that drives our attention even more strongly to continuous improvement as measured through local surveys, focus groups, and other internal measures.

5.1 High-Impact Educational Practices

Puget Sound values High-Impact Educational Practices, as articulated by George Kuh and the American Association of Colleges and Universities' LEAP project, as effective means to high-quality student learning outcomes. Here, we provide a brief audit of our status with respect to delivering High-Impact Practices.

- First-year seminars and experiences
 - In place since 2003; strengthened through recent revisions, as detailed in Section 4.3
- Common intellectual experiences
 - Prelude portion of new student Orientation is, in a relatively small way, a start on this
 - Within the core, the Approaches to Knowing are more distribution than not and so do not contribute significantly to a sense of common intellectual experience
 - Connections, as capstone for the core, does provide an intellectual experience with some commonality; see Section 4.4
- Learning communities
 - Residential component and focused paths through the core as a long-standing feature of the Honors Program

- Residential seminars paired with first-year courses introduced in 1999-2000. Since 2005, 46 faculty having taught, 100 courses have been offered, and roughly 1,700 students have participated; see Section 3.1
- Creation of a new residential Humanities Program based on the Honors Program model
- Business Leadership Program, with dedicated sections of MATH 160 and ECON 170, BLP Seminars, and targeted programming
- Theme houses and suites as housing options for upper-division students
- Writing-intensive courses
 - Writing Across the Curriculum, as documented in Section 4.2
- Collaborative assignments and projects
 - Anecdotal evidence that many faculty members assign collaborative and group projects
 - Students serve on administrative committees, including high-level searches
 - NSSE results indicate that 65% of seniors worked with other students on course projects or assignments often or very often, and an additional 33% did so sometimes
- Undergraduate research
 - Long-standing summer science research award program
 - More recent arts, humanities, and social science summer research program
 - Efforts to expand both
- Diversity/global learning
 - Introduction of the KNOW requirement, see Section 4.5
 - Introduction of the Latina/o studies minor and African American studies major
 - Introduction of the global development studies minor
 - Hiring global environmental policy and decision-making faculty position
 - Deepening international curriculum in School of Business
- Service learning, and community-based learning
 - Initiative to expand experiential learning, see Section 4.6
- Internships
 - See data on current status in Section 4.6
 - Specific initiatives to expand opportunities, including Summer Fellowship Internship Program and Summer Academic Internship Program
- Capstone courses and projects
 - In place for most departments and programs, see NSSE data in Table 10
 - Connections as a capstone, see Section 4.4

5.2 Student Learning Outcomes

As described in Chapter 2, our framework for evaluating extent of mission fulfillment in terms of student learning has three components:

1. Student persistence to graduation
2. Student achievement along essential learning dimensions based in general education:
 - a. Apt expression
 - b. Critical analysis
 - c. Rich knowledge of self and others
3. Student progress toward a lifetime of engaged citizenship

The first of these serves as a necessary condition for the others, the second is foundational to our identity as a liberal arts institution, and the third is integral to the lifelong holistic aspect of our mission.

For each component, we identify a small set of representative measures or indicators that give a high-level view of where we stand. For measures that come from nationally administered instruments, such

as the Higher Education Data Sharing Consortium (HEDS) and National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE), as described in Chapter 3, our point of comparison is peer institutions; for other measures, the point of comparison is an internal threshold. In general, we define acceptable to mean that our most recent data point is not lower than the point of comparison by a statistically significant amount. (Details on the underlying statistical analysis is given in Appendix E.) For NSSE indicators that we measure at different points in a given cohort's trajectory (at the end of the first year and end of the fourth year), we also look at growth over that time period.

For each component, we describe the selected indicators, provide a table with current values, and discuss the current status.

Component 1: Student Persistence to Graduation

For the purposes of evaluating mission fulfillment, evidence on student persistence to graduation is based on these measures:

- Number of new first-time, full-time students
- One-year retention rate
- Four-year graduation rate
- Five-year graduation rate
- HEDS Item 11: Overall, how satisfied have you been with your undergraduate education at this institution?

The first four are part of a set of strategic indicators that are closely monitored by the President's Cabinet in relation to both mission fulfillment and sustainability. The HEDS item is perhaps a bit out of place in a component labeled "student persistence to graduation" but it serves as a useful high-level indicator and fits here better than in the other two components.

Targets for the first four of these are based on institutional strategic planning as described in Section 5.3. These targets have origins in the summer 2011 review of the *Defining Moments* strategic plan and so reflect commitment to fulfilling the Puget Sound mission. The target for the last is a comparison to peer institutions that administered the same survey instrument. The current status of indicators for this component are given in Table 11. A discussion follows.

Survey/Source	Data	Target	Status
Number of new first-time, full-time students Fall 2016 cohort	674	669	Acceptable
One-year retention rate Fall 2015 cohort	86%	88%	Acceptable
Four-year graduation rate Fall 2012 cohort	66%	75%	Of note, see discussion below
Five-year graduation rate Fall 2011 cohort	77%	79%	Acceptable
HEDS Item 11: Overall satisfaction Proportion responding "Satisfied" or "Very Satisfied" 2016 Seniors	86%	89%	Acceptable

Table 11. Indicators of Student Persistence to Graduation. Statistically significant differences between the Puget Sound data and the Target are denoted: *= $p < .05$, **= $P < .01$, ***= $p < .001$.

Trends for the first four data points are given in Figure 14–17. Four of the five indicators are currently at an acceptable level for mission fulfillment. The exception is the four-year graduation rate for the fall

2012 cohort, which is both below target and below graduation rates for recent cohorts, as shown in Figure 16. We have been attentive to the fall 2012 cohort rate; at this point, our conclusion is that the lower-than-expected rate is an anomaly rather than indicative of a persistent change. As shown in Figure 15, the one-year retention rate for the fall 2012 cohort was within a normal range, and even on the high end. Retention for this cohort began slipping in its second year (see Figure 17) and did not recover. We have yet to identify specific characteristics of the fall 2012 cohort that might explain the relatively low graduation rate. We have not seen similar slippage in the second year for subsequent cohorts, and so have some confidence that the low graduation rate is an anomaly. We do expect that the five-year graduation rate for the fall 2012 cohort will be below target. We expect that the four-year graduation rate for the fall 2013 cohort will be acceptable.

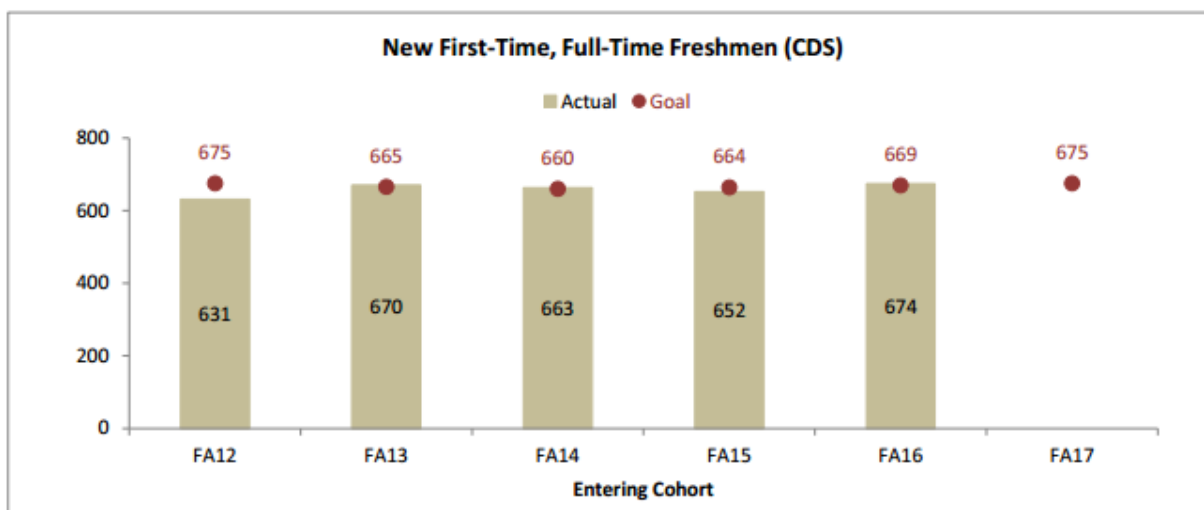


Figure 14. New First-Time, Full-Time First-Year Students

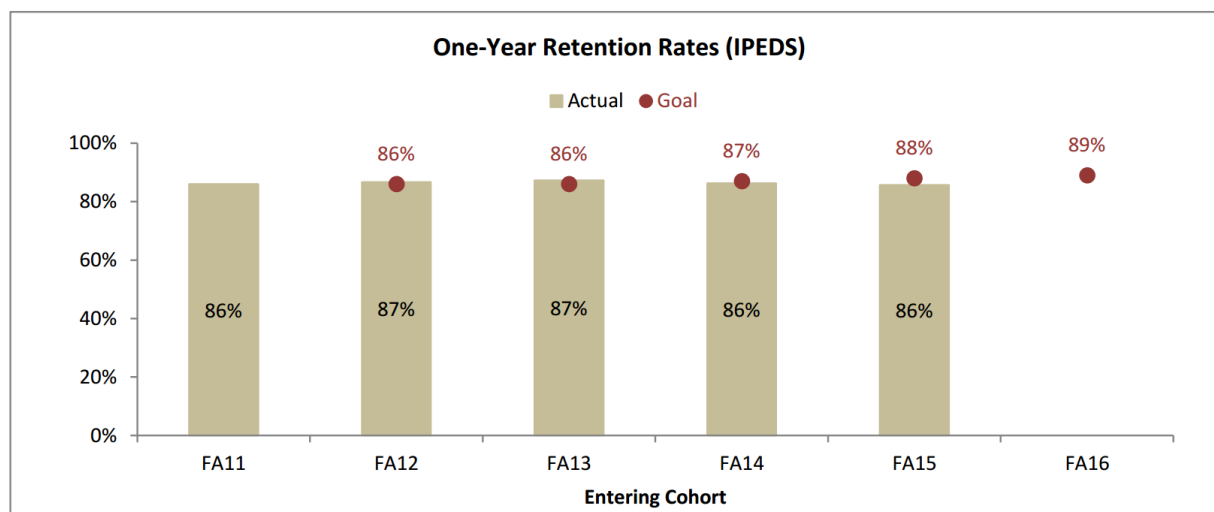


Figure 15. One-Year Retention Rates and Targets

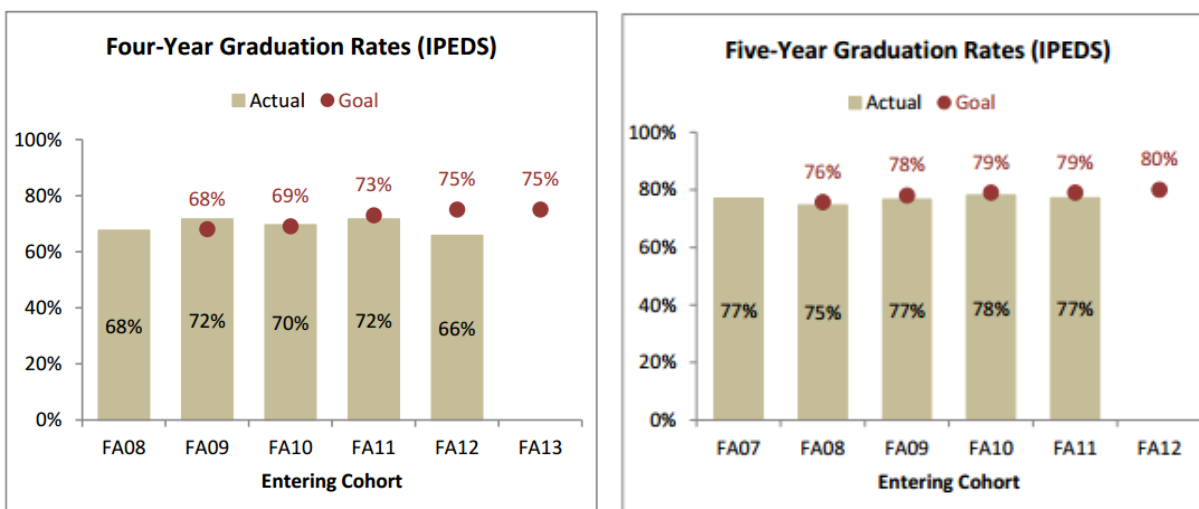


Figure 16. Four-Year and Five-Year Graduation Rates and Targets

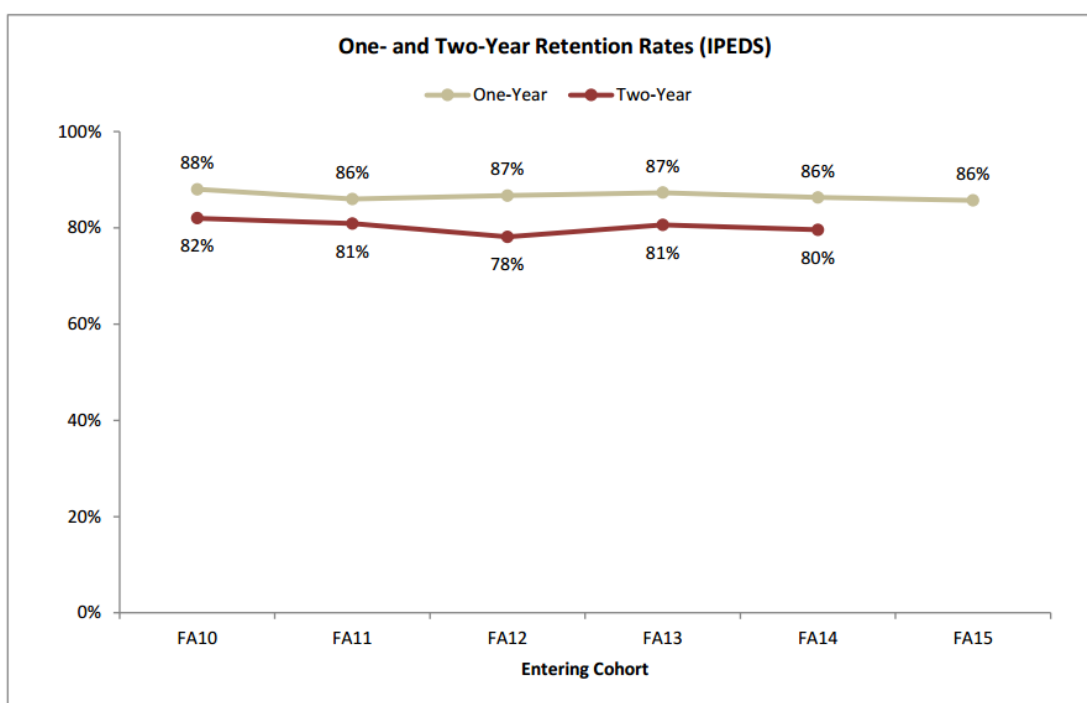


Figure 17. One- and Two-Year Retention Rates

Component 2: Student Achievement along Essential Learning Dimensions

Our three essential learning dimensions are apt expression, critical analysis, and rich knowledge of self and others. For apt expression, we look separately at written communication and oral communication. We draw indicators primarily from three sources (described in Chapter 3): the Spring Survey, the Higher Education Data Sharing Consortium Survey (HEDS), and the National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE). For each instrument, we use items mostly directly related to student achievement along essential learning dimensions. In addition, we use our own longitudinal Writing Across the Curriculum assessment (see Section 4.2) as an indicator for written communication.

In setting targets, we define “acceptable” for indicators coming from nationally administered instruments to mean that our most recent data point is not lower than the average of our peers, among those who also administered the instrument. Details on the underlying statistical analysis for these comparisons is given in Appendix E. For the Spring Survey items, students report on a zero to 100 scale with this wording:

- 0 to 20: I do not understand this.
- 20 to 40: I understand this but have not been exposed to it in my courses.
- 40 to 60: I understand this and have received exposure to it in one or more of my classes.
- 60 to 80: I can articulate specific examples of how coursework helped my build skills and abilities related to this.
- 80 to 100: I am able to apply these skills and abilities in my academic work and outside of class.

For Spring Survey items, we set the target at 80 since this indicates the beginning point for the range “applying skills and abilities in academic work and outside of class.” For the Writing Across the Curriculum study, we have selected a target of 0.5 for the mean paired difference between first-year and senior portfolio score; given the ordinal nature of the portfolio scores, this target is somewhat arbitrary.

The specific indicators used in relation to student achievement along the apt expression learning dimension are:

- Written communication:
 - Longitudinal Writing Across the Curriculum assessment.
 - Spring Survey student self-report on Educational Goal Two—written.
 - HEDS Item 6f: To what extent has your experience at this institution contributed to your knowledge, skills, and personal development in the following areas? Effective writing: Conveying accurate and compelling content in clear, expressive, and audience-appropriate prose.
 - NSSE Item 17a (equivalent to Item 11c on the 2011 version): How much has your experience at this institution contributed to your knowledge, skills, and personal development in the following areas? Writing clearly and effectively.
- Oral communication:
 - Spring Survey student self-report on Educational Goal Two—oral.
 - HEDS Item 6g: To what extent has your experience at this institution contributed to your knowledge, skills, and personal development in the following areas? Conveying accurate and compelling content in clear, expressive, and audience-appropriate oral presentations.
 - NSSE Item 17b (equivalent to Item 11d on the 2011 version): How much has your experience at this institution contributed to your knowledge, skills, and personal development in the following areas? Speaking clearly and effectively.

The indicators used in relation to student achievement along the critical analysis learning dimension are:

- Spring Survey student self-report on Educational Goal One.
- HEDS Item 6b: To what extent has your experience at this institution contributed to your knowledge, skills, and personal development in the following areas? Critical thinking: Examination of ideas, evidence, and assumptions before accepting or formulating a conclusion.
- NSSE Item 17c (equivalent to Item 11e on the 2011 version): How much has your experience at this institution contributed to your knowledge, skills, and personal development in the following areas? Thinking critically and analytically.

The indicators used in relation to student achievement along the rich knowledge of self and others learning dimension are:

- Spring Survey student self-report on Educational Goal Eight.
- HEDS Item 6k: To what extent has your experience at this institution contributed to your knowledge, skills, and personal development in the following areas? Intercultural knowledge and competence: Information, skills, and commitments that support effective and appropriate interactions in a variety of cultural contexts.
- NSSE Item 17h (equivalent to Item 11l on the 2011 version): How much has your experience at this institution contributed to your knowledge, skills, and personal development in the following areas? Understanding people of other backgrounds (economic, racial/ethnic, political, religious, nationality, etc.).

The current status of indicators for this component are given in Table 12 (see page 62). A discussion follows.

Overall, indicators for written communication are at an acceptable level. The most recently completed longitudinal Writing Across the Curriculum assessment study concluded that there is growth between first year and senior year, consistent with results from previous iterations of the study. This is also consistent with growth as reported on the Spring Survey scale, which is strong. On the NSSE item, the fall 2010 cohort reports similar levels as first-year students and seniors. Given the wording of the item, we might conjecture that students are applying different standards at the two different points in their careers. The structure of the Spring Survey item provides a single standard that students use throughout their careers and so provides a measure of growth.¹⁴

In comparison to written communication, values for oral communication indicators are lower. This is perhaps not surprising given our explicit focus on writing as evidenced through, for example, our long-standing attention to Writing Across the Curriculum and support for writing provided by the Center for Writing, Learning, and Teaching. We do not have comparable explicit attention to oral communication. It is true that the new rubrics for the first-year seminars include attention to oral communication, but in practice we pay more attention to writing than to oral communication. As noted in Section 4.3, we noted faculty survey data indicates a relatively wide range of pedagogical practices with respect to speaking. Oral communication is clearly an area for growth to which we should consider additional attention.

Lower values on measures of rich knowledge of self and others have been previously noted and discussed in Section 4.5. Efforts such as the introduction of the Knowledge, Identity, and Power graduation requirement are a response to this.

¹⁴ Note that this Spring Survey item has only been administered since spring 2014, so we are not yet able to track change within the same cohort.

	Survey/Source	Data	Target	Status
Apt Expression-Written	Puget Sound Writing Across the Curriculum Assessment Mean paired difference between first-year and senior portfolio scores Fall 2008 cohort as spring 2012 seniors	0.44	0.50	Acceptable
	Spring Survey: Write clearly and efficiently Value along 0–100 scale Fall 2015 cohort as spring 2016 first-years Fall 2012 cohort as spring 2016 seniors	71.8 83.3	80.0	Acceptable
	HEDS Item 6f: Effective writing Proportion responding “Quite a Bit” or “Very Much” Fall 2012 cohort as 2016 seniors	91%	89%	Acceptable
	NSSE Item 17a: Writing clearly and effectively Proportion responding “Quite a Bit” or “Very Much” Fall 2010 cohort as spring 2011 first-years Fall 2010 cohort as spring 2014 seniors	87% 89%	85% 89%	Acceptable
Apt Expression-Oral	Spring Survey: Communicate well orally Value along 0–100 scale Fall 2015 cohort as spring 2016 first-years Fall 2012 cohort as spring 2016 seniors	62.6 74.1	80.0	Of note; see discussion below
	HEDS Item 6g: Effective speaking Proportion responding “Quite a Bit” or “Very Much” Fall 2012 cohort as 2016 seniors	69%***	79%	Of note; see discussion below
	NSSE Item 17b: Speaking clearly and effectively Proportion responding “Quite a Bit” or “Very Much” Fall 2010 cohort as spring 2011 first-years Fall 2010 cohort as spring 2014 seniors	66% 69%*	70% 80%	Of note; see discussion below
Critical Analysis	Spring Survey: Think analytically and logically Value along 0–100 scale Fall 2015 cohort as spring 2016 first-years Fall 2012 cohort as spring 2016 seniors	73.0 86.1	80.0	Acceptable
	HEDS Item 6b: Critical thinking Proportion responding “Quite a Bit” or “Very Much” Fall 2012 cohort as 2016 seniors	95%	93%	Acceptable
	NSSE Item 17c: Thinking critically and analytically Proportion responding “Quite a Bit” or “Very Much” Fall 2010 cohort as spring 2011 first-years Fall 2010 cohort as spring 2014 seniors	93% 92%	91% 96%	Acceptable
Rich Knowledge of Self and Others	Spring Survey: Appreciate yourself and others Value along 0–100 scale Fall 2015 cohort as spring 2016 first-years Fall 2012 cohort as spring 2016 seniors	73.9 77.9	80.0	Of note; see discussion below
	HEDS Item 6k: Intercultural knowledge and competence Proportion responding “Quite a Bit” or “Very Much” Fall 2012 cohort as 2016 seniors	65%	72%	Acceptable
	NSSE Item 17h: Understanding people of other backgrounds Proportion responding “Quite a Bit” or “Very Much” Fall 2010 cohort as spring 2011 first-years Fall 2010 cohort as spring 2014 seniors	51% 49%***	57% 66%	Of note; see discussion below

Table 12. Indicators of Student Achievement along Essential Learning Dimensions. Statistically significant differences between the Puget Sound data and the Target are denoted: *=p<.05, **=P<.01, ***p<.001.

Component 3: Student Progress Toward a Lifetime of Engaged Citizenship

For this component, we draw items from the Higher Education Data Sharing Consortium Survey (HEDS), and the National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE):

- HEDS Item 6j: To what extent has your experience at this institution contributed to your knowledge, skills, and personal development in the following areas? Civic engagement: Promoting the quality of life in the community, through both political and nonpolitical processes.
- HEDS Item 10c: Overall, to what extent have your experiences at this institution prepared you for the following activities? Social and civic involvement.
- NSSE Item 17j : How much has your experience at this institution contributed to your knowledge, skills, and personal development in the following areas? Being an informed and active citizen. This question was phrased differently in 2011 therefore, we are comparing two different cohorts, Fall 2013 cohort in Spring 2014 and Fall 2010 cohort in Spring 2014.

The current status of indicators for this component is provided in Table 13. A discussion follows.

Survey/Source	Data	Target	Status
HEDS Item 6j: Civic engagement Proportion responding “Quite a Bit” or “Very Much” Fall 2012 cohort as 2016 seniors	50%**	61%	Of note; see discussion below
HEDS Item 10c: Social and civic involvement Proportion responding “Quite a Bit” or “Very Much” Fall 2012 cohort as 2016 seniors	59%	63%	Acceptable
NSSE Item 17j: Being an informed and active citizen Proportion responding “Quite a Bit” or “Very Much” Fall 2013 cohort as spring 2014 first-years Fall 2010 cohort as spring 2014 seniors	52%** 60%**	63% 68%	Of note; see discussion below

Table 13. Indicators of Student Progress Toward a Lifetime of Engaged Citizenship. Statistically significant differences between the Puget Sound data and the Target are denoted: *=p<.05, **=P<.01, ***p<.001.

We first note that there is a seeming inconsistency between Puget Sound responses to HEDS Item 6j and Item 10c, which seem to ask closely related questions. That aside, the current status for two of the three indicators here is acceptable, although just on the borderline for the HEDS Item 6j. For the NSSE item, we note that the gap between Puget Sound and peer mean is smaller for this cohort as seniors than as first-year students. As detailed in Section 4.6, civic engagement is a strong theme within our experiential learning program; current initiatives to expand that program are thus an important factor in continuous improvement.

Where are we now?

Overall, Puget Sound is in an acceptable position with respect to use of High-Impact Educational Practices. First-year seminars, writing-intensive courses, and capstone courses and projects are among areas of clear strength. Diversity, service learning, and internships are areas to which we are devoting particular attention for strengthening.

Overall, Puget Sound is in an acceptable position with respect to student persistence to graduation, student achievement along essential learning dimensions, and student progress toward lifelong holistic goals. Evidence indicates persistence to graduation is reasonable; we continue to strive for improvement in this area—while maintaining standards for student progress and achievement—to better fulfill our vision of a residential liberal arts community and, on a practical level, to strengthen viability and sustainability. Evidence indicates written communication and critical analysis as areas of relative strength that we will continue to monitor and refine. Evidence indicates oral communication and rich knowledge of self and others as areas on which to focus some attention; we have clear initiatives in place for continued improvement on rich knowledge of self and others, and efforts are emerging for additional attention to oral communication. Evidence indicates progress toward a lifetime of engaged citizenship is reasonable, and we anticipate continued improvement from ongoing initiatives.

5.3 Where are we heading and how will we move forward?

At Puget Sound, we are confident that our current extent of mission fulfillment is acceptable and that we have reasonable understanding of areas of strength and areas for growth. Planning for continued effectiveness, adaptability, and sustainability takes place at multiple scopes and scales. At the highest level and longest scale, progress is guided by strategic planning, as described in the next subsection. That strategic planning provides the context within which midrange and annual planning takes place, as described in the subsection that follows.

Strategic Planning

The ongoing strategic planning process at Puget Sound begins each midsummer, when the President's Cabinet meets for a multiday planning retreat. Based on each Cabinet member's annual report on goal achievement for the prior academic-fiscal year, as well as the outlines of strategic objectives for the coming year—reports that are structured to align with the *Defining Moments* strategic plan goals—the president provides a summary of primary strategic plan achievements, as well as a vision, outlook, and outline of primary goals for the coming year. Cabinet colleagues have an opportunity to discuss key achievements, new and/or continuing needs, and plans for moving ahead in the coming year. At a January planning retreat each year, the Cabinet has an opportunity to check in on and update progress toward (or any adjustment of) goals.

The Cabinet also reviews in both the summer and winter planning retreats Puget Sound's strategic indicators, a set of 100+ dashboard and trend indicators provided by the Office of Institutional Research which contextualize goal-setting, provide comparative benchmarks with institutional peers, and, over time, inform decision-making. See Attachment 18.

In summer planning retreats, priorities are discussed in the context of the long-range budget model, a detailed model that includes the balanced budget recommendations approved by the board for the coming fiscal year, as well as budget projections for the coming 10 years, in order to maintain balanced budget scenarios and avoid structural deficits. The long-range budget model is then used in October through December by the Budget Task Force to test viability of revenue and expense recommendations for the subsequent fiscal years and in the Cabinet's January planning retreat. A synopsis of the long-range budget model is provided to the board as part of its approval process for budget recommendations. Thus, the strategic plan is appropriately linked with budget planning and budget decision-making.

In summer 2011, at the midpoint of the *Defining Moments* strategic plan, a summary of primary achievements was provided to the campus (Attachment 19). At the same time, as Puget Sound experienced the impact of the recession, the President's Cabinet took a concerted and broad look at

what adjustments in the strategic plan would strengthen student recruitment/retention and net revenue growth. In October 2011, a board workshop—“Redefining Moments”—invited trustee engagement with areas of challenge: brand recognition, rising discount rates, declining wealth of families, growing proportion of high-need students, constrained growth of net tuition, and graduation rates lower than peers and correlated lower on-campus residency. The board affirmed fully its commitment to Puget Sound’s fundamental mission as a liberal arts college with selected graduate programs that delivers a high-touch, teaching-intensive, comprehensive educational experience. A set of integrated “strategic initiatives” was outlined: investments in institutional branding, recruitment of students, financial aid strategy, retention of students to graduation, and the residential character of the campus at the potential short-term expense of other mission-central programming, in recognition of the university’s reliance on net tuition to deliver the promise of our mission. Senior leadership formed specific goals, supported by action plans, for the five-year period FY 2013–14 through FY 2017–18; discussed those plans with the board in February 2012; and received board endorsement for the goals, strategies, and funding plan. Progress on the strategic initiatives, and the strategic investments they entailed, has been monitored annually against benchmarks and benchmark goals have been refined based on actual experience; in more recent years, those benchmarks have been incorporated into the strategic indicators dashboard and trend data. A summary of *Defining Moments* strategic plan achievements since 2011 is contained in Table 14 (see page 66).

As the *Defining Moments* strategic plan reaches the end of its lifespan, President Isiaah Crawford has begun his presidency by hosting a series of twenty-four campus “listening and learning” sessions with faculty members, staff members, and students to gauge joys, points of pride, needs, and concerns of the campus community. He has also sought input on what type of strategic planning process the community sees as a “best fit” for discernment of the next strategic plan. The campus looks forward to an inclusive process that will begin in fall 2017; lead to a draft plan by May 2018; and result in presentation to the board for its review and action in fall 2018. This new strategic plan for Puget Sound will inform an updated campus master planning process and undergird the next capital fundraising campaign.

<p>Innovate: Enhance and distinguish the Puget Sound experience</p> <p>Environmental policy and decision making major Environmental field schools in Asia; new Pacific Rim model; Latin America study tour revived Business major internationalized Diversity Strategic Plan: Threshold 2022 Knowledge, Identity, and Power (KNOW) graduation requirement African American studies major; Latino/a studies minor; gender and queer studies minor Jennie M. Caruthers Chair in Neuroscience; Neuroscience emphasis; neuroculture program; Art+Science Salons William and Flora McCormick Chair in Biophysics Bioethics emphasis Race and Pedagogy Institute and third national conference; Freedom Educational Project Puget Sound affiliation; new Civic Scholarship projects; Sound Policy Institute & Slater Museum outreach Digital humanities initiative; postdoctoral fellows Experiential learning initiative; Summer Immersion Internship Programs Athletics strategic plan Collins Memorial Library development as vibrant academic center for the campus</p>	<p>Inspire: Build an inspiring physical environment for learning</p> <p>Weyerhaeuser Center for Health Sciences completed, fosters cross disciplinary interaction among exercise science, neuroscience, occupational therapy, physical therapy, and psychology Commencement Walk and Event Lawn created, integrates the north and south sectors of campus Thomas Hall completed, 135-bed residence and event/meeting spaces; Rocchi International District, honors, humanities, environmental, and business residential “houses” developed within Thomas Hall Wheelock Student Center expanded and renovated to enhance dining, student services, and event space Athletics and Aquatics Center completed, replacing Wallace Pool and providing expanded Fitness Center, sports medicine, athletics team and recreational facilities Student Diversity Center and Social Justice Center opened Admission, experiential learning, and student accessibility and accommodation space enhanced External campus signage designed and installed External door card access installed in all major buildings Electrical and network infrastructure enhanced</p>
<p>Engage: Forge lifelong relationships</p> <p>Enrollment cohorts created in accord with Enrollment Work Group recommendations: Tacoma Access Cohort, Tacoma Public Schools Initiative, and Posse Scholars Test-optional policy, noncognitive variable assessment, Logger Summer Institute, trans* resources initiated to bolster recruitment and retention of diverse and talented student body Alumni Council established with membership exceeding target of 1,300; strategic plan completed; class officers instituted Parents Council established, with strong numbers and activity; structure and staffing model in progress Summer reunion converted to second five-year cycle; “best-yet” attendance in 2016; Black Alumni Union formed Tiered regional alumni club model implemented Seamless university external media presence achieved through Office of Communications Strong engagement with Tacoma community</p>	<p>Invest: Strengthen financial position</p> <p>Strategically deployed student financial aid to achieve enrollment and net tuition revenue objectives Successfully completed One of a Kind campaign at \$131.56mm (above \$125mm goal) Engaged Outsourced Chief Investment Officer for management of endowment that has grown to \$332.8 million, developed statement on divestment, and created student-managed endowment portfolio with donor gift Debt capacity used strategically, S&P and Moody’s affirmed ratings of A+ and A1, respectively Implemented enterprise software solution for student information, financials, and human resources Faculty Compensation Task Force outlined faculty compensation philosophy and salary goal based on larger peer set, and developed model to monitor sustainability of salary scale and decisions Robust constituent engagement program developed for long-term philanthropic success Implemented numerous student recruitment initiatives</p>

Table 14. Summary of strategic achievements, 2011 to date

Midrange and Annual Planning

Within the purview of the overarching strategic plan, other midrange and annual planning processes keep Puget Sound moving forward in well-informed and evidence-based ways. A partial set of examples includes: Enrollment Work Group, Diversity Strategic Plan, retention work groups, curricular work groups (study abroad, experiential learning, teaching with technology, “big ideas,” and those described in the ongoing improvement narratives of Chapter 4), and annual office and program planning processes, four of which will be discussed next as representative of robust processes to help ensure continued adaptability and sustainability.

Enrollment Work Group

In October 2013, in alignment with the strategic importance of attention to student recruitment, the board of trustees convened the Enrollment Work Group at the request of the president to develop a set of clear guidelines and principles to inform institutional decision-making regarding choices the institution must make in its enrollment strategies related to student quality, diversity, and institutional financial sustainability to align with Puget Sound’s mission, core values, and strategic plan. Important contextual factors for the Enrollment Work Group included: changing national demographics, expanding higher education internationalization efforts, continuing technological innovation that threatens to disrupt the traditional private university financial model, declining access and ongoing public scrutiny of college costs and student debt, declining median family incomes, and resultant increased price sensitivity of prospective college students and their families. The charge for the Enrollment Work Group included 11 overarching questions to guide its discussions regarding University of Puget Sound’s longer-term enrollment strategy.

Seven trustees, including a trustee as chair, the president, two faculty members, and five staff members participated in the enrollment planning project. During the course of its work, the group invited guests to participate in the discussions, including the academic vice president and dean of the university, the dean of diversity and inclusion and chief diversity officer, the vice president of student affairs and dean of students, and the vice president for finance and administration.

The Enrollment Work Group forwarded seven confidential recommendations, which fell into three categories: market position (2), student quality and diversity (2), and assessment (3). Important context for these recommendations was the agreement the work group reached that among all the priorities, the first priority in our enrollment efforts needs to be financial sustainability for Puget Sound. The group also summarized that Puget Sound has adapted well to market changes over time, and has developed a strong position in its market. Recent successes enrolling on-target entering classes at discount rates well below the market indicate a strong competitive position. Puget Sound’s recent strategic investments in developing a beautiful and well-equipped residential campus, an innovative curriculum and cocurriculum, an integrated technology infrastructure, an effective branding platform and national profile, and a dynamic fundraising and constituent engagement program have combined to strengthen that position considerably.

But the work group also affirmed that challenges remain formidable, noting that it will be important for Puget Sound to remain vigilant to market dynamics, true to its mission and its brand, and nimble in making course corrections as necessary. The work group recommendations continue to guide recruitment and enrollment strategies at the present time.

Diversity Strategic Plan

Since the creation of the Diversity Planning Task Force in 2005–06, the establishment of a Diversity Strategic Plan in December 2006, and initial hiring of a chief diversity officer in 2007, Puget Sound has worked diligently to address diversity and inclusion on campus. Out of the work undertaken by the task

force, a more permanent collegewide institutional group, the Diversity Advisory Council (DAC), was established in September 2008. DAC is a group charged with examining diversity, inclusion, and equity issues on campus with respect to policy and practice from multiple perspectives (including access, recruitment and retention, community connections and outreach to diverse constituents, and campus climate and culture). DAC works together with the President's Cabinet and Puget Sound constituents to engage the campus community in productive dialogue about campus climate issues and to make recommendations toward action.

As noted in Chapter 4, DAC collaborates with the Office of Institutional Research to lead and carry out Puget Sound's Campus Climate Survey focused on gauging collective change in experiences and perceptions of Puget Sound campus climate as reported by faculty, staff, and students, and is charged, in collaboration with the Cabinet, with developing and implementing the institution's Diversity Strategic Plan. DAC reviews current efforts aimed at enhancing diversity in representation and practice, and considers which diversity goals and approaches might serve effective in furthering the university's diversity and inclusion vision, and diversity statement.

In 2015–16, as the 2006 plan reached the end of its lifespan, the Diversity Advisory Council—under the leadership of Puget Sound's dean for diversity and inclusion and chief diversity officer, hired in 2013—launched a new diversity strategic planning process. Informed by Campus Climate Survey results, a series of open campus forums to discuss those results, annual reports of Harassment Response Officers and the Bias-Hate Education Response Team, goals and achievements of the Race and Pedagogy Initiative (now Institute) and Center for Intercultural and Civic Engagement, DAC employed four working groups to draft goals and objectives. The council then sought additional campus input through a series of open sessions and a May 2016 trustee workshop, such that all interested campus constituents would have input into the draft plan and, in particular, suggested strategies and tactics for implementation of goals and objectives. The council's commitment was that the goals and objectives of the Diversity Strategic Plan should be designed to serve as a vehicle to help move the university from its current state with regard to equity and inclusion, practice, and representation toward the future state to which we aspire. Important to the accountability of each strategic goal is the institution's role in providing the human and financial capacity to effectively carry out said objectives.

The first annual report on the Diversity Strategic Plan goals and objectives was completed in January 2017, and is available as Attachment 20.

Budget Task Force

The operating budget is a document that reflects the university's planning and Puget Sound has relied for 40 years on a comprehensive process in developing that budget. At the heart of the process is an advisory committee to the President, the Budget Task Force, that considers mission, strategic priorities and economic realities, and reviews metrics, benchmarking and proposals from leaders of all key areas of the institution before recommending a balanced budget to the President. The Budget Task Force consists of two faculty members, two students, two staff members, the Vice President for Finance and Administration, and the Academic Vice President, who serves as the Budget Task Force chair. The Associate Vice President for Financial Planning and Analysis provides information support. The Budget Task Force is charged with weighing competing requests and recommending to the President those ongoing additions to the base budget which most forward Puget Sound's mission. The proposed operating budget includes all key variables, including enrollment, net tuition, faculty and staff compensation pools, and all other revenues and expenses. Members of the Budget Task Force are charged with representing the best interests of the university as a whole rather than the interests of any constituent group.

Principles that guide the Budget Task Force's recommended allocations include:

- Maintain centrality to mission and adherence to Puget Sound's core values
- Preserve quality of educational experience for students
- Maintain competitiveness in the higher education marketplace
- Use strategic plan to drive resource allocations
- Encourage innovative deployment of resources
- Expect maximum operating efficiency and effectiveness
- Expenditure levels must be within available revenues and responsive to economic and market conditions
- Balance the budget with long-term benefits in mind

The Budget Task Force provides a report of its recommendations to the campus community at the conclusion of its deliberations (see Attachment 21). Members of the Budget Task Force present the task force's recommendations in person to the ASUPS Senate, the Faculty Senate, and the Staff Senate at the beginning of the spring semester. All students, faculty, and staff are welcome at these presentations. A two-week comment period occurs prior to the February Board of Trustees meeting where final action must take place. During this two-week period, any group, committee, or individual of the campus community may write to the President expressing their opinion on any element of the proposed budget. After considering the task force's recommendations and campus feedback, the President advances a recommendation to the Finance and Facilities Committee of the Board of Trustees, which takes a final recommendation to the Board of Trustees for its action.

In its work developing a recommendation for the 2017–18 budget, the Budget Task Force was also guided by key considerations, such as:

- External environment and economic realities for families
- Competition for students and family price sensitivity, which means minimizing tuition increases, offering financial aid to reward achievement and meet financial need, and containing costs
- Endowment distributions and fundraising capacity
- Fair and competitive compensation for faculty and staff members
- Maintaining facilities and reducing deferred maintenance
- Innovation and cost effectiveness throughout the university
- Support for student success

Key recommendations for the 2017–18 budget include:

- Enrollment targets: new first-year students at 670, transfer students at 55, graduate students at 121
- Modest tuition increase of 3.3%, the lowest in 45 years at Puget Sound
- Financial aid at level to result in average total discount rate of 38.7%
- Total expenditure increase of 3.0%
- Total compensation increase of 3.7% (faculty salary at 4%, staff salary at 3.25%)
- Targeted operating expense increases

The Budget Task Force recommendations were approved by the board of trustees at its February 2017 meeting. More complete details are available in the Budget Task Force report (Attachment 21).

Student Persistence and Success

The university has been paying attention to retention and graduation rates in a structured way since at least 2002–03, when then-President Susan Resnick Pierce convened the first retention committee. At that time, the retention rate was about 84 percent. That committee instituted a Student Alert Group (SAG), which is still in effect. In addition, that committee developed a communication mechanism through which faculty and staff members could share concerns about students with SAG. SAG continues

to meet regularly to review those concerns and do triage. That first retention committee disbanded, and in 2008, with a retention rate of about 85 percent, then-President Ronald Thomas charged a Retention Task Force to recommend best practices for student success and retention. The task force supported a two-year residency requirement for first- and second-year undergraduates, an enhanced new faculty orientation and faculty advisor training, midterm grade follow-up via SAG, and a dismissal policy for first-semester students earning below a 1.0 GPA.

In fall 2012, the retention rate was about 86 percent, and the task force was recast as a standing Retention Committee to monitor retention and recommend new practices, with a goal of 90 percent. That committee supported the move to optional test score submission for admission, a revamped and scaffolded Seminar in Scholarly Inquiry, and an academic skills course offering. The committee also recommended that incoming first-year students register for all courses in the summer, prior to arriving on campus for orientation. The committee found additional impacts on retention to be experiential learning, leadership, student/faculty research, and athletic participation.

Through these years of focus on retention, Puget Sound has moved the needle a bit, but we recognize that at 86 percent, we are not as close to our goal of 90 percent as we would like. We have implemented best practices, and have explored the data in some depth; we conclude that improving our retention rate is not a matter of pulling a lever or two, but that there are numerous individual complex stories to be addressed. We have contracted with Human Capital Research Corporation to assist us in identifying pathways that may predict individual attrition early enough for us to intervene, and our new vice president for enrollment will have an opportunity to bring her insights to the ongoing work.

5.4 Conclusion

At Puget Sound, we are confident that our current extent of mission fulfillment is acceptable and that we have reasonable understanding of areas of strength and areas for growth. Processes for continuous improvement are robust. Planning for continued effectiveness, adaptability, and sustainability are sound.

Chapter 6 Compliance With Regulatory Standards

Per guidelines provided by the commission, in this chapter we provide “a brief narrative (no more than 10 pages) addressing any substantial changes related to each section of Standard Two which have occurred since the last accreditation evaluation.” In developing this narrative, we have defined “substantial change” to mean either (1) any change to a foundational document (the corporate bylaws, the faculty bylaws, and the faculty code), or (2) any change to other documents and policies that has impacts at the institutional level or implications for NWCCU Standards for Accreditation. We are reporting substantial changes made since our Year Three report that was finalized in February 2013. In addition to substantial changes relating to Standard Two, we note that a Credit Hour Policy was adopted in March 2013 to fulfill the commission’s credit hour policy requirement.

Standard 2A Governance

In the Year Three report, the University of Puget Sound Corporate Bylaws are cited in relation to 2.A.1, 2.A.4, 2.A.5, 2.A.6, 2.A.23, and 2.F.5. Since February 2013, there have been two amendments to the corporate bylaws:

- In May 2014, the board of trustees approved revisions to Article VI, Sections 1, 2, and 3 that consolidated provisions regarding committees.
- In October 2016, the board of trustees approved changes to Article VI, Sections 1 and 2 to clarify voting rights of nontrustee members of committees and to clarify certain issues of quorum and majority.

The University of Puget Sound Faculty Code was cited in the Year Three report in relation to 2.A.1, 2.A.9, 2.A.12, 2.A.18, 2.A.27, 2.B.5, and 2.B.6. In 2015, amendments to the faculty code were approved by the faculty (March 2015) and by the board of trustees (May 2015) to make alternate “head officer only” evaluation (described in Chapter III, Section 2b of the faculty code) the normal process for three-year associate professor evaluations that do not involve consideration for promotion or tenure, and to make the alternative “streamlined” evaluation process (described in Chapter III, Section 5 of the faculty code) an option for all [full] professor evaluations. Prior to these amendments, three-year associate professor evaluations were conducted using the standard evaluation process (described in Chapter III, Section 4 of the faculty code), and the “streamlined” evaluation process was available only at five, 15, 25, 30, and 35 years of service in the rank of [full] professor.

In the Year Three report, the University of Puget Sound Faculty Bylaws are cited in relation to 2.A.9, 2.A.12, and 2.A.18. Changes to Article III of the faculty bylaws were approved in March 2016 by the faculty and in May 2016 by the board of trustees. The main effect was to change from the president presiding over full faculty meetings to the Senate chairperson presiding. A change to Article V, Section 6B was approved in November 2016 by the faculty and in February 2017 by the board to move curriculum reviews from a five-year cycle to a seven-year cycle in order to allow faculty more time to follow up on recommendations.

2.A.7 and 2.A.10

In June 2016, President Ronald R. Thomas concluded his service as Puget Sound’s president. President Thomas was succeeded by President Isiaah Crawford, effective July 1, 2016, following an extensive national search. The search was initiated in May 2015, following the announcement from President Thomas of his plans to conclude his presidency at the end of the 2015–16 academic year. The trustees appointed Robert Pohlad, who was board chair-elect at the time, as search committee chair. Services of a search consultant were secured and a 14-member search committee was assembled with trustee, faculty, student, staff, and alumni representatives. Using input from the campus community, the search committee developed a presidential search profile and a search process that balanced confidentiality for

candidates with desire for broad input. That process allowed for 30 students, 15 faculty members, 15 staff members, 15 alumni, and Cabinet members to take part in interviews with finalists.

President Crawford brought a rich and relevant background to Puget Sound. He was a tenured psychology professor and licensed clinical psychologist with three decades of experience in higher education. He earned degrees from St. Louis University and DePaul University in Chicago, and began his teaching career in 1987 at Loyola University Chicago, where he chaired the Department of Psychology and served as dean of the College of Arts and Sciences. Since 2008, he served as provost for Seattle University, where he directed the Division of Academic Affairs and oversaw the university's schools and colleges, libraries, enrollment, information technology, institutional research, and offices supporting academic achievement, faculty affairs, and global engagement. A distinguished teacher, scholar, and college administrator, President Crawford's academic work and achievements are closely aligned with the values and aspirations of Puget Sound.

2.A.9

Two transitions relating to senior leadership have taken place since spring 2013, and one upcoming transition has been announced.

The first transition was in the position of vice president for enrollment. Effective July 1, 2016, Jenny Rickard left Puget Sound to pursue an opportunity as executive director of The Common Application in Washington, D.C. To allow for a national search to be conducted, Christine Mica was appointed as interim vice president for enrollment, effective Aug. 15, 2016. The search was completed in November 2016, with the announcement that Laura Martin-Fedich had been named the new vice president for enrollment at Puget Sound, having previously worked as vice president for enrollment and dean of admission and financial aid, Agnes Scott College (2011–16); associate vice president for enrollment and director of admission, Hendrix College (2007–11); director of admission, Eckerd College (2003–06); and senior associate director of admission, Kalamazoo College (1998–2003).

The second transition was promotion of Executive Director of Communications Gayle McIntosh, who has served as a member of the President's Cabinet since 2003, to the role of vice president for communications and chief of staff, effective March 1, 2017. In this expanded role, McIntosh is responsible for providing leadership to and oversight of the Office of Communications and the Office of the President, and will assist President Crawford in advancing the mission of the college through strategic communications, planning, and execution of key initiatives.

An upcoming transition was announced in February 2017. At the end of the current academic year, Mike Segawa will conclude his service as vice president for student affairs and dean of students. Vice President for Academic Affairs and Dean of the University Kris Bartanen will take on additional responsibility as interim vice president for student affairs and dean of students, effective June 2, 2017. This opportunity will provide continuity of leadership across academic and student affairs, which will be strengthened by Dean Bartanen's previous experience as vice president for student affairs and dean of students, from 1999 to 2004. Plans are being formulated to identify additional support needed to effect a smooth transition.

Other transitions in leadership include a new chief information officer and in-progress searches for an associate vice president for admission and a university registrar.

2.A.16

Effective for the class entering Fall 2016, Puget Sound introduced a new admission policy that provides opportunity for undergraduate applicants to respond to two short-essay questions in lieu of submitting standardized test scores. The essay option was piloted in the prior year; impacts of the new option are being monitored by the enrollment division.

Effective Fall 2012, a change was made to Puget Sound's policy regarding continuation in and termination from its educational programs for new students based on grade point average for their first semester. As articulated in the Academic Standing section of the Academic Handbook, "New students entering Puget Sound with freshman, transfer, or nonmatriculated status who earn a grade point average below 2.00 for their first semester at Puget Sound will be placed on academic probation or will receive academic dismissal." If the grade point average for a new student is between 1.00 and 1.99, then the student is placed on academic probation; if the grade point average for a new student is below 1.00, then the student is dismissed for one semester. This change was made upon recommendation from the Retention Task Force (see Section 5.3).

2.A.30

In fall 2013, the university's finance offices were reorganized with the creation of a new associate vice president for financial analysis and planning position and consolidation of investment support and procurement into the Office of Finance under the associate vice president for finance.

In December 2013, Puget Sound moved from internal management, with consultant assistance, of endowment funds to an outsourced chief investment officer model. This model is reflected in the Investment Policy Statement for Pooled Endowment Investments, available as an exhibit in the required Standard Two documentation.

In May 2015, the Designation of Unrestricted Funds Policy was updated to add \$1.25 million of annual educational and general operating surplus to unrestricted quasi-endowment.

Standard 2B Human Resources

2.B.2

Refinements to the staff performance appraisal and review process were implemented in 2015 with the goal of achieving more uniform, timely, and productive reviews. Staff performance appraisal forms were revised to focus on reviewing performance goals from the current year and articulating performance goals for the upcoming year. These changes were communicated through meetings with supervisors across campus and professional development workshops.

2.B.6

See changes to the faculty code described above.

Standard 2C Education Resources

2.C.1 and 2.C.10

As described in Section 4.1, a process is currently underway to review the faculty's educational goals as articulated in the Curriculum Statement.

Since spring 2013, the university has:

- implemented the new Seminars in Scholarly Inquiry, effective for students matriculating fall 2013 (see Section 4.3);
- introduced the new Knowledge, Identity, and Power graduation requirement, effective for students matriculating fall 2015 (see Section 4.5);
- introduced, in 2013–14, a new program in Latina/o studies, offering a minor (see Section 4.5);
- introduced, in 2014–15, a new interdisciplinary program in bioethics, offering an interdisciplinary emphasis;
- introduced a new major in African American studies, effective 2016–17, to complement the existing minor (see Section 4.5); and
- introduced a new major in environmental policy and decision making, effective 2016–17, to complement the existing minor.

2.C.2

Our response to Recommendation One from the spring 2013 Year Three evaluation regarding expected learning outcomes for programs and courses is in Appendix B.

2.C.5

See the change to the faculty bylaws regarding length of curriculum review cycles, described above.

2.C.12

Effective 2015–16, the School of Occupational Therapy introduced a post-professional Doctor of Occupational Therapy (DrOT) degree to replace the existing post-professional Master of Science in Occupational Therapy (PP-MSOT) degree; the new DrOT degree fulfills the same position and purpose within the university's mission as the previously offered PP-MSOT degree. Replacing the PP-MSOT degree with a DrOT degree was a response to the fact that the entry-level degree in occupational therapy is now a master's degree, so practicing professionals seeking additional education are now most frequently looking for a doctoral program.

Standard 2D Student Support Services

2.D.1

Effective 2013–14, Disability Services became an independent office (having previously been part of the Center for Writing, Learning, and Teaching) and was renamed the Office of Student Accessibility and Accommodations. To meet increased need, staff FTE for the office has been increased and additional space has been renovated as an accommodations test center.

In student affairs, additional part-time counseling positions have been added to Counseling, Health, and Wellness Services staffing to help meet increasing demand. Intercultural services, civic engagement, and spirituality services were reorganized under the new Center for Intercultural and Civic Engagement, encompassing the Offices of Intercultural Engagement, Civic Engagement and Social Justice, and Spirituality and Religious Life. Facilities for the Student Diversity and Social Justice centers were renovated.

2.D.2

Additional full-time staff positions have been added in Security Services to improve campus safety and to eliminate higher-risk responsibilities for student employees.

Standard 2E Library and Information Resources

2.E.1

In August 2015, Collins Memorial Library completed a move to a new integrated library system (ILS) shared by members of the Orbis Cascade Alliance.

Standard 2F Financial Resources

See Standard 2A for details on changes relating to financial resources policies.

Standard 2G Physical and Technological Infrastructure

2.G.1

Since 2013, three major construction projects have been completed:

- Thomas Hall (2013), a 135-bed residential hall, which is designed to encourage a 24/7 living and learning experience by housing together students with similar interests and by providing event spaces;
- Wheelock Student Center renovation and expansion (2015), a remodel and extension of the kitchen, servery, and seating; and
- Athletics and Aquatics Center (2016), a new and renovated athletics facility.

2.G.6

Implementation of a new enterprise information system began in fall 2011, with PeopleSoft replacing the locally developed Cascade system. PeopleSoft became the “system of record” in stages with finance first in July 2012, human resources next in January 2013, and student information last in March 2013. Final stages of implementation will be completed in June 2017, with the last remaining functionality in Cascade moved to other systems. Network infrastructure has been upgraded, including replacement of the core switch and distribution switches in the past year and a series of ongoing upgrades to the wireless network to meet continuously growing demand.

Chapter 7 Discussion of Lessons Learned and Best Practices

We are honored to have been afforded the opportunity to participate in the Demonstration Project of the Northwest Commission on Colleges and Universities. It provided us with freedom to learn new lessons, to deepen our thinking about mission fulfillment, and, hopefully, to provide guidance to the commission and our colleagues about the challenges and rewards of approaching our self-study in this way.

A focus on general education as central to the mission of the majority of NWCCU members was wise. We took advantage of the opportunity to step back and think about the documents, both living and dusty, that guide the delivery of our general education as it pertains to our mission. The overarching guiding document for our general education sets forth our educational goals, which flow from our mission. The Demonstration Project gave us the impetus and opportunity to closely examine the faculty's educational goals; in the process of looking at how to use the goals as the basis for student learning outcomes, we realized that they were ripe (or perhaps overripe) for review.

As we continue to work on that process, we appreciate the struggle to find ways to do direct summative assessment. While grades can provide summative assessment of individual student progress, there is no corollary for institutional progress that works well for small liberal arts institutions. Tests such as the Collegiate Assessment of Academic Proficiency may be worth exploring, as are the AAC&U VALUE rubrics, as described in the recent AAC&U report *On Solid Ground*. The period of time in which we worked on the Demonstration Project was not sufficient to define the measures, measure, make changes, and then measure again to "close the loop." We suspect this will continue to be a challenge for institutions with missions that are about developing the whole person through a broad set of habits of mind.

We will continue to struggle with summative assessment, and be able to do so collaboratively as a result of the good will we established with our faculty in revisiting our educational goals. The faculty discussion group protocol used to examine educational goals was of value in getting faculty members engaged in the work of the project. We recommend this approach to other institutions looking to promote campus discussions of mission, educational goals, and essential learning dimensions.

In working with our faculty, we learned that ensuring a common understanding of the institution mission and learning outcomes is critical. Central to this is an awareness of institutional culture and language that will allow for productive communication. Aligned with cultural awareness is attention to the language at the institution. If "assessment" is off-putting, and "improvement" is valued, use the language that resonates. This common understanding allows work at the institution to be framed by a shared goal or goals. We would recommend that our colleagues make this an explicit point of emphasis by putting focus on student learning. At the same time, it is essential that institutions provide outlets for feedback and listen carefully, taking that feedback seriously. We used discussion groups to move in this direction; good practice would implement a regular opportunity for members of the community to share their thinking about mission, educational goals, and essential learning outcomes, and their contributions to the mission. It is the shared commitment to the mission, well understood, that leads to the ability to not only fulfill the mission, but to demonstrate mission fulfillment.

Through our work with the demonstration project, we have come to a realization that a mission fulfillment framework can focus largely on outcomes as a way of addressing the question "To what degree are we fulfilling our mission?" With this in mind, we have merged and simplified the frameworks for mission fulfillment. At the same time, we are maintaining separate attention to the Puget Sound environment and student experiences within it as this is essential to addressing the question "How do we get better at fulfilling our mission?" This understanding led us to devote a significant portion of our

report to ways in which we are using data to discover and attend to continuous improvement in fulfilling our mission.

In addition, we have come to see the environment as a “necessary condition” for mission fulfillment—in other words, while student retention and graduation do not demonstrate mission fulfillment, students must persist in order for us to fulfill our mission; we recommend that the commission consider allowing institutions to discuss or describe the necessary conditions for mission fulfillment at their institutions.

The concept of necessary conditions for mission fulfillment dovetails nicely with the direction piloted in the demonstration project to restructure the handling of Standard Two. We recommend that the commission move forward with the Resources and Capacity chapter focusing only on substantive changes with pointers to policies, and that institutions provide a separate table with links and/or descriptions of compliance with each substandard. This would minimize replication of text that exists in other documents at the institution, and allows for more narrative space to attend to mission fulfillment.

There may be alternatives to the mandated “core themes” that work better to demonstrate mission fulfillment. At Puget Sound, the essential learning outcomes, connected to our educational goals and to High-Impact Educational Practices, resonated in a way that the core themes did not. In our case, the core theme layer was a distraction; the time spent in trying to fit them into the model could be better spent in finding more direct ways to demonstrate mission fulfillment (in our case through educational goals). The core theme concept may be a valuable option for some institutions; for Puget Sound, they felt artificial and therefore not meaningful. We recommend that the commission consider providing flexibility in the ways that institutions demonstrate mission fulfillment.

As we developed our mission fulfillment framework, we focused on elements that are natural and meaningful on campus. In so doing, it was clear that we had areas of success and areas for improvement. In order for the evaluation of mission fulfillment to be meaningful to an institution, the institution must feel that it can be open about both strengths and challenges. This requires trust in the accreditation process and a sense of what is acceptable in terms of being authentic. We recommend that the commission consider ways in which institutions might use the self-study as an opportunity to be candid about shortcomings and plans for improvement, as opposed to setting low-bar mission fulfillment thresholds.

We found that the opportunity to work with the other three institutions (Columbia Basin College, University of Montana, and University of Oregon) fostered open and honest exchange of our struggles in the process of demonstrating mission fulfillment. We learned of resources and expertise outside of our own institutions that impacted the quality of our work. We recommend that the commission find ways to foster this type of collaboration among interested institutions. Perhaps cohort groups could be organized to meet annually at similar points in the cycle, or means for mentoring of one institution by another that has just completed a particular point in the cycle could be developed. We emphasize that there is value in learning not only from institutions of the same sector, but also across sectors.

Finally, we wonder if an accreditation report could be a relatively brief narrative that serves as a guide to existing documents that tell the story of continuous improvement and mission fulfillment. The guide would be a combination of executive overview and any updates to those existing documents (with particular attention to responses to any recommendations made in those documents). This would only be possible if the institution has a rich collection of documents in place (e.g., internal reports such as our writing study and 2014 NSSE report) that describe analysis and use of evidence used, at some level, to evaluate mission and drive continuous improvement.

We reiterate that our participation in the Demonstration Project was fruitful in providing us an opportunity to think more purposefully about mission fulfillment in a more flexible way, to exchange

ideas and roadblocks with colleagues from a variety of institutions, and to guide the commission in considering alternative approaches to demonstrating mission fulfillment.

Appendices

Appendix A Glossary

Approaches to Knowing: five areas in which undergraduates must take a course as part of the core curriculum: Artistic, Humanistic, Social Scientific, Mathematical, and Natural Scientific

ASUPS: Associated Students of University of Puget Sound, our student governing body

BCSSE: Beginning of College Survey of Student Engagement

BHERT: Bias-Hate Education Response Team

BTF: Budget Task Force, an advisory group to the President; the BTF considers expense and revenue recommendations

Cabinet: the President's Senior Staff

CHWS: Counseling, Health and Wellness Services

CICE: Center for Intercultural and Civic Engagement

CIRP: Cooperative Institutional Research Program housed at UCLA's Higher Education Research Institute

Connections: part of the core curriculum; upper level interdisciplinary course; students are required to take one Connections course after they have completed the five approaches to knowing

CORE: See Core curriculum

Core curriculum: a graduation requirement that includes two first-year seminars (Seminars in Scholarly Inquiry), the five Approaches to Knowing, and the capstone Connections

CSSC: Committee to Support the Shared Curriculum

Curriculum Statement: document that provides guidance for offerings of the shared curriculum

CWLT: Center for Writing, Learning and Teaching

DAC: Diversity Advisory Council, comprised of faculty, staff, students, and alumni who advise the chief diversity officer

Defining Moments: 2006 Strategic Plan

DSA: Division of Student Affairs

DSP: Diversity Strategic Plan

ELWG: Experiential Learning Work Group

EWG: Enrollment Work Group, meeting in 2013-2014, the EWG was comprised of trustees and staff to guide enrollment practices.

HEDS: Higher Education Data Sharing Consortium of about 150 colleges who exchange data for planning purposes

HERI: Higher Education Research Institute, housed at UCLA

HIP: High-Impact Educational Practices (see George Kuh, 2008)

IEC: International Education Committee

KNOW: Knowledge, Power and Identity graduation requirement (overlay)

Minoritized: individuals whose racial and ethnic identity has been minoritized by virtue of their nondominance (i.e. African American or Black, Asian, Hispanic or Latino/a, Alaskan Native or American Indian, Native Hawaiian and/or Other Pacific Islander)

NSSE: National Survey of Student Engagement

ResSem: residential seminar where students with similar academic interests and at least one shared class live in the same residence

RPI: Race and Pedagogy Institute (previously Initiative)

RPS: Research Practices Survey

SAC: Summer Academic Challenge, a partnership with Tacoma Public Schools to promote academic excellence for middle and high school students who are traditionally underrepresented in higher education

SAG: Student Alert Group, comprised of student support staff from across campus; SAG meets regularly to discuss the best ways to support students who are experiencing difficulty

SAWG: Sexual Assault Work Group, now SGVC, Sexual and Gender Violence Committee; may also refer to the Study Abroad Work Group

SCIS: Seminar in Scholarly and Creative Inquiry, the first-year seminar requirement for second semester undergraduates through the 2012-2013 academic year

SGVC: Sexual and Gender Violence Committee

Shared Curriculum: courses that students take to fulfill graduation requirements other than those related to their major, minor or emphasis; includes the core curriculum, foreign language requirement, upper-division requirement, and KNOW

S.L.O.: Student Learning Outcomes Team

SSI: Seminars in Scholarly Inquiry, first-year seminar courses required of all students as part of the core curriculum; students take two levels, one in their first semester (SSI1) and one in their second semester (SSI2)

TFS: The Freshman Survey, conducted by UCLA's Higher Education Research Institute's (HERI) Cooperative Institutional Research Program (CIRP)

TPS: Tacoma Public Schools

Upper Division: three courses students take to fulfill a graduation requirement; these course must be upper level course outside of the student's major.

WAC: Writing Across the Curriculum

WR: Writing and Rhetoric, the first year seminar requirement for first semester undergraduates through the 2012-2013 academic year

Appendix B Response to Recommendation from Spring 2013 Year Three Evaluation

As part of our Spring 2013 Year Three evaluation, the commission requested that we address Recommendation #1 from the peer-evaluation report. That recommendation reads

The Evaluation Committee recommends that the University of Puget Sound take action to ensure that intended student learning outcomes are listed in all syllabi and in all program descriptions.

The recommendation was made in reference to Standard 2.C.2 which reads

The institution identifies and publishes expected course, program, and degree learning outcomes. Expected student learning outcomes for courses, wherever offered and however delivered, are provided in written form to enrolled students.

The relevant section from the full peer-evaluation report reads

The University publishes expected program and degree learning outcomes, and in some cases, individual course outcomes. However, a review of over 25% of the course syllabi provided to the review team reveals that student learning outcomes are not consistently printed in syllabi. In almost every case, there are detailed course descriptions and assignment schedules, but not always identified student learning outcomes. Perhaps it should be an institutional practice to have a required section in all syllabi that begins: Upon the completion of this course, students will be able to . . .

A review of program websites showed the same inconsistent pattern of publishing intended student outcomes. In many cases, the desired student learning outcomes can be deduced by reading the course description, but they are not clearly or intentionally listed. Examples of department/program assessment found on the Web date back to 2006-07.

With limited exceptions, departments and program now have clearly identified expected learning outcomes published in the printed *Bulletin* and on the university web site. We note and comment on these exceptions:

- The Geology Department has articulated expected learning outcomes but these are currently distributed across several paragraphs in the department's section of the *Bulletin*. These learning outcomes could be made more evident by gathering them together in one place. We will work with the department in revising the *Bulletin* for the 2017-18 edition.
- The German Studies Department is currently undergoing a curriculum review in which attention is being given to articulating learning outcomes at both program and course levels. These will be reflected in the 2017-18 *Bulletin* and on course syllabi going forward.
- The Neuroscience Program has expected student learning outcomes embedded in the *Bulletin* description of the program. These should be made more evident. The program has proposed a change from "interdisciplinary emphasis" to minor and will give attention to articulating expected learning outcomes in conjunction with developing new *Bulletin* copy reflecting this change.

To ensure expected learning outcomes are listed in all syllabi, the Dean provided attention in the August 2013, February 2014, and August 2014 Chairs, Directors and Deans meetings to this topic and the Curriculum Committee has revised policies and practices. Course proposal forms were revised to include an explicit list of required items for the syllabus of any newly proposed course; the first item on this list is "clear enumeration of student learning outcomes". In summer 2015, a group of faculty members who were serving or had recently served on the Curriculum Committee gathered to produce a set of guidelines for the committee's regular review processes. These guidelines include need for attentiveness to articulation of expected student learning outcomes in course syllabi. Inclusion of explicit reference to expected student learning outcomes on course proposal forms and in guidelines for Curriculum

Committee review processes has resulted in inclusion of learning outcomes on new course syllabi and those of departments reviewed recently.

Having now seen the initial impacts of these new policies and processes over the past two years, it is clear that we would benefit from better developing shared language and understanding. On course syllabi, faculty members use a range of language that includes “outcomes”, “objectives”, and “goals”. Within this varying language, some faculty members are describing means or processes more than ends or results. Our approach to developing shared language and understanding will be careful and deliberate. As is not uncommon elsewhere, some faculty members resent any perceived intrusion on their syllabi. To avoid compliance without meaning, we need to engage faculty in a thoughtful discussion that leads to an understanding of the value of articulating expected learning outcomes. One step in that process was the November 11, 2015 Wednesday at 4 session on “The Perfect Syllabus” which included discussion of “backward design” approach to developing instruction and curriculum that has been described by Wiggins and McTighe.¹⁵ Using ideas from the “backward design”, we will develop and use questions to help faculty think about expected learning outcomes such as “What are the essential things I want my students to carry away from this course and keep with them for the long run?” While taking this approach will require more effort and be slower than a direct mandate, it will ultimately result in more meaningful results. Given that departments, schools and programs – as noted above – have articulated written student learning outcomes for their students that are evaluated through an annual cycle of assessment reports that culminate in a now seven-year review by the Curriculum Committee, we are confident that students are being well-served by their Puget Sound coursework.

¹⁵ Wiggins, Grant P., and Jay. McTighe. *Understanding by Design*. Alexandria, Va.: Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development, 1998

Appendix C Undergraduate Degrees Offered

Bachelor of Arts with a Major in

African American Studies
 Art History
 Business
 Chemistry
 Chinese
 Classics
 Communication Studies
 Economics
 English
 Environmental Policy and Decision Making
 French
 French International Affairs
 German
 German International Studies
 Hispanic International Studies
 History
 International Political Economy
 Japanese
 Music
 Philosophy
 Politics and Government
 Psychology
 Religious Studies
 Science, Technology, and Society
 Sociology and Anthropology
 Spanish
 Special Interdisciplinary Major
 Studio Art
 Theatre Arts

Bachelor of Science with a Major in

Biology
 Biochemistry
 Chemistry
 Computer Science
 Computer Science/Business
 Economics
 Exercise Science
 Geology
 Mathematics
 Molecular and Cellular Biology
 Natural Science
 Physics
 Special Interdisciplinary Major

Bachelor of Music with a Major in

Elective Studies in Business
 Music Education
 Performance

Minors Offered

African American Studies
 Art
 Biology
 Business
 Chemistry
 Chinese
 Classics
 Communication Studies
 Computer Science
 Economics
 Education Studies
 English
 Environmental Policy and Decision Making
 Exercise Science
 French
 German
 Gender and Queer Studies
 Geology
 Global Development Studies
 History
 Humanities
 Japanese
 Latin American Studies
 Latina/o Studies
 Mathematics
 Music
 Philosophy
 Physics
 Politics and Government
 Religious Studies
 Science, Technology, and Society
 Sociology and Anthropology
 Spanish
 Theatre Arts

Interdisciplinary Emphasis in

Asian Studies
 Bioethics
 Neuroscience

Appendix D Guidelines for Annual Assessment Report

The Assessment Report, due by June 30 each year, is an opportunity to describe how your department or program evaluates actual student learning outcomes in relation to expected outcomes, and incorporates your assessments into curriculum planning.

In your annual report please provide the following information:

- I. List all of your department or program student learning outcomes, expressed as statements that clearly articulate what students should be able to do, achieve, demonstrate, or know upon graduation.
- II. List the one or two expected student learning outcomes that you selected for analysis for the current academic year. (These were listed at the end of last year's report; should you need a copy of that report please contact the associate deans' office.)
 - a. Please list the most significant elements of your program and curriculum that contribute to development of student achievement of the expected learning outcome(s).
 - b. Please list the most significant measures (or information and processes) your program uses to understand the degree to which students achieve the expected student learning outcome(s).
 - c. What has your program learned about student achievement with respect to the expected outcome(s) this year?
 - d. Based on what you currently understand about the degree to which students achieve the selected outcome(s), please identify actions you have taken or plan to take. These might include:
 - Changes to an expected learning outcome(s)
 - Changes in program or curricular elements related to the learning outcome(s)
 - Changes to the ways you measure or collect information about achieving the outcome(s)
- III. List the one or two expected learning outcomes will you analyze in the coming academic year.
 - a. What measurements or ways of collecting information do you intend to use for these upcoming outcome(s)?
 - b. What information do you need in order to conduct a helpful analysis?

Please note that effective, meaningful assessment of learning outcomes does not need to be burdensome. Whatever the process, establishing meaningful processes to discuss and act on data is key to the usefulness of outcomes assessment.

Appendix E Statistical Analysis for Mission Fulfillment Framework

In Section 5.2, we reported the proportion of students that responded at the top two levels (generally labeled “Quite a Bit” or “Very Much”) of a four- or five-point Likert scale for specific HEDS and NSSE items. For a statistical comparison with responses for peer institutions, t-tests were done using the mean values for the Likert response scale at Puget Sound and the peer institutions (as a single group). Examples of details are provided in Table 15, Table 16, and Table 17. Peer institution groups are given in Table 18; each consists of those institutions from Puget Sound’s full peer comparison group who also administered the relevant instrument. Full details are available upon request.

Group	Mean	SD	SEM	N	t	df	SED	95% CI	P (2-tailed)
Puget Sound	4.25	0.78	0.06	174	0.4557	3293	0.0620	-0.15 to 0.09	0.6486
HEDS Peers	4.28	0.80	0.01	3121					

Table 15. From Component 1: HEDS Item 11: Overall, how satisfied have you been with your undergraduate education at this institution? (1=very dissatisfied; 5=very satisfied). Data analysis by Puget Sound.

Item	Group	Mean	SD	SEM	N	t	df	SED	95% CI	P (2-tailed)
6f. Effective writing	Puget Sound	3.47	0.69	0.05	172	1.0868	3298	0.0560	-.05 to .17	0.2772
	HEDS Peers	3.41	0.72	0.01	3128					
6g. Effective speaking	Puget Sound	2.92	0.83	0.06	173	3.7160	3303	0.0640	-.36 to -.11	0.0002
	HEDS Peers	3.16	0.82	0.01	3132					
6b. Critical thinking	Puget Sound	3.63	0.58	0.04	172	1.6878	3304	0.0500	-.01 to .18	0.0915
	HEDS Peers	3.54	0.65	0.01	3134					
6k. Intercultural knowledge	Puget Sound	2.90	0.99	0.07	173	1.3385	3295	0.0690	-.23 to .04	0.1808
	HEDS Peers	2.99	0.88	0.02	3124					

Table 16. From Component 2: HEDS Item 6: To what extent has your experience at this institution contributed to your knowledge, skills, and personal development in...? (1=very little; 4=very much). Data analysis by Puget Sound.

Cohort	Group	Mean	N	Effect size	P
Fall 2010 cohort as spring 2011 first-years	Puget Sound	2.52	151	-0.1600	Not significant
	NSSE Peers	2.68	2241		
Fall 2010 cohort as spring 2014 seniors	Puget Sound	2.50	155	-0.3900	<0.001
	NSSE Peers	2.90	2395		

Table 17. From Component 2: NSSE Item 17h: How much has your experience at this institution contributed to your knowledge, skills, and personal development in understanding people of other backgrounds? (1=very little; 4=very much). Analysis results from NSSE custom reports.

HEDS Peers 2016	NSSE Peers 2014	NSSE Peers 2011
Colgate University	Allegheny College	Beloit College
Franklin and Marshall College	Beloit College	Bucknell University
Gettysburg College	Connecticut College	DePauw University
Hobart and William Smith Colleges	Denison University	Franklin and Marshall College
Holy Names University	Hendrix College	Furman University
McDaniel College	Kenyon College	Gettysburg College
Muhlenberg College	Knox College	Kalamazoo College
Reed College	Lewis & Clark College	Sewanee: The University of the South
Sweet Briar College	Linfield College	St. Lawrence University
Union College (NY)	Pitzer College	St. Olaf College
University of Puget Sound	St. Lawrence University	Wheaton College
Washington & Jefferson College	St. Olaf College	
	Trinity University	
	Whitman College	

Table 18. Puget Sound Comparison Institutions that Administered HEDS and NSSE.

Appendix F List of Attached Documents

Attachment 1 Demonstration Project Memorandum of Understanding

Attachment 2 Curriculum Statement

Attachment 3 Defining Moments Strategic Plan 2006

Attachment 4 Student Conduct Rubric

Attachment 5 Counseling, Health, and Wellness Services Assessment Report

Attachment 6 Core Curriculum Assessment Report 2016

Attachment 7 Guidelines for Working Groups Conducting Core Area Reviews

Attachment 8 Department and Program Curriculum Review Self-Study Guide

Attachment 9 Guidelines for Working Groups Conducting Department Curriculum Reviews

Attachment 10 Biology Department Data Packet

Attachment 11 Biology Department Curriculum Self-Study

Attachment 12 Out of the Blue: Report on Educational Goals Discussion Groups

Attachment 13 Ad Hoc Committee on Educational Goals Report February 2017

Attachment 14 Writing Across the Curriculum December 2013

Attachment 15 Connections Core Assessment 2012

Attachment 16 2014 National Survey of Student Engagement Results Analysis

Attachment 17 Experiential Learning Work Group Report June 2014

Attachment 18 Indicators: Dashboards and Puget Sound Trends

Attachment 19 2011 Five-Year Defining Moments Strategic Plan Update

Attachment 20 Diversity Strategic Plan Annual Report 2016

Attachment 21 Budget Task Force Report for 2017-18 Budget