Office of General Education
End of Year Report
2016-17

THE UNIVERSITY OF UTAH
Undergraduate Studies

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# INTRODUCTION

The Offices of General Education and Learning Outcome Assessment conduct work that touches every single student and faculty member at the University of Utah. Each of our 27,000 students completes General Education and Bachelor Degree Requirement courses that are overseen by the Office of General Education. Each faculty member helps to develop and assess learning outcomes and that work is facilitated by the Office of Learning Outcome Assessment. Students who participate in an integrated pathway through General Education, the BlockU Program, are supported by the Office of General Education. Going forward, the Office of Learning Outcome Assessment will help to implement the Learning Framework as an assessment tool for the whole of the undergraduate experience.

Through the General Education Curriculum Committee, the Undergraduate Council, the Office of Learning Outcome Assessment and the BlockU Program, these offices contribute to two of the University's big goals:

- **To promote student success to transform lives**
- **To ensure long-term viability of the university**
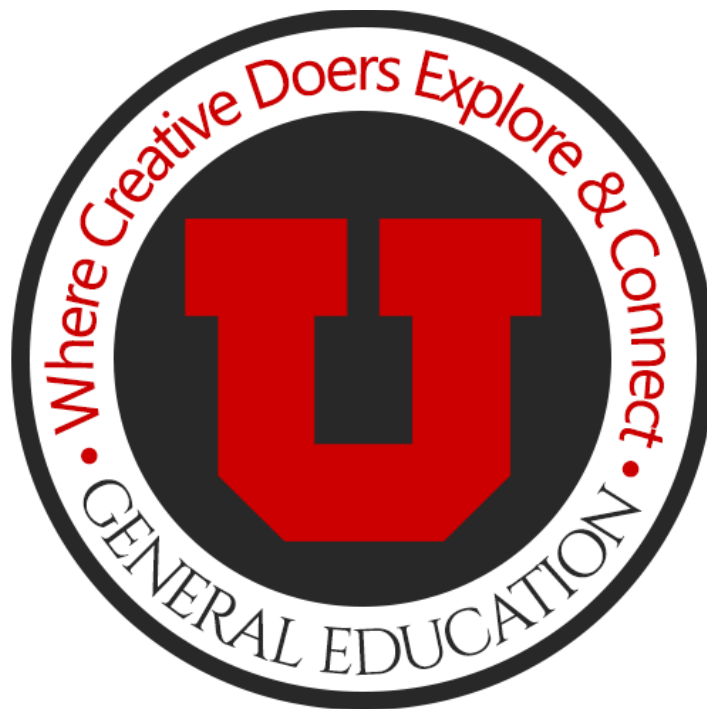
Promote Student Success To Transform Lives

The Office of Undergraduate Studies encapsulates its commitment to student success in the **Utah Pledge**. The Pledge sets forth the expectation that every student will 1) have access to a **learning community**, 2) be **surrounded by the support** of peer mentors, advisors and student success advocates, 3) have access to financial guidance and 4) participate in **deeply engaged learning experiences**.

BlockU students presenting their capstone project on teaching pre-schoolers about health and well-being at this year's BlockU Symposium.

BlockU Program

The BlockU Program contributes to the growing menu of **learning community courses available to students**. Like other learning community opportunities available, students in the BlockU program experience the wrap around support of **peer mentors, advisors, librarians and student success advocates**. Each BlockU program culminates in a real world project that allows students to build a foundation for integrative and applied learning. This deeply engaged learning experience, structured into their first year of college, communicates our full commitment to the Utah Pledge. This year we recruited more students into the program, retained them at a high level, are beginning to be able to provide data related to graduation rates and have begun to develop sustainable community partnerships in our deeply engaged learning experiences.

BlockU Accomplishments for 2016-17:

- **This year 139 students enrolled in a BlockU Program** (up from 115 in 2016) and 104 have been retained in the program, giving us a 75% fall to spring retention rate.
- In our fourth year of existence we can begin to report on graduation rates. From our first year cohort (n=31) at least 2 students graduated in three years and 13 graduated this spring, four years after enrolling as first time students. **We can report a nearly 50% 4 year graduation rate.**
- At this reporting, all of the students currently enrolled in the Arts & Advocacy BlockU **have declared majors in the College of Fine Arts.**
- During 2016-17 we partnered with two new colleges to launch two new BlockU programs. The program located in the College of Social and Behavioral Sciences has been especially successful.
- We have developed **a fully online Global Citizenship BlockU** and with the help of a strong marketing campaign will enroll students in that program in the fall of 2017.
- We are developed **a fully integrated early college BlockU Program** working with Alta High School. Thirty-five high school students are now participating in this program.
- Projects from two of our BlockU programs have developed **sustainable partnerships** with a local senior center and Bryant Middle School.
- **The 2017 BlockU Symposium** included 16 projects completed by 1st year students. Some of the projects featured included 1 food truck, an installation at the Natural History Museum, and a film and performance created in a partnership with Bryant Middle School.

Students participating in the 2017 BlockU Symposium at the Sterling Sill Center, where students have the opportunity to present their capstone projects to BlockU faculty, supporting staff, university advisors, as well as other BlockU students and their parents.

LEARNING COMMUNITY PROGRAM
LEARNING OUTCOME ASSESSMENT: BLOCKU

The Learning Community Portfolio team identified the following three program learning outcomes for learning community courses:

1. Students will build connections among ideas and concepts across a range of courses.
2. Students will build connections among their academic, personal and professional lives.
3. Students will develop connections with communities on and off campus.

METHODS OF ASSESSMENT

Students who completed both semesters of the BlockU program were sent a survey developed through CampusLabs. This year was our first year to run this survey and we learned a lot, primarily about how to improve our technique. The survey was mailed to students the week of finals but no follow up processes were built into our proceduares; therefore, the survey went out only once without any reminders. Only 10 out of 104 students responded making our numerical data almost meaningless; qualitative comments are much more enlightening.

RESULTS

1. Eight out of ten students either agreed or strongly agreed that the BlockU Program helped them develop connections among ideas and concepts across a range of courses.

   "Attachment theory was covered in my Communication course, BlockU, and Psychology."

   "In BlockU we talked a lot about the human cost of our impacts on the environment and in ENVST we talked a lot about what those impacts are and how they work scientifically, and how these impacts aren't limited to a single country or region, especially in the case of global warming."

   "Talking about epigenetics in one of my psychology classes, having already talked about it in the BlockU Medical Humanities class made it easier to understand."

2. Eight out of ten student either agreed or strongly agreed that the BlockU Program helped them develop connections among their academic, personal and professional lives.

   "I understood that I do need to give back to the community because it helps the community to thrive. That is why I chose an internship with the Salt Lake City Mayors Office."

   "Learning about how our most important systems (environmental, trade) extend far beyond our borders changed my view on what being a citizen means."

   "I'm working with someone in the pediatrics clinic at Primary Children's Hospital to hopefully get involved in research regarding doctors' and medical staffs opinons of child mistreatment when parents refuse to give life-saving cancer treatments."

3. Eight out of ten student either agreed or strongly agreed that the BlockU Program helped them develop connections with communities on and off campus.

   "I have a connection with the theater teacher at Bryant Middle School now that I've completed my BlockU course. I also made friends in my class since we've known each other all year."

"It made me reach out to other programs like the Know your Neighbor Program, to see how they are helping Refugees."

"This last semester I was able to work with Tim Cannon from the Utah Natural History Museum as we were creating an exhibit in the University of Utah Marriott Library."

Changes to Make

1. The survey must be sent out with a system of reminders in place so that we can improve our return rate.
2. From these few qualitative comments, it appears that students may no be making distinctions between more personal connections and those across communities. We may want to be more explicit about how we see these distinctions.

BlockU is still a new and evolving program and each year we strive to improve it. Using feedback from students and BlockU faculty we have identified the following goals for 2017-18:

- Use funds recovered from two teachers per learning community model to provide modest instructional support for teachers and small grants for students working on BlockU projects. Currently BlockU students apply to the Capstone Initiative for these funds because we didn't have any available. Because these are first year students this is not the best use of Capstone Initiative funds.
- Use funds to hire a BlockU faculty liason. This year Christine Jones developed a faculty blog that created a space for faculty to post and learn from each other on issues related to teaching first year students, working within an integrated curriculum and teaching toward meaningful applied projects.
- Develop a partnership with the Office for Equity and Diversity to develop a BlockU program connected with the Diversity Scholars.
- We have been working with the Registrars Office to develop a data base that would allow us to track BlockU students course taking patterns, major declaration and graduation. Currently we are able to track graduation rates, as reported above. This tool will allow us to track the degree to which BlockU students continue to take 15 credit hours per semester, when they declare a major and whether or not they complete the degree in a timely fashion. We had hoped to have this project completed by this time and hope to have it available later in the semester.

Student Success Advocates Bianca Bellot and Waizer Jefferson worked with BlockU students.

Ensure Long-Term Viability Of The University

One of the ways in which the University can ensure its long-term viability is to attend to the quality of the learning experiences and learning outcomes in which students are engaged. The Office of Undergraduate Studies, in partnership with colleges and departments, ensures that students will be immersed in high quality learning experiences that will allow them to graduate with a **broad and deep base of knowledge**. The Offices of General Education and Learning Outcome Assessment are concerned primarily with this commitment. We activate this concern by making sure that students have access to high quality general education (GE) and bachelor degree requirement (BA) courses. We validate this commitment through rigorous learning outcome assessment.

General Education Curriculum Committee

Data from OBIA asserts that increasing the number of GE and BA courses attempted in the first year of college can positively affect student success metrics by as much as 20%, after controlling for several other variables known to affect student success. Clearly, these courses and the experiences that students have in them are vital to our mission. The General Education Curriculum Committee (GECC) and the Undergraduate Council make decisions that affect the degree to which students have access to high quality learning experiences in GE and BA courses. These two bodies oversee the quality of the curriculum and the programs through which students earn their degrees.

Over the last four years the GECC has strengthened its commitment to making sure that courses that carry General Education or Bachelor Degree Requirement designations are of the highest quality and taught by faculty who are committed to student success. These commitments are activated in the criteria used to review courses and in our discussions of those reviews. These review conversations have helped us instill in faculty the need to make instruction in courses engaging, relevant and integrated. Where we see evidence that faculty are struggling to meet these expectations, we recommend consultation with the Center for Teaching & Learning Excellence.

For the 2016-17 year, the **GECC reviewed 27 new designation applications**. Seventeen of those applications were advanced to the Undergraduate Council for review and vote. Ten applications were returned to the faculty member for revisions.

This year we suspended 5-year renewal reviews in order to begin a conversation about how to move from a catalogue of nearly 1000 courses to one that is more manageable. Toward that end **we developed two data based tools for each college**.

We developed tables that describes how many students actually used each course to meet a GE or BA requirement in the graduating classes of 2013 and 2015. On our behalf, OBIA developed a dashboard that allows colleges and departments to explore if and how particular GE or BA courses are functioning to help convert majors.

We felt this dashboard was especially important given the new budget paradigm's incentive to identify and grow majors quickly. Using these tools, we have met with each college's associate dean and often their curriculum committees to talk about and collaboratively identify a GE footprint that is appropriate for theirstudents, mission and resources. By the end of this academic year we expect to have 50% fewer GE and BA courses on our list. *This smaller list of courses will allow us to engage more deeply with colleges and departments to enhance quality assurance in our GE and BA courses.*

To date, we have received memos from three colleges and one department with their lists of courses that they are willing to remove Gen Ed designations from. We expect the rest of them by the end of the summer.

In the area of professional development to support GE/BA faculty we share the following accomplishments:

- **Two faculty members received General Education Teaching Awards.** These awards were recognized at an event co-sponsored with the Center for Teaching & Learning Excellence.

Excellence in General Education

Kelly MacArthur, Department of Mathematics, was selected among 8 nominations to receive the 2017 Excellence in General Education Teaching Award. This award recognizes a sustained record of successful commitment to General Education teaching. Kelly joined the Department of Mathematics in 2003 and has devoted her career to teaching lower division Math courses that meet the QA requirement. The GECC was most impressed by the range of courses and the years of dedicated service to high quality math instruction in General Education. Her impact is truly immense as captured by one of the nomination letters: "Thousands of students have benefited directly from her excellence in the classroom. Many thousands more have benefited indirectly through her work on the video lectures and through her role as course coordinator."

Innovation in General Education

Adrienne Cachelin, Sustainability Studies, was selected among 5 nominations to receive the 2017 Innovation in General Education Teaching Award. This award recognizes successful innovation in curriculum or pedagogy in General Education teaching. In the nomination materials, Adrienne was described as a passionate advocate for interdisciplinary and community-engaged teaching and research. The GECC was most impressed by the degree to which Adrienne has fully integrated experiential and community engaged learning throughout the range of General Education courses that she teaches. Her impact is truly unique as captured by one of the letter writers: "By explicitly connecting lessons in the classroom to students' own experiences and the issues affecting their communities, she empowers them to create positive change in their own lives and the lives of their families, friends, and neighbors."

- **Two additional co-sponsored CTLE Workshops** took place this year: integrated learning, program learning outcome assessment..
- With CTLE the Office of General Education co-sponsored a very successful **teaching symposium** which was attended by 100 faculty members and helped to launch the Faculty Ambassadors for Student Success program.

The Office of General Education has identified the following goal for 2017-18:

- Reconfigure the program learning outcomes for GE and BA courses.
- Identify integrated GE + BA pathways

Undergraduate Council

The Undergraduate Council makes the first level of decisions pertaining to all new or discontinued majors, minors, certificates, emphases, centers/institutes/schools, and changes to names of programs/departments.

This year the Council approved one new certificate, 2 new majors, 5 new emphasis areas, 1 new center, 14 new courses to carry GE/BA designations, and completed the Gender Studies Division program review.

Last year the Undergraduate Council voted to fund the Department of Communication, submitted by Danielle Endres, to sponsor a McMurrin Professorship; consequently, Dr. Phillip Deloria will be on campus as the McMurrin Professor in

Danielle Endres speaking at a CTLE workshop on Diversity Requirement Faculty Fellows.

the fall of 2017. The Council also recommended that Professors Liang, Educational Psychology, and Anne Jamison, English, as a team to receive appointments as 2016-18 University Professors. Following their recommendations, both professors have been teaching their courses this spring and have supported a slate of guest speakers from March 7 - April 18.

The Undergraduate Council will deliberate about revising the nomination and selection materials for the McMurrin Professorship in the 2017-18 academic year.

Learning Outcome Assessment

In July of 2015, the Office of Learning Outcome Assessment began working with colleges and departments to develop and assess program level learning outcomes. By conducting studies of our sister institutions in the PAC12 and other similar institutions, a website was developed containing instructional and support materials pertaining to program learning outcomes. With the help of CTLE, this task was completed by early fall of 2016 and can be viewed at this link: http://ugs.utah.edu/learning-outcomes-assessment/index.php.

In addition to instructional support and samples of national best practices, the website serves as a clearinghouse for assessment plans and assessment reports on our campus. The website now **contains 11 assessment plans and 2 completed assessment reports**. **We anticipate receiving 5 more assessment reports** by the end of this academic year.

These plans and reports represent intensive work with one college and the Office of Learning Outcome Assessment.

After two years of meetings and consultations, **the entire College of Social and Behavioral Sciences is now fully engaged in an assessment cycle**. Each department has an assessment plan and several departments have or are continuing to collect assessment data. Similarly, each team in the Office of Undergraduate Studies has an assessment plan, available online, and each are working on assessment reports.

This year we also **met with each of the 12 departments or programs preparing for their 7-year graduate review**. Our purpose in these meetings was to provide support for the newly written section 5 of the Redbook. This section, entitled Program Effectiveness, now clearly outlines an assessment cycle that begins with the identification of program learning outcomes and culminates with curricular changes recommended from a completed assessment report.

Policy Change

After two years of deliberation, and based on recommendations from the NWCCU, policy language about program learning outcome assessment was proposed to and approved by the Academic Senate in the spring of 2017. Language was added to existing Policy 6-001 and dictates that formal program learning outcome assessment will be folded into the 7-year Graduate Review cycle and that interim program learning outcome assessment reports will be submitted to the Office of Learning Outcome Assessment at years 3 & 5 within the 7-year cycle.

POLICY CHANGE CONT.

Colleagues involved in this two year effort included the following: Margaret Clayton, Nursing; Robert Nathan Mayer, Family and Consumer Studies; Paul Jewell, Geology & Geophysics; Rachel Hayes-Harb, Linguistics and Office of Undergraduate Studies. Mark St. Andre, Office of Undergraduate Studies was included as an assessment expert and Senate Policy Liaison and Professor of Law Bob Flores was assigned by the Senate Leadership as ex officio to provide the committee technical assistance in the task of drafting the proposed policy changes. The ad hoc committee was co-chaired by William Nesse, Department of Mathematics and Ann Darling, Office of Undergraduate Studies.

The Office of Learning Outcome Assessment is now in the process of coordinating policy implementation with the Graduate School.

We are commited to **providing technological solution** to the problem of securely collecting, organizing and storing student artifacts of student work for the campus' learning outcome assessment activities. Working with TLT and the Office of Curriculum
Management we are about to deliver a tool that will allow faculty to attach assignments stored in Canvas to learning outcomes stored in Kuali Curriculum Management. There, assessment teams at the college and university level will be able to search for outcomes and assignments when conducting assessments.

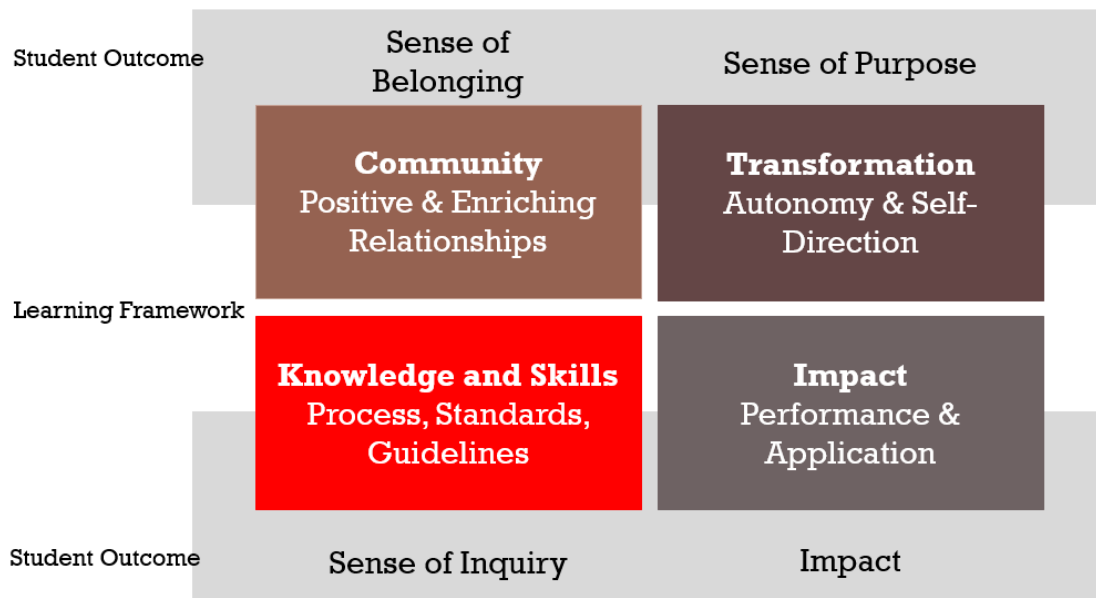### COMMITMENT TO PROVIDING INSTRUCTIONAL SUPPORT

Beyond meeting with individuals in colleges and departments we are also offering program learning outcome workshops. Our second workshop took place on April 7, 2017 and representatives from departments preparing for their graduate review in the 2017-18 academic year were invited to attend.

The Office of Learning Outcome Assessment has identified the following goals for 2017-18:

- Work with the Colleges of Humanities and Fine Arts to get their program learning outcome assessment plans developed and assessment processes underway.
- Work with the Department of Mathematics to develop learning outcome assessment for courses meeting the QA/QB requirements.
- Work with the Department of Writing and Rhetoric Studies to develop learning outcome assessment for WRTG 1010 and 2010.
- Work with the three departments associated with the American Institutions requirement to develop learning outcome assessment plans and processes.

LEARNING FRAMEWORK

In response to the last NWCCU, Senior Vice President Ruth Watkins appointed a committee and charged them to identify university wide learning outcomes. Chaired by Jim Agutter, Associate Professor of Architecture + Planning, this committee identified a learning framework that could be used to support and celebrate the diverse learning outcomes that characterize degree completion at the University of Utah. **That framework includes the following four elements: community, transformation, knowledge and skills, impact.**

Student Outcome	Sense of Belonging	Sense of Purpose
Learning Framework	**Community** Positive & Enriching Relationships	**Transformation** Autonomy & Self-Direction
	Knowledge and Skills Process, Standards, Guidelines	**Impact** Performance & Application
Student Outcome	Sense of Inquiry	Impact

Through the four elements, the Learning Framework aims to help students develop a sense of belonging, sense of purpose, sense of inquiry, and to be able to make an impact.

This year our task has been to develop an implementation plan for the learning framework. This implementation effort has two parts. First, **assessment reports in the Office of Undergraduate Studies are being organized according to the learning framework**. This organizational structure will allow this office to provide information about the ways in which students are encountering opportunities to develop learning within communities, that is transformational, that result in aaquisition of knowledge and skills, and to have an impact with their deeply engaged learning experiences. We hope this organizational structure might provide a heuristic for working with colleges and departments across the campus.

Second, we also want **students to identify and assess their own learning** in relation to the Learning Framework. With Jim Agutter's partnership, the Office of Learning Outcome Assessment is piloting an integration of the Learning Framework into the Sophomore Rise initiative. Students enrolled in the Sophomore Rise course and who receive sophomore milestone advising will be introduced to the learning framework and invited to see and record their learning experiences in a learning portfolio using this framework.