Report of High Impact Programs at the University of Utah

Introduction: Clearing the Path, A Strategic Student Success Agenda

In the past five years, the University of Utah has started to transform the very nature of higher education. As the flagship institution for the state of Utah, we feel a great sense of responsibility—a duty inherent in our status as a top tier research institution. Our students are at the center of all these efforts—tens of thousands of whom benefit every year from new technologies, predictive data analysis and, perhaps most importantly, the personal connections and human interactions that form responsible, creative, and productive citizens.[1]
We put Students First.

We promote an approach to supporting student success embedded in the "Utah Pledge" and which forms the central organizational framework for the Student Success website, http://www.studentsuccess.utah.edu.

> *"We pledge to help you graduate with the support of learning communities, mentors and advisors, a plan to finish, and deeply engaged learning experiences."*

These four promises reflect our approach to supporting student success, starting them in supportive learning communities which help them satisfy General Education credit and build critical skills and learning outcomes; give them the support of Academic Advisors, Student Success Advocates, peer mentors; help them develop a Plan to Finish in milestone advising or with a SSA; and, guide them toward high impact programs and deeply engaged learning experiences that maximize their time as undergraduates and lead to transformative learning.

A Strong Start: Increasing the Odds for Completion

Two-thirds of the first-year students at the University of Utah enroll in a learning community. Our marketing slogan—"If you want to go far, go together, Learn to Navigate College like a Pro with an Academic Learning Community" captures the importance of the cohort effect in the U's first year learning communities.

An Academic Learning Community begins with a class or a series of connected classes, where the student develops critical skills in thinking, writing, and communication, builds a network of friends, and connects with peer advisors, faculty mentors, and gains support for their academic success. These range from the LEAP or BlockU Program, to the Honors College, Business Scholars, and cohort experiences in the College of Fine Arts. *At the University of Utah, high impact programs fall into three big buckets: Learning Communities; Bachelor Degree requirements including the International Requirement, the Diversity Requirement, and the Upper Division Writing Requirement (or CW); and Deeply Engaged Learning Experiences which include internships, Community Based Learning, learning abroad, the MUSE Project, Undergraduate Research and Capstone or Culminating Projects.*

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[1] Clearing the Path: A Strategic Student Success Agenda, 1.

I.   Learning Communities

At the University of Utah, an Academic Learning Community (ALC) begins with a class or series of connected classes, where students develop critical skills in thinking, writing, and communication, build a network of friends, and connect with peer advisors, faculty mentors, and gain support for their academic success. In some programs, students engage with the community through unique hands-on projects. They earn General Education credit and make connections that put them on a path toward a rewarding college career.

There are many Academic Learning Communities on the U of U campus, including the following: LEAP, BlockU, Business Scholars, Humanities Scholars, Honors, Diversity Scholars, Beacon Scholars and Fine Arts companies or corps.

The U's concept of ALC's corresponds with that of George Kuh whose work on the powerful impact of HIPs describes first year learning communities as follows:

> The key goals for learning communities are to encourage integration of learning across courses and to involve students with "big questions" that matter beyond the classroom. Students take two or more linked courses as a group and work closely with one another and with their professors. Many learning communities explore a common topic and/or common readings through the lenses of different disciplines. Some deliberately link "liberal arts" and "professional courses"; others feature service learning (Kuh, AACU).

The **LEAP** program, established in 1998, is our longest-running learning community, currently serving approximately 600 freshman each year. LEAP students have had consistently higher retention rates and 6- and 8-year graduation rates. The Figures below compare LEAP to the entire non-LEAP population at the University, but we have also conducted and published a study in which we matched LEAP students with non-LEAP students on demographic and academic characteristics to control for other factors and found that there was a significant difference in favor of LEAP related to retention and graduation rates (Bliss, Webb, and St. Andre, 2012).
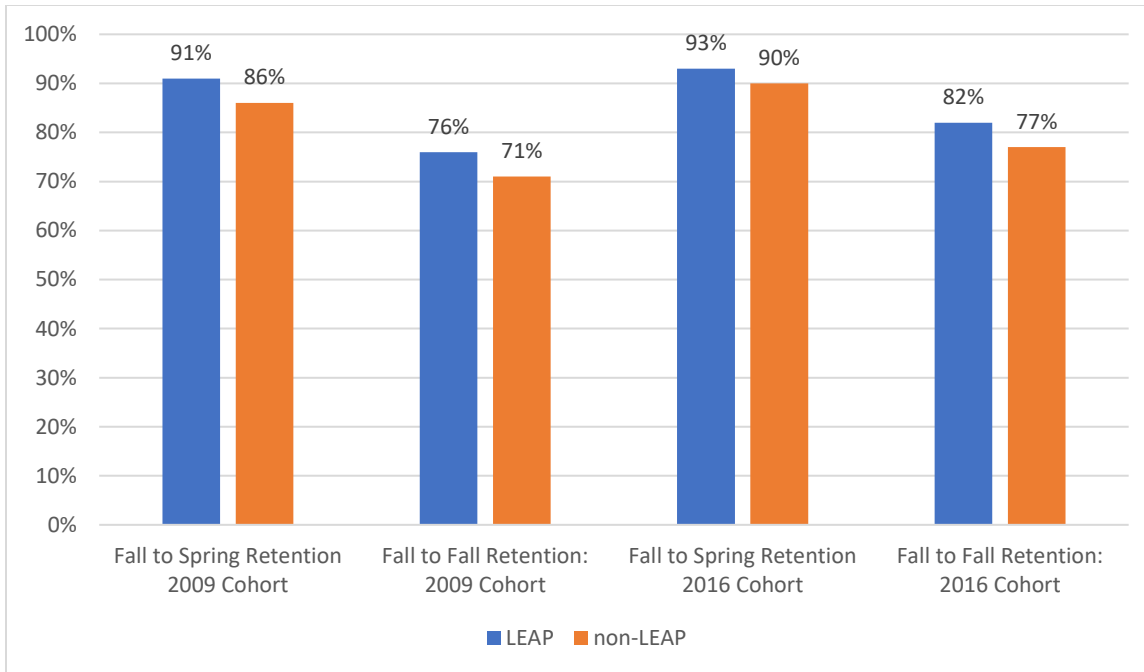
Figure 1: Fall to Spring and Fall to Fall Student Retention for LEAP Program and non-LEAP Students: 2009, 2016
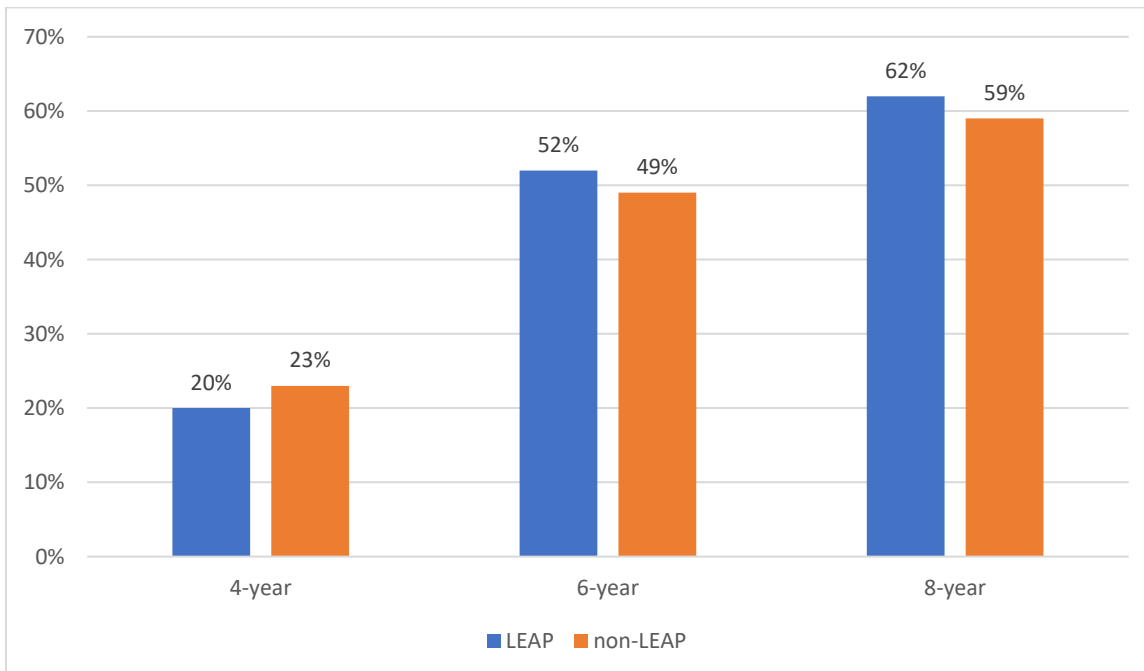*Source: Office of Budget and Institutional Analysis, University of Utah*

Figure 2: LEAP and non-LEAP Students: 4-, 6-, and 8-year Graduation Rates
Source: Office of Budget and Institutional Analysis, University of Utah

The following is a list of experiences, and the approximate number of students participating in them each year, that function as Academic Learning Communities on the University of Utah campus:

- REFUGE program at the Center for Science and Math Education: 20
- LEAP: 600
- Block U: 180
- Diversity Scholars: 110
- Honors College: 550 first-year students
- Art & Art History: 50
- Dance: 25
- Film & Media Arts: 150
- Music: 50
- Actor Training and Musical Theatre: 70

[Should we add a paragraph here reporting on the Impact study we are doing on Learning Communities when we have the results?]

II.   Bachelor Degree Requirements, Core curricular experiences

Besides General Education requirements that all undergraduates are required to complete before graduation, undergraduates at the University of Utah are also required to complete the International Requirement (IR), the Diversity Requirement (DV) and the upper division Communication and Writing (CW) requirement specific to their major for graduation with a University of Utah undergraduate degree. The content and approaches behind these common intellectual experiences engage students in their roles as citizens of the world, as members of diverse communities, and in intensive disciplinary writing instruction.

Although writing is the one class most commonly taken by students at the University of Utah, the IR, DV, and CW requirements all reflect our core values, the kind of education we promote, and the impact we expect our students to have upon graduation.

- **International Requirement (IR) -** The upper-division International Requirement will give students a broad base of knowledge about global issues and perspectives in a comparative context by exploring big questions both contemporary and enduring. It will introduce students to international frames of reference so that they may think critically about long-standing and newly emerging international issues. These courses will help students accept and appreciate the interdependence of nations and the viewpoints of other nations and give them the ability to communicate with people across international borders.

In the Class of 2017, 5,065 (97%) of the graduating class completed one of 154 International courses or participated in a learning abroad experience at the University of Utah to fulfill the International Requirement.

George Kuh also describes the power of diversity or multicultural education.

> Many colleges and universities now emphasize courses and programs that help students explore cultures, life experiences, and worldviews different from their own. These studies—which may address US diversity, world cultures, or both—often explore "difficult differences" such as racial, ethnic, and gender inequality, or continuing struggles around the globe for human rights, freedom, and power. Frequently, intercultural studies are augmented by experiential learning in the community and/or by study abroad (Kuh, AACU).

- **The U of U's Diversity Requirement (DV) -** The Diversity Requirement supports the institutional commitment to proactively support a positive campus climate in regard to diversity, equity, and inclusion. Courses that fulfill this requirement provide opportunities for students to critically explore the society and culture in the United States — its norms, laws, public policies, cultural practices, and discourses — in the context of the rich and varied cultural diversity that has shaped it. All students in courses fulfilling this requirement will grapple with theoretical approaches to discrimination, privilege, and social justice. Race, ethnicity, sex, gender, socioeconomic status, age, religion, ability status, or sexual orientation will be the crux of these classes. Students will also critically reflect on their own identities and relationships with institutions that maintain and/or challenge the status quo. The goal of this requirement is to extend cross-cultural understanding, to interrogate current and historical narratives of equality, justice, progress, and freedom, to open possibilities for meaningful communication across social boundaries, and to allow students to consider ethical and social decisions from multiple perspectives. This requirement, together with other institutional practices, also signals to students that their distinctive traditions, opinions, and insights enrich and are valued at the university.

In the Class of 2017, 4,061 (78%) of the 5214 students in the graduating class took one of 126 Diversity courses to fulfill the Diversity requirement. The University of Utah has an agreement with Salt Lake Community College (SLCC) through which students who transfer from SLCC to the U can meet this requirement through a course on the SLCC campus. This is largely where the remaining 22% of students in this graduating class are fulfilling their Diversity requirement.

- **The U of U's CW Requirement (CW)** - The upper-division communication/writing requirement provides students advanced instruction in speaking and writing with the understanding that these skills will continue to develop throughout the educational program while completing their degrees. This requirement prepares students to communicate clearly and effectively within the standards and conventions established by specific disciplines, to incorporate feedback and criticism into multiple revisions, and to

tailor written or oral communication to the needs of particular audiences. Because research and national best practices strongly suggest that enrollment in CW courses not exceed thirty students, these courses should maintain appropriately small enrollments.

In the Class of 2017, 5,164 (99%) of the 5,214 students in the graduating class took one of 133 Upper Division Communication and Writing courses to fulfill the requirement.

III.   Deeply Engaged Learning Experiences

Elevate and Guide Ambition
Whatever our students want to be, we want to increase their chances of success. There are clear milestones they need to hit and we have constructed a campus-wide network of advisors, guides, and roadmaps to help them find their way.

When students begin to define their major areas of study, our advisors engage them in developing a clear map forward. This personalized Plan to Finish process is executed by students and guided by advisors—ensuring that students' roadmaps lead to their desired destinations.[2]

Enhance Education with Experience
Often, we learn best by doing. And as we build out our ecosystem of opportunities, our students have choices to truly participate in advancing knowledge for themselves and the world.

Experiences beyond the classroom, what we call Deeply Engaged Learning, include undergraduate research, internships, scholars programming, community-engaged learning and learning abroad, to name a few. These opportunities ensure students can take full advantage of a flagship academic experience. Our aim is to involve every undergraduate with at least one such experience during their academic career. This opportunity presents students with a chance to discover more about their personal passions and their own career ambitions. Real-world experiences like these are the hallmark of a top tier research institution education:[3]
- Internships
- Undergraduate Research
- Bennion Center Community Based Learning
- Capstone Program
- Learning Abroad

Kuh's categories of most impactful HIPs are reflected in the portfolio of deeply engaged learning experiences at the University of Utah.

Service Learning, Community-Based Learning
In these programs, field-based "experiential learning" with community partners is an

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[2] Clearing the Path, 13.
[3] Clearing the Path, 17.

instructional strategy—and often a required part of the course. The idea is to give students direct experience with issues they are studying in the curriculum and with ongoing efforts to analyze and solve problems in the community. A key element in these programs is the opportunity students have to both apply what they are learning in real-world settings and reflect in a classroom setting on their service experiences. These programs model the idea that giving something back to the community is an important college outcome, and that working with community partners is good preparation for citizenship, work, and life (Kuh, AAC&U).

The Bennion Center at the University of Utah encourages students to continually ask the question: "How can I help?" Our students put new knowledge and discovery into action to make positive change in their communities. The Bennion Center connects student and faculty scholarship with projects and community partners that make a difference. Students learn civic competencies, leadership, and collaborative skills that prepare them for work and service. They choose from over 300 Community Engaged Learning classes offered across academic disciplines, to 3-hour Saturday service projects, to a 2-year intensive program called Bennion Scholars, to tutoring young children in Utah Reads, living and learning in the Bennion Service House, or having an engaged Alternative Break experience. During the 2016-2017 academic year, there were 8,686 students (33% of the University's undergraduate headcount) either participating in one of the 330 Community Engaged Learning Courses or volunteering in the community. A total of 2,548 students took a CEL course, and students participated in a total of 179,690 hours of service in the community.

Internships
Internships are another increasingly common form of experiential learning. The idea is to provide students with direct experience in a work setting—usually related to their career interests—and to give them the benefit of supervision and coaching from professionals in the field. If the internship is taken for course credit, students complete a project or paper that is approved by a faculty member (Kuh, AAC&U).

In our 2017 Graduating Student Survey, 41.2% of students indicated that they had done an internship during their undergraduate experience. That percentage is an improvement from 36.2% in 2016 and 31.2% in 2015. Results from the First Destination survey, which is sent to recent graduates and has a higher response rate than the Graduating Student Survey, showed that 52.3% of students graduating over the past two years (2016 to 2017) have done an internship while they were a student at the University of Utah.

Capstone Courses and Projects
Whether they're called "senior capstones" or some other name, these culminating experiences require students nearing the end of their college years to create a project of some sort that integrates and applies what they've learned. The project might be a research paper, a performance, a portfolio of "best work," or an exhibit of artwork.

Capstones are offered both in departmental programs and, increasingly, in general education as well (Kuh, AAC&U).

There are capstone projects required in 48 of the 64 departments and 15 of the 17 colleges on the University of Utah campus. We believe this number will increase to 52 next year. Details about these experiences can be found here: https://capstone.ugs.utah.edu/undergraduate-capstone-programs/current_capstone_initiatives_new.php.

Undergraduate Research
Many colleges and universities are now providing research experiences for students in all disciplines. Undergraduate research, however, has been most prominently used in science disciplines. With strong support from the National Science Foundation and the research community, scientists are reshaping their courses to connect key concepts and questions with students' early and active involvement in systematic investigation and research. The goal is to involve students with actively contested questions, empirical observation, cutting-edge technologies, and the sense of excitement that comes from working to answer important questions (Kuh, AAC&U).

In the 2015-16 academic year, the Office of Undergraduate Research (OUR) funded 492 semester-long research opportunities for undergraduates, 49 research travel grants, and 36 small research travel grants. OUR has created a research opportunity database where faculty can list research opportunities and students can search for projects that interest them. They are also building a catalog of research intensive courses, which currently stands at 157.

Add:
- *Students in Research-Intensive Courses (RICs) [*Rachel has RIC criteria and a list in Box: https://our.utah.edu/about-our/learning-outcomes/research-courses. I have requested from OBIA that they give us the # of students in those courses during the last complete academic year. We have the old list of courses that Steve Roens created but Rachel says it is far from a complete review of all departments.]
- *Senior Theses*: University-wide, including Honors, there were the following number of students completing a thesis over the past three years: 234 in 2015, 277 in 2016, and 254 in 2017.
- *Presentations and publications involving students (FAR).* [These data will come from FAR, working on it getting us synched up to this data but will take time.]
- *Student volunteers and employees in research groups*: As of February 22, 2018, there were 355 active University of Utah grants that have budget lines for undergraduate researchers. Those 355 grants were paying all University of Utah undergraduate researchers $5,127 per workday, or $1.35 million per year.

Assessment of HIPs

Office of Undergraduate Research

The Office of Undergraduate Research (OUR) recently launched a discipline-general undergraduate research assessment project. We have elaborated a set of Undergraduate Research Learning Outcomes and developed a poster presentation evaluation rubric that aligns with these outcomes. We will be deploying graduate student, post-doc, and faculty attendees at our campus-wide Undergraduate Research Symposium as ad hoc raters. We will then be presenting the results of this assessment at the national Conference on Undergraduate Research in July 2018.

High Impact Programs Assessment
A team of key leaders of deeply engaged learning experiences, assessment representatives of both SA and AA, the Registrar and co-chair of IST, and a representative of OBIA began to develop an institution wide way of tracking engagement in HIPs or deeply engaged learning experiences using Civitas. This cross divisional conversation will help us develop the partnerships needed to make this a campus wide commitment. In addition, the UGS Engage Portfolio team [has developed assessment questions and approaches used in each unit to both track partcipation and assess impact. We expect exciting new data and insights to result. Our Graduating Senior Survey indicates that participation in HIPs has increased in most categories over the last couple of years.
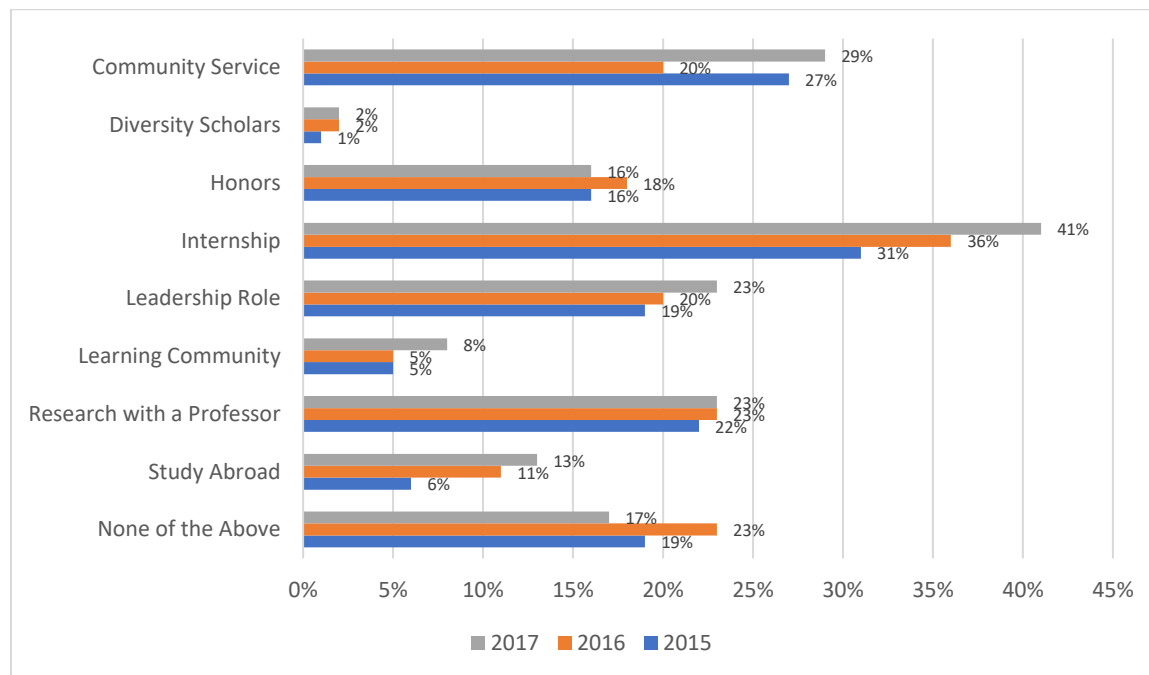

Figure 3: High Impact Program Participation: 2015-2017
Source: Graduating Student Surveys 2015-2017, University of Utah

Also, important, the Regents have charged each USHE institution to track engagement in HIPs at two points in the student's path through our institutions: First, in the student's first 30 credit hours and, second, in the junior and senior year and once they are in the major.

The High Impact Practices Evaluation working Group met in December and early February with the following work underway:

The working group was charged to figure out definitions, data sources and evaluation techniques for high impact practices and assist in developing efficacy reports.

Working from the AAC&U Essential Learning Outcomes categories, the working group began drafting a catalog of U of U HIP programs, the data we capture for each program, the data format and the best methods for measuring efficacy. The working group is documenting how student participation data is currently collected and recorded for each program and matching appropriate efficacy evaluation techniques. Some programs can use quantitative student retention analysis as a measure of efficacy (ex. LEAP). They have decided to use the Civitas Illume Impact[4] program to determine lift in persistence for programs where it is appropriate to assess with a quantitative student retention analysis. Impact became available to us in December 2016 and they have run first year learning community data through this system as a way to become familiar with what Impact can deliver and where it has limitations. This analysis resulted in the following finding:

- Over the last four years, 5,353 freshmen have participated in a first-year learning community experience (Beacon, Business, Diversity, Humanities, Innovation, or New University Scholars, Block U, Honors, or LEAP).

- A 2.5% lift in persistence was associated with participation in those programs as a whole compared to those who did not participate in any of them.

- This 2.5% lift in persistence equated to 130 more students over the past 4 years who participated in one of those learning communities compared to students who did not participate.

Some HIP programs primarily measure qualitative efficacy through student learning outcomes performance (ex. Undergraduate Research). We are looking at how we might use a learning outcomes evaluation tool currently being developed (for the General Education outcomes evaluation process) as a method for reviewing student artifacts and evaluating learning outcomes attainment for HIP programs. The tool is in development and won't be ready to use for several months. They plan to connect the evaluation criteria with the work underway in the UGS Inspired Learning Portfolio team.

Finally, the working group is working with some programs (i.e. MUSE) to help them tighten up and formalize their participation data collection to enable future evaluation. By March they plan to have a draft U of U HIP catalog spreadsheet showing:

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[4] Civitas Illume Impact matches program participants with non-participants on a variety of variables that determine their likelihood to persist and identifies the "lift" in persistence that the program provides.

1. what programs we operate
2. the scope of student participation
3. where the participation data exists and in what form,
4. the stated key metrics for success for each program
5. the planned tool / methodology for evaluating key metrics efficacy

Assessment Plan for HIPs

The three big buckets of high impact practices occur at three key developmental moments in the student's undergraduate career—at the beginning, through the process of developing broad and deep knowledge, and as an enhancement of the major course of study.

The following 2018-2019 HIP report creates benchmarks for annual reports to be completed at the end of the academic year. These reports will be based on Civitas data and analysis, Kuali Curriculum and Learning Outcomes data, participation data (eventually all put in Civitas).

1. First year meta report
    a. Metric: Participation in learning communities, cohort programs and living and learning communities
    b. Key Question: Does participation in a learning community matter, and if so how?
    c. Metric: Retention to the second year
    d. Lead Teams: UGS Building Community Portfolio Team; Civitas Team; Kuali LO
2. Second year meta report
    a. Metric: Declared status, key moments, Milestone Advising, advising in First-Year Learning Communities
    b. What's the control that we're turning that made the difference?
    c. Metric: Total number of credit hours
    d. Lead Teams: UGS Support Student Success Portfolio Team; Civitas Team
3. Housing factor
    a. Key Question: What is the effect of housing + a living and learning community?
4. Deeply Engaged Learning Experiences
    a. Key Programs: Learning Abroad, Internships, Capstone or Culminating Experiences, and Undergraduate Research
    b. Participation lists fed into Civitas
    c. Learning Outcomes assessment through the Kuali tool currently being built—we have a conceptual design and prototype
    d. Lead Teams: UGS Engage Portfolio Team; Civitas Team; Kuali LO
    e. Key Programs, Bachelor Degree Requirements: International Requirement, Diversity Requirement, Upper Division (CW) Requirement
        i. How do we measure impact on students?
            1. Learning Outcomes assessed through Kuali LO's tool
            2. Impact on time to completion (Civitas)
            3. Analysis of course taking patterns (OBIA); Golden combos

4. Key Questions: What is the deeply engaged learning experience at most benefits a student from the School of Business, from the College of Architecture + Planning and so forth?
   f. Lead Teams: UGS Inspired Teaching Portfolio Team; Civitas Team; Kuali LO
5. Powerful predicators analysis for students in each of the three big buckets
   a. Lead Teams: Civitas Team

In addition, the **UGS Engage Portfolio Team** has worked to develop three key learning outcomes and assessment plans for units across the division.

I. Team members
Ann Darling and Rachel Hayes-Harb, Co-chairs; Dean McGovern; Mark Matheson; Merilee Anderson; Patricia Rohrer; Stephen Goldsmith; and Trever Bruhn

II. The charge
Develop a systematic approach to assessing the student learning that occurs in the context of deeply engaged learning experiences.
• Look at the assessment we are already doing and what we are not
• Develop a set of goals about what we hope to achieve through deeply engaged learning experiences
• Combine qualitative and quantitative measures to assess the numbers of students participating, what we hope they will learn, what they think they are learning, and how this represents an undergraduate education at the U

III. What is an engaged learning opportunity?
The team agreed that we would adopt the definition of an engaged learning opportunity that had been previously developed by the Deeply Engaged Learning Portfolio Team. Our definition is thus as follows:

A well-defined and purposeful educational experience, of significant duration or intensity, that offers sustained mentoring, deep inquiry into a specific field or practice, and a concentration of learning modes that enable students to develop their capacities for analysis, creativity, and constructive action.

IV. Programs that focus on deeply engaged learning
We identified several programs and units on the University of Utah campus who focus on deeply engaged learning; each program/unit had at least one representative on the team.
• Beacon Scholars
• Bennion Center
• Capstone Initiative
• Continuing Education and Community Outreach (CECE)
• Honors College
• MUSE
• Undergraduate Research

V. Categories of outcomes for deeply engaged learning
Given the definition above, we identified three categories for learning outcomes. Learning outcomes should focus on the ways in which the opportunity enables students to develop their capacities for:

1. Analysis
Processes of inquiry
Use of appropriate methods to answer questions
Examining the parts of a whole to understand them separately
Creativity
Problem-solving

2. Navigating complexities
Flexibility
Comfortable with uncertainty
Managing change effectively

3. Constructive action
Projects, products
Taking what you have learned and effecting change
Reflection
Collaboration

VI. Where are we now?
Each of the identified programs was invited to share their current learning outcomes assessment plan and/or develop one by answering the following questions: (1) What are your learning outcomes, and how are they aligned with the categories of analysis, creativity, and constructive action?; (2) What are your procedures for data collection, analysis, and reporting?; and (3) How does the data inform change?

Bennion Center

1. Learning Outcomes
- Identify and utilize relevant previous work that supports community engagement and civic competencies (analysis)
- Develop a collaborative community engagement project (creativity/ constructive action)
- Identify and defend civic competencies (analysis)
- Work collaboratively with other students, faculty, and community partners demonstrating effective communication and problem-solving skills (creativity)
- Present/defend the community engagement project effectively in a written publication (constructive action)
- Reflect constructively on the CE experience, identify what happened, why it is important, what comes next (What? So What? Now What?) (analysis/ constructive action)

2. <u>Data Collection, Analysis, And Reporting</u>
Portfolio, defense, reflective narrative/video

3. <u>How Does the Data Inform Change</u>?
Data is continuously evaluated to make adjustments to Bennion Center programming including work with community partners. Also the Bennion Center reports community impacts.

Honors Praxis Labs

1. <u>List Of Learning Outcomes</u>
• Identify and utilize previous research on a complex social issue (analysis)
• Develop multiple disciplinary approaches to analyze the issue (analysis)
• Collaboratively identify and review relevant actionable local issues (creativity/constructive action)
• Collaboratively design and implement a project that addresses a need in the community (creativity/constructive action)
• Present the research in a written publication and in multiple presentations on campus and in the community (creativity/constructive action)

2. <u>Data Collection, Analysis, And Reporting</u>
Student and faculty assessment/self-reports

3. <u>How Does the Data Inform Change</u>?
We continuously (annually?) review the Praxis Lab program.

Office of Undergraduate Research

1. <u>List Of Learning Outcomes</u>
• Identify and utilize relevant previous work that supports their research (analysis)
• Articulate a timely and important research question or creative objective (analysis)
• Identify and utilize appropriate methodologies to address the research question or creative objective (analysis)
• Meet the relevant field's standards for the responsible conduct of research, and effectively navigate challenges that arise in the research process (analysis)
• Work collaboratively with other researchers, demonstrating effective communication and problem-solving skills (creativity)
• Present the research effectively in a conference setting and a written publication (constructive action)
• Reflect constructively on their research experience, identifying what was learned, personal strengths and opportunities for growth, and how the experience informs their future educational and career goals (constructive action)

2. <u>Data Collection, Analysis, And Reporting</u>
Student Self-Report - As a condition of acceptance of the Undergraduate Research Opportunities

program (UROP) award, a small grant, or a travel grant, students agree to complete an online 'final report' of the experience. They are asked to indicate the extent to which they agree that their undergraduate research experience has helped them to meet each of the learning outcomes. Response options are: Strongly Disagree, Disagree, Agree, Strongly Agree. In addition, students who apply for the Undergraduate Research Scholar Designation (usually in their final semester before graduation) are asked to indicate the extent to which they agree that their undergraduate research experience has helped them to meet each of the learning outcomes. Faculty Mentor Report - Faculty mentors are also asked to complete a final report; they are asked to indicate the extent to which they agree that "through participation in UROP this semester under your mentorship", the student has met each of the learning outcomes. We calculate proportion 'agree' scores for each of our learning outcomes. These are available on our web site: http://our.utah.edu/aboutour/ learning-outcomes/.

3. How Does the Data Inform Change?
We use the data in our annual program review process to determine the extent to which students involved in these programs achieve our learning outcomes. To the extent that students do not meet the learning outcomes, we adjust our programs accordingly. By virtue of asking students and their faculty mentors to interact with our learning outcomes via the final reports detailed above, we enjoy the additional benefit of communicating our values and goals as an office to our stakeholders. Thus, the learning outcomes assessment process in and of itself has the ability to effect positive change.

MUSE

1. Learning Outcomes
• Students improve their skills at critical analysis of texts, lectures, and performances. Students encounter these forms of discourse through our annual MUSE Theme Year text, for which we hold student book-group discussions; our MUSE Lunchtime Lectures and other sponsored presentations; and attendance at performances and exhibits offered through our MUSE Nights Out program.
• Students increase their capacity for self-reflection, for attention to their inner life, and for analysis of their unique experience.
• Students create new social skills and develop their capacities for community building and for establishing personal networks. These opportunities are available through a variety of MUSE events that connect students with individual members of our faculty, community leaders, and distinguished national guests. Video and design contests have also provided a stimulus to artistic creativity.
• Students engage in the life of the campus and the broader community. MUSE opportunities encourage constructive action in the intellectual life of the University, such as facilitating student book discussion groups, participating in Q and A conversations with distinguished lecturers, and presenting papers at conferences. MUSE Internships also engage students in constructive action in professional offices across campus. Our MUSE Theme Year events have proven to be a rich opportunity for students to engage with younger students in the local community.

2. <u>Data Collection, Analysis, And Reporting</u>
• MUSE keeps accurate records of the number of students who participate in each of our events. We have also conducted, in each of the last two years, an inventory of student involvement in engaged learning opportunities offered by all campus offices.
• We learn through ongoing conversations with students about their experience of MUSE events and through asking them to reflect on these opportunities in writing.
• We ask for mentor and intern evaluations for all MUSE Internships.

3. <u>How Does the Data Inform Change</u>?
As an office, MUSE evaluates our programming-based student responses. This is an ongoing effort.

Beacon Scholars

1. <u>Learning Objectives</u>: Students will develop skills known to contribute to student success and retention. Students will:
   a) Demonstrate support-seeking behaviors
   b) Apply for financial aid and scholarships and complete steps to ensure receipt
   c) Set personal/professional development goals and reflect on process and progress
   d) Develop relationships and sense of community

2. <u>Data Collection, Analysis, and Reporting</u>: The preceding 4 objectives will be measured through:
   a) Number of interactions, type of interactions, & % of student-initiated interactions
   b) % of students applied for FAFSA or scholarships and successful completion verification or acceptance procedures
   c) Goals set at beginning of year and year end reflection activities
   d) Survey responses coupled with sense of belonging inventory

3. <u>How Does the Data Inform Change</u>?

Beacon is structured around flexibility and changes each year are made to meet the needs of each unique student cohort. Program content is selected and designed based on feedback from three sources; student goals/reflections, individual advising sessions, and sense of belonging inventory. Each year's planning begins with end of year reflections from the previous year. These reflections are used to decide on more significant structural changes for the following year.

An analysis of students' goals, set at the beginning of the year, is employed to identify common goals shared by the group. Student leaders then use these common goals to develop activities and curriculum for the year. Throughout the year, we watch for emerging themes from individual advising/support sessions and then build content to meet these needs. Students' responses to sense of belonging inventory can be used to direct and target advising and also to help inform the development of relationship building activities. The data we are collecting

directly shapes student experience and ensures that we are providing the most relevant programming possible.

Capstone Programs

1. Learning Objectives:
    1. Provide students with or connect them to opportunities to apply their accumulated learning to a meaningful capstone project.
    2. Provide students with the tools and opportunities to assess their capstone experiences in order to understand how they could improve upon their project.
    3. Help students position themselves for emerging opportunities in their fields.

2. Data Collection, Analysis, and Reporting:

Objective 1 is accomplished by securing program funding from donors to support student capstone projects and working with departments at the University of Utah to develop new or promote already existing capstone courses, experiences, and projects. Examples of those can be found here: http://capstone.ugs.utah.edu/current-projects/index.php

Objective 2 is accomplished through projects funded by community donors. A required part of these projects is the development of a video summary of the work that was done, and reflection on what could have been done to improve it. See https://capstone.ugs.utah.edu/current-projects/digital_fair.php for videos.

Objective 3 is examined by following up with students after graduation to ask them how the capstone contributed to their job search, whether they are working in a field related to the capstone project, etc.

An inventory of the Capstone experiences available on campus can be found here: https://capstone.ugs.utah.edu/undergraduate-capstone-programs/current_capstone_initiatives_new.php

3. How Does the Data Inform Change?

Status: In progress. During the AACU conference on assessment held in New Orleans in February, examples of assessment criteria and processes were presented from a broad range of institutions and programs. These ranged from collaborative, interdisciplinary capstone courses to capstones for language majors and chemistry. In June, the Director of Capstone Programs at Portland State along with some of her colleagues is hosting Stephen during their capstone fair. The goal is to bring back wisdom from their 20-years of experience in assessing capstones and adapt the knowledge from both of these experiences to our program.

Example of Building Community Portfolio Team
Learning Committee Members:

Sylvia Torti; Dean Honors College
Marissa Diener; Director UGS; LEAP
Ann Darling; Assistant Vice President of UGS; Block U Undergraduate Studies
Taunya Dressler; Assistant Dean College of Humanities
Steve Maisch Assistant Professor UGS; LEAP
Rudy Medina; Student Equity and Diversity
Erica Rojas; Associate Director Honors College
Tricia Sugiyama; Director Student Equity and Diversity

The committee's charge had two specific components. First, the committee was asked to "develop a systematic approach to assessing the student learning that occurs in the context of learning communities." The second was to look into qualitative and qualitative tools to assess these communities. The overarching goal was then to develop learning outcomes and recommend assessment tools that may be applicable to various LCs. The committee met every other week January through April, 2016.

Learning Community Definition
Based on the Association of American Colleges and Universities (AAC&U) Integrative Learning Value Rubric, the committee defined Learning Community as:
"A community where integration of learning involves students with 'big questions' that matter beyond the classroom. Students take two or more linked courses as a group and work closely with one another and with their professors."

From this definition, each committee member evaluated its own learning communities to identify the purpose of the program and desirable outcomes. The committee reviewed the following first-year learning communities:

• Honors (various versions)
• LEAP (various versions)
• Block U
• Diversity Scholars
• Humanities Scholars

Its members considered other existing communities such as Business Scholars and potential new learning communities.

Learning Outcomes for First Time Freshmen Learning Communities
As a result of the program evaluation each committee member conducted, three integrative learning outcomes emerged. These dimensions include: making intellectual, reflective/self-assessment, and community connections.

Intellectual Connections: Measures student capacity for making connections among disciplines, experiences, perspectives, etc.

Reflection/Self-Assessment Connections: Develops ability to self-assess (e.g., introspection, directional learning, self-authorship).

Community Connections: anchoring students to campus and community, e.g., feeling they belong, knowledge of where to find resources, etc.
It is important to note that current learning communities had already been engaging their students in making connections in all three dimensions. These dimensions, however, create a framework that current learning communities can use to evaluate their programs. In addition, these dimensions give direction to future LCs and the ability to easily integrate in their curriculum.

Assessment of Learning Outcomes
The committee looked at qualitative and quantitative tools to assess the three dimensions of the learning outcome.

• Qualitative: Since the theme for each learning community differs, the committee recommends that each program integrates assignments into their syllabi that demonstrate each dimension. Committee members mapped their syllabi to show how faculty could incorporate and evaluate the dimensions (see Appendix I).

• Quantitative: The committee looked into Skyfactor, a survey tool LEAP has utilized in the past to assess classroom experience and curriculum outcomes. Questions already included in the survey aim to evaluate a student's sense of belonging in the classroom and on campus, as well as connections to other disciplines and intellectual growth. The approximate cost to distribute this survey to 102 course sections is $4,738 for the 2016-2017 academic year (see Appendix II). In addition, the committee recommends that each program develops its own assessment tools to track student retention and degree completion.

References

Bliss, C., Webb, J., & St. Andre, M. (2012). "The impact of the University of Utah's LEAP program on student performance. *Journal of General Education*, *61(1),* 39-58

Watkins, R. (2018). Clearing the Path: A Strategic Student Success Agenda, University of Utah, Salt Lake City, UT