

# ABILENE CHRISTIAN UNIVERSITY



## Impact Report Year 4: 2014-2015

A Quality Enhancement Plan developed as part of the  
University's SACSCOC 2011 Reaffirmation

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## OVERVIEW OF YEAR 4

Year 4 of Pursuit concludes with the completion of the following accomplishments:

- Fourth assessment for CORE 110 by Assessment Team I led by Dr. Laura Carroll;
- Third assessment for CORE 210 by Assessment Team II led by Dr. Brenda Bender;
- Second assessment for BCOR 310 by Assessment Team III led by Dr. Sarah Lee;
- First assessment for Capstone led by Assessment Team IV led by Dr. David Hendricks;
- Conclusion of *Pursuit* Research Grants for 12 faculty and 18 student researchers, with funding awards of \$95,900;
- Selection of 13 *Pursuit* Research Fellows, awarding \$78,440 to the faculty/student teams for projects funding during Year 5;
- *Pursuit* Travel Funds monies awarded for 23 faculty and 79 student researchers to travel to conferences for verbal and poster presentations of their research and creative projects, including entrance fees for juried shows, a funding total of \$16,520; and
- *Pursuit* provided \$16,467 to assist in the funding for the Director of Undergraduate Research.

An overview of *Pursuit Goals and Learning Outcomes* can be found in Appendix A. Appendix B includes the report: *Actions to be Implemented*.

## WORKING TEAMS

***Pursuit Implementation Team (PIT):*** Faculty, staff, and alumni members include the following:

- Phyllis Bolin (Director of *Pursuit*, Chair, CAS, Mathematics),
- Glenn Pemberton (CBS, Bible, Missions and Ministry),
- Alan Lipps (CEHS, School of Social Work),
- Mark McCallon (Library),
- Alfa Nyandoro (COBA, School of Information Technology and Computing),
- Rick Piersall (CAS, Music),
- Timothy Head (on Faculty Renewal Leave--CAS, Physics),
- Hilary Simpson (Staff, Honors College), and
- Kay Price-Hawkins (Alumnus).
- Ex Officio: Autumn Sutherlin (Office of Undergraduate Research) and Eric Gumm (General Education).

***Assessment Team I—CORE 110--Cornerstone:*** The assessment team was formed during Year 1 to assess CORE 110 artifacts. The team continues to work together during Year 4. Assessment Team I assessed CORE 110 annotated bibliographies and will

continue to assess CORE 110 artifacts for the duration of the QEP in order to have a consistency of assessment. Faculty members include the following:

- Laura Carroll (Chair, CAS, Language and Literature),
- Stephen Baldrige (CEHS, School of Social Work),
- Houston Heflin (CBS, Bible, Missions and Ministry, General Education),
- Susan Lewis (Vice Provost, CAS, Journalism and Mass Communications), and
- Dawne Swearingen Meeks (CAS, Theater).

A report detailing results and recommendations can be found in Appendix D along with the *EXPLORE 110* Rubric used in the assessment process.

**Assessment Team II—CORE 210:** The assessment team was formed during Year 2 to assess CORE 210 artifacts. The team continued to work together during Year 4. Assessment Team II assessed CORE 210 position papers and will continue to assess CORE 210 artifacts for the duration of the QEP in order to have a consistency of assessment. Faculty members include the following:

- Brenda Bender (Chair, CEHS, Communication Sciences and Disorders),
- Josh Brokaw (CAS, Biology),
- Jason Holland (CAS, Mathematics),
- Scott Self (CORE, University Access Programs), and
- Jeanine Varner (CAS, Language and Literature),

A report detailing results and recommendations can be found in Appendix E along with the *EXPLORE II* Rubric used in the assessment process.

**Assessment Team III—BCOR 310:** The assessment team was formed during Year 3 to assess BCOR 310 research artifacts. Assessment Team III assessed BCOR 310 research artifacts and will continue to assess BCOR 310 artifacts for the duration of the QEP in order to have a consistency of assessment. Faculty members include the following:

- Sarah Lee (Chair, CAS, Chemistry and Biochemistry),
- Lynette Austin (CEHS, Communication Sciences and Disorders),
- Suanna Davis (CAS, Language and Literature),
- Monty Lynn (COBA, Management Sciences), and
- Curt Niccum (CBS, Bible, Missions and Ministry).

A report detailing results and recommendations can be found in Appendix F along with the *EXPLORE III* Rubric used in the assessment process.

**Assessment Team IV—Capstone:** The assessment team was formed during Year 4 to assess Capstone experience research artifacts. Assessment Team IV assessed research papers from Capstone experiences and will continue to assess those artifacts for the duration of the QEP in order to have a consistency of assessment. Faculty members include the following:

- David Hendricks (CAS, Chair Mathematics),
- Rodney Ashlock (CBS, Bible, Missions and Ministry),
- Brad Crisp (COBA, School of Information Technology and Computing)
- Shelly Sanders (CAS, Language and Literature),
- Tracy Shilcutt (CAS, History and Global Studies), and

- Sam Stewart (CEHS, School of Teacher Education).

A report detailing results and recommendations can be found in Appendix G along with the *CREATE* Rubric used in the assessment process.

## TASKS COMPLETED

**PIT Tasks for 2014-2015:** The Pursuit Implementation Team (PIT) group met regularly and completed the following tasks:

- Examined all *Pursuit* Research Grant requests and, using the criteria for *Pursuit* Research Grants, selected 13 faculty recipients and notified them of the award; the Director of *Pursuit* and Tom Milholland, the Office of Institutional Research met with faculty receiving awards, discussed their projects, assessments, and obligations to ACU, and had all faculty sign a contract describing those details.
- Examined *Pursuit* Travel Grant requests and awarded \$16,520 funding for faculty and student travel to conferences.

**2014-2015 Pursuit Research Grant Fellows:** *Pursuit* Research Grants funded \$96,000 for twelve grant projects:

- Stephen Baldrige (School of Social Work),
- Brian Cavitt (Chemistry and Biochemistry),
- Matthew Garver (Kinesiology and Nutrition),
- J. Darby Hewitt (Physics and Engineering),
- Bruce Hopkins (Chemistry and Biochemistry),
- Jennifer Huddleston (Biology),
- Ryan Jessup (Management Sciences),
- Sarah Lee (Chemistry and Biochemistry),
- Laura Phillips (Management Sciences),
- Gregory Powell (Chemistry and Biochemistry),
- Matt Steele (Physics and Engineering), and
- John Weaver (Brown Library).

Twenty-one undergraduate students worked with the faculty on projects during the grant cycle for Year 4 Academic Year 2014-2015.

## COURSE ASSESSMENTS

During the fourth year of implementation, *Pursuit* focused on collecting data and assessments from CORE 110 (Cornerstone), CORE 210, BCOR 310, and Capstone courses, including artifacts from each course. *SAILS* data was collected in CORE 110 for benchmarking in the fall semester to utilize as pre-test information for comparison purposes to the post-test data from Capstone courses.



## **SAILS**

**(Standardized Assessment of Information Literacy Skills developed by Kent State University):** All students enrolled in CORE 110 completed *SAILS* early in Fall 2014. In the total enrollment of 974 first-year students, 695 students (71%) took the assessment. Results will be used as a pre-test for benchmark comparison with *SAILS* results from students enrolled during their capstone experience (taken during one of the final three semesters).

Students enrolled in fall semester Capstone courses took the *SAILS* assessment in late August; those enrolled in spring Capstone courses took the assessment at the start of the spring semester in January.

Detailed results of the outcomes, including the *SAILS* Skill Sets are found in Appendix C.

### **SLO 1.1 Students will understand and appropriately use scholarly sources.**

**Objective 1.1.A.** Students will determine the nature and extent of the information needed.

**Measurement:** *SAILS* sections ONE through FOUR.

**Objective 1.1.B.** Students will access needed information effectively and efficiently.

**Measurement:** *SAILS* sections FIVE and SIX.

**Objective 1.1.C.** Students will use information ethically and legally.

**Measurement:** *SAILS* sections SEVEN and EIGHT.

**Results:** Note: the incoming students who take *SAILS* are not expected to have understanding and knowledge on use of scholarly sources. This test is used as a pre-test for comparison purposes with the post-test to be given during student's final undergraduate year at ACU in Capstone courses.

In the first year of *SAILS* assessments (Fall 2011)) students entering in fall 2011 performed *about the same as* the Institution Type benchmark on 4 skills sets, and *worse than* the institution type on the remaining 4 skills sets. After 3 years of assessments, data from CORE 110 compared to Capstone data shows the following overall results:

- Overall scores have increased significantly.
- Standard errors have decreased, showing student scores have less variability and are performing more consistently on the *SAILS* skills sets.
- Capstone students at Abilene Christian University performed *BETTER THAN* the institution-type benchmark on ALL *SAILS* Skills Sets, including the following:
  - Developing a Research Strategy
  - Selecting Finding Tools
  - Searching
  - Using Finding Tool Features

- Retrieving Sources
  - Evaluating Sources
  - Documenting Sources
  - Understanding Economic, Legal, and Social Issues.
- This cohort group of entering students enrolled in CORE 110 during fall 2011 did NOT perform better than the Institution-type benchmark on ANY skill set.

Information on the *SAILS* results is provided to CORE 110 faculty who teach information literacy skills for SLO 1.1. Comparative data was provided to specifically to Capstone faculty and to all faculty. Further details of the comparative results can be found in Appendix C.

### **CORE 110 (Cornerstone)**



The Cornerstone research artifact was collected from a set of 1080 students; 1024 papers were collected (95%). This is a significant improvement from 93% last year, and 77% the initial year. A simple random sample of 100 papers was selected for assessment; 95 papers were assessed; 5 papers were used for norming.

### **SLO 1.1 Students will understand and appropriately use scholarly sources.**

**Objective 1.1.A.** Students will determine the nature and extent of the information needed.

**Measurement:** *EXPLORE 110 Rubric* ITEM ONE “determine the extent of information needed.” CORE 110 requires each student research and write an annotated bibliography meeting specific requirements. This annotated bibliography is scored using the Revised *EXPLORE 110 Rubric*.

**Acceptable Target:** 70% of the samples scored by Assessment Team 1 using the Revised *EXPLORE 110 Rubric* ITEM ONE will average 2.5 or higher.

**Ideal Target:** 80% of the samples scored by Assessment Team 1 using Revised *EXPLORE 110 Rubric* ITEM ONE will average 2.5 or higher.

**Results:** In 2014-2015, 84.8% of samples scored 2.5 or higher; **the ideal target for 1.1.A was met this year.**

ONE	Obj. 1.1.A	CORE 110	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4
	Determine Information Needed	Score > 2.5	61%	56%	61.1%	84.8%
		Acceptable Target (70%)	Not met	Not met	Not met	MET
		Ideal Target (80%)	Not met	Not met	Not met	MET
		Average of all samples	2.45	2.55	2.69	2.96

**Objective 1.1.B.** Students will access needed information effectively and efficiently.

**Measurement:** Revised *EXPLORE 110 Rubric* ITEM TWO “Assess the needed information.” CORE 110 requires each student write an annotated bibliography meeting specific requirements. This essay is scored using the Revised *EXPLORE 110 Rubric*.

**Acceptable Target:** 70% of the samples scored by faculty Assessment Team 1 using the Revised *EXPLORE 110 Rubric* ITEM TWO will average 2.5 or higher.

**Ideal Target:** 80% of the samples scored by faculty Assessment Team 1 using the Revised *EXPLORE 110 Rubric* ITEM TWO will average 2.5 or higher.

**Results:** In 2014-2015 84.8% of samples scored 2.5 or higher; **the ideal target for 1.1.B was met this year.**

TWO	Obj. 1.1.B	CORE 110	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4
	Access and Use Information	Score > 2.5	No assessment	67%	70.5%	84.8%
		Acceptable Target (70%)	No assessment	Minimally Met	MET	MET
		Ideal Target (80%)	No assessment	Not met	Not met	MET
		Average of all samples	No assessment	2.52	2.62	2.89

**Objective 1.1.C.** Students will use information ethically and legally.

**Measurement:** Revised *EXPLORE 110 Rubric* ITEM THREE “Assess and use the information ethically and legally.” CORE 110 requires each student write an annotated bibliography meeting specific requirements. This essay is scored using the Revised *EXPLORE 110 Rubric*.

**Acceptable Target:** 70% of the samples scored by faculty Assessment Team 1 using the Revised *EXPLORE 110 Rubric* ITEM THREE will average 2.5 or higher.

**Ideal Target:** 80% of the samples scored by Assessment Team 1 using revised *EXPLORE 110 Rubric* ITEM THREE will average 2.5 or higher.

**Results:** In 2013-2014, 80% of samples scored 2.5 or higher meeting both Acceptable and Ideal Targets; the average score of all samples was 2.82 (up significantly from the previous year). In 2014-2015, 90.9% of samples scored 2.5 or higher; **the ideal target for 1.1.C was met this year**, a significant increase from Year 3.

	Obj. 1.1.C	CORE 110	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4
<b>THREE</b>	Information Use Strategies	Score > 2.5	40%	55%	80%	90.9%
		Acceptable Target (70%)	Not met	Not met	MET	MET
		Ideal Target (80%)	Not met	Not met	MET	MET
		Average of all samples	2.01	2.49	2.82	3.04

### Composite Scores

The composite score, while not prescribed in the original QEP, was calculated to provide an overview of the Cornerstone assessment. To be consistent with the language for individual outcomes, CORE 210, and BCOR 310, an **acceptable target** of 70% of samples scoring 7.5 or higher and an **ideal target** of 80% of samples. In 2013-2014, 66.3% of samples exhibited a composite score greater than 7.5, minimally meeting the Acceptable Target; the average of all samples was 8.1.

2014-2015 showed a significant increase so that the Acceptable Target and Ideal Target were both met.



COMPOSITE	Obj. 1.1	CORE 110	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4
		Score > 7.5	56% (5)	50.51%	66.32%	83.8%
		Acceptable Target (70%)	Not met	Not met	Minimally met	MET
		Ideal Target (80%)	Not met	Not met	Not met	MET
		Average of all samples	3.76 (5)	7.72	8.121	8.89

**Recommendations for CORE 110:**

The CORE 110 assignment, rubric and assessment are working well to teach and assess students' understandings of information literacy. Over four years, faculty have worked to (1) revise the assignment, (2) refine the rubric, (3) train teachers, and (4) work with embedded librarians to increase effectiveness of their assistance.

*As a result, Cornerstone results show exceptional assessment data from student annotated bibliographies. Faculty and students have worked together to meet Acceptable and Ideal Targets for all three outcomes and the composite score.*

It is recommended that faculty continue to follow the same course as in the past. Cliff Barbarick, the Course Director, has chosen to leave his position. It is recommended that a strong replacement is found for him. He has been an exceptional leader and has encouraged and focused the faculty in productive ways.

After the 2013-2104 assessment, the assessment team conducted professional development sessions for CORE 110 teachers in the Adam's Center. They focused on the following key points:

- a. Implement consistent formatting for the document across all sections.
- b. Understand correct MLA citation.
- c. Address target audience in the introduction to the bibliography.
- d. Refine and revise students' research questions based on their findings
- e. Insure the students address questions rather than arguments.
- f. Distinguish between social sciences and humanities.
- g. Prohibit using the Bible as a source.

The assessment team believes that these meetings were key in raising the scores and meeting all Acceptable and Ideal Targets. As we continue to help CORE 110 instructors teach information literacy more effectively, the assessment team will continue to hold professional development sessions in the weeks leading up to the Informational Literacy assignment. These sessions will allow time for the assessment team to discuss findings and recommendations for teaching the assignment and for the instructors to ask

questions. Embedded librarians assist faculty in working to improve information literacy concepts.

The CORE 110 Assessment Report and *EXPLORE 110 Rubric* for 2014-2015 are included in Appendix D.

## **CORE 210**

CORE 210 courses were developed to target specific skills and outcomes that linked to the fundamental understandings found in the foundation of the general education curriculum approved by faculty in 2007. These include but are not limited to the following:

- Strong analytical, communication, quantitative, and information skills;
- Deep understanding of and hands-on experience with inquiry practices that explore the natural, socio-cultural, aesthetic, and religious realms and habits of mind that foster integrative thinking; and
- Ability to transfer skills and knowledge from one setting to another.

Throughout the many changes and modifications to the CORE sequence and the CORE 210 course, the finds of the assessment team indicate CORE 210 is targeting the stated goals and outcomes in the QEP initiative.

The CORE 210 research artifact was collected from an enrollment of 840 enrolled students, 820 papers were collected (97.6%). A random sample of 75 papers was selected from CORE 210 sections delivered in fall 2014 and spring 2015.

### **SLO 1.1 Students will understand and appropriately use scholarly sources.**

**Objective 1.1.A.** Students will determine the nature and extent of the information needed.

**Measurement:** *EXPLORE II Rubric ITEM ONE*. CORE 210 requires each student to write a position paper guided by assigned components. This paper is evaluated by trained faculty on Assessment Team II utilizing the *EXPLORE II Rubric*.



**Acceptable Target:** 70% of the samples scored by faculty Assessment Team II using the Revised *EXPLORE II Rubric* ITEM ONE will average 2.5 or above AND 70% will have a composite score of 5.0 or higher.

**Ideal Target:** 80% of the students will score 3.0 or above on each of the seven components AND 80% will have a composite score of 6.0 or higher.

**Results:** In 2014-15, 74.67% of sampled papers received a rubric rating of 2.5 or higher; meeting the acceptable target and approaching the ideal

target for this SLO. A comparison with 2013-2014 data indicates no significant change for this year.

ONE	Obj. 1.1.A	CORE 210	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4
	Determine Information Needed	Score > 2.5	63.6%	75.0%	74.67%
		Acceptable Target (70%)	Approaching	Met	Met
		Ideal Target (80%)	Not met	Approaching	Approaching
		Average of all samples	2.67	2.63	2.71

**Objective 1.1.B.** Students will access needed information effectively and efficiently.

**Measurement:** Revised *EXPLORE II Rubric* ITEM TWO “Assess the needed information.” CORE 210 requires each student write a position paper meeting specific requirements. This essay is scored using the Revised *EXPLORE II Rubric*\*.

**Acceptable Target:** 70% of the samples scored by faculty Assessment Team II using the Revised *EXPLORE II Rubric* ITEM TWO will average 2.5 or higher.

**Ideal Target:** 80% of the samples scored by faculty Assessment Team II using the Revised *EXPLORE II Rubric* ITEM TWO will average 2.5 or higher.

TWO	Obj. 1.1.B	CORE 210	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4
	Access and Use Information	Score > 2.5	No assessment	61.7%	72%
		Acceptable Target (70%)	No assessment	Approaching	Met
		Ideal Target (80%)	No assessment	Not met	Not met
		Average of all samples	No assessment	2.45	2.59

**Results:** In 2014-15, 72% of sampled papers received a rubric rating of 2.5 or higher; meeting the acceptable target for this SLO. The ideal target was not met. A comparison with 2013-2014 data indicates a substantive 16.7% of increase for this year

**Objective 1.1.C.** Students will use information ethically and legally.

**Measurement:** Revised *EXPLORE II Rubric* ITEM THREE “Assess and use the information ethically and legally.” CORE 210 requires each student write a position paper guided by assigned components. This essay is scored using the Revised *EXPLORE II Rubric*\*.

**Acceptable Target:** 70% of the samples scored by faculty Assessment Team 2 using the Revised *EXPLORE II Rubric* ITEM THREE will average 2.5 or higher.

**Ideal Target:** 80% of the samples scored by faculty Assessment Team 2 using revised *EXPLORE II Rubric* ITEM THREE will average 2.5 or higher.

**Results:** In 2014-15, 66.67% of sampled papers received a rubric rating of 2.5 or higher; the acceptable target and ideal target for this SLO were not met. A comparison with 2013-2014 data indicates a slight increase in this outcome.

THREE	Obj. 1.1.C	CORE 210	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	
	Information Use Strategies	Score > 2.5		70.5%	61.7%	66.67%
		Acceptable Target (70%)		MET	Approaching	Approaching
		Ideal Target (80%)		Not met	Not met	Not met
		Average of all samples		2.63	2.5	2.66

### SLO 1.1 Composite

The QEP report calls for a composite score for 7.5 for SLOs ONE, TWO and THREE. An **acceptable target** of 70% of samples scoring 7.5 or higher and an **ideal target** of 80% of samples scoring 7.5 or higher. In 2014-15, 62.67% of sampled papers received a rubric rating of 7.5 or higher; the acceptable target and the ideal target were not met for this SLO. A comparison with 2013-2014 data indicates a slight but insignificant increase for this year, though the data seems to be approaching the acceptable target.

COMPOSITE	Obj. 1.1	CORE 210	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4
		Total > 7.5	63.6% (total > 5.0)	60.0%	62.67%
		Acceptable Target (70%)	Approaching	Not met	Approaching
		Ideal Target (80%)	Not met	Not met	Not met
		Average of all samples	5.29 (total > 5.0)	7.59	7.96

**SLO 1.2 Students will integrate knowledge to frame researchable questions and to develop strategies to seek answers.\***

**Objective 1.2.A.** Students will be able to describe major theories in the field relevant to a particular case, problem, or solution.

**Measurement:** A research artifact is assigned and collected in CORE 210 and assessed using the *EXPLORE II* Rubric ITEM FOUR.

**Acceptable Target:** 70% of the research artifacts (ITEM FOUR) will have an average score of 2.5 or higher and will have a Composite Score of 5.0 or higher on ITEMS FOUR and FIVE.

**Ideal Target:** 80% of the research articles will have an average score of 2.5 or higher and will have a Composite Score of 5.0 or higher on ITEMS FOUR and FIVE.

FOUR	Obj. 1.2.A	CORE 210	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4
		Score > 2.5	63.6%	41.7%	62.67%
	Describe Relevant Theories	Acceptable Target (70%)	Approaching	Not met	Approaching
		Ideal Target (80%)	Not met	Not met	Not met
		Average of all samples	2.5	2.16	2.54

**Results:** In fall of 2014-15, 62.67% of sampled papers received a rubric rating of 2.5 or higher; the SLO is approaching the acceptable target score; the ideal target score is not met. A comparison with 2013-2014 data indicates a substantive increase for this year.

**Objective 1.2.B.** Students will be able to describe findings and interpretations in the field relevant to a particular case, problem, or solution.

**Measurement:** The course's assigned position paper is collected in CORE 210 and assessed using the *EXPLORE II* Rubric on ITEM FIVE.

**Acceptable Target:** 70% of the research papers will have an average score of 2.5 or higher on ITEM FIVE.

**Ideal Target:** 80% of the research articles will have an average score of 2.5 or higher across these items.

**Results:** In 2014-15, 57.33% of sampled papers received a rubric rating of 2.5 or higher; target scores for this SLO are not met. A comparison with 2013-2014 data indicates a substantive 18.7% of increase for this year but a 9.9% of decrease from Year 2 2012-2013 data.

FIVE	Obj. 1.2.B	CORE 210	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4
	Analysis Applied to Situation	Score > 2.5	63.6%	48.3%	57.33%
		Acceptable Target (70%)	Approaching	Not met	Not met
		Ideal Target (80%)	Not met	Not met	Not met
		Average of all samples	2.53	2.27	2.41

**Composite Results:** The QEP report calls for a composite score for 7.5 for SLOs FOUR and FIVE. An **acceptable target** of 70% of samples scoring 5.0 or higher and an **ideal target** of 80% of samples scoring 5.0 or higher. In 2014-15, 56% of sampled papers received a rubric rating of 5.0 or higher; target scores for this SLO are not met. A comparison with 2013-2014 data indicates a substantive 52.6% of increase for 2014-2015.

COMPOSITE	Obj. 1.2	CORE 210	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4
		Total > 5.0	59.1%	36.7%	56%
		Acceptable Target (70%)	Not Met	Not met	Not met
		Ideal Target (80%)	Not met	Not met	Not met
		Average of all samples	5.03	4.44	4.96

**SLO 1.3 Students will analyze, interpret, and/or evaluate information and make and implement research informed decisions.**

**Objective 1.3.A.** Students will evaluate information and its sources critically and incorporate selected information into their knowledge base and value system.

**Measurement:** A research paper will be collected in CORE 210 and assessed using the *EXPLORE II* Rubric ITEM SIX.

**Acceptable Target:** 70% of the research artifacts (ITEM SIX) will have an average score of 3.0 or higher on ITEM SIX and a Composite Score of 5.0 or higher on ITEMS SIX and SEVEN.

**Ideal Target:** 80% of the research papers will have an average score of 3.0 or higher on ITEM SIX and a Composite Score of 5.0 or higher on ITEMS SIX and SEVEN.

SIX	Obj. 1.3.A	CORE 210	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4
	Evaluate Information	Score > 2.5	50%	40%	57.33%
		Acceptable Target (70%)	Not met	Not met	Not met
		Ideal Target (80%)	Not met	Not met	Not met
		Average of all samples	2.27	2.15	2.36

**Results:** In 2014-15, 57.33% of sampled papers received a rubric rating of 2.5 or higher; target scores for this SLO are not met. A comparison with 2013-2014 data indicates a substantive 43% of increase for this year.

**Objective 1.3.B.** Students will use multiple sources effectively to accomplish a specific purpose/assignment.

**Measurement:** The assigned research paper is assessed using the *EXPLORE II* Rubric on ITEMS SEVEN.

**Acceptable Target:** 70% of the research papers will have an average score of 3.0 or higher on ITEM SEVEN.

**Ideal Target:** 80% of the research papers will have an average score of 3.0 or higher on ITEM SEVEN of the rubric.

**Results:** In 2014-15, 70.67% of sampled papers received a rubric rating of 2.5 or higher; the acceptable target is met. A comparison with 2013-2014 data indicates a substantive 28% of increase for this year.

SEVEN	Obj. 1.3B	CORE 210	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	
	Use Information for a Purpose	Score > 2.5		65.9%	55.0%	70.67%
		Acceptable Target (70%)		Minimally Met	Not met	Met
		Ideal Target (80%)		Not met	Not met	Not met
		Average of all samples		2.67	2.4	2.54

**Composite Results:** The QEP report calls for a composite score for 7.5 for SLOs SIX and SEVEN. An **acceptable target** of 70% of samples scoring 5.0 or higher and an **ideal target** of 80% of samples scoring 5.0 or higher. In 2014-15, 57.33% of sampled papers received a rubric rating of 5.0 or higher; target scores for this SLO are not met. A comparison with 2013-2014 data indicates a substantive 33% of increase for 2014-2015.



COMPOSITE	Obj. 1.3	CORE 210	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4
		Total > 5.0	50%	43%	57.33%
		Acceptable Target (70%)	Not met	Not met	Not met
		Ideal Target (80%)	Not met	Not met	Not met
		Average of all samples	4.94	4.55	4.91

**Factors to consider for the 2014-2015 assessment:**

**Significant Changes to Assessment Rubric.** Looking back at the history of the course, the CORE 210 rubric was significantly revised for the YEAR 3 assessment. The first major revision occurred in SLO 1.1.A and 1.1.C following the changes made by the CORE 110 assessment team. Each of these rubric items assessed more than one skill; therefore, the two skills/outcomes were rated separately and the two ratings were averaged to determine the rubric score for each item. This change allowed for a more specific rating of each skill for SLO 1.1. In addition, the term “theories” in SLO 1.2.A and 1.2.B was very difficult to apply to the assignments generated from CORE 210. This year the language of these SLOs was revised to “...theories or perspectives” to allow for a broader application of the SLO especially as the BCOR 310 assessment team launched this year. When you understand these changes, Year 4 shows an improvement from the previous year, a large step in the right direction.

**Improvements found in CORE 110--Cornerstone.** If adaptations and pedagogical improvements are considered, the CORE 210 assessment data may be on the verge of a major improvement in the assessment data. If you compare the data from CORE 110—Cornerstone, assessment results have taken about 3 years of “closing the loop” and using assessment results to improve the assignment prompt, the pedagogy of faculty, and the learning strategies in order to show significant improvements in assessment results. Cornerstone results from 2014-2015 were outstanding, so it is hoped that similar improvements in assessment results will occur for CORE 210 in 2015-2016.

**Observations:**

The data indicate:

- Students are meeting the criteria for SLO 1.1; determining the nature and extent of the information needed, accessing the needed information effectively and efficiently, and using information ethically and legally.
  - Objective 1.1.C continues to be an area where papers fall short of the acceptable target rating. The assessment team observed students struggle with providing citations consistently – frequently not citing a source for information of a factual nature in introductory information and when giving their opinion. In addition, paraphrase and/or summary information was frequently too broad.

- Students are not meeting the criteria for SLO 1.2; describing theories or perspectives relevant to a particular case or problem and describing findings and interpretations relevant to a particular case or problem. However, substantive increases in performance were noted between 2013-14 and 2014-15; a 20% increase was observed in the composite score for this SLO.
  - The substantive increase in this SLO is attributable in part to the availability of the writing prompts to the assessment team. When the writing prompt is available, the team is able to assess the paper based on the expectations set forth by the instructor. The assessment team was able to match the rating level on the rubric to the content of the paper through the lens of the writing prompt.
- Students are not meeting one of the two criteria for SLO 1.3; evaluating information and its sources critically. However, students did meet the criteria of using information effectively to accomplish a specific purpose for this SLO. A substantive increase of 17% was noted in the other SLO, evaluating information between 2013-14 and 2014-15.

The Assessment Team had access to the writing prompts from the sections of CORE 210 taught in the fall and spring, which was extremely helpful in determining how well the paper met the expectations for the assignment. In particular, assessment of papers meeting the intended purpose was facilitated by having the writing prompt.

#### **Commendations:**

Thesis statements were readily identifiable in the majority of papers. This is noted in the improvements for SLO 1.1. The CORE 210 faculty are clearly helping students know the importance of the thesis statement. In addition, several writing prompts that were available to the assessment team were very detailed and assisted the team in understanding the expectations of the paper when applying the rubric.

The papers assessed this year made significant improvements in describing the theories or perspectives relevant to the thesis statement [SLO 1.2.A]. This is another area where the CORE 210 faculty should be commended. It is the opinion of the assessment team that this observation is attributable to the specificity of many of the writing prompts coupled with the improvements in defining the scope of the thesis statement.

#### **Closing the Loop—Recommendations for CORE 210:**

The assessment team continues to encourage the CORE 210 faculty to refine the writing prompts to assist students in knowing specific expectations of this paper. In addition, incorporating particular pieces of the *EXPLORE II* Rubric into the specific expectations of the writing prompt would benefit the student as well as the instructor. Suggested objectives from the rubric to address in the writing rubrics include Objectives 1.1.C, 1.2.A, 1.2.B and 1.3.A.

In SLO 1.1, the area of most concern is citing information ethically and legally. Most papers had evidence of the legal aspect of citations – a source was cited for some of the information in the paper. The ethical use of information continues to be problematic. In particular, citing sources in introductory paragraphs and when presenting an informed

opinion. The team acknowledges the sophisticated nature of this skill; however, the team encourages CORE 210 faculty to provide students feedback on this specific skill on drafts and the final paper.

**Assessment rubric – limitations:**

The assessment team continues to work through the tension of the differing expectations across the rubric levels for each objective. In particular, the team struggled to differentiate between the competent and emerging levels of Objective 1.2.B – the difference between these two levels is the use of professional language. Each semester the team has to identify a working definition of professional language during the norming process. Often, it is defined by what professional language is not – colloquial terms, poor grammar – as opposed to what it is.



In objective 1.3.A there is a significant amount of tension between the levels of competent, emerging and unacceptable. Interpreting and evaluating information is targeted. These three levels on the rubric refer to identifying assumptions and relevant contexts when presenting a position. If the writing prompt does not define the position or positions the paper is to address the team is left to assess this very broadly. The differences between rubric levels is indicated by non-specific referents such as “...several relevant contexts...” and “...some assumptions...” and “emerging awareness of present assumptions”.

The CORE 210 Assessment Report and *Explore II Rubric* for 2013-2014 are included in Appendix E.

**BCOR 310**

From a set of 606 students, 562 papers were collected (92.7%) from the 11 sections of BCOR taught in the fall and spring semesters of 2014-2015. A random sample of 66 papers was assessed from those 606 papers. The assessment took place at the close of the fall semester (30 papers assessed from 211 collected) and the close of the spring semester (36 papers assessed from 351 collected).

**SLO 1.1 Students will understand and appropriately use scholarly sources.**

**Objective 1.1.A.** Students will determine the nature and extent of the information needed.

ONE	Obj. 1.1.A	BCOR310	Year 3: 2013-2014	Year 4: 2014-2015		
				Fall 2014	Spring 2015	Overall Year 4
Determine Information Needed	Score $\geq$ 2.5	36.7%	75.0%	58.3%	65.9%	
	Acceptable Target (73%)	Not met	Met	Not met	Approaching	
	Ideal Target (85%)	Not met	Not met	Not met	Not met	
	Average of all samples	2.18	2.68	2.45	2.55	

**Measurement:** *EXPLORE II Rubric ITEMS ONE*. BCOR 310 requires each student write a research artifact guided by assigned components. This paper was evaluated by trained faculty on Assessment Team III utilizing the *EXPLORE II Rubric*.

**Acceptable Target:** 73% of the samples scored by faculty Assessment Team III using the Revised *EXPLORE II Rubric* ITEM ONE will average 2.5 or above AND 70% will have a composite score of 5.0 or higher.

**Ideal Target:** 85% of the students will score 2.5 or above on each of the seven components AND 80% will have a composite score of 6.0 or higher.

**Results:** The QEP report calls for an acceptable target of 73% of samples scoring 2.5 or higher and an ideal target of 85% of samples scoring 2.5 or higher for this rubric item. In the 2014-2015 assessment, 65.9% of sampled papers received a rubric rating of 2.5 or higher; thus **falling short of the acceptable target** for this SLO objective.

#### Comparisons.

- Despite falling short of the ideal target, there was significant improvement in the percentage of papers scoring 2.5 or higher on this SLO objective for Year 4 when compared to the assessment for Year 3 (2013-2014). The percent of increase is almost 80%.
- The Year 4 fall and spring data show significant differences in the percentage of sampled papers scoring above a 2.5 on this SLO. There was a 22% of decrease in scores from fall 2014 to spring 2015. This pattern is observed throughout the assessment data. See the “Factors Affecting Year 4 Assessment” below for discussion of this observation.

**Objective 1.1.B.** Students will access needed information effectively and efficiently.

	Obj. 1.1.B	BCOR310	Year 3: 2013- 2014	Year 4: 2014-2015		
				Fall 2014	Spring 2015	Overall Year 4
TWO	Access and Use Information	Score $\geq$ 2.5	<b>43.3%</b>	66.7%	69.4%	<b>68.2%</b>
		Acceptable Target (73%)	Not met	Approaching	Approaching	Approaching
		Ideal Target (85%)	Not met	Not met	Not met	Not met
		Average of all samples	2.05	2.58	2.57	2.58

**Measurement:** Revised *EXPLORE II Rubric* ITEM TWO: “Assess the needed information.” BCOR 310 requires each student write a research artifact meeting specific requirements. This paper is scored using the Revised *EXPLORE II Rubric*.

**Acceptable Target:** 73% of the samples scored by faculty Assessment Team III using the Revised *EXPLORE II Rubric* ITEM TWO will average 2.5 or higher.

**Ideal Target:** 85% of the samples scored by faculty Assessment Team III using the Revised *EXPLORE II Rubric* ITEM TWO will average 2.5 or higher.

**Results:** The QEP report calls for an acceptable target of 73% of samples scoring 2.5 or higher and an ideal target of 85% of samples scoring 2.5 or higher for this rubric item. In the 2014-2015 assessment, 68.2% of sampled papers received a rubric rating of 2.5 or higher; thus **falling short, but approaching the acceptable target** for this SLO objective.

#### **Comparisons.**

- Despite falling short of the target, we did observe an encouraging percent increase of 57.5% in the papers with a score of 2.5 or above from the Year 3 to Year 4 data.
- The fall 2014 and spring 2015 scores were very close for this SLO objective. The percent of increase between these numbers was just 4%.

**Objective 1.1.C.** Students will use information ethically and legally.

**Measurement:** Revised *EXPLORE II Rubric* ITEM THREE “Assess and use the information ethically and legally.” BCOR 310 requires each student write a research artifact guided by assigned components. This research paper is scored using the Revised *EXPLORE II Rubric*.

**Acceptable Target:** 73% of the samples scored by faculty Assessment Team III using the Revised *EXPLORE II Rubric* ITEM THREE will average 2.5 or higher.

**Ideal Target:** 85% of the samples scored by faculty Assessment Team III using revised *EXPLORE II Rubric* ITEM THREE will average 2.5 or higher.

**Results:** The QEP report calls for an acceptable target of 73% of samples scoring 2.5 or higher and an ideal target of 85% of samples scoring 2.5 or higher for this rubric item. In the 2014-2015 assessment, 69.7% of sampled papers received a rubric rating of 2.5 or higher; thus **falling short, but approaching the acceptable target** for this SLO objective.

### Comparisons.

- There is a notable 26.7% of increase in the papers with a rating of 2.5 or higher when comparing the Year 3 and Year 4 data.
- While both the fall and spring assessment data show increases compared to the Year 3 data, the absolute increase is more pronounced in the fall 2014 assessment. Note that there was 20% of decrease from the fall to spring scores in fall 2014 and spring 2015. Discussion of the possible reasons for these decreases will be discussed later in the report.

THREE	Obj. 1.1.C	BCOR310	Year 3: 2013- 2014	Year 4: 2014-2015		
				Fall 2014	Spring 2015	Overall Year 4
Information Use Strategies	Score $\geq$ 2.5	55.0%	78.3%	62.5%	69.7%	
	Acceptable Target (73%)	Not met	Met	Not met	Approaching	
	Ideal Target (85%)	Not met	Approaching	Not met	Not met	
	Average of all samples	2.42	2.61	2.42	2.51	

### SLO 1.1 Composite—Objective 1.1.A + 1.1.B + 1.1.C

SLO 1.1 calls for students to understand and appropriately use scholarly sources.

COMPOSITE SLO 1.1	BCOR310	Year 3: 2013-2014	Year 4: 2014-2015		
			Fall 2014	Spring 2015	Overall Year 4
Total $\geq$ 7.5	37.0%	60.0%	52.8%	56.1%	
Acceptable Target (73%)	Not met	Not met	Not met	Not met	
Ideal Target (85%)	Not met	Not met	Not met	Not met	
Average of all samples	2.22	2.62	2.48	2.55	

**Composite Results:** The SLO is broken down into 3 objectives, 1.1.A, 1.1.B, and 1.1.C, as described above. The QEP report calls for a composite score of 7.5 for SLO 1.1. The acceptable target is 73% of samples scoring 7.5 or higher, while the ideal target is 85% of samples meeting this score. In the 2014-2015 assessment, 56.1% of sampled papers received a composite score of 7.5 or higher; thus **falling short of the acceptable target** for this SLO objective.

**Comparisons.**

- Despite falling short of the goal, there is a significant 51.6% of increase in the number of papers with a composite score of 7.5 or higher comparing the Year 3 and Year 4 data.
- Fall and spring data again shows a decline in the spring semester scores for this academic year. Results from the spring data show a percentage decrease of 12% from fall 2014.

**SLO 1.2 Students will integrate knowledge to frame reresearchable questions and to develop strategies to seek answers.\***

**Objective 1.2.A.** Students will be able to describe major theories in the field relevant to a particular case, problem, or solution.

**Measurement:** A research artifact is assigned and collected in BCOR 310 and assessed using the *EXPLORE II* Rubric ITEM FOUR.

**Acceptable Target:** 73% of the research artifacts (ITEM FOUR) will have an average score of 2.5 or higher and will have a Composite Score of 5.0 or higher on ITEMS FOUR and FIVE.

**Ideal Target:** 85% of the research articles will have an average score of 2.5 or higher and will have a Composite Score of 5.0 or higher on ITEMS FOUR and FIVE.

**Results:** The QEP report calls for an acceptable target of 73% of samples scoring 2.5 or higher and an ideal target of 85% of samples scoring 2.5 or higher. In the 2014-2015 assessment, 53.0% of sampled papers received a rubric rating of 2.5 or higher; thus **falling short of the acceptable target** for this SLO objective.

FOUR	Obj. 1.2.A	BCOR310	Year 3: 2013- 2014	Year 4: 2014-2015		
				Fall 2014	Spring 2015	Overall Year 4
Describe Relevant Theories	Score $\geq$ 2.5	51.7%	66.7%	41.7%	53.0%	
	Acceptable Target (73%)	Not met	Approaching	Not met	Not met	
	Ideal Target (85%)	Not met	Not met	Not met	Not met	
	Average of all samples	2.28	2.47	2.15	2.30	

**Comparisons.**

- Gains from Year 3 to Year 4 were insignificant and showed only a 2.5% of increase in scores.
- Comparison of scores in fall and spring of 2014-2015 show a 37.5% of decrease from fall to spring. This drop in scores will be discussed below.

**Objective 1.2.B.** Students will be able to describe findings and interpretations in the field relevant to a particular case, problem, or solution.

**Measurement:** The course’s assigned research artifact is collected in BCOR 310 and assessed using the *EXPLORE II* Rubric on ITEM FIVE.

**Acceptable Target:** 73% of the research papers will have an average score of 2.5 or higher on ITEM FIVE.

**Ideal Target:** 85% of the research articles will have an average score of 2.5 or higher across these items.

**Results:** The QEP report calls for an acceptable target of 73% of samples scoring 2.5 or higher and an ideal target of 85% of samples scoring 2.5 or higher. In the 2014-2015 assessment, 51.5% of sampled papers received a rubric rating of 2.5 or higher; thus **falling short of the acceptable target** for this SLO objective.

FIVE	Obj. 1.2.B	BCOR310	Year 3: 2013- 2014	Year 4: 2014-2015		
				Fall 2014	Spring 2015	Overall Year 4
		Score $\geq$ 2.5	51.7%	70.0%	31.6%	51.5%
	Analysis Applied to Situation	Acceptable Target (73%)	Not met	Approaching	Not met	Not met
		Ideal Target (85%)	Not met	Not met	Not met	Not met
		Average of all samples	2.34	2.52	2.11	2.30

**Comparisons.**

- Overall, the 2014-2015 results showed a small, insignificant drop of 0.3% of decrease in the scores in comparison to the assessment data for Year 3 (2013-2014).
- A large difference between the fall and spring assessment data was observed for this particular SLO objective. The data from spring showed a significant 48.4% of decrease from the papers assessed in the fall of 2014-2015. This is a matter of concern that needs to be further studied.



**SLO 1.2 Composite—Objective 1.2.A + 1.2.B**

SLO 1.2 calls for students to integrate knowledge to frame researchable questions and to develop strategies to seek answers.

COMPOSITE SLO 1.2	BCOR310	Year 3: 2013-2014	Year 4: 2014-2015		
			Fall 2014	Spring 2015	Overall Year 4
	Total $\geq$ 5.0	<b>45.0%</b>	56.7%	30.6%	<b>42.4%</b>
	Acceptable Target (73%)	Not met	Not met	Not met	Not met
	Ideal Target (85%)	Not met	Not met	Not met	Not met
	Average of all samples	2.31	2.49	2.13	2.30

**Composite Results:** The SLO is broken down into 2 objectives, 1.2.A and 1.2.B, as described above. The QEP report calls for a composite score for 5.0 for SLO 1.2. The acceptable target is 73% of samples scoring 5.0 or higher, while the ideal target is 85% of samples scoring 5.0 or higher.

In the 2014-2015 assessment, 42.4% of sampled papers received a composite score of 5.0 or higher; thus **not meeting or approaching the acceptable target** for this SLO objective. The Year 4 assessment data shows a slight but insignificant drop from the assessment from Year 3.

**Comparisons.**

- Scores from Year 3 to Year 4 showed a 5.8% of decrease.
- Scores from fall 2014 to spring 2015 showed a 31.4% of decrease. This is cause for concern and will be addressed below.

**SLO 1.3 Students will analyze, interpret, and/or evaluate information and make and implement research informed decisions.**

**Objective 1.3.A.** Students will evaluate information and its sources critically and incorporate selected information into their knowledge base and value system.

**Measurement:** A research paper will be collected in BCOR 310 and assessed using the *EXPLORE II* Rubric ITEM SIX.

**Acceptable Target:** 73% of the research artifacts (ITEM SIX) will have an average score of 2.5 or higher on ITEM SIX and a Composite Score of 5.0 or higher on ITEMS SIX and SEVEN.

**Ideal Target:** 85% of the research papers will have an average score of 2.5 or higher on ITEM SIX and a Composite Score of 5.0 or higher on ITEMS SIX and SEVEN.

**Results:** The QEP report calls for an acceptable target of 73% of samples scoring 2.5 or higher and an ideal target of 85% of samples scoring 2.5 or higher for this objective. In the 2014-2015 assessment, 56.1% of sampled papers received a rubric rating of 2.5 or higher; thus **not meeting the acceptable target** for this SLO objective.

SIX	Obj. 1.3.A	BCOR310	Year 3: 2013- 2014	Year 4: 2014-2015		
				Fall 2014	Spring 2015	Overall Year 4
		Score $\geq$ 2.5	<b>52.0%</b>	80.0%	36.1%	<b>56.1%</b>
	Evaluate Information	Acceptable Target (73%)	Not met	Met	Not met	Not met
		Ideal Target (85%)	Not met	Approaching	Not met	Not met
		Average of all samples	2.25	2.55	2.14	2.33

**Comparisons.**

- Comparison of results from Year 3 and Year 4 shows a percentage of increase of 7.9%.
- Comparison of results from fall 2014 to spring 2015 shows a significant 54.9% of decrease. This follows the observed trend in decreased scores from fall 2014 to spring 2015.

**Objective 1.3.B.** Students will use multiple sources effectively to accomplish a specific purpose/assignment.

**Measurement:** The assigned research paper is assessed using the *EXPLORE II* Rubric on ITEMS SEVEN.

**Acceptable Target:** 70% of the research papers will have an average score of 3.0 or higher on ITEM SEVEN.

**Ideal Target:** 80% of the research papers will have an average score of 3.0 or higher on ITEM SEVEN of the rubric.

**Results:** The QEP report calls for an acceptable target of 73% of samples scoring 2.5 or higher and an ideal target of 85% of samples scoring 2.5 or higher for this objective. In the 2014-2015 assessment, 62.1% of sampled papers received a rubric rating of 2.5 or higher. This **does not meet the acceptable target** for this SLO objective.

SEVEN	Obj. 1.3.B	BCOR310	Year 3: 2013- 2014	Year 4: 2014-2015		
				Fall 2014	Spring 2015	Overall Year 4
	Use Information for a Purpose	Score $\geq$ 2.5	55.0%	70.0%	55.6%	62.1%
		Acceptable Target (73%)	Not met	Approaching	Not met	Not met
		Ideal Target (85%)	Not met	Not met	Not met	Not met
Average of all samples		2.70	2.67	2.35	2.49	

**Comparisons.**

- Comparison results from Year 3 and Year 4 show a small but significant 12.9% of increase.
- From the fall of 2014 to spring of 2015 there was a significant 20.6% percent of decrease.

**SLO 1.3 Composite—Objective 1.3.A + 1.3.B**

SLO 1.3 calls for students to analyze, interpret, and/or evaluate information and make and implement research informed decisions.

COMPOSITE SLO 1.3	BCOR310	Year 3: 2013-2014	Year 4: 2014-2015		
			Fall 2014	Spring 2015	Overall Year 4
	Total $\geq$ 5.0	45.0%	66.7%	38.9%	51.5%
	Acceptable Target (73%)	Not met	Approaching	Not met	Not met
	Ideal Target (85%)	Not met	Not met	Not met	Not met
Average of all samples	2.47	2.61	2.24	2.41	

**Composite Results:** This SLO is broken down into 2 objectives, 1.3A and 1.3B, as described above. The QEP report calls for a composite score for 5.0 for SLO 1.3. The acceptable target is 73% of samples scoring 5.0 or higher, while the ideal target is 85% of samples scoring 5.0 or higher. In the 2014-2015 assessment, 51.5% of sampled papers received a composite score of 5.0 or higher, **not meeting the acceptable target** of 73%.

**Comparisons.**

- Comparative examination of Year 3 and Year 4 shows a slight but significant percent of increase of 14.4%.
- The fall to spring data continue the downward trend as the year progresses. There is a percent decrease of 41.7% in the scores from fall 2014 to spring 2015.

## Overall Findings

The assessment team noted an overall increase in quality of the BCOR research papers this year. This anecdotal observation was reflected in our numerical analysis, which showed promising **increases in most SLOs**. We recognize the work of the BCOR faculty and hope our previous recommendations helped guide areas of improvement for the course.

The area with the **greatest improvement** is in SLO objectives 1.1.A, 1.1.B and 1.1.C. We applaud the BCOR faculty for making great strides in each of these SLO objectives. The most improved area was 1.1.A, which deals with writing a research question and choosing sources that relate to the research question. We also noticed improvement in development of introductory and concluding paragraphs.

The data also show **improvement** with SLO objectives 1.3.A and 1.3.B, although the difference between the Year 3 and Year 4 data is not as pronounced as the difference in 1.1.A, 1.1.B and 1.1.C. We found large gains in this area at the fall 2014 assessment, but assessment of the spring sections of BCOR showed similar, or worse, results than the Year 3 data. The difference between semesters is discussed further below.

We found basically **no change** in the assessment for SLO objectives 1.2.A and 1.2.B from Year 3 to Year 4. It is worth noting that the fall BCOR sections performed much better on these objectives than the spring BCOR sections.

**Summary Table Showing the Percent of Increase or Decrease from Year 3 to Year 4**

SLO	Description of SLO	Percent Change
1.1.A	Determine the nature and extent of information needed	+ 80.0%
1.1.B	Access needed information effectively and efficiently	+ 57.5%
1.1.C	Use information ethically and legally	+ 26.7%
<b>1.1 Composite</b>	<b>Understand and appropriately use scholarly sources</b>	<b>+ 51.6%</b>
1.2.A	Describe relevant theories or perspectives	+ 2.5%
1.3.B	Apply interpretations relevant to a case or problem	- 0.3%
1.2 Composite	Integrate knowledge to frame questions and develop strategies to seek answers	- 5.8%
1.3.A	Evaluate information and use sources critically	+ 7.9%
1.3.B	Use information to accomplish a purpose	+ 12.9%
<b>1.3 Composite</b>	<b>Analyze, interpret or evaluate information and make decisions</b>	<b>+ 14.4%</b>

## Factors Impacting Year 4 (2014-2015) Assessment

### *Prompts*

Fall 2014. The assessment team met the week after the fall semester ended to assess the BCOR research artifacts collected from the fall 2014 sections. On the day of the assessment, the team was provided with the prompts from each section of BCOR. Additionally, the team was told which papers corresponded to a given prompt. We did not have this information during the Year 3 (2013-2014) assessment. We believe **having the prompt for each paper was an improvement** over the organization of the 2013-2014 assessments.

Spring 2015. The team was provided with the three prompts used in different sections of BCOR. During the spring 2015 assessment, the team used two of the prompts from the previous fall, and received one updated prompt for the spring sections. It is unclear whether the two reused prompts matched what was given to spring 2015 BCOR students.

**Having the prompt for each paper is a necessity and an improvement** over the organization of the 2013-2014 assessment. **Better communication** in 2015-2016 will ensure the prompts the assessment team uses match the prompts given to students and provide for a more accurate assessment.

The team recognizes that the prompts for Year 4 were improved compared to the 2013-2014 assessment. **Prompts were clearer, more focused, and addressed several of the recommendations the assessment team suggested last year.** For instance, the findings from the 2013-2014 assessments found many students were writing film reviews. Year 4 prompts very clearly stated that a film review would not satisfy the assignment. Correspondingly, there was a significant drop in the number of papers regarded as “reviews” this year. Additionally, the team noticed an improvement in research question development in Year 4 papers compared to the Year 3 assessment. Wording in two of the three prompts encouraged and helped students to write good research questions. The assessment team recognizes the professors for their focus on the research question and encourage continued focus on this aspect of the research paper.

### *Amount of Research Required*

The team noticed significant **variability in the types of research required, the number of scholarly sources,** and the materials used for research in the prompts.

### *Rubric Interpretation*

During the normalization process conducted before assessment, team members discussed the incongruence in some of the categories on the rubric. The normalization process exists to assist reviewers in coming to a consistent understanding of rubric categories. The observed inconsistencies may be a possible factor impacting the assessment data. It is recommended faculty and assessment team members work together to discuss possible revisions in the language found in the rubric.

### *Plagiarism*

The team noticed different levels of plagiarism in several papers. This issue was more pronounced during the spring 2015 assessment. The team members noticed cases of suspected plagiarism. We also noticed several papers with missing or partial citations.

### Commendations for Faculty

The assessment team recognizes the BCOR faculty for their focus on the research question and encourages continued focus on this aspect of the research paper. The assessment team anecdotally recognized that students given examples of thesis statements were able to develop their own thesis statements better than others. When comparing assessments from Year 3 to Year 4, the assessment team noticed an improvement in the quality of introductions and conclusions in student writing. The assessment team also appreciated the consistency in the required citation style this year.

The team recognizes the hard work of the BCOR faculty to improve student research papers from Year 3 to Year 4. While room for improvement exists, it is obvious that the faculty have made great strides in focusing the prompts and working on the student use of scholarly sources.

**Recommendations for the BCOR teaching team.** Based on the 2014-2015 assessment, the BCOR assessment team has several recommendations for the BCOR faculty for next year. These can be found in the BCOR 310 Assessment Report in Appendix F.

### Capstone

During the fall and spring semesters, the university had 38 sections of courses that departments had designated as a capstone experience and 37 of these sections submitted capstone papers. There were a total of 667 students enrolled and 619 papers were submitted to the *Pursuit* Office. A simple random sample of 60 papers was assessed from the 619 papers submitted.

### SLO 2.1.A – Students will demonstrate effective use of information literacy skills through writing.

#### *Use of Sources to Answer Question*

The QEP report calls for an acceptable target of 73% of the sample papers be scored at or above 2.5 and an ideal target of 85% of sample papers be scored at or above 2.5 for this objective. In the 2014–2015 assessment, 43.3% of the sample papers scored at or above 2.5. The inter-rater reliability was good for this objective with 53.3% of the papers receiving the same score, 43.3% of the papers receiving scores within one point of each other, and 3.3% of the papers receiving scores that differ by two points.

Rubric	Capstone Experience	QEP Year 4 2014–2015
Use of Sources to Answer Question	Score $\geq$ 2.5	43.3%
	Acceptable Target (73%)	Not met
	Ideal Target (85%)	Not met
	Average of Samples	2.1

*Ethical and Appropriate Use of Sources*

The QEP report calls for an acceptable target of 73% of the sample papers be scored at or above 2.5 and an ideal target of 85% of sample papers be scored at or above 2.5 for this objective. In the 2014–2015 assessment, 50.0% of the sample papers scored at or above 2.5. The inter-rater reliability was good for this objective with 58.3% of the papers receiving the same score, 33.3% of the papers receiving scores within one point of each other, and 8.3% of the papers receiving scores that differ by two points.

Rubric	Capstone Experience	QEP Year 4 2014–2015
Ethical and Appropriate Use of Sources	Score $\geq$ 2.5	50.0%
	Acceptable Target (73%)	Not met
	Ideal Target (85%)	Not met
	Average of Samples	2.1

***SLO Objective 2.1.B – Students will apply information to planning and creation of a product or performance.***

*Organization or Structure*

The QEP report calls for an acceptable target of 73% of the sample papers be scored at or above 2.5 and an ideal target of 85% of sample papers be scored at or above 2.5 for this objective. In the 2014–2015 assessment, 83.3% of the sample papers scored at or above 2.5. The inter-rater reliability was relative good for this objective with 44.2% of the papers receiving the same score, 49.2% of the papers receiving scores within one point of each other, and 6.7% of the papers receiving scores that differ by two points.

Rubric	Capstone Experience	QEP Year 4 2014–2015
Organization or Structure	Score $\geq$ 2.5	83.3%
	Acceptable Target (73%)	Met
	Ideal Target (85%)	Approaching
	Average of Samples	2.7

### *Mechanics*

The QEP report calls for an acceptable target of 73% of the sample papers be scored at or above 2.5 and an ideal target of 85% of sample papers be scored at or above 2.5 for this objective. In the 2014–2015 assessment, 83.3% of the sample papers scored at or above 2.5. The inter-rater reliability was OK for this objective with 48.3% of the papers receiving the same score, 45.0% of the papers receiving scores within one point of each other, and 6.7% of the papers receiving scores that differ by two points.

<b>Rubric</b>	<b>Capstone Experience</b>	<b>QEP Year 4 2014–2015</b>
Mechanics	Score $\geq$ 2.5	83.3%
	Acceptable Target (73%)	Met
	Ideal Target (85%)	Approaching
	Average of Samples	2.7

### ***SLO Objective 2.1.C – Students will demonstrate critical thinking as they develop, produce, and evaluate product or performance.***

#### *Purpose of Project*

The QEP report calls for an acceptable target of 73% of the sample papers be scored at or above 2.5 and an ideal target of 85% of sample papers be scored at or above 2.5 for this objective. In the 2014–2015 assessment, 80% of the sample papers scored at or above 2.5. The inter-rater reliability was relatively good for this objective with 55.0% of the papers receiving the same score, 41.7% of the papers receiving scores within one point of each other, and 3.3% of the papers receiving scores that differ by two points.

<b>Rubric</b>	<b>Capstone Experience</b>	<b>QEP Year 4 2014–2015</b>
Purpose of Project	Score $\geq$ 2.5	80%
	Acceptable Target (73%)	Met
	Ideal Target (85%)	Approaching
	Average of Samples	2.7



## *Integrative Learning*

The QEP report calls for an acceptable target of 73% of the sample papers be scored at or above 2.5 and an ideal target of 85% of sample papers be scored at or above 2.5 for this objective. In the 2014–2015 assessment, 46.7% of the sample papers scored at or above 2.5. The inter-rater reliability was not good for this objective with 35.0% of the papers receiving the same score, 43.3% of the papers receiving scores within one point of each other, and 21.7% of the papers receiving scores that differ by two points.

<b>Rubric</b>	<b>Capstone Experience</b>	<b>QEP Year 4 2014–2015</b>
Integrative Learning	Score $\geq$ 2.5	46.7%
	Acceptable Target (73%)	Not met
	Ideal Target (85%)	Not met
	Average of Samples	2.3

## **Commendations and Recommendations**

1. Departments and Capstone faculty are to be commended for their high rate of participation and submission of students' Capstone papers this first year.
2. Dan Brannan, Stephen Baldrige, Suzie Macaluso, Sarah Lee, Nancy Jordan, Rodney Ashlock, Brenda Bender, and Denise Barnett are to be commended for developing a rubric that the committee could use to assess the first round of Capstone papers.
3. The committee recommends that the rubric be tweaked. It is not clear who would make the decision on changing the rubric. Items mentioned by the committee to consider are the following:
  - Improve consistency in the levels of the rubric. For example, adequate is used at the effective level in purpose of project and is used at the emergent level for organization or structure.
  - Provide explicit quantitative expectations. The emergent level for integrative learning states "few connections." This is too ambiguous—is it one, two, three or fewer.
  - Possibly consider collapsing the rubric into three levels from the four. Having four levels does require the committee members to divide the papers into above average and below average. Having only three levels would
4. The committee recommends that someone oversee the Senior-Year Integrative Capstone. Although discussions about eliminating some CORE classes are

under way, CORE 120, CORE 210, and BCOR 310 each have a course director that coordinates with CORE instructors about required syllabus components and course outcomes. A Capstone director would, similarly, coordinate with Capstone faculty about required assignments in a Capstone course.

## **FACULTY-GUIDED RESEARCH ASSESSMENTS**

During Academic Year 2014-2015 (Year 4), it was expected that the number of faculty-guided research or creative-activity projects would increase within academic departments. This was accomplished through an increased focus in introducing, practicing, and reinforcing information literacy skills in general education classes (CORE 110, CORE 210, BCOR 310, ENGL112, and COMS 211), through student creation and production of new information in activities in which they wrote, presented, and performed, and through financial support from *Pursuit* Research Grants and travel grants for faculty and students and the Undergraduate Research Festival.

### **Faculty-guided Research**

Data was collected during each academic year for faculty-guided research and creative activity projects funded through *Pursuit* Research Grants and from data provided by departments and collected on the Annual Outcomes Report.

## **SLO 2.2: Students conduct faculty-guided original work relevant to the field of study.**

**Objective 2.2.A.** Students engaged in faculty-guided work will be able to perform appropriate research steps in the development/creation of discipline-specific projects.

**Measurement:** Students [working with faculty on *Pursuit* Research Grants] will keep a *Research Activity Journal* that is graded by a faculty mentor using the *CREATE Rubric* ITEMS ONE, TWO, AND THREE.

**Acceptable Target:** Each individual item will have 80% of the journals average 3.0 on each item. 80% of the journals will score 80% of the total rubric score.

**Ideal Target:** Each individual item will have 85% of the journals average 3.0 on each item. 85% of the journals will score 85% of the total rubric score.

**Results:** Collection and assessment of the student's Research Journal as the assessment for this project was revised early in the project for two reasons. First, due to the variety and type of projects from both STEM areas and arts and humanities, a comparison of research journals was not feasible for assessment. Also, in order to keep the student researchers answers open and truthful, it was decided that grading the responses by a faculty member would bias the researcher in the prompt. The students submitted final reflective responses answering the following questions:

- Have I reached the goals that were prescribed in the beginning of the project? Was the pace of the project appropriate? What results did I find in my project?
- What did I learn? What are the benefits I received from the project? What results were surprising to me? What did I expect to find as a result of the project? What did I **not** expect to find?
- What plans do I have for the future? Will I continue to work on this project or an extension of this project?
- Would you recommend this type of project to another intern? Why or why not? What recommendations for change would you suggest?
- What scholarly product(s) do you expect from the project? What presentations have you made or plan to make?

Reflective responses from 2014-2015 (Year 4), final reflective journal responses were collected and from 11 faculty projects that included 20 students. Journals were collected in May at the end of the project year.

**Question 1.** Have I reached the goals that were prescribed in the beginning of the project? Was the pace of the project appropriate? What results did I find in my project?

Over 77% of students responded affirmatively to the question; 11.1% said they did not reach their goals but that they had learned what to change to achieve better results. Students commented that research is difficult. One student said that he learned that he really enjoyed this field of work; another said that the project surpassed all expectations but was very challenging; research prompts more questions.

**Question 2.** What did I learn? What are the benefits I received from the project? What results were surprising to me? What did I expect to find as a result of the project? What did I **not** expect to find?

Students commented that the answers they found were more complex than the previously thought, that research was hard; some experiments had strange results or had failed reactions. They learned to work in teams and use the safety protocols they had learned. Researchers commented that they gained more knowledge than they expected but walked away with much more than they had expected. A comment was that "One can learn more from failures than from successes." You need to be patient and flexible as you apply textbook knowledge in real-life situations. It is "challenging to think on my feet." Of the 18 students responding,

over 94% of the students mentioned being surprised by the failures and how much they had learned working on the projects.

**Question 3.** What plans do I have for the future? Will I continue to work on this project or an extension of this project?

67% of students who responded said that they would continue to work on this project, continue to develop their research skills, or had plans to find outlets for research. One student said he was “inspired to pursue further interests in research. 22% specifically mentioned their plans for graduate school.

**Question 4.** Would you recommend this type of project to another intern? Why or why not? What recommendations for change would you suggest?

Of the students who responded to this question, over 88% would definitely recommend participating in a research project. 100% were overwhelmingly positive in recommending the project to another intern; comments included: invaluable to a science major; excited for two new research students to continue my project; pushed me to really work hard in a fast-paced environment; and learned to work with others. One student did not respond to this question.

**Question 5.** What scholarly product(s) do you expect from the project? What presentations have you made or plan to make?

Of the students who responded, 100% of responses reported a presentation at the ACU Research Festival on campus; over 88% presented at conferences external to ACU; over 27% of the researchers were working on articles and plan on submitting them to academic journals. One researcher did not respond to this question.

**Objective 2.2.B** Students engaged in faculty-guided work will be able to draw sound conclusions from the results of the project in order to identify future directions (use of evaluated results).

**Measurement:** Students will submit a *Student Self-Rating for Pursuit-Funded Project*. This report will be assessed using the *CREATE Rubric* ITEMS FOUR, FIVE, AND SIX.

**Acceptable Target:** Each individual item will have 80% of the reports average 3.0 on each item. 80% of the reports will score 80% of the total rubric score.

**Ideal Target:** Each individual item will have 85% of the reports average 3.0 on each item. 85% of the reports will score 85% of the total rubric score.

**Results:** In anticipation of collection and assessment of the *Student Self-Rating for Pursuit-Funded Project*, the assessment was revised due to the

variety and type of projects from both STEM areas and arts and humanities. Instead of using the *CREATE Rubric*, the student responses on the *Assessment of Project Report* were scored and used comparatively.

At the end of 2014-2015 (Year 4), student responses on the *Student Self-Rating for Pursuit-Funded Project* were submitted and assessed. Reports are collected in May at the end of the project year. A Likert scale was used to rank the following competencies on a 0-4 scale:

1. Purpose of Project—clarity and focus and degree of high level thinking skills;
2. Organizing—time frame, organization, plan, and appropriate time limits;
3. Gathering or Seeking—variety and selection of resources
4. Appraising—selection and information to answer question or focus of project;
5. Synthesizing or Constructing Knowledge—evaluation of complex information and ideas, theories, or perspectives; and
6. Evaluating the Final Product—product answers the question or focus with accuracy, detail, and understanding.

**Results:**

1. Purpose of Project: project scores ranged from 3 to 4, with an average of 3.82, up from Year 3; there were no individual scores lower than 3.
2. Organizing: project scores ranged from 2 to 4, with an average of 3.2 overall, down a little from Year 3.
3. Gathering Information: project scores ranged from 3 to 4, with an average project score of 3.69.
4. Appraising: project scores ranged from 3 to 4; with an average project score of 3.47, up from Year 3; no individual scores fell below 2.
5. Synthesizing or Constructing Knowledge—project scores ranged from 2 to 4 with an average project score of 3.375; individual scores did fall below 3.
6. Evaluating the Final Project—project scores ranged from 3 to 4 with an overall project average of 3.41; individual scores fell below 3.

Students assessed their projects anonymously on the *Student Self-Rating for Pursuit-Funded Project*. Overall, the average of the project scores for all competencies was 3.49 on a 4-point scale. Student scores did not vary greatly. A copy of the questions and scale for the *Student Self-Rating for Pursuit-Funded Project* can be found in Appendix H.

**Operational Objective 2.2C:** The number of faculty-guided research/creative activity projects will increase within academic departments.

**Measurement:** All academic departments report the number and type of faculty-guided research and creative activity projects conducted on an annual basis. These data are reported in the Annual Assessment Cycle.

**Acceptable Target:** All departments report these data. The increase of faculty-guided research and creative activities will increase by 50% across the institution by Year Five.

**Ideal Target:** There will be a 75% increase in the number of faculty-guided research and creative activities across the institution by Year Five.

**Results:** All but 3 departments reported data in Year 4. Note that Agriculture and Environmental Science, Family Studies, and Psychology were non-reporting on the Annual Assessment Cycle. Two of these departments provide multiple research projects for their students. It is unfortunate that these department do not have data for our report.

Obj 2.2.C	Year 1 2011-12	Year 2** 2012-13	Year 3*** 2013-14	Year 4 2014-15	Year 5 2015-16
Indep res beyond course requirement	171	119	151	177	
Research w/ fac mentor	168	189	331	183	
Presented or co-authored paper/project at conferences	73	86	120	111	
Orig work for juried show	65	162	228	127	
Performed for jury outside dept requirement	26	55	67	45	
Published article related to discipline	13	12	15	14	

<b>Research Festival</b>	91	90	151	116	
<b>Participated in research activity not mentioned above</b>	11	57	75	28	
<b>Number of individual students represented</b>	*	465	609	420	
<b>Percent Increase/Decrease</b>	N/A	N/A	+30.9%	-31.03%	
<b>Undergraduate Enrollment In fall</b>	3771	3626	3727	3650	

\*Note: It was discovered that data collected in Year 1 utilized descriptions of student involvement in research projects ambiguously so that some of the same students were counted multiple times and were, therefore, not mutually exclusive. Therefore, the number of individual students in Year 1 is omitted from this report.



**ACU Undergraduate Research**

**SLO 3.1:** Students will publicly disseminate independent scholarly, and creative work in a public setting.

**Objective 3.1.A.** Students will produce independent scholarly and/or creative products.

**Measurement:** Students producing scholarly or creative work for the Undergraduate Research Festival must submit abstracts describing the product. Faculty reviewers assess the abstracts using the *Review of Submitted Abstracts Rubric*.

**Acceptable target:** 80% of abstracts will have 3.0 or higher on each item. [Adapted to 7 or higher out of 12]

**Ideal target:** 80% of abstracts will have a 3.3 or higher on each item. [Adapted to 8 or higher out of 12.]

Obj 3.1.A	Year 1* 2011-12	Year 2 2012-13	Year 3 2013-14	Year 4 2014-15	Year 5 2015-16
Percent > 7 out of 12	-	94%	95.7%	98.1%	
Acceptable Target (80% of 7 or higher)	-	Met	Met	Met	
Percent > 8 out of 12		90.2%	94.0%	91.6%	
Ideal Target (80% of 8 or higher)	-	Met	Met	Met	
Acceptance Rate	85.7%	98.9%	98.3%	97.2%	

\*Rubric was not utilized in Year 1.

**Results:** In 2015, 126 abstracts were submitted to the ACU Undergraduate Research Festival, a slight decrease from 131 in 2014. This is still a significant increase over the 98 abstracts submitted in 2013. One hundred and twenty three of the abstracts were submitted by ACU Students, consistent with 124 in 2014 and up from 92 in 2013. Only three abstracts were rejected two of which were by ACU students. Sixteen abstracts were not reviewed by their departments. These abstracts went before the final review committee which reviews abstracts that receives 2's on the rubric to decide whether they should be accepted to the conference. This committee does not score the abstracts on the rubric, therefore, 16 ACU abstracts do not have scores. Before the conference, three presentations were withdrawn.

Of the 107 scored abstracts submitted by ACU students, 105 (98.1%) reached the Acceptable Target. Eighty-three abstracts (94.0%) reached the Ideal Target. Thus, 3 scored abstracts were not accepted to the Undergraduate Research Festival for a 97.2% acceptance rate.

**Measurement:** Students who received grants from the Office of Undergraduate Research or Pursuit Grants will submit a paper or creative work based on their project to their mentoring faculty member. Faculty members submit the report to the *Pursuit* Team. Faculty reviewers will assess the work using *Writing Assessment Rubric*.

**Acceptable Target:** 80% of papers or creative work will receive a total score of 15 out of 25 points or higher on the rubric.



**Ideal Target:** 80% of papers will receive 20 out of 25 points or higher.

**Results:** The Office of Undergraduate Research does not require students who receive summer stipends to submit a paper summarizing the results of their project. Students who work with a faculty member on Pursuit Research Grants submit two assessment reports at the completion of their projects. Results from those reports will be used for assessment of this objective. See Objective 2.2.A and 2.2.B results above.

**Measurement:** Students who received grants from the Office of Undergraduate Research or Pursuit Research Grants will submit a self-assessment entitled *Research Project: Student Self-Assessment of Project Report* to their faculty mentor. Faculty members submit the report to the *Pursuit* Team.

**Acceptable Target:** 80% of papers or creative work will receive a total score of 15 out of 25 points or higher on the rubric.

**Ideal Target:** 80% of papers will receive 20 out of 25 points or higher.

**Results:** The Office of Undergraduate Research does not require students to complete the *Student Self-Assessment of Project Report*. 2013-2014 (Year 3), student *Assessment of Project Reports* from Pursuit Research Grants were assessed using the Acceptable and Ideal Targets. Results can be found in 2.2.B above.

**Objective 3.1.B** Students will demonstrate professionalism in the presentation of scholarly and creative products beyond the classroom.

**Measurement:** Student work accepted to the Undergraduate Research Festival will be assessed using *Papers/Verbal Presentations Rubric* or *Posters/Presentations Rubric*. Faculty score the papers/posters products.

**Acceptable target:** 70% of products/presentations will score 50 or higher out of a total score of 90 on the rubric. [Adapted to a total score of 38.9 points out of 70 points on the verbal presentations rubric and 36.1 points out of 65 points on the poster presentations rubric.]

**Ideal target:** 80% of products/presentations will score 65 or higher out of a total score of 90 on the rubric. [Adapted to 56 out of a total score of 70 points on the verbal presentations rubric and 46.9 points out of 65 points on the oral presentations rubric.]

Obj 3.1.B Verbal	Year 1 2011-12	Year 2 2012-13	Year 3 2013-14	Year 4 2014-15	Year 5 2015-16
Percent $\geq$ 38.9	61%	75%	78.9%	83%	
Acceptable Target (70% of 7 or higher)	Not Met	Met	Met	Met	
Ideal Target (80% of 8 or higher)	14% Not Met	45% Not Met	12.7% Not met	30% Not met	

**Results:**

At the 2015 ACU Undergraduate Research Festival, 116 presentations were given by 182 ACU students. Four students from another university also participated in the Research Festival. Their data is not included here.

**Verbal Presentations:** Seventy-seven verbal presentations were made by ACU students at the 2015 Undergraduate Research Festival. Of the verbal presentations, **64 presentations (83%) scored above the Acceptable Target** with a total of 38.9 or higher. **Twenty-three verbal presentations (30%) scored at or above the Ideal Target.** In 2014, 56 presentations (79%) scored above the Acceptable Target with a total of 38.9 or higher. Nine verbal presentations (13%) scored at or above the Ideal Target. In 2013, 75% of the verbal presentations scored above the Acceptable Target and 45% scored above the Ideal Target. In 2012, 61% of the verbal presentations scored above the Acceptable Target and 14% scored above the Ideal Target.

Obj 3.1.B Poster	Year 1 2011-12	Year 2 2012-13	Year 3 2013-14	Year 4 2014-15	Year 5 2015-16
Percent $\geq$ 38.9	66%	60%	93%	80%	
Acceptable Target (70% of 7 or higher)	Not Met	Not Met	Met	Met	
Ideal Target (80% of 8 or higher)	6% Not met	10% Not met	33% Not met	10% Not met	

**Poster Presentations:** Forty-three poster presentations were made by ACU students. Of the 39 poster presentations, **31 presentations scored a total of 36.1 or higher or 80% of presentations scored within the Acceptable Target** on the Poster Presentations Rubric. **Four poster presentations or 10% scored at or above the Ideal Target.** This compares to 93% at or about the Acceptable target and 33% at or above

the Ideal target in 2014. In 2013, 60% scored above the Acceptable Target and 10% above the Ideal Target in 2013. In 2012, 66% scored above the Acceptable Target and 6% above the Ideal Target.

**Overall Totals:** At the 2015 ACU Undergraduate Research Festival, **82% of the presentations scored at or above the acceptable target. Twenty-three percent of the presentations scored at or above the ideal target.** In 2014, 93% of the presentations scored at or above the acceptable target. Thirty-three percent of the presentations scored at or above the ideal target. Seventy percent scored at the Acceptable Target at the 2013 ACU Undergraduate Research Festival. At the 2012 ACU Undergraduate Research Festival, 63% scored at or above the Acceptable Target and 11% scored at or above the Ideal Target.

<b>Obj 3.1.B Overall Presentations</b>	<b>Year 1 2011-12</b>	<b>Year 2 2012-13</b>	<b>Year 3 2013-14</b>	<b>Year 4 2014-15</b>	<b>Year 5 2015-16</b>
<b>Percent ≥ 38.9</b>	63%	70%	93%	82%	
<b>Acceptable Target (70% of 7 or higher)</b>	Not Met	<b>Met</b>	<b>Met</b>	<b>Met</b>	
<b>Ideal Target (80% of 8 or higher)</b>	11% Not Met	33% Not Met	33% Not met	23% Not met	

**Table: Presentations Reaching or Exceeding the *Acceptable* Target.**

	<b>2012 Number of Presentations (%)</b>	<b>2013 Number of Presentations (%)</b>	<b>2014 Number of Presentations (%)</b>	<b>2015 Number of Presentations (%)</b>
<b>Verbal Presentations</b>	34 (61%)	45 (75%)	56 (79%)	64 (83%)
<b>Poster Presentations</b>	23 (66%)	18 (60%)	40 (93%)	31 (80%)
<b>Total presentations</b>	57 (63%)	63 (70%)	106 (93%)	95 (82%)

**Table: Presentations Reaching or Exceeding the *Ideal* Target**

	<b>2012 Number of Presentations (%)</b>	<b>2013 Number of Presentations (%)</b>	<b>2014 Number of Presentations (%)</b>	<b>2015 Number of Presentations (%)</b>
<b>Verbal Presentations</b>	8 (14%)	27 (45%)	9 (13%)*	23 (30%)
<b>Poster Presentations</b>	2 (6%)	3 (10%)	14 (33%)	4 (10%)
<b>Total presentations</b>	10 (11%)	30 (33%)	23 (20%)	13 (23%)

**Analysis** In 2015, the Acceptable Target of having 70% of presentations reach 38.9 or higher out of 70 for verbal presentations or 36.1 or higher out of 65 for poster presentations was well exceeded with 80% passing these scores. Several factors may have contributed to reaching this goal. The first is that it was the 7<sup>th</sup> ACU Undergraduate Research Festival and faculty mentors have learned how to better advise their students in preparation for the Research Festival. Second, rubrics and helpful hints were provided on the Research Festival Blog and at poster preparation workshops to the students and faculty before the conference to aid the students in their preparation for the Research Festival. Third, all the students, except fifth or sixth year seniors had completed at least part of the Research Literacy material through the university core courses.

The drop in students reaching the Ideal Target is most likely due to better trained judges. These rubrics are used for the competition portion of the Research Festival. Judges are instructed that a good all-around presentation should be given 3's in all categories. This would give the student a score of 42 for verbal presentations and 39 for poster presentations. To reach the score for the ideal target, that means that 80% of the students would score close to a 4 or above in every category. This would make it very difficult to distinguish among the very good presentations and the exceptional presentations. Because our students' presentations had become so good, the judging was readjusted to give more room at the top of the scores. This adjustment allows good presentations to score in the acceptable range, but makes it very difficult for many to score in the ideal range.

Appendix I contains the Undergraduate Research Report for 2014-2015.

**Objective 3.1.C** Students who present research projects and/or creative activities to audiences external to ACU will demonstrate professionalism in the presentation and contribute to the discipline.

**Measurement:** Evaluation forms from peer-reviewed conferences.

**Acceptable Target:** Using the baseline for these categories from 2010, each category will increase 25% from the baseline by the fourth year of the QEP and 35% by the fifth year.

**Ideal Target:** The percent of increase will be 30% by year four and 40% by year five.

**Results:** It is unclear how this data will be collected to find a reasonable measure and avenue for the collection.

**Operational Objective 3.1.D** An increase in the number of students submitting research projects and creative works to institutional, local, state, national, and international conferences and juried programs will occur.

**Measurement:** The number of submissions and acceptances is documented on an annual basis from departmental data found in TaskStream or the Student Research by Department Survey.

**Acceptable Target:** Using the baseline for these categories from 2010, each category will increase 35% from the baseline by the fourth year of the QEP and 50% by the fifth year.

**Ideal Target:** The percent of increase will be 40% by year four and 60% by year five.

**Number of students submitting research projects and creative works to conferences and juried programs.**

**Annual Outcomes Assessment Reports Results**

In AY 2014-2015, on the annual outcomes assessment report, faculty reported the following levels of student participation:

- 177 students were involved in independent research submitted for review beyond a course requirement;
- 183 students performed research with a faculty member;
- 111 presented a research paper or project or poster at a conference or professional meeting, either state or national;
- 127 submitted an original work for a juried show;
- 45 performed for a jury outside a department requirement;
- 14 published an article, chapter, or book related to their discipline;
- 28 students were involved in research activity not classified in the categories above;
- 116 participated in the spring ACU Research Festival; and
- 420 students are represented in the numbers above.

**Pursuit Travel Grants**

Travel Grant Funds were established in Year 2 as a part of ACU's Quality Enhancement Plan. The purpose of the fund is to support conference expenses of students and their faculty mentors as they present research or scholarship findings, or creative activities.

<b>Travel Funding to Conferences</b>	<b>Year 2 2012-13</b>	<b>Year 3 2013-14</b>	<b>Year 4 2014-15</b>	<b>Year 5 2015-16</b>
<b># Faculty Funded</b>	25	23	15	
<b># Students Funded</b>	32	79	47	
<b>Average Amount of Funding per Faculty</b>	\$798	\$718	\$1,072	

P u r s u i t	<b>Total # Impacted</b>	57	102	62	
	<b>Percent of Increase / Decrease</b>	--	+78.9%	-34.8%	

*Pursuit* Travel Funds are available for faculty/student travel to conferences to present and showcase research conducted collaboratively between faculty and students. Funding has a maximum of \$2,000 (\$1,000 for the faculty mentor and \$1,000 for the student researcher).

In Year 4, 15 faculty and 47 students, a total of 62 persons were funded for travel to conferences or shows to showcase their scholarship. An absolute decrease of 40 faculty and students were impacted for a percent of decrease of 34.8%. Fewer faculty asked for funding in the fall and it is speculated that increased costs for travel may have dissuaded faculty travel.

**Other Research Programs:** Student involvement in research and creative projects is an important part of the climate at ACU. Special programs and groups within the university provide important assistance to encourage student involvement in research and creative projects.

**McNair Scholars Program** is designed to provide qualified college students with effective preparation for doctoral study. The program provides opportunities for student development of research skills. During the 2014-15 calendar year, the ACU McNair Scholars Program assisted 17 research students through a summer research internship. The field of study for the projects included Communications Sciences and Disorders, Psychology, Accounting and Finance, Family Studies, Biblical Text, Global Studies, Animal Science, Criminal Justice, and History. After completing the projects, the same 17 students had the opportunity to present their research at various conferences. These include national McNair Scholars Conferences hosted by the University of Wisconsin-Madison, the University of New Mexico, and the University of North Texas, the National Conference of Undergraduate Research hosted by Eastern Washington University, and other conferences hosted by professional organizations.

## MAJOR CHANGES—YEAR 1 AND JUSTIFICATIONS

The Development Team provided a vision for *Pursuit* in the document found on the *Pursuit* Blog page (<http://blogs.acu.edu/qep/>). In the process of implementation, a few minor adjustments were made in the plan, but the need for two major changes emerged during analysis of first-year assessments.

**Change 1:** During Fall 2011 and Spring 2012, conversations across campus were held in discussion of revisions to the 2007 General Education Revision Steering Committee (GERSC) plan for the structure of a new core curriculum. Faculty approved a plan to modify General Education that included the following:

- Consolidation of CORE 120 and CORE 220 into a single 3-hour course entitled CORE 210, combining the curriculum from both courses.
- Combination of CORE 320 and BIBL 440 into a single 3-hour course entitled BCOR 310, including team-teaching the course with 2 or 3 professors, one from Bible, Missions, and Ministry.

**Justification for Change 1:**

- Review of student learning outcomes from CORE classes showed the program outcomes could be met with 9 hours of integrated courses instead of the original 12 hours and not undermine the fundamental understandings and objectives.
- Budget reductions in FY11 and FY12, as well as those proposed for FY13 and beyond, significantly impacted the ambitious and comprehensive new curriculum. Implementation of the original 12-hour program was not feasible but a 9-hour integrated core was.

**Change 2:** The original QEP called for a research paper to be taught and assessed in CORE 110. During review of student learning outcomes and curriculum, the CORE 110 Advisory Committee discovered a gap in learning. In this first semester course for entering students, students were asked to write a research paper before they received instruction in writing from sources in required English classes. To fix the gap, students will work on an annotated bibliography in CORE 110, then write a research paper in English 112 (Composition and Literature). The next general education course-CORE 210-requires a research paper to be assessed for QEP student learning outcomes.

**Justification for Change 2:** An advisory committee composed of CORE 110 faculty worked during the summer of 2012 to modify the focus and to adapt the final assessment document from an evaluative essay to a annotated bibliography. Because most students take ENGL 112 (Composition and Literature) during the second semester they are enrolled, providing instruction for writing an annotated bibliography in CORE 110, practicing those skills while writing a research paper in ENGL 112, and reinforcing the skills while working on a research paper in CORE 210 provides a more successful sequencing of instruction.

The tables below depict the changes effective for Fall 2013.

Original Plan:

<b>Practice</b>	<b>Introduce</b>	<b>Reinforce</b>
CORE 110—Research Paper	ENGL 112—Research Paper	CORE 210—Research Paper

Adjusted Plan:

<b>Introduce</b>	<b>Practice</b>	<b>Reinforce</b>
CORE 110—Annotated Bibliography	ENGL 112—Research Paper	CORE 210—Research Paper

**Change 3: Pursuit Research Grant Applications**—During Year 1 grants were awarded for funding for the next academic year, thus delaying the schedule for the grants one year. Year 2 research grants were originally intended for Year 1 but due to the timing of the awards, grants were conducted in Year 2.

**Justification for Change 3:** The original QEP document called for 6 grants for funding during the first year, but the actuality of the situation is that the grants include research and scholarship during Year 2. This was an unavoidable change due to the approval and implementation schedule for *Pursuit*.

## RECOMMENDATIONS FROM YEAR 1

As a result of findings by Assessment Team I (CORE 110-Cornerstone), the Compliance Workgroup, and the *Pursuit* Implementation Team (PIT), recommendations were made for Year 2.

1. *Pursuit* Grant Applications—PIT recommended the *Pursuit* Director to work with faculty to improve the quality of grant applications and to include student-learning outcomes in the applications.
2. Marketing—Work with Online Marketing and Creative Services to find ways to showcase faculty and student research from *Pursuit* Grants. Add information about the funded grants to website. Reorganize research information on ACU website.
3. *Pursuit* Institute—Work with PIT and IL Teams to consider best focus for next year's institute. Faculty Teams must decide what type of institute will best provide assistance to faculty to improve and promote research within departments.
4. Assessments
  - CORE 110—Work with Assistant Provost of General Education to ensure *Pursuit* objectives are a part of student learning outcomes and assignments are developmentally appropriate for entering students. During Summer 2012, faculty teaching CORE 110 wrote a new assignment to serve as the assessment artifact for *Pursuit*.
  - SAILS—Increase the percentage of students taking SAILS. The syllabus needs to prescribe a portion of the student's grade for completion of the SAILS assessment. It is recommended that students completing the assessment receive a weekly quiz grade for their efforts.
  - Undergraduate Research—Methods for reporting the number of faculty-guided research and creative projects are insufficient. Protocol for collection of data needs refinement.

## SUMMARY FOR YEAR 1

Year 1 started well but had a bit of a rocky start during this initial year of our *Pursuit* dreams. Year 2 starts with a new provost and a new Assistant Provost of General Education, stabilizing the structure for assessment and providing a more focused approach to implementation.

- Working teams (PIT, IL Team, and Assessment Team I) were formed and began their tasks for implementation.
- Goals and tasks for each team were discussed, delineated and begun with fervor and enthusiasm.



- Funding for six *Pursuit* Grants grant projects was awarded to 10 students and their 6 faculty mentors. Preliminary results and anecdotal responses indicate a successful and productive group of researchers. Because this is the first year of grant implementation, reports will not be available for assessment until the the end of Year 2.
- The *Pursuit Institute* was conducted in May. The institute was an overwhelming success with 19 faculty participants, many of whom made improvements in their teaching and classroom behaviors and assignments.
- Assessments for the first year were implemented.
  - SAILS was given to CORE 110 students in the early fall;
  - Evaluative essays were assigned, collected, and assessed from CORE 110 students.
- Recommendations were determined for alterations in data collection and implementation of the goals and assessments for *Pursuit*. Those are listed above and have been accepted and changes implemented in Fall 2012.

In summary, we have made an excellent start. Faculty and students were enthusiastic and excited about *Pursuit*. We began anew and refined and revised our strategies to meet the goals described for the *Pursuit* of Research Literacy.

## CHANGES—YEAR 2

As of Fall 2012, Year 2 was implemented as planned in the *Pursuit* document with the changes noted on Year 1 but began with the following improvements and adjustments based on recommendations from Year 1:

1. *Pursuit* Research Grant Fellows—asked to revise the student learning outcomes for their grant projects in order for a more comprehensive assessment of the projects. A presentation was made in the Adams Center to provide examples of well-written purposes, goals, and objectives from previous research grants.
2. Marketing—Videos showcasing faculty and student research were crafted by the Learning Studio. As of the writing of this document, the videos are in limbo, having been lost due to a hardware crash. Those will be redone if the information is not retrieved.
3. *Pursuit* Institute—was held during the summer break to work with Capstone faculty, department chairs, and other interested faculty.
4. Assessments
  - CORE 110—The new annotated bibliography was utilized for the assessment in Year 2, making a clearer vision of ways to provide assistance to faculty and students. Expectations for CORE 110 (Cornerstone) were revised, including changes in the rubric used to assess the annotated bibliography.
  - CORE 210—This year was the first year for the assessment of the position paper from all CORE 210 classes.
  - In the process of implementation, a few minor adjustments were made in the plan to close the loop as a result of assessments.
  - SAILS—Changes in implementation were made and the percentage of students taking SAILS at the beginning of Year 2 increased from 50% to 72.3%, as a result of faculty encouragement of students.

- Undergraduate Research—Data collection continues to be a problem.

## RECOMMENDATIONS FROM YEAR 2

As a result of findings by Assessment Team I (CORE 110-Cornerstone) and Assessment Team II (CORE 210), recommendations for implementation were made for Year 3.

- **CORE 110.** The Director of Assessment Team I, Dr. Laura Carroll, met with Assistant Provost, Dr. Nancy Shankle Jordan, and Director of Cornerstone, Dr. Cliff Barbarick. In the meeting, Cornerstone recommendations were discussed and a revised rubric was shared. Subsequently, presentations were made in the Adams Center to share results of the assessment and recommendations with CORE 110, CORE 210, and other interested faculty. Dr. Cole Bennett, Chair of the Department of Language and Literature, worked with CORE 110 faculty to discuss characteristics of quality annotated bibliographies.

### Results and Recommendations

1. Collection of papers. Based on recommendations from the Year 1: 2011-2012 report, continue to use the flash drive system to collect papers. Year 2 saw 100% of faculty members submitted papers from 93% of students enrolled (up from 77%). It is recommended that we continue the same procedure for collection.
  2. Strategies for improvement. Based on recommendations from the Year 1: 2011-2012 report, the assignment was adapted to better reflect *EXPLORE* goals. The new assignment, an annotated bibliography, better taught information literacy. Continue to help CORE 110 instructors teach information literacy more effectively by following strategies recommended in the Year 1 report. As a part of the strategies, the assessment team held professional development sessions for instructors in the Adams Center to discuss findings and recommendations for teaching the assignment and for the instructors to ask questions.
- **CORE 210.** The Director of Assessment Team II, Dr. Brenda Bender, met with Assistant Provost, Dr. Nancy Shankle Jordan; Director of CORE 210, Dr. Lauren Lemley; and the CORE 210 Curriculum Committee. In the meeting, CORE 210 recommendations were discussed. Presentations were made in the Adams Center to share results of the assessment and recommendations with CORE 210 and other interested faculty.

### Results and Recommendations

1. Rubric. Adjusted the rubric language to be more general to better fit the variety of topics selected in the writing assignment:
2. Writing Assignment. Worked to insure all sections follow the common writing assignment. Clarified the common writing assignment requirement, including citation style, across all sections of CORE 210.

3. Prerequisites. Ensure students meet the course prerequisites for CORE 210, specifically ENGL 112.

## SUMMARY FOR YEAR 2

Year 2 started with a new Provost and a new Assistant Provost of General Education, stabilizing the structure for assessment and providing a more focused approach to implementation.

- Working teams (PIT, IL Team, and Assessment Team I) continued with their tasks for implementation. Each group worked to incorporate recommendations from Year 1. Assessment Team II was formed and assessed the position papers from CORE 210 for the first time.
- Funding for *Pursuit* Research Grant projects were awarded to 22 students and their 11 faculty mentors. Preliminary results and anecdotal responses indicate a successful and productive group of researchers. Summary reports will not be available until Year 3 for *Pursuit* Research Grants.
- The *Pursuit Institute* was conducted during the summer break. The institute was an overwhelming success with 19 faculty participants, many of which have made improvements within their own teaching and classroom behaviors and assignments. The focus of the Institute was Capstone assignments and assessments. A informational meeting was held on November 6 in the Adams Center to share the rubrics developed and to collect suggestions for improvement.
- Assessments for the second year were implemented.
  - *SAILS* was given to CORE 110 students in the early fall; 695 students out of 961 freshmen completed the assessment.
  - Position papers were assigned, collected, and assessed from CORE 210 students for the first time.
- Recommendations were determined for alterations in data collection and implementation of the goals and assessments for *Pursuit*. Those are listed above and have been accepted and changes implemented in Fall 2013. These recommendations were shared with the appropriate faculty and other interested faculty.
- Fall 2013, Year 3, began with the following improvements:
  - CORE 110 (Cornerstone) Annotated Bibliography prompt and assessment rubrics were revised; recommendations were shared with CORE 110 faculty on two different days; and faculty were provided with an informational workshop on how to assist students in writing an annotated bibliography. An informational session regarding annotated bibliographies was conducted in the Adams Center.
  - A director for CORE 210 was selected. The CORE 210 Curriculum Committee met with Assessment Team II to discuss recommendations for the position paper. The Director of *Pursuit*, the Assistant Provost of General Education, and the Director of CORE 210 met to further discuss recommendations and details for the assessment artifact. The

Assessment Team II presented their findings and recommendations to CORE 210 faculty.

- Percentages for students taking SAILS at the beginning of Year 2 have increased from 50% to 72.3%.

In summary, the results of our *Pursuit* are beginning to be more evident. While there are places that could see improvements, faculty and students are working together to enhance student learning. Scores are rising; percentages are approaching the Acceptable Target. The numbers of faculty and students working together on research and creative projects are increasing. We continue to refine and revise our strategies to meet the goals described for the *Pursuit* of Research Literacy.

### CHANGES—YEAR 3

As of Fall 2013, Year 3 was implemented as planned in the *Pursuit* document with the changes previously noted. Improvements and adjustments were made based on recommendations from Year 2.

1. Assessments
  - CORE 110—Assessment results showed improvements were being made so faculty were encouraged to continue to work and improve their delivery of information literacy concepts to students. Recommendations were presented and discussed with faculty and the Director of CORE 110 in the Adams Center. Professional development sessions were held in the weeks leading up to the signature assignment, the annotated bibliography. The embedded librarians continue to provide a consistency in development of student information literacy skills.
  - SAILS—The percentage of students taking SAILS at the beginning of Year 3 dropped slightly from 72.3% to 71.3%. Faculty will continue to work with students to encourage them to take the assessment.
  - CORE 210—The assessment team revised the rubric significantly for the Year 3 assessment. Language utilized in the descriptions was adjusted to better fit the research papers collected. Previous recommendations commented on the variability among the papers. This variability continues to be a problem. Writing prompts will be collected from all sections this year for the assessment team prior to the assessment process.
  - BCOR 310—Assessments are planned for the first time in Year 3, with a director in place and a signature assignment. No changes were made before the assessments were made.
  - Undergraduate Research—Collection of data remains a problem. It appears that *Pursuit* Office will remain as the advocate in the collection of this data.
2. Due to financial difficulties in the university, the *Pursuit* budget remained the same for Year 3. The *Pursuit* Institute was put on hold, *Pursuit* Research Grants were increased slightly to fund \$80,000 for 11 grant projects, and other non-essential funding for the QEP budget lines was temporarily discontinued. To follow on our commitment to SACS, we awarded funding for 12 research grants for Year 4 with the hope of increasing funding for projects in Year 5.
3. *Pursuit* Research Grant projects started this financial year with better student learning outcomes and revised assessment reports thanks to Dr. Tom Milholland

of the Office of Institutional Research, who met with each faculty member individually to discuss student learning outcomes and assessments and sign contracts for the projects.

### RECOMMENDATIONS FROM YEAR 3

Recommendations from the three assessment teams included the following:

- **CORE 110.** The CORE 110 assignment, rubric and assessment are working well to teach and assess students' understandings of information literacy. Over three years, faculty have worked to (1) revise the assignment, (2) refine the rubric, (3) train teachers, and (4) work with embedded librarians to increase effectiveness of their assistance.

*As a result, we are approaching the acceptable target for 1.1.A, have met the acceptable target for 1.1.B, and have met the ideal target for 1.1.C.*

After the 2012-2103 assessment, the assessment team met with the Course Director, Cliff Barbarick, and conducted professional development sessions for CORE 110 teachers in the Adam's Center.

The assessment team believes that these meetings were key in raising the scores and meeting two of the three targets. As we continue to help CORE 110 instructors teach information literacy more effectively, the assessment team will continue to hold professional development sessions in the weeks leading up to the Informational Literacy assignment. These sessions will allow time for the assessment team to discuss findings and recommendations for teaching the assignment and for the instructors to ask questions. Over the three years of the program, the concept of using embedded librarians for each section of Cornerstone has provided consistency in student development of information literacy skills.

- **CORE 210.** The assessment team found three factors that may have impacted the Year 3 assessments. 1) Significant changes to the assessment rubric called for the assessment team to rate each rubric item more individually. 2) An 8-day delay between completion of the norming process and when sample papers were available for assessment. 3) Inconsistencies in the writing assignment across sections and variability among the papers may have made the assessment of the assignment problematic.

Recommendations for improvements in CORE 210 include the following:

- Finalize adjustments to the assessment rubric in early 2015 and have a team meeting to discuss the rubric prior to norming process.
- Collect writing prompts from all sections of CORE 210 and give them to the team prior to the assessment process.
- Submit papers to the *Pursuit* office no later than the last day of classes OR on the first day of Finals Week to facilitate a timely assessment process.

- Invite a faculty member from the Department of Language and Literature to make a presentation to CORE 210 faculty to discuss helpful strategies for writing position papers.
  - Focus on the big ideas of citing sources, evaluating and analyzing theories or perspectives, and of writing conclusions.
  - Compare specific signature assignments from each of the CORE 210 classes to make revisions and provide consistency in the descriptions of the assignment.
  - Conduct a mid-year assessment of fall papers to provide an analysis of improvements and determine if other adjustments are needed.
- **BCOR 310.** The assessment team for BCOR 310 found similar issues in the signature assignment for the course, especially inconsistencies in the writing assignment across the sections. While prompts were made available to the assessment team, there was considerable variation in the prompts across the sections.

The assessment team made suggestions for the course in 2014-15, recognizing that 2013-2014 was the first year for full availability of the course. Thus, it is recommended the following revisions be made:

- It is strongly recommended for faculty to create a signature research assignment that aligns with the “big ideas” for the learning outcomes of the course. A common prompt crafted by the faculty for the signature assignment should then be utilized for all sections of BCOR 310.
- Submit papers to the *Pursuit* office on or before the last day of classes but no later than Dead Day to facilitate a timely assessment process.
- Content of papers needs to be addressed. Detailed suggestions can be found in Appendix F.
- Formatting of the papers should be considered to assist the assessment in their assessment of the papers, including submitting the document as a PDF.
- All students should use APA or MLA citation style for their papers.

### SUMMARY FOR YEAR 3

Year 3 started with great hope and expectations. We believed we had worked through the difficulties and adjustments found during the first two years. However, we found there was a surprise awaiting our best-laid plans.

- Working Teams (PIT, Assessment Team I, II, and III) continued with their tasks for assessing CORE classes. A flat budget this year saw the postponement of the *Pursuit* Institute. Since the primary purpose of the Information Literacy Team (ILT) was to plan and implement the *Pursuit* Institute, it was decided for the committee to disband until funding for the *Pursuit* Institute is restored.
- Interest in funding for *Pursuit* Research Grants was at an all time high. Faculty planned creative projects that include multiple students to mentor in the projects. Student learning outcomes continued to improve as faculty provided better measureable outcomes for the projects.

- Assessment data for CORE 110 continued to improve; data collected from CORE 210 and BCORE 310 showed that work needs to be done by faculty teaching the courses to revise prompts for a more consistent assignment across the sections. Consistency has become the mantra for the two courses.
- In order to make mid-year adjustments in CORE 210 and BCOR 310, it was decided to plan assessments at the end of the fall semester, looking ahead to make possible revisions for the spring offerings.
- The Assistant Provost for General Education accepted a position at another university at the end of the academic year for 2013-2014. It is anticipated that an interim director of General Education will take her place sometime in the fall of 2014.

In summary, *Pursuit* Travel Grants provided support for faculty and students to share their research all across the United States. *Pursuit* Research Grants supported and encouraged projects from STEM areas as well as from the Arts and Humanities. Faculty focused on ways to assist their students in CORE courses to be more research literate. In the beginning of the QEP, there was push-back from many faculty regarding the assessments, but Year 3 finds a vision of faculty who are working collegially to improve student learning for information literacy outcomes as they collect the signature assignments and brain-storm how to close-the-loop and analyze and evaluate assessment data. It has been a productive year.

## CHANGES—YEAR 4

As a result of the recommendations from Year 3, the following changes were implemented in Year 4:

- CORE 110.
  - All four Acceptable Targets were close to being met in Year 3. In meetings with the faculty teaching CORE 110, It was recommended by the assessment team for faculty to continue to work with students to improve consistency in formatting across all sections, to address the target audience in the introduction, to refine and revise the research question, to insure students address questions rather than arguments, to distinguish between the social sciences and the humanities, and to prohibit the use of the Bible as a source.
  - We continued to use the embedded librarians in each of the CORE 110 sections. Their work with students in all sections has provided a consistency in student development of information literacy skills.
- CORE 210.
  - Because of the drop in assessment scores in Year 3, several significant changes were made at the start of Year 4. Brenda Bender, Chair of Assessment Team II, met with CORE 210 faculty to discuss the rubric used by the assessment team, and possible revisions in the wording to clarify the intentions of the rubric and the goals of the position papers in order to coordinate both without altering the underlying purposes.

- Prompts from faculty were collected on the flash drives so that the assessment team would be able to understand the specifics of the assignment before beginning the assessment process.
- All faculty agreed on a Dead Day submission for flash drives to the *Pursuit* office.
- Faculty were provided with specific signature assignments from other CORE 210 classes in order to provide examples so they could make revisions and provide more consistency in the assignment prompts.
- The Assessment Team conducted assessments on fall papers in January so that any needed adjustments could be made between semesters.
- BCOR 310.
  - Sarah Lee, chair of Assessment Team III, met with BCOR 310 faculty to discuss recommendations from the Year 3 assessments. Recommendations included the following:
    - Create a signature research assignment aligning with the “big ideas” for the learning outcomes of the course.
    - Address the content of the papers.
    - Require all students to use MLA or APA citation style.
  - The Director of BCOR 310 resigned and was not replaced. Lack of a director did not allow focused efforts to implement any changes.
  - Faculty were asked to include prompts on the flash drives so that the assessment team would be able to understand the specifics of the assignment before beginning the assessment process.
  - A Dead Day submission was emphasized to all faculty.
  - The Assessment Team scheduled assessments on fall papers in January so that any needed adjustments could be made between semesters.
- Capstone.
  - Year 4 was the first year of the assessment of papers from designated capstone courses. This was a year for learning and adjusting to close the loop to improve the assessment.

## RECOMMENDATIONS FROM YEAR 4

Recommendations from the four assessment teams include the following:

- CORE 110.
  - Students in CORE 110 met all Acceptable Targets and Ideal Targets for all three outcomes as well as the composite score. Commendations to the faculty and students were well deserved. Faculty were admonished to continue with everything that have focused on. The results clearly indicated the building of a strong foundation of information literacy.
  - After the Year 3 assessments, the assessment team conducted professional development sessions for CORE 110 faculty in the Adam’s Center. It was recommended that the assessment team continue with these sessions because the meetings were key in raising the scores and meeting and exceeding ALL targets.
  - Recommendations included the need to continue the concept of using embedded librarians for each section of Cornerstone to provide consistency in the development of student’s information literacy skills as



well as to give first-year students a connection to a librarian that may continue throughout the student's years at ACU.

- CORE 210.
  - Commendations were made to faculty for the improvement in thesis statements. Student work showed that faculty were clearly helping students know the importance of the thesis statements.
  - Continue to include the writing prompts for each class with the flash drives. The assessment team was better able to match the rating level on the rubric to the content of the paper through the lens of the writing prompt.
  - Continue to focus on refining the thesis statements in the position papers. Year 4's papers made significant improvements in describing theories of perspectives relevant to the thesis statement.
  - The ethical use of information continues to be problematic. It is recommended that faculty provide feedback to students on this specific skill on drafts the final paper.
  - Continue to work to make revisions on the rubric, especially on Objective 1.2.B and 1.3.A.
- BCOR 310.
  - While improvements have been indicated from Year 3 to Year 4, it is strongly recommended that faculty develop a more uniform research assignment, with less variability in the types of research required, the number of sources, and the materials used for research in the prompts. Note: this seemed to be a problem that has plagued the team for multiple years. It is critical that faculty need to address this problem if improvements are made.
  - Work to provide the prompts from each section of the class. It is a necessity that prompts be provided to the assessment team.
  - Work with students to write good research questions, narrowing many of the topics that were too broad.
  - Many of the papers assessed were suspected of plagiarism. Faculty are urged to use Turnitin software for the submission of student work to assist in the identification of the plagiarism. Faculty are urged to use class time to discuss plagiarism, particularly self-plagiarism.
  - Continue to emphasize proper in-text citation format.
  - Work with students to integrate and extend their ideas, especially as they write their conclusions.
  - Find a replacement for the former Director of BCOR. A leader who is invested in the team can make a big difference. While the Interim Director of General Education is working to pull the group together and plan for fall 2015 improvements, if the course is to remain as a General Education requirement, it must adapt to grow and thrive.
- Capstone.
  - This is the first year for the Capstone course assessments. Faculty are to be commended for the high rate of participation and submission of Capstone papers during this first year.
  - Authors of the rubric used in the assessment are commended for their great efforts at the development of the rubric to assess the papers.

- The committee recommends the rubric be tweaked to clarify various inconsistencies and ambiguous quantitative expectations.
- Assessment Team IV recommends that someone be appointed the director of the Capstone courses to coordinate with Capstone faculty about the required assignments in the Capstone courses.

## SUMMARY FOR YEAR 4

This year was a great year for *Pursuit*. Faculty worked hard to teach their students the skills and integrative thinking needed for research. Faculty and staff across campus became accustomed to all the facets of *Pursuit* and how we work together to accomplish our common tasks and goals. In particular,

- The *Pursuit* Implementation Team (PIT) continued awarding of *Pursuit* Travel Grants for faculty and students to travel to present their research or creative artifacts at conferences. PIT awarded 11 faculty research projects for Year 5.
- Assessment Teams for CORE 110, CORE 210, BCOR 310, and Capstone worked with faculty in each of the courses to disseminate the information from this year's assessments and to assist the faculty in understanding and brainstorming ways to improve student papers.
- CORE 110 showed great progress in meeting all of the Acceptable and Ideal Targets for the annotated bibliographies.
- CORE 210 and BCOR 310 worked to revise prompts and assist the assessment teams in revisions to the rubric.
- Capstone had its initial assessment. The results provided the assessment team and faculty opportunities to discuss changes and ways to improve student work and discuss revisions to the rubric.
- *SAILS* results from Capstone students showed remarkable progress when comparing first-year data and data from students enrolled in Capstone courses. | Comparisons were made between this year's capstone students with their scores from their first year at ACU, fall of 2011. Initially, those students entering in fall 2011 performed about the same as the Institution Type benchmark on 4 skills sets, and worse than the institution type on the remaining 4 skills sets. In comparison, after 3 years, data shows the following phenomenal results:
  - ✓ Overall scores have increased significantly.
  - ✓ Standard errors have decreased, showing student scores have less variability and are performing more consistently on the *SAILS* skills sets.
  - ✓ Capstone students at Abilene Christian University performed **BETTER THAN** the institution-type benchmark on ***ALL SAILS Skills Sets***.
- *Pursuit* Travel Grants were awarded to 15 faculty and 47 students for conference travel or assistance in juried shows for their creative works.
- *Pursuit* Research Grants were awarded to 12 faculty for research projects with students. This provides students with direct involvement with a faculty mentor in quality research projects where they experience all the facets of research. This program prepares the students for graduate school and gives them a better understanding of what to expect in graduate school. In addition, Graduate schools have been very impressed with the experiences our graduates have as undergraduates.

- The Undergraduate Research Festival provided students opportunities to share research in Verbal and Poster Presentations. This year there were 116 presentations.

#### General Education Review.

The most significant occurrence in 2014-2015 was the formation of a General Education Review Committee. In May 2007 faculty ratified to adopt our current general education program by full-faculty vote, shaped by the essential learning outcomes and high-impact practices articulated by *LEAP* (Liberal Education and America's Promise). This began with the first Cornerstone class (CORE 110) taught in Fall 2010.

The final objective in the *Liberal Arts Core Curriculum at ACU* document articulated the following systematic review of general education:

*12. Implement an on-going review of the Liberal Arts Core Curriculum.*

Because the world changes, professors' methods of teaching change, knowledge of disciplines changes, and the nature of the student body changes, students will be best served by an on-going review process that includes at the least the following considerations:

- The nature, experiences, knowledge, and skills of our incoming students.
- The best practices and current research on student learning.
- A straightforward and sustainable assessment system that supports a consistent focus on student learning outcomes, measurement of our success in achieving the outcomes, and thoughtful and continual response to assessment data.
- Annual review of assessment data.
- Comprehensive review of curriculum every three years.

(ACU University General Education Council (UGEC) Minutes, *General Education Review—Findings and Recommendations*, January 2015, Page 1). See Appendix J for a copy of the document.

The General Education Review Committee was formed in fall of 2014 and began its work to review and discuss several points in the charge from the Provost Office. The following meetings and discussions occurred in Fall 2014:

- All faculty were invited to meetings in October to discuss review of General Education and CORE courses. Faculty were encouraged to attend one of the meetings and provide their perspective about what was working and what needed to be improved.
- Students were invited to a Focus Group to provide input.
- A survey was sent out to a random selection of students who had taken at least two CORE courses at ACU (70 students responded).
- A draft of the proposal of changes was shared with faculty who were invited to sessions held in the Adams Center in mid-December to gather input.

The Provost Office approved the final report in late January. Following the Provost Office acceptance of the General Education Review-Findings and Recommendations

Report, Spring 2015 proved to be a busy semester filled with academic discussions regarding the recommendations. The following is a brief summary of the sequence of events:

- January 28, 2015 - University General Education Council (UGEC) received the report and began discussions.
- February 11, 2015 - UGEC met with chairs from the Department of Mathematics and Communications and Sociology to discuss the impact of recommendations on their departments including the following:
  - Accept College Algebra from student who completed dual credit for such a dual credit course prior to matriculating at ACU;
  - Accept all of the commonly accepted basic Communication courses at Texas public universities.
- February 25, 2015 - UGEC met with chairs from Language and Literature and History and Global Studies to discuss impact on their department of recommendations in the report, specifically:
  - Make ENGL 111 an entrance requirement;
  - Create a Historical Literacy requirement.
- March 25, 2015 – UGEC met with faculty to discuss the impact of hour reductions in CORE classes.
- April 8, 2015 – UGEC met to finalize the recommendations that moved forward for full faculty consideration. Counsel members approved final wording for a survey to gauge faculty’s interest and acceptance of these recommendations (ACU UGEC Minutes, 2015).

The busy year came to a close amidst a flurry of discussions regarding the changes and recommendations for General Education classes. Change is difficult in an academic setting fraught with diverse opinions. Change is inevitable and can a productive endeavor, filled with hope for a better future and better educational opportunities for our students.

Appendix  
of  
Descriptive Documents

## Pursuit Goals and Learning Outcomes

**Goal 1 Student Learning--Explore--Students will acquire information literacy competencies and skills at both the basic and more advanced research levels through exploration and inquiry.**



	Specific Learning Outcomes for All Students	Expected Outcome--The student will:	Courses or Components	Assessment	Evidence—Artifacts Collected Yearly Beginning
<b>EXPLORE</b>	<b>Objective 1.1:</b> Students understand and appropriately use scholarly resources.  <i>(Def 1)</i>	1.1.A. Determine the nature and extent of the information needed. 1.1.B. Access needed information effectively and efficiently. 1.1.C. Use information ethically and legally.	CORE 110—I	SAILS in CORE 110 (Pretest)	AY '11-12
				EXPLORE I Rubric	AY '11-12
			CORE 210—P	EXPLORE II Rubric—Items 1-3	AY '12-13
			BCOR 310 ENGL 112 - P	EXPLORE II Rubric Items 1-3	AY '13-14
	<b>Objective 1.2:</b> Students integrate knowledge to frame researchable questions and to develop strategies to seek answers.  <i>(Def 2)</i>	1.2.A. Describe major theories in the field relevant to a particular case/problem/situation.  1.2.B. Describe findings and interpretations in the field relevant to a particular case/problem/situation.	CORE 210—P	CORE 210—EXPLORE II rubric--Items 6 & 7	AY '12-13
			BCOR 310-R ENGL 112 - P	EXPLORE II Rubric—Items 6 & 7	AY '13-14
			<b>Objective 1.3:</b> Students analyze, interpret, and/or evaluate information and make and implement research-informed decisions.  <i>(Def 3)</i>	1.3.A. Evaluate information and its sources critically and incorporate selected information into his or her knowledge base and value system.  1.3.B. Use multiple sources effectively to accomplish a specific purpose.	CORE 210—P
	BCOR 310-R	EXPLORE II Rubric---Items 4 & 5			AY '13-14
	Capstone Experience-P	SAILS --(Posttest)			AY '14-15
	ENGL 112 - P				

Key for year assessment will **begin**:

Academic Year—2011-2012—QEP Year 1    Academic Year—2012-2013—QEP Year 2    Academic Years—2013-2014 or 2014-2015--QEP Year 3 or Year 4

I= Introduce

P= Practice

R=Reinforce

**Goal 2 Student Learning—Create—Students will create and produce new information as they write, present, and perform.**



C R E A T E	Specific Learning Outcomes for All Students	Expected Outcome--The student will:	Courses or Components	Assessment	Evidence—Artifacts Collected Yearly Beginning
	<b>Objective 2.1:</b> Students prepare, present, and assess effectiveness of scholarly and creative products.  <i>(Def 4)</i>	2.1.A. Demonstrate effective use of information literacy skills through written and oral communication  2.1.B. Apply new and prior information to the planning and creation of a particular product or performance.  2.1.C. Demonstrate effective critical thinking as student develops, produces and evaluates a product or performance.	COMS 211—I	Artifact from Writing Intensive or Capstone Experience – <i>Create</i> Rubric	AY '13-'14 and
			AY '14-'15 in Capstone		
	Specific Learning Outcomes for <i>Select Undergraduates</i>	Expected Outcome--The student will:	Courses or Components	Assessment	Evidence—Artifacts Collected Yearly Beginning
	<b>Objective 2.2:</b> Students conduct faculty-guided original work relevant to the field of study.  <i>(Def 5)</i>	2.2.A. Perform steps of a discipline specific project.  2.2.B. Draw sound conclusions from the results of the project in order to identify future direction.  2.2.C. Operational Objective-The number of faculty-guided research or creative activity projects will increase within academic departments.	Faculty-guided Research-I, P	Departmental Outcomes Assessment, Self-assessment Rubric, Assessment of Project Rubric	AY '13-14 and
AY '14-15					
		Faculty-guided Research-I, P	Departmental Outcomes Assessment, Self-assessment Rubric, Assessment of Project Rubric	AY '13-14 and	
				AY '14-15	
		Faculty-guided-research-I, P		Departmental Outcomes Assessment	AY '13-'14 and
			AY '14-'15		

Key for year assessment will **begin:**

Academic Year—2011-2012—QEP Year 1

Academic Year—2012-2013—QEP Year 2

Academic Years—2013-2014 or 2014-2015—QEP Year 3 or Year 4

I= Introduce

P= Practice

R=Reinforce

**Goal 3 Student Learning—Express—Students will express their research through independent scholarly and creative work in a public setting.**



	Specific Learning Outcomes for <i>Select Undergraduates</i>	Expected Outcome--The student will:	Courses or Components	Assessment	Evidence—Artifacts Collected Yearly Beginning
<b>EXPRESS</b>	<p><b>Objective 3.1:</b> Students publicly disseminate independent scholarly and creative work.</p> <p><i>(Def 6)</i></p>	3.1.A. Produce an independent scholarly and/or creative product.	Capstone Experience—P; OUR—I, P; Honors Coll.—P; McNair Scholars (3 courses)— I, P	Departmental Outcomes Assessment, Self-assessment Rubric, Assessment of Project Rubric	AY '13-14 and AY '14-15
		3.1.B. Demonstrate professionalism in the presentation of scholarly and creative product beyond the classroom	OUR—I, P; Honors Coll.—P; McNair Scholars (3 courses)— I, P	Departmental Outcomes Assessment, Self-assessment Rubric, Assessment of Project Rubric	AY '13-14 and AY '14-15
		3.1.C. Demonstrate professionalism in the presentation of original intellectual or creative contribution to the discipline (external to ACU)	OUR—I, P; Honors Coll.—P; McNair Scholars (3 courses)— I, P	Departmental Outcomes Assessment, Self-assessment Rubric, Assessment of Project Rubric	AY '13-14 and AY '14-15

Key for year assessment will **begin:**

Academic Year—2011-2012—QEP Year 1    Academic Year—2012-2013—QEP Year 2    Academic Years—2013-2014 or 2014-2015—QEP Year 3 or Year 4

I= Introduce

P= Practice

R=Reinforce



## Actions to be Implemented

### Student Learning Outcomes—*EXPLORE* Information Literacy

In fall 2010, ACU began a new core curriculum for entering first-year students. In response to the new beginnings encountered by the students and the vision of the concepts of the QEP, a plan for implementing the QEP student learning outcomes along with the new curriculum was prescribed. Faculty will weave the information literacy student learning outcomes from *EXPLORE* into CORE 110: Cornerstone; CORE 210: Human Identity; and BCOR 310: The Search for Meaning.

Student Learning Outcomes	Yr 1 (FY 12) AY 11-12	Yr 2 (FY 13) AY 12-13	Yr 3 (FY 14) AY 13-14	Yr 4 (FY 15) AY 14-15	Yr 5 (FY 16) AY 15-16
<b><i>EXPLORE</i></b>					
<b>1.1 All students will understand and appropriately use scholarly sources.</b>	CORE 110				
			CORE 210		
				BCOR 310	
<b>1.2 All students will integrate knowledge to frame researchable questions and to develop strategies to seek answers.</b>	CORE 120				
			CORE 210		
				BCOR 310	
<b>1.3 All students will analyze, interpret, and/or evaluate information and make and implement research-informed decisions.</b>	CORE 120				
			CORE 210		
				BCOR 310	

**Student Learning Outcome 1.1:** All students will understand and appropriately use scholarly sources. More specifically, students will:

- Determine the nature and extent of the information needed,
- Access needed information effectively and efficiently, and
- Use information ethically and legally.

The broad scope of the concept of information literacy provides for a structured and iterative understanding of the skills and concepts of information literacy. As students work to increase their knowledge, skills, and behaviors of information literacy, they will continue to learn and enhance the knowledge and skills in deeper ways.

**Student Learning Outcome 1.2:** All students will integrate knowledge to frame researchable questions and to develop strategies to seek answers. More specifically, students will

- Describe major theories in the field relevant to a particular case, problem, or situation, and
- Describe findings and interpretations in the field relevant to a particular case, problem, or situation.

**Student Learning Outcome 1.3:** Students will analyze, interpret, and/or evaluate information and make and implement research informed decisions. More specifically, students will

- Evaluate information and its sources critically and incorporate selected information into his or her knowledge base and value system; and
- Use multiple sources effectively to accomplish a specific purpose.

As the QEP Development Team defined the topic of Research Literacy, the student learning outcomes listed above described characteristics for the strategies within the core curriculum providing a foundation for research, scholarship, and creative work for the student's major field of study.

**Assessment of *EXPLORE* student learning outcomes.** While these skills are introduced in CORE 110, practiced in CORE 210, and reinforced in BCOR 310, students practice these skills throughout their program of study. Because most students take these courses, a consistent assessment of the QEP student learning outcomes will be possible. This will be accomplished through two means:

- Standardized Assessment of Information Literacy Skills (SAILS) is given as a pre-test to all entering first-year students. [The post-test will be administered during CORE 320.]
- A evaluative essay paper is collected and assessed from a cohort group of students in CORE 110 and CORE 220. These artifacts are assessed using the *EXPLORE 110 Rubric* and the *EXPLORE 220 Rubric*. [See Appendix IV for the rubrics.]

### **Student Learning Outcomes—*CREATE* new information**

After students complete their introduction to and practice of information literacy concepts in CORE 110 and CORE 210, they move into a level of learning where they create and produce new information as they write, present, and perform.

Student Learning Outcomes	Yr 1 (FY 12) AY 11-12	Yr 2 (FY 13) AY 12-13	Yr 3 (FY 14) AY 13-14	Yr 4 (FY 15) AY 14-15	Yr 5 (FY 16) AY 15-16
<b>CREATE</b>					
<b>2.1 All students prepare, present, and assess effectiveness of scholarly and creative products.</b>			<b>COMS 211</b>		
				<b>Capstone Experiences</b>	

**Student Learning Outcome 2.1.** Students create and produce new information through writing, presentation, and performance. More specifically, students will:

- Demonstrate effective use of information literacy skills through written and oral communication;
- Apply new and prior information to the planning and creation of a particular product or performance; and
- Demonstrate effective critical thinking as the student develops, produces and evaluates a product or performance.

**COMS 211.** A new course in the core curriculum, COMS 211: Foundations of Speech and Rhetoric introduces students to the development of public speaking knowledge, skills and attitudes through the integration of rhetorical theory, practice and analysis. The COMS 211 student-learning outcome states that all students will effectively conduct scholarly research for the rhetorical situation. This course in the beginning core curriculum lays the foundation for student research, scholarship, and creative work. This course is assessed within General Education and will not be a part of the assessment for Pursuit.

**Capstone Experiences.** ACU has a long history of Writing Across the Curriculum (WAC). All graduates of ACU successfully complete a course designated as a writing intensive course within their major. Following along the same tradition as WAC, the new general education curriculum and the QEP seek to develop capstone experiences in all majors. Many majors have a capstone course or experience as a part of graduation requirements already.

By the conclusion of the fall semester of 2013, all departments will have developed and submitted a capstone course or experience to the appropriate academic councils for approval. A student's capstone experience provides the final culminating experience for research literacy. [Guidelines for Capstone experiences may be found in Appendix VI.]

**Assessment of CREATE Student Learning Outcome 2.1.** All capstone experiences submit artifacts for assessment to a Team IV--Capstone Assessment Team. The Assessment Team works collaboratively to score all capstone artifacts by the *CREATE Rubric*. [Year 2 Pursuit Institute participants developed this rubric.]

**Student Learning Outcomes—CREATE with faculty**

Student learning outcomes spread throughout the core curriculum and into discipline-specific courses allow students to progress in their understanding of the importance of research, scholarship, and creative work within their chosen fields.

**Student Learning Outcome 2.2** stresses the importance for students to partner with faculty to *CREATE* scholarly and creative products through faculty-guided projects. Not all students will have the interest or the time to work with a faculty member outside of the classroom to create or conduct original work, so in order to assist students in this time commitment, stipends and equipment and material funds are allocated through the *Pursuit* Grant. Grants from other areas of the campus are publicized on the ACU website and efforts are made to link all students who wish to conduct faculty mentored research, scholarship, or creative endeavor with a faculty member. More specifically, undergraduates who wish to work on a project with a faculty member will:

- Perform steps of a discipline specific project; and
- Draw sound conclusions from the results of the project in order to identify future directions.

**Assessment of CREATE Student Learning Outcome 2.2.** The Office of Undergraduate Research annually keeps records of student research on campus. All academic departments report the number and type of faculty-guided research and creative activity projects conducted on an annual basis. These data are reported in the Annual Assessment Cycle.

**Student Learning Outcomes—EXPRESS research, scholarship, or creative work in a public setting**

The primary goal of research is to add to the body of knowledge in a discipline.

**Student Learning Outcome 3.1**, the apex of our student learning outcomes pyramid,

Student Learning Outcomes	Yr 1 (FY 12) AY 11-12	Yr 2 (FY 13) AY 12-13	Yr 3 (FY 14) AY 13-14	Yr 4 (FY 15) AY 14-15	Yr 5 (FY 16) AY 15-16
<b>CREATE</b>					
<b>2.2 Students conduct faculty-guided original work relevant to the field of study.</b>				<b>Pursuit Research Grant, Undergraduate Research Summer Stipend, McNair Scholars, Alpha Chi</b>	

provides for the peer-reviewed, public dissemination of a student’s research, scholarship, or creative work. [The pyramid can be found in Section 3-figure 3.1.] This can be accomplished on three levels: within the classroom, across the ACU campus, and external to ACU. Students will:

- Produce an independent scholarly and/or creative product;
- Demonstrate professionalism in the presentation of scholarly and creative

- product beyond the classroom; and
- Demonstrate professionalism in the presentation of original intellectual or creative contribution to the discipline (external to ACU).

**Assessment of EXPRESS Student Learning Outcome 3.1.** The same assessment will be used for Student Learning Outcome 2.2 and Student Learning Outcome 3.1. All academic departments report the number and type of faculty-guided research and creative activity projects conducted on an annual basis. These data are reported in the Annual Assessment Cycle

**Professional Development for Faculty—QEP Pursuit Institute**

Each May, after the spring semester has concluded, a *Pursuit Institute* will be conducted on campus in the Adams Center for Teaching and Learning. The Institute will consist of ten faculty members selected through an application process. During the institute, fellows will revise existing courses, design new courses, or work on as task as deemed necessary and vital to the implementation of Pursuit. Courses. New courses will be designated as **keystone courses** in an effort to provide support and encouragement for faculty and students. Keystone courses will add an additional information link between QEP learning outcomes in CORE 110 to the capstone experience in the junior or senior year.

Faculty participants in the Institute will work to include activities that develop QEP student learning outcomes and assessments of those outcomes in a course. Adams Center faculty development staff work with fellows to complete course application forms to send through the appropriate academic councils when the course is ready.

**Support Services for Faculty—Director of Undergraduate Research**

Each year the Director of Undergraduate Research works with a large group of faculty to provide an avenue for students to present their research and creative projects in a public venue. This annual event is entitled the Undergraduate Research Festival. It is anticipated that as more and more students are affected by the learning outcomes of Pursuit, that the numbers of students who make oral or poster presentations will increase. It is also anticipated that the quality for those presentations will increase. In order to assist in the increased number of participants, *Pursuit* will provide a .25 FTE reduction in load for the director.

**Support Services for Students and Faculty—QEP Pursuit Research Grants**

QEP *Pursuit Research Grants* provide incentives and funding for faculty and

Student Learning Outcomes	Yr 1 (FY 12) AY 11-12	Yr 2 (FY 13) AY 12-13	Yr 3 (FY 14) AY 13-14	Yr 4 (FY 15) AY 14-15	Yr 5 (FY 16) AY 15-16
<b>EXPRESS</b>					
<b>3.1 Students publicly disseminate independent scholarly and creative work.</b>				<b>Undergraduate Research Festival</b>	

students to work together on research projects beginning in Year 1 of *Pursuit*. Grant funding requires the projects to include students and faculty working together on research, scholarship, or creative projects. Information for the grants and applications will be found on the QEP Blog and on the ACU webpage under the Research tab.

**Faculty.** The competitive application process provides up to \$5,000 funding for each faculty member. Funding may be used for stipends, for student stipends, for travel, or for expenses related to research or creative activities with students. These grants are awarded on a competitive application basis, much like ACU's Cullen and Math/Science Grants, beginning in Year 1. Final award payments to faculty are made when Student Research Journals, Student Assessment of Project Reports, Final Budget Reports, and Faculty Assessment of Project Reports are submitted.

**Students.** During the grant project year, students may earn \$1,000/semester for research or creative work with a faculty mentor. This funding is in addition to the faculty funding described. Faculty members may apply to receive funding for student researchers up to \$2000 for one academic year (\$1000/semester). A maximum of four student researchers will receive funding from any one department. Final award payments to students are made when Research Activity Journals, Research Project and Student Self-Assessment Reports are submitted. Stipend amounts can vary depending upon how many students are working with the faculty mentor and are dependent upon decisions made by the faculty in charge of the project.

**Project Expenses.** \$1,000 is allocated for research or project expenses for use by the faculty or student researchers.

### Support Services for Students and Faculty—Travel

Beginning in Year 2, faculty and students traveling to conferences to make presentations regarding their scholarly or creative products may apply for funding to offset travel expenses. A total of \$10,000 for faculty members and a total of \$10,000 for students are allocated in the budget. The *Pursuit* Team will consider funding proportional to costs of travel and make recommendations to the Research Council for final approval. Priority is given for travel to international and national conferences.

## SUMMARY

Actions for implementation of the selected learning outcomes have been carefully considered and analyzed in context of the mission and the strategic plan of the University. Each of the actions has been examined from multiple perspectives to insure the impact of the *Pursuit* QEP on students, faculty and staff is realistic and yet manageable and sustainable.



# SAILS Summary Comparison

## CORE 110 (Fall 2011) vs Capstone (2014-2015)

In 2011-2012, Abilene Christian University (ACU) began its implementation of *Pursuit*, the Quality Enhancement Plan (QEP). The plan envisioned three specific, well-defined curricular goals, each clearly articulated in student learning outcomes. The first student-learning outcome is “Students will understand and appropriately use scholarly sources.” More specifically, students will:

1. Determine the nature and extent of the information needed,
2. Access needed information effectively and efficiently, and
3. Use information ethically and legally.

In order to assess student progress at achieving these outcomes, the Standardized Assessment of Information Literacy Skills (SAILS) was given to students enrolled in CORE 110 (Cornerstone) during the first three weeks of class and then repeated during the senior capstone course. Scores for students entering in fall 2011 were compared to the scores of students enrolled in Capstone experiences during the fall and spring of 2014-2015. Overall scores, standard error, and true group average scores for each year are compared on the next two pages. In addition to a comparison between the groups, scores for ACU, scores for institutions of the same type (Masters), and scores for all institutions are provided for comparisons.

Initially, students entering in fall 2011 performed *about the same* as the Institution Type benchmark on 4 skills sets, and *worse than* the institution type on the remaining 4 skills sets. After 3 years, comparison data shows the following results:

- Overall scores have increased significantly.
- Standard errors have decreased, showing student scores have less variability and are performing more consistently on the SAILS skills sets.
- Capstone students at Abilene Christian University performed **BETTER THAN** the institution-type benchmark on ALL SAILS Skills Sets, including the following:
  - Developing a Research Strategy
  - Selecting Finding Tools
  - Searching
  - Using Finding Tool Features
  - Retrieving Sources
  - Evaluating Sources
  - Documenting Sources
  - Understanding Economic, Legal, and Social Issues.
- This group of entering students in CORE 110 in fall 2011 did NOT perform better than the Institution-type benchmark on ANY skill set.

# SAILS Summary Data— Cornerstone 2011-2012

Detailed results from the Fall 2011 SAILS Skills Sets and alignment with *Pursuit* objectives are found below:

Fall 2011	SAILS Skill Sets*	Abilene Christian University <i>n</i> =439**	Institution Type: Masters <i>n</i> =23,417	All Institutions <i>n</i> =59,397
<b>Pursuit Objective</b>	<b>Overall Scores, Standard Error, and True Group Average Score</b>			
1.1.A	1. Developing a Research Strategy	487 ± 12 (475, 499)	501 +2 (499, 503)	497 +1 (496,498)
	2. Selecting Finding Tools	510 ± 16 (494, 526)	524 ± 2 (522, 526)	518 +1 (517,519)
	3. Searching	465 ±12 (453, 477)	482 +2 (480, 484)	478 +1 (477, 479)
	4. Using Finding Tool Features	528 ± 17 (511, 545)	546 +2 (544, 548)	541 +1 (540, 542)
1.1.B	5. Retrieving Sources	525 ± 18 (507, 543)	560 +2 (558, 562)	553 +1 (551, 555)
	6. Evaluating Sources	472 ± 13 (459, 485)	486 +2 (484, 488)	478 +1 (477, 479)
1.1.C	7. Documenting Sources	438 ± 17 (421, 455)	461 +2 (459, 463)	455 +1 (454, 456)
	8. Understanding Economic, Legal, and Social Issues	443 ± 14 (429, 457)	453 +2 (451, 455)	448 +1 (447, 449)

\* The Standardized Assessment of Information Literacy Skills (SAILS) is a knowledge test with multiple-choice questions targeting a variety of information literacy skills. Questions on the SAILS test are based directly on two documents authored by the Association of College and Research Libraries. Project SAILS is located at Kent State University in Ohio.

\*\*439 students completed the test out of 875 students enrolled in CORE 110.



# SAILS Summary Data— Capstone 2014-2015



Detailed results from students enrolled in Capstone during Fall 2014 and Spring 2015. SAILS Skills Sets results and alignment with *Pursuit* objectives are found below:

2014-2015	SAILS Skill Sets*	Abilene Christian University <i>n</i> =351**	Institution Type: Masters <i>n</i> =27,376	All Institutions <i>n</i> =59,589
<i>Pursuit</i> Objective	Overall Scores, Standard Error, and True Group Average Score			
1.1.A	1. Developing a Research Strategy	541 ± 6 (535, 547)	509 + 1 (508, 510)	507 + 0 (507, 507)
	2. Selecting Finding Tools	542 ± 7 (535, 549)	515 + 1 (514, 516)	511 + 1 (510, 512)
	3. Searching	528 ± 6 (522, 534)	486 + 0 (486, 486)	486 + 0 (486, 486)
	4. Using Finding Tool Features	556 ± 8 (548, 564)	535 + 1 (534, 536)	532 + 1 (531, 533)
1.1.B	5. Retrieving Sources	570 ± 8 (562, 578)	521 + 1 (520, 522)	519 + 1 (518, 520)
	6. Evaluating Sources	515 ± 7 (508, 522)	473 + 1 (472, 474)	469 + 0 (469, 469)
1.1.C	7. Documenting Sources	535 ± 8 (527, 543)	492 + 1 (491, 493)	487 + 1 (486, 488)
	8. Understanding Economic, Legal, and Social Issues	512 ± 6 (506, 518)	471 + 1 (470, 472)	471 + 1 (470, 472)

\*The Standardized Assessment of Information Literacy Skills (SAILS) is a knowledge test with multiple-choice questions targeting a variety of information literacy skills. Questions on the SAILS test are based directly on two documents authored by the Association of College and Research Libraries. Project SAILS is located at Kent State University in Ohio.

\*\* 351 students completed the test out of 858 students enrolled in Capstone courses.

# CORE 110 Assessment – 2014-15 Report



*Dr. Phyllis Bolin*  
*Dr. Laura Carroll*

## Background

In order to assess outcomes 1.1A<sup>1</sup>, 1.1B<sup>2</sup>, and 1.1C<sup>3</sup> from the QEP document, the Cornerstone (CORE 110) research artifact – annotated bibliography -- was collected. A simple random sample was used to select 99 papers for assessment.

The same assessment team met for the fourth year and consisted of 5 faculty members from across the university – Dr. Stephen Baldrige (Social Work), Dr. Laura Carroll, (Language and Literature), Dr. Houston Heflin (Bible, Missions, and Ministry), Dr. Susan Lewis (Vice Provost), Dawne Swearingen Meeks (Theatre) – who have agreed to serve for 5 years.

## Results

### Outcome 1.1.A

The QEP report calls for an **acceptable target** of 70% of samples scoring 2.5 or higher, and an **ideal target** of 80% of samples scoring 2.5 or higher. In 2014-2015, 84.8% of samples scored 2.5 or higher; **the ideal target for 1.1.A was met this year.**

	Obj. 1.1.A	CORE 110	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4
<b>ONE</b>	Determine Information Needed	Score > 2.5	61%	56%	61.1%	84.8%
		Acceptable Target (70%)	Not met	Not met	Not met	MET
		Ideal Target (80%)	Not met	Not met	Not met	MET
		Average of all samples	2.45	2.55	2.69	2.96

<sup>1</sup> Students will determine the nature and extent of the information needed.?

<sup>2</sup> Access the needed information effectively and efficiently

<sup>3</sup> Students will use information ethically and legally.

### Outcome 1.1.B

The QEP report calls for an **acceptable target** of 70% of samples scoring 2.5 or higher, and an **ideal target** of 80% of samples scoring 2.5 or higher. In 2014-2015 84.8% of samples scored 2.5 or higher; **the ideal target for 1.1.B was met this year.**

TWO	Obj. 1.1.B	CORE 110	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4
	Access and Use Information	Score > 2.5	No assessment	67%	70.5%	84.8%
		Acceptable Target (70%)	No assessment	Minimally Met	MET	MET
		Ideal Target (80%)	No assessment	Not met	Not met	MET
		Average of all samples	No assessment	2.52	2.62	2.89

### Outcome 1.1.C

The QEP report calls for an **acceptable target** of 70% of samples scoring 2.5 or higher, and an **ideal target** of 80% of samples scoring 2.5 or higher. In 2014-2015, 90.9% of samples scored 2.5 or higher; **the ideal target for 1.1.C was met this year.**

THREE	Obj. 1.1.C	CORE 110	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4
	Information Use Strategies	Score > 2.5	40%	55%	80%	90.9%
		Acceptable Target (70%)	Not met	Not met	MET	MET
		Ideal Target (80%)	Not met	Not met	MET	MET
		Average of all samples	2.01	2.49	2.82	3.04

### Composite

The composite score, while not prescribed in the original QEP, was calculated to provide an overview of the Cornerstone assessment. To be consistent with the language for individual outcomes, CORE 210, and BCOR 310, an **acceptable target** of 70% of samples scoring 7.5 or higher and an **ideal target** of 80% of samples.

COMPOSITE	Obj. 1.1	CORE 110	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4
		Score > 7.5	56% (5)	50.51%	66.32%	83.8%
		Acceptable Target (70%)	Not met	Not met	Minimally met	MET
		Ideal Target (80%)	Not met	Not met	Not met	MET
		Average of all samples	3.76 (5)	7.72	8.121	8.89

### Recommendations and Findings –

The CORE 110 assignment, rubric and assessment are working well to teach and assess students’ understandings of information literacy. Over four years, we have worked to (1) revise the assignment, (2) refine the rubric, and (3) train teachers.

***As a result, student annotated bibliographies have met the ideal target for all three outcomes and the composite score.***

After the 2013-2104 assessment, the assessment team conducted professional development sessions for CORE 110 teachers in the Adam’s Center. We focused on the following key points:

- a. Implement consistent formatting for the document across all sections.
- b. Understand correct MLA citation.
- c. Address target audience in the introduction to the bibliography.
- d. Refine and revise their research question based on their findings
- e. Insure the students address questions rather than arguments.
- f. Distinguish between social sciences and humanities.
- g. Prohibit using the Bible as a source.

The assessment team believes that these meetings were key in raising the scores and meeting all Acceptable and Ideal Targets. As we continue to help CORE 110 instructors teach information literacy more effectively, the assessment team will continue to hold professional development sessions in the weeks leading up to the Informational Literacy assignment. These sessions will allow time for the assessment team to discuss findings and recommendations for teaching the assignment and for the instructors to ask questions.

# EXPLORE / Rubric—for use in CORE 110

## Annotated Bibliography

Revised 5/2013

**Student Learning Outcome 1.1. Students will understand and appropriately use scholarly sources.**

Rubric Items		Exemplary (4)	Competent (3)	Emerging (2)	Unacceptable (1)	Score
<b>ONE</b>	<b>Determine the nature and the extent of information needed</b>	Effectively defines and narrows the scope of the research question/topic.	Defines the scope of the research question/topic completely.	Defines the scope of the research question/topic or incompletely (parts are missing, remains too broad or too narrow, etc.).	Has difficulty defining the scope of the research question/topic.	
	<b>Obj 1.1.A</b>	Types of information (sources) selected directly relate to concepts or answer research questions.	Types of information (sources) selected relate to concepts or answer research question.	Types of information (sources) selected partially relate to concepts or answer research questions.	Types of information (sources) selected do not relate to concepts or answer research questions.	
<b>TWO</b>	<b>Access the needed information effectively and efficiently</b>	Citations represent various scholarly or academic sources  All cited resources come from reliable sources  All resources are appropriate for the target audience.	Most citations represent scholarly or academic sources  Most cited resources come from reliable sources  Most resources are appropriate for the target audience	Citations represent a limited range of scholarly or academic sources  Some cited resources come from reliable sources  Some resources are appropriate for the target audience	Citations are from only one scholarly or academic source  Few cited resources come from reliable sources  Few resources are appropriate for the target audience.	
	<b>Obj 1.1.B</b>					
<b>THREE</b>	<b>Access and use information ethically and legally (information use strategies)</b>	Citations and references are correct MLA citation style.	Citations and references are MLA style with few errors.	Citations and references are consistent, but aren't MLA style.	Citations and references do not resemble a citation style.	
	<b>Obj 1.1.C</b>	Paraphrase, summary, or quotes in ways that are true to original context.	Paraphrase, summary, or quotes are close to the original context, but not rely too heavily on quoting or have too little summary.	Paraphrase, summary, or quotes are too broad to reflect the original content.	Annotations are absent or do not reflect content of the article.	

# CORE 210 Assessment – 2014-15 Report

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*Dr. Phyllis Bolin*  
*Dr. Brenda Bender*

In order to assess outcomes 1.1A<sup>1</sup>, 1.1B<sup>2</sup>, 1.1C<sup>3</sup>, 1.2A<sup>4</sup>, 1.2B<sup>5</sup>, 1.3A<sup>6</sup>, and 1.3B<sup>7</sup> from the QEP document, the CORE 210 research artifact was collected. From a set of 840 enrolled students, 820 papers were collected (97.6%). A random sample of 75 papers was selected from CORE 210 sections delivered in fall 2014 and spring 2015.

The assessment team consisted of the same 5 faculty members from the previous year – Dr. Brenda Bender (Communication Disorders), Dr. Joshua Brokaw, (Biology), Dr. Jason Holland (Mathematics), Mr. J. Scott Self (Alpha Academic Services), Dr. Jeanine Varner (Language and Literature).

Each paper was rated by 2 members of the assessment team. The scores from rater 1 and rater 2 were averaged for each SLO for each paper in the sample. These averages scores were used to calculate the total average score for each SLO, the number of papers meeting the acceptable target and the composite scores. Composite scores were calculated by adding the rubric scores for each SLO (e.g., 1.1.A + 1.1.B + 1.1.C). Percentages of papers meeting acceptable target scores were calculated by dividing by the number of papers in the sample.

Two assessments were conducted in 2014-2015, one for students enrolled in fall courses and one for students enrolled in spring courses. This was done in order to allow time for adjustments in curriculum or pedagogy.

SLOs assessed in 2014-2015:

- <sup>1</sup> Students will determine the nature and extent of the information needed.
  - <sup>2</sup> Students will access the needed information effectively and efficiently.
  - <sup>3</sup> Students will use information ethically and legally.
  - <sup>4</sup> Student will describe theories or perspectives relevant to a particular case or problem.
  - <sup>5</sup> Students will describe findings and interpretations relevant to a particular case or problem.
  - <sup>6</sup> Students will evaluate information and its sources critically.
  - <sup>7</sup> Students will use information effectively to accomplish a specific purpose.
-

## Background

CORE 210 courses were developed to target specific skills and outcomes that linked to the fundamental understandings found in the foundation of the general education curriculum approved by faculty in 2007. These include but are not limited to the following:

- Strong analytical, communication, quantitative, and information skills;
- Deep understanding of and hands-on experience with inquiry practices that explore the natural, socio-cultural, aesthetic, and religious realms and habits of mind that foster integrative thinking; and
- Ability to transfer skills and knowledge from one setting to another.

Throughout the many changes and modifications to the CORE sequence and the CORE 210 course, the finds of the assessment team indicate CORE 210 is targeting the stated goals and outcomes in the QEP initiative.

## Results

### SLO 1.1.A

The QEP report calls for an **acceptable target** of 70% of samples scoring 2.5 or higher and an **ideal target** of 80% of samples scoring 2.5 or higher for this rubric item. In 2014-15, 74.67% of sampled papers received a rubric rating of 2.5 or higher; meeting the acceptable target and approaching the ideal target for this SLO. A comparison with 2013-2014 data indicates a slight drop in this SLO for this year.

	Obj. 1.1.A	CORE 210	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4
<b>ONE</b>	Determine Information Needed	Score > 2.5	63.6%	75.0%	74.67%
		Acceptable Target (70%)	Approaching	Met	Met
		Ideal Target (80%)	Not met	Approaching	Approaching
		Average of all samples	2.67	2.63	2.71

## SLO 1.1.B

The QEP report calls for an **acceptable target** of 70% of samples scoring 2.5 or higher and an **ideal target** of 80% of samples scoring 2.5 or higher for this rubric item. In 2014-15, 72% of sampled papers received a rubric rating of 2.5 or higher; meeting the acceptable target for this SLO. The ideal target is not met. A comparison with 2013-2014 data indicates a substantive increase for this year.

TWO	Obj. 1.1.B	CORE 210	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4
	Access and Use Information	Score > 2.5	No assessment	61.7%	72%
		Acceptable Target (70%)	No assessment	Approaching	Met
		Ideal Target (80%)	No assessment	Not met	Not met
		Average of all samples	No assessment	2.45	2.59

## SLO 1.1.C

The QEP report calls for an **acceptable target** of 70% of samples scoring 2.5 or higher and an **ideal target** of 80% of samples scoring 2.5 or higher for this rubric item. In 2014-15, 66.67% of sampled papers received a rubric rating of 2.5 or higher; the acceptable target and ideal target for this SLO were not met. A comparison with 2013-2014 data indicates an increase in this outcome for this year.

THREE	Obj. 1.1.C	CORE 210	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4
	Information Use Strategies	Score > 2.5	70.5%	61.7%	66.67%
		Acceptable Target (70%)	MET	Approaching	Approaching
		Ideal Target (80%)	Not met	Not met	Not met
		Average of all samples	2.63	2.5	2.66

## SLO 1.1 Composite

The QEP report calls for a composite score for 7.5 for SLOs ONE, TWO and THREE. An **acceptable target** of 70% of samples scoring 7.5 or higher and an **ideal target** of 80% of samples scoring 7.5 or higher. In 2014-15, 62.67% of sampled papers received a rubric



rating of 7.5 or higher; the acceptable target and the ideal target were not met for this SLO. A comparison with 2013-2014 data indicates a slight increase for this year.

COMPOSITE	Obj. 1.1	CORE 210	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4
		Total > 7.5	63.6% (total > 5.0)	60.0%	62.67%
		Acceptable Target (70%)	Approaching	Not met	Approaching
		Ideal Target (80%)	Not met	Not met	Not met
		Average of all samples	5.29 (total > 5.0)	7.59	7.96

SLO 1.2.A

The QEP report calls for an **acceptable target** of 70% of samples scoring 2.5 or higher and an **ideal target** of 80% of samples scoring 2.5 or higher. In fall of 2014-15, 62.67% of sampled papers received a rubric rating of 2.5 or higher; the SLO is approaching the acceptable target score; the ideal target score is not met. A comparison with 2013-2014 data indicates a substantive increase for this year.

FOUR	Obj. 1.2.A	CORE 210	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4
		Score > 2.5	63.6%	41.7%	62.67%
	Describe Relevant Theories	Acceptable Target (70%)	Approaching	Not met	Approaching
		Ideal Target (80%)	Not met	Not met	Not met
		Average of all samples	2.5	2.16	2.54

## SLO 1.2.B

The QEP report calls for an **acceptable target** of 70% of samples scoring 2.5 or higher and an **ideal target** of 80% of samples scoring 2.5 or higher. In 2014-15, 57.33% of sampled papers received a rubric rating of 2.5 or higher; target scores for this SLO are not met. A comparison with 2013-2014 data indicates a substantive increase for this year.

FIVE	Obj. 1.2.B	CORE 210	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	
	Analysis Applied to Situation	Score > 2.5		63.6%	48.3%	57.33%
		Acceptable Target (70%)		Approaching	Not met	Not met
		Ideal Target (80%)		Not met	Not met	Not met
		Average of all samples		2.53	2.27	2.41

## SLO 1.2 Composite

The QEP report calls for a composite score for 5.0 for SLOs FOUR and FIVE. An **acceptable target** of 70% of samples scoring 5.0 or higher and an **ideal target** of 80% of samples scoring 5.0 or higher. In 2014-15, 56% of sampled papers received a rubric rating of 5.0 or higher; target scores for this SLO are not met. A comparison with 2013-2014 data indicates a substantive increase for this year.

COMPOSITE	Obj. 1.2	CORE 210	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	
		Total > 5.0		59.1%	36.7%	56%
		Acceptable Target (70%)		Not Met	Not met	Not met
		Ideal Target (80%)		Not met	Not met	Not met
		Average of all samples		5.03	4.44	4.96

SLO 1.3.A

The QEP report calls for an **acceptable target** of 70% of samples scoring 2.5 or higher and an **ideal target** of 80% of samples scoring 2.5 or higher. In 2014-15, 57.33% of sampled papers received a rubric rating of 2.5 or higher; target scores for this SLO are not met. A comparison with 2013-2014 data indicates a substantive increase for this year.

<b>SIX</b>	Obj. 1.3.A	CORE 210	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4
	Evaluate Information	Score > 2.5	50%	40%	57.33%
		Acceptable Target (70%)	Not met	Not met	Not met
		Ideal Target (80%)	Not met	Not met	Not met
		Average of all samples	2.27	2.15	2.36

SLO 1.3.B

The QEP report calls for an **acceptable target** of 70% of samples scoring 2.5 or higher and an **ideal target** of 80% of samples scoring 2.5 or higher. In 2014-15, 70.67% of sampled papers received a rubric rating of 2.5 or higher; the acceptable target is met. A comparison with 2013-2014 data indicates a substantive increase for this year.

<b>SEVEN</b>	Obj. 1.3B	CORE 210	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4
	Use Information for a Purpose	Score > 2.5	65.9%	55.0%	70.67%
		Acceptable Target (70%)	Minimally Met	Not met	Met
		Ideal Target (80%)	Not met	Not met	Not met
		Average of all samples	2.67	2.4	2.54

## SLO 1.3 Composite

The QEP report calls for a composite score for 5.0 for SLOs SIX and SEVEN. An **acceptable target** of 70% of samples scoring 5.0 or higher and an **ideal target** of 80% of samples scoring 5.0 or higher. In 2014-15, 57.33% of sampled papers received a rubric rating of 5.0 or higher; target scores for this SLO are not met. A comparison with 2013-2014 data indicates a substantive increase for this year.

COMPOSITE	Obj. 1.3	CORE 210	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4
		Total > 5.0	50%	43%	57.33%
		Acceptable Target (70%)	Not met	Not met	Not met
		Ideal Target (80%)	Not met	Not met	Not met
		Average of all samples	4.94	4.55	4.91

### Factors to consider for the 2014-2015 assessment:

**Significant Changes to Assessment Rubric.** Looking back at the history of the course, the CORE 210 rubric was significantly revised for the YEAR 3 assessment. The first major revision occurred in SLO 1.1.A and 1.1.C following the changes made by the CORE 110 assessment team. Each of these rubric items assessed more than one skill; therefore, the two skills/outcomes were rated separately and the two ratings were averaged to determine the rubric score for each item. This change allowed for a more specific rating of each skill for SLO 1.1. In addition, the term “theories” in SLO 1.2.A and 1.2.B was very difficult to apply to the assignments generated from CORE 210. This year the language of these SLOs was revised to “...theories or perspectives” to allow for a broader application of the SLO especially as the BCOR 310 assessment team launched this year. When you understand these changes, Year 4 shows an improvement from the previous year, a large step in the right direction.

**Improvements found in CORE 110--Cornerstone.** If adaptations and pedagogical improvements are considered, the CORE 210 assessment data may be on the verge of a major improvement in the assessment data. If you compare the data from CORE 110—Cornerstone, assessment results have taken about 3 years of “closing the loop” and using assessment results to improve the assignment prompt, the pedagogy of faculty, and the learning strategies in order to show significant improvements in assessment results. Cornerstone results from 2014-2015 were outstanding, so it is hoped that similar improvements in assessment results will occur for CORE 210 in 2015-2016.

### **Observations:**

The data indicate:

- Students are meeting the criteria for SLO 1.1; determining the nature and extent of the information needed, accessing the needed information effectively and efficiently, and using information ethically and legally.
  - Objective 1.1.C continues to be an area where papers fall short of the acceptable target rating. The assessment team observed students struggle with providing citations consistently – frequently not citing a source for information of a factual nature in introductory information and when giving their opinion. In addition, paraphrase and/or summary information was frequently too broad.
- Students are not meeting the criteria for SLO 1.2; describing theories or perspectives relevant to a particular case or problem and describing findings and interpretations relevant to a particular case or problem. However, substantive increases in performance were noted between 2013-14 and 2014-15; a 20% increase was observed in the composite score for this SLO.
  - The substantive increase in this SLO is attributable in part to the availability of the writing prompts to the assessment team. When the writing prompt is available, the team is able to assess the paper based on the expectations set forth by the instructor. The assessment team was able to match the rating level on the rubric to the content of the paper through the lens of the writing prompt.
- Students are not meeting one of the two criteria for SLO 1.3; evaluating information and its sources critically. However, students did meet the criteria of using information effectively to accomplish a specific purpose for this SLO. A substantive increase of 17% was noted in the other SLO, evaluating information between 2013-14 and 2014-15.

The Assessment Team had access to the writing prompts from the sections of CORE 210 taught in the fall and spring which was extremely helpful in determining how well the paper met the expectations for the assignment. In particular, assessment of a paper meeting the intended purpose was facilitated by having the writing prompt.

### **Commendations:**

Thesis statements were readily identifiable in the majority of papers. This is noted in the improvements for SLO 1.1. The CORE 210 faculty are clearly helping students know the importance of the thesis statement. In addition, several writing prompts that were available to the assessment team were very detailed and assisted the team in understanding the expectations of the paper when applying the rubric.

The papers assessed this year made significant improvements in describing the theories or perspectives relevant to the thesis statement [SLO 1.2.A]. This is another area where the CORE 210 faculty should be commended. It is the opinion of the assessment team that this observation is attributable to the specificity of many of the writing prompts coupled with the improvements in defining the scope of the thesis statement.

**Suggestions:**

The assessment team continues to encourage the CORE 210 faculty to refine the writing prompts to assist students in knowing specific expectations of this paper. In addition, incorporating particular pieces of the EXPLORE II Rubric into the specific expectations of the writing prompt would benefit the student as well as the instructor. Suggested objectives from the rubric to address in the writing rubrics include Objectives 1.1.C, 1.2.A, 1.2.B and 1.3.A.

In SLO 1.1, the area of most concern is citing information ethically and legally. Most papers had evidence of the legal aspect of citations – a source was cited for some of the information in the paper. The ethical use of information continues to be problematic. In particular, citing sources in introductory paragraphs and when presenting an informed opinion. The team acknowledges the sophisticated nature of this skill; however, the team encourages CORE 210 faculty to provide students feedback on this specific skill on drafts and the final paper.

**Assessment rubric – limitations:**

The assessment team continues to work through the tension of the differing expectations across the rubric levels for each objective. In particular, the team struggled to differentiate between the competent and emerging levels of Objective 1.2.B – the difference between these two levels is the use of professional language. Each semester the team has to identify a working definition of professional language during the norming process. Often, it is defined by what professional language is not – colloquial terms, poor grammar – as opposed to what it is.

In objective 1.3.A there is a significant amount of tension between the levels of competent, emerging and unacceptable. Interpreting and evaluating information is targeted. These three levels on the rubric refer to identifying assumptions and relevant contexts when presenting a position. If the writing prompt does not define the position or positions the paper is to address the team is left to assess this very broadly. The differences between rubric levels is indicated by non-specific referents such as “...several relevant contexts...” and “...some assumptions...” and “emerging awareness of present assumptions”.

# EXPLORE II Rubric—for CORE 210 and BCOR 310

Revised 5/16

## SLO 1.1. Students will understand and appropriately use scholarly sources.

Rubric Item		Exemplary (4)	Competent (3)	Emerging (2)	Unacceptable (1)	Score	
<b>ONE</b>	<b>Determine the nature and the extent of information needed</b>  <i>Obj 1.1.A</i>	Effectively defines and narrows the scope of the research question/topic.	Defines the scope of the research question/topic completely.	Defines the scope of the research question/topic or incompletely (parts are missing, remains too broad or too narrow, etc.).	Has difficulty defining the scope of the research question/topic.		
		Types of information (sources) selected directly relate to concepts or answer research questions.	Types of information (sources) selected relate to concepts or answer research question.	Types of information (sources) selected partially relate to concepts or answer research questions.	Types of information (sources) selected do not relate to concepts or answer research questions		
<b>TWO</b>	<b>Access the needed information effectively and efficiently</b>  <i>O1.1.B</i>	Citations represent various scholarly or academic sources.	Most citations represent scholarly or academic sources.	Citations represent a limited range of scholarly or academic sources.	Citations are from only one scholarly or academic source.		
			Cited resources are used appropriately.	Most cited resources come from reliable sources.	Some cited resources come from reliable sources.		Few cited resources come from reliable sources.
			All resources are appropriate for the target audience.	Most resources are appropriate for the target audience.	Some resources are appropriate for the target audience.		Few resources are appropriate for the target audience.
<b>THREE</b>	<b>Access and use information ethically and legally (information use strategies)</b>  <i>Obj 1.1.C</i>	Citations and references are correct APA or MLA citation style.	Citations and references are APA or MLA style with few errors.	Citations and references are consistent, but aren't APA or MLA style.	Citations and references do not resemble a citation style.		
			Paraphrases, summarizes, or quotes in ways that are true to original context.	Paraphrases, summaries, or quotes are close to the original context, but do not rely too heavily on quoting or have too little summary.	Papers relied too heavily on quotes. Paraphrases, summaries, or quotes are too broad to reflect the original content.		Annotations are absent or do not reflect content of the article

**SLO 1.2. Students will integrate knowledge to frame researchable questions and to develop strategies to seek answers.**

Rubric Item		Exemplary (4)	Competent (3)	Emerging (2)	Unacceptable (1)	Score
FOUR	Describe theories or perspectives relevant to the thesis <i>Obj 1.2.A</i>	Theories and perspectives are thoroughly described and relevance to the thesis is discussed, recognizing the strengths and limitations of each theory.	Theories and perspectives are identified and adequate description of relevance to the thesis is provided.	Most theories and perspectives are identified with limited description of thesis provided.	Several theories and perspectives are described but are not all relevant to the thesis. Not all relevant theories and perspectives are identified and described.	
	Interpretations are applied relevant to a thesis. <i>Obj 1.2.B</i>	Analysis/interpretations are thoroughly described using formal academic writing. Interpretations are applied to the thesis and extensions are made to other relevant connections.*	Analysis/interpretations are presented and described using formal academic writing. Interpretations are clearly connected to the thesis. *	Analysis/interpretations using formal academic writing are presented and summarized. May lack some formal academic writing. Interpretation of how findings are relevant to the thesis. *	Analysis/interpretations are presented in limited terms. Lacks formal academic writing. Little to no interpretation of how findings are relevant to the thesis. *	

**SLO 1.3. Students will analyze, interpret, and/or evaluate information and make and implement research-informed decisions.**

Rubric Item		Exemplary (4)	Competent (3)	Emerging (2)	Unacceptable (1)	Score
SIX	Evaluate information and its sources critically <i>Obj 1.3.A</i>	Carefully evaluates the relevance of contexts when presenting a position.	Identifies own and others' assumptions or biases and several relevant contexts when presenting a position.	Questions some assumptions or biases. Identifies several relevant contexts when presenting a position. May be more aware of others' assumptions or biases than one's own (or vice versa).	Shows an emerging awareness of present assumptions or biases (sometimes labels assertions as assumptions or biases). Begins to identify some contexts when presenting a position.	
	Use info effectively to accomplish a specific purpose <i>Obj 1.3.B</i>	Communicates, organizes, and synthesizes information from sources to fully achieve a specific purpose, with clarity and depth.	Communicates, organizes, and synthesizes information from sources. Intended purpose is achieved.	Communicates and organizes information from sources. The information is not yet synthesized, so the intended purpose is not fully achieved.	Communicates info from sources. The info is fragmented and /or used inappropriately (misquoted, taken out of context, or incorrectly paraphrased, etc.); purpose not achieved.	

\*Formal academic writing or professional language varies with the profession. In some professions, use of a personal pronoun is unprofessional. The assessment teams will not consider the use of a personal pronoun unprofessional. Formal academic writing does not include contractions or colloquialisms and is clear and concise.

If faculty will submit prompts for student papers, the assessment teams will use the prompts to clarify the definition of formal academic writing for each class.



# BCOR 310 Assessment Report 2014-2015

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## **Background**

This report describes the results from the second assessment of the research artifact from BCOR 310. The assessment outcomes are those prescribed for BCOR 310 (Outcomes 1.1 (A, B, and C), 1.2 (A and B) and 1.3 (A and B)), which are found in the QEP document approved by SACSCOC in 2011.

From a set of 606 students, 562 papers were collected (92.7%) from the 11 sections of BCOR taught in the fall and spring semesters of 2014-2015. A random sample of 66 papers was assessed from those 606 papers. The assessment took place at the close of the fall semester (30 papers assessed from 211 collected) and the close of the spring semester (36 papers assessed from 351 collected).

The assessment team consisted of 5 faculty members. Dr. Sarah Lee (Chemistry and Biochemistry), Dr. Suanna Davis (Language and Literature), Dr. Curt Niccum (Bible, Missions and Ministry) and Dr. Lynette Austin (Communication Sciences and Disorders) assessed papers in both the fall and spring semesters. Dr. Monty Lynn (Management Sciences) was involved in the assessment of fall papers, but did not assess papers in the spring.

Two members of the assessment team rated each paper. The scores from rater 1 and rater 2 were averaged for each paper in the sample. These scores were used to calculate the average score for each SLO objective, the number of papers meeting the acceptable and ideal targets for each SLO objective, and the composite score for each SLO. Composite scores were calculated by adding the rubric scores for each SLO (e.g., 1.1.A + 1.1.B + 1.1.C = 1.1 composite). Percentages of papers rated at or above a certain target (for example, at or above an average of 2.5) were calculated by dividing the appropriate score by the number of papers in the sample.

## **SLOs assessed (2014-2015):**

- 1.1.A Students will determine the nature and extent of the information needed.
- 1.1.B Students will access the needed information effectively and efficiently.
- 1.1.C Students will use information ethically and legally.
- 1.2.A Students will describe theories or perspectives relevant to a particular case, problem or situation.
- 1.2.B Students will apply interpretations relevant to a particular case or problem.
- 1.3.A Students will evaluate information and its sources critically.
- 1.3.B Students will use information effectively to accomplish a specific purpose.

## Results

### **SLO Objective 1.1.A—Students will determine the nature and extent of the information needed.**

ONE	Obj. 1.1.A	BCOR310	Year 3: 2013-2014	Year 4: 2014-2015		
				Fall 2014	Spring 2015	Overall Year 4
Determine Information Needed	Score $\geq$ 2.5	36.7%	75.0%	58.3%	65.9%	
	Acceptable Target (73%)	Not met	Met	Not met	Approaching	
	Ideal Target (85%)	Not met	Not met	Not met	Not met	
	Average of all samples	2.18	2.68	2.45	2.55	

The QEP report calls for an acceptable target of 73% of samples scoring 2.5 or higher and an ideal target of 85% of samples scoring 2.5 or higher for this rubric item. In the 2014-2015 assessment, 65.9% of sampled papers received a rubric rating of 2.5 or higher; thus **falling short of the acceptable target** for this SLO objective.

### Comparisons.

- Despite falling short of the ideal target, there was significant improvement in the percentage of papers scoring 2.5 or higher on this SLO objective for Year 4 when compared to the assessment for Year 3 (2013-2014). The percent of increase is almost 80%.
- The Year 4 fall and spring data show significant differences in the percentage of sampled papers scoring above a 2.5 on this SLO. There was a 22% of decrease in scores from fall 2014 to spring 2015. This pattern is observed throughout the assessment data. See the “Factors Affecting Year 4 Assessment” below for discussion of this observation.

### **SLO Objective 1.1.B—Students will access the needed information effectively and efficiently.**

TWO	Obj. 1.1.B	BCOR310	Year 3: 2013-2014	Year 4: 2014-2015		
				Fall 2014	Spring 2015	Overall Year 4
Access and Use Information	Score $\geq$ 2.5	43.3%	66.7%	69.4%	68.2%	
	Acceptable Target (73%)	Not met	Approaching	Approaching	Approaching	
	Ideal Target (85%)	Not met	Not met	Not met	Not met	
	Average of all samples	2.05	2.58	2.57	2.58	

The QEP report calls for an acceptable target of 73% of samples scoring 2.5 or higher and an ideal target of 85% of samples scoring 2.5 or higher for this rubric item. In the 2014-2015 assessment, 68.2% of sampled papers received a rubric rating of 2.5 or higher; thus **falling short, but approaching the acceptable target** for this SLO objective.

**Comparisons.**

- Despite falling short of the target, we did observe an encouraging percent increase of 57.5% in the papers with a score of 2.5 or above from the Year 3 to Year 4 data.
- The fall 2014 and spring 2015 scores were very close for this SLO objective. The percent of increase between these numbers was just 4%.

**SLO Objective 1.1.C—Students will use information ethically and legally.**

THREE	Obj. 1.1.C	BCOR310	Year 3: 2013-2014	Year 4: 2014-2015		
				Fall 2014	Spring 2015	Overall Year 4
		Score ≥ 2.5	<b>55.0%</b>	78.3%	62.5%	<b>69.7%</b>
	Information Use Strategies	Acceptable Target (73%)	Not met	Met	Not met	Approaching
		Ideal Target (85%)	Not met	Approaching	Not met	Not met
		Average of all samples	2.42	2.61	2.42	2.51

The QEP report calls for an acceptable target of 73% of samples scoring 2.5 or higher and an ideal target of 85% of samples scoring 2.5 or higher for this rubric item. In the 2014-2015 assessment, 69.7% of sampled papers received a rubric rating of 2.5 or higher; thus **falling short, but approaching the acceptable target** for this SLO objective.

**Comparisons.**

- There is a notable 26.7% of increase in the papers with a rating of 2.5 or higher when comparing the Year 3 and Year 4 data.
- While both the fall and spring assessment data show increases compared to the Year 3 data, the absolute increase is more pronounced in the fall 2014 assessment. Note that there was 20% of decrease from the fall to spring scores in fall 2014 and spring 2015. Discussion of the possible reasons for these decreases will be discussed later in the report.

**SLO 1.1 Composite—Objective 1.1.A + 1.1B + 1.1.C**

**SLO 1.1 calls for students to understand and appropriately use scholarly sources.**

COMPOSITE SLO 1.1	BCOR310	Year 3: 2013-2014	Year 4: 2014-2015		
			Fall 2014	Spring 2015	Overall Year 4
	Total ≥ 7.5	<b>37.0%</b>	60.0%	52.8%	<b>56.1%</b>
	Acceptable Target (73%)	Not met	Not met	Not met	Not met
	Ideal Target (85%)	Not met	Not met	Not met	Not met
	Average of all samples	2.22	2.62	2.48	2.55

The SLO is broken down into 3 objectives, 1.1.A, 1.1.B, and 1.1.C, as described above. The QEP report calls for a composite score of 7.5 for SLO 1.1. The acceptable target is 73% of samples scoring

7.5 or higher, while the ideal target is 85% of samples meeting this score. In the 2014-2015 assessment, 56.1% of sampled papers received a composite score of 7.5 or higher; thus **falling short of the acceptable target** for this SLO objective.

**Comparisons.**

- Despite falling short of the goal, there is a significant 51.6% of increase in the number of papers with a composite score of 7.5 or higher comparing the Year 3 and Year 4 data.
- Fall and spring data again shows a decline in the spring semester scores for this academic year. Results from the spring data show a percentage decrease of 12% from fall 2014.

**SLO Objective 1.2.A—Students will describe theories or perspectives relevant to a particular case, problem or situation.**

FOUR	Obj. 1.2.A	BCOR310	Year 3: 2013-2014	Year 4: 2014-2015		
				Fall 2014	Spring 2015	Overall Year 4
Describe Relevant Theories	Score ≥ 2.5	51.7%	66.7%	41.7%	53.0%	
	Acceptable Target (73%)	Not met	Approaching	Not met	Not met	
	Ideal Target (85%)	Not met	Not met	Not met	Not met	
	Average of all samples	2.28	2.47	2.15	2.30	

The QEP report calls for an acceptable target of 73% of samples scoring 2.5 or higher and an ideal target of 85% of samples scoring 2.5 or higher. In the 2014-2015 assessment, 53.0% of sampled papers received a rubric rating of 2.5 or higher; thus **falling short of the acceptable target** for this SLO objective.

**Comparisons.**

- Gains from Year 3 to Year 4 were insignificant and showed only a 2.5% of increase in scores.
- Comparison of scores in fall and spring of 2014-2015 show a 37.5% of decrease from fall to spring. This drop in scores will be discussed below.

**SLO Objective 1.2.B—Students will apply interpretations relevant to a particular case or problem.**

FIVE	Obj. 1.2.B	BCOR310	Year 3: 2013-2014	Year 4: 2014-2015		
				Fall 2014	Spring 2015	Overall Year 4
Analysis Applied to Situation	Score ≥ 2.5	51.7%	70.0%	31.6%	51.5%	
	Acceptable Target (73%)	Not met	Approaching	Not met	Not met	
	Ideal Target (85%)	Not met	Not met	Not met	Not met	
	Average of all samples	2.34	2.52	2.11	2.30	

The QEP report calls for an acceptable target of 73% of samples scoring 2.5 or higher and an ideal target of 85% of samples scoring 2.5 or higher. In the 2014-2015 assessment, 51.5% of sampled papers received a rubric rating of 2.5 or higher; thus **falling short of the acceptable target** for this SLO objective.

**Comparisons.**

- Overall, the 2014-2015 results showed a small, insignificant drop of 0.3% of decrease in the scores in comparison to the assessment data for Year 3 (2013-2014).
- A large difference between the fall and spring assessment data was observed for this particular SLO objective. The data from spring showed a significant 48.4% of decrease from the papers assessed in the fall of 2014-2015. This is a matter of concern that needs to be further studied.

**SLO 1.2 Composite—Objective 1.2.A + 1.2.B**

**SLO 1.2 calls for students to integrate knowledge to frame researchable questions and to develop strategies to seek answers.**

COMPOSITE SLO 1.2	BCOR310	Year 3: 2013-2014	Year 4: 2014-2015		
			Fall 2014	Spring 2015	Overall Year 4
	Total ≥ 5.0	45.0%	56.7%	30.6%	42.4%
	Acceptable Target (73%)	Not met	Not met	Not met	Not met
	Ideal Target (85%)	Not met	Not met	Not met	Not met
	Average of all samples	2.31	2.49	2.13	2.30

The SLO is broken down into 2 objectives, 1.2.A and 1.2.B, as described above. The QEP report calls for a composite score for 5.0 for SLO 1.2. The acceptable target is 73% of samples scoring 5.0 or higher, while the ideal target is 85% of samples scoring 5.0 or higher.

In the 2014-2015 assessment, 42.4% of sampled papers received a composite score of 5.0 or higher; thus **not meeting or approaching the acceptable target** for this SLO objective. The Year 4 assessment data shows a slight but insignificant drop from the assessment from Year 3.

**Comparisons.**

- Scores from Year 3 to Year 4 showed a 5.8% of decrease.
- Scores from fall 2014 to spring 2015 showed a 31.4% of decrease. This is cause for concern and will be addressed below.

**SLO Objective 1.3.A—Students will evaluate information and its sources critically.**

SIX	Obj. 1.3.A	BCOR310	Year 3: 2013-2014	Year 4: 2014-2015		
				Fall 2014	Spring 2015	Overall Year 4
SIX	Evaluate Information	Score $\geq$ 2.5	<b>52.0%</b>	80.0%	36.1%	<b>56.1%</b>
		Acceptable Target (73%)	Not met	Met	Not met	Not met
		Ideal Target (85%)	Not met	Approaching	Not met	Not met
		Average of all samples	2.25	2.55	2.14	2.33

The QEP report calls for an acceptable target of 73% of samples scoring 2.5 or higher and an ideal target of 85% of samples scoring 2.5 or higher for this objective. In the 2014-2015 assessment, 56.1% of sampled papers received a rubric rating of 2.5 or higher; thus **not meeting the acceptable target** for this SLO objective.

**Comparisons.**

- Comparison of results from Year 3 and Year 4 shows a percentage of increase of 7.9%.
- Comparison of results from fall 2014 to spring 2015 shows a significant 54.9% of decrease. This follows the observed trend in decreased scores from fall 2014 to spring 2015.

**SLO Objective 1.3.B—Students will use information effectively to accomplish a specific purpose.**

SEVEN	Obj. 1.3.B	BCOR310	Year 3: 2013-2014	Year 4: 2014-2015		
				Fall 2014	Spring 2015	Overall Year 4
SEVEN	Use Information for a Purpose	Score $\geq$ 2.5	<b>55.0%</b>	70.0%	55.6%	<b>62.1%</b>
		Acceptable Target (73%)	Not met	Approaching	Not met	Not met
		Ideal Target (85%)	Not met	Not met	Not met	Not met
		Average of all samples	2.70	2.67	2.35	2.49

The QEP report calls for an acceptable target of 73% of samples scoring 2.5 or higher and an ideal target of 85% of samples scoring 2.5 or higher for this objective. In the 2014-2015 assessment, 62.1% of sampled papers received a rubric rating of 2.5 or higher. This **does not meet the acceptable target** for this SLO objective.

**Comparisons.**

- Comparison results from Year 3 and Year 4 show a small but significant 12.9% of increase.
- From the fall of 2014 to spring of 2015 there was a significant 20.6% percent of decrease.

**SLO 1.3 Composite—Objective 1.3.A + 1.3.B**

**SLO 1.3 calls for students to analyze, interpret, and/or evaluate information and make and implement research informed decisions.**

COMPOSITE SLO 1.3	BCOR310	Year 3: 2013-2014	Year 4: 2014-2015		
			Fall 2014	Spring 2015	Overall Year 4
	Total ≥ 5.0	45.0%	66.7%	38.9%	51.5%
	Acceptable Target (73%)	Not met	Approaching	Not met	Not met
	Ideal Target (85%)	Not met	Not met	Not met	Not met
Average of all samples	2.47	2.61	2.24	2.41	

This SLO is broken down into 2 objectives, 1.3A and 1.3B, as described above. The QEP report calls for a composite score for 5.0 for SLO 1.3. The acceptable target is 73% of samples scoring 5.0 or higher, while the ideal target is 85% of samples scoring 5.0 or higher. In the 2014-2015 assessment, 51.5% of sampled papers received a composite score of 5.0 or higher, **not meeting the acceptable target** of 73%.

**Comparisons.**

- Comparative examination of Year 3 and Year 4 shows a slight but significant percent of increase of 14.4%.
- The fall to spring data continue the downward trend as the year progresses. There is a percent decrease of 41.7% in the scores from fall 2014 to spring 2015.

**Overall Findings**

The assessment team noted an overall increase in quality of the BCOR research papers this year. This anecdotal observation was reflected in our numerical analysis, which showed promising **increases in most SLOs**. We recognize the work of the BCOR faculty and hope our previous recommendations helped guide areas of improvement for the course.

The area with the **greatest improvement** is in SLO objectives 1.1.A, 1.1.B and 1.1.C. We applaud the BCOR faculty for making great strides in each of these SLO objectives. The most improved area was 1.1.A, which deals with writing a research question and choosing sources that relate to the research question. We also noticed improvement in development of introductory and concluding paragraphs.

The data also show **improvement** with SLO objectives 1.3.A and 1.3.B, although the difference between the Year 3 and Year 4 data is not as pronounced as the difference in 1.1.A, 1.1.B and 1.1.C. We found large gains in this area at the fall 2014 assessment, but assessment of the spring sections of BCOR showed similar, or worse, results than the Year 3 data. The difference between semesters is discussed further below.

We found basically **no change** in the assessment for SLO objectives 1.2.A and 1.2.B from Year 3 to Year 4. It is worth noting that the fall BCOR sections performed much better on these objectives than the spring BCOR sections.

**Summary Table Showing the Percent of Increase or Decrease from Year 3 to Year 4**

SLO	Description of SLO	Percent Change
1.1.A	Determine the nature and extent of information needed	+ 80.0%
1.1.B	Access needed information effectively and efficiently	+ 57.5%
1.1.C	Use information ethically and legally	+ 26.7%
<b>1.1 Composite</b>	<b>Understand and appropriately use scholarly sources</b>	<b>+ 51.6%</b>
1.2.A	Describe relevant theories or perspectives	+ 2.5%
1.3.B	Apply interpretations relevant to a case or problem	- 0.3%
1.2 Composite	Integrate knowledge to frame questions and develop strategies to seek answers	- 5.8%
1.3.A	Evaluate information and use sources critically	+ 7.9%
1.3.B	Use information to accomplish a purpose	+ 12.9%
<b>1.3 Composite</b>	<b>Analyze, interpret or evaluate information and make decisions</b>	<b>+ 14.4%</b>

### **Factors Impacting Year 4 (2014-2015) Assessment**

#### **Prompts**

Fall 2014. The assessment team met the week after the fall semester ended to assess the BCOR research artifacts collected from the fall 2014 sections. On the day of the assessment, the team was provided with the prompts from each section of BCOR. Additionally, the team was told which papers corresponded to a given prompt. We did not have this information during the Year 3 (2013-2014) assessment. We believe **having the prompt for each paper was an improvement** over the organization of the 2013-2014 assessments.

Spring 2015. The team was provided with the three prompts used in different sections of BCOR.

During the spring 2015 assessment, the team used two of the prompts from the previous fall, and received one updated prompt for the spring sections. It is unclear whether the two reused prompts matched what was given to spring 2015 BCOR students.

**Having the prompt for each paper is a necessity and an improvement** over the organization of the 2013-2014 assessment. **Better communication** in 2015-2016 will ensure the prompts the assessment team uses match the prompts given to students and provide for a more accurate assessment.



The team recognizes that the prompts for Year 4 were improved compared to the 2013-2014 assessment. **Prompts were clearer, more focused, and addressed several of the recommendations the assessment team suggested last year.** For instance, the findings from the 2013-2014 assessments found many students were writing film reviews. Year 4 prompts very clearly stated that a film review would not satisfy the assignment. Correspondingly, there was a significant drop in the number of papers regarded as “reviews” this year. Additionally, the team noticed an improvement in research question development in Year 4 papers compared to the Year 3 assessment. Wording in two of the three prompts encouraged and helped students to write good research questions. The assessment team recognizes the professors for their focus on the research question and encourage continued focus on this aspect of the research paper.

### ***Amount of Research Required***

The team noticed significant **variability in the types of research required, the number of scholarly sources,** and the materials used for research in the prompts.

### ***Rubric Interpretation***

During the normalization process conducted before assessment, team members discussed the incongruence in some of the categories on the rubric. The normalization process exists to assist reviewers in coming to a consistent understanding of rubric categories. The observed inconsistencies may be a possible factor impacting the assessment data. It is recommended faculty and assessment team members work together to discuss possible revisions in the language found in the rubric.

### ***Plagiarism***

The team noticed different levels of plagiarism in several papers. This issue was more pronounced during the spring 2015 assessment. The team members noticed cases of suspected plagiarism (for example, a paper written in two very different styles and a phrase in different color font). We also noticed several papers with missing or partial citations (for example, a quote followed by no citation; or, a phrase that was clearly taken from a source, but no citation was given).

### ***Commendations for Faculty***

The assessment team recognizes the BCOR faculty for their focus on the research question and encourages continued focus on this aspect of the research paper. The assessment team anecdotally recognized that students given examples of thesis statements were able to develop their own thesis statements better than others. When comparing assessments from Year 3 to Year 4, the assessment team noticed an improvement in the quality of introductions and conclusions in student writing. The assessment team also appreciated the consistency in the required citation style this year.

The team recognizes the hard work of the BCOR faculty to improve student research papers from Year 3 to Year 4. While room for improvement exists, it is obvious that the faculty have made great strides in focusing the prompts and working on the student use of scholarly sources.

## **Recommendations for the BCOR Teaching Team**

Based on the 2014-2015 assessment, the BCOR assessment team has several recommendations for the BCOR faculty for next year.

### **1) *Inconsistencies in the Assignment across Sections***

Moving forward, the assessment team suggests the instructors develop a more uniform research assignment. We believe that this will lessen the variability observed across sections, and equalize the type of research students need to perform for this assignment. We feel a uniform prompt encompassing the key component of the BCOR curriculum would be ideal. If the BCOR professors see value in topic variability across sections, at the least we recommend that the papers for each section should have the **same research component**. Specifically, they should require the same number (and type) of scholarly sources, papers of equal length, and similar depth (analysis of same number of metanarratives).

### **2) *Research Question Development***

Continue to encourage students to write good research questions. We noticed more papers attempted a clear research question this year compared to the Year 3 assessment, but there remains need for improvement. We specifically noticed a large number of papers included research topics that were **too broad**.

### **3) *Use of Sources and Plagiarism***

During the spring 2015 assessment, the assessment team noticed a common mistake related to appropriate use of sources. We found students using very general quotes from otherwise great sources. Some students exhibited a lack of engagement with the source.

With the number of papers assessed with suspected plagiarism, the assessment team recommends that **all BCOR faculty use Turnitin**. Faculty should use some time in class to discuss plagiarism and provide resources that define plagiarism, particularly self-plagiarism.

### **4) *Citations***

Consistency in the required citation style (MLA) across BCOR sections improved. It is recommended that faculty continue to emphasize proper in-text citation format, including use of page numbers in their in-text citations.

### **5) *Integration/extension of ideas***

The assessment team noticed that students tended to struggle most with SLO 1.2-*students will integrate knowledge to frame researchable questions and to develop strategies to seek answers*. Quantitatively, the composite score for this SLO was the lowest of the three SLOs. The team suggests that BCOR professors intentionally encourage students to describe theories/perspectives AND encourage students to make connections to other situations. **Encourage students to make connections to other cases. This integration is often found in the last paragraph of research papers, and may help students write better conclusions.**

In addition, the assessment team saw a disappointing decrease in scores from the fall to spring semesters on this particular SLO 1.2. On SLO objective 1.2A, we found many students failed to discuss all relevant theories and perspectives. Many papers discussed only one perspective. This objective also has a component of connection back to the thesis statement. Discussing topics and

how they relate back to the thesis was an area in which many students struggled. Objective 1.2.B includes a component of using professional language. Many students scored low in this category because of blatant use of non-professional language. **Encourage students to use professional language (no contractions), correct spelling mistakes, and proof read their work.**

#### **6) Integration of the assessment rubric**

Finally, we suggest the BCOR professors integrate part or the entire BCOR assessment rubric into their own rubrics for assessment of the research paper. We believe this integration would strengthen the assessment. **(There was some concern among the team that the “Exemplary” category on the assessment rubric is above and beyond what the students are asked to do for class.)**

### **Comparison of Fall and Spring Assessment Data**

In almost all categories, the scores from the spring 2015 assessment were lower than the scores from the fall 2015 assessment. The assessment team members felt that the spring papers were not as strong as the papers collected the previous fall. The numerical data supports this observation made on the assessment day. There were clear and significant drops in the scores from the fall to the spring. Unfortunately, without more information, it is impossible to discover why this drop was observed. We suggest several possible reasons here:

- The fall and spring semesters are not matched for academic ability, grade level, or major. Were the enrolled fall students higher-achieving students? Is there a quantifiable difference in academic indicators between the fall and spring populations?
- Did the BCOR professors approach the research paper differently in their fall and spring sections? Many, but not all of the professors teach both fall and spring sections of BCOR. Did the spring BCOR professors receive information about the fall 2014 assessment? Did they receive the Year 3 assessment report?
- Did the BCOR assessment team approach each semester with different expectations, leading to inconsistencies in scoring the two semesters?

**Summary Table of Percent of Increase or Decrease from Fall to Spring in Year 4**

<b>SLO</b>	<b>Description of SLO</b>	<b>Percent Change</b>
1.1.A	Determine the nature and extent of info needed	- 22.3%
1.1.B	Access needed information effectively and efficiently	+ 4.0%
1.1.C	Use information ethically and legally	- 20.2%
<b>1.1 Composite</b>	<b>Understand and appropriately use scholarly sources</b>	<b>- 12.0%</b>
1.2.A	Describe relevant theories or perspectives	- 37.5%
1.3.B	Apply interpretations relevant to a case or problem	- 48.8%

<b>1.2 Composite</b>	<b>Integrate knowledge to frame questions and develop strategies to seek answers</b>	<b>- 31.4%</b>
1.3.A	Evaluate information and use sources critically	- 54.9%
1.3.B	Use information to accomplish a purpose	- 20.6%
<b>1.3 Composite</b>	<b>Analyze, interpret or evaluate information and make decisions</b>	<b>- 41.7%</b>

### Concluding Remarks from the Director of Pursuit

#### Limitations of the assessment rubric

- The assessment team continues to work through the tension of the differing expectations across the rubric levels for each objective. In particular, the team struggled to differentiate between the competent and emerging levels of Objective 1.2.B – the difference between these two levels is the use of professional language. Each semester the team has to identify a working definition of professional language during the norming process. Often, it is defined by what professional language is not – colloquial terms, poor grammar – as opposed to what it is.
- In objective 1.3.A there is a significant amount of ambiguity between the levels of competent, emerging and unacceptable. Interpreting and evaluating information is targeted. These three levels on the rubric refer to identifying assumptions and relevant contexts when presenting a position. If the writing prompt does not define the position or positions the paper is to address the team is left to assess this very broadly. The differences between rubric levels is indicated by non-specific referents such as “...several relevant contexts...” and “...some assumptions...” and “emerging awareness of present assumptions”.
- The same rubric is utilized for CORE 210 and BCOR 310. It is recommended that faculty from BCOR 310 and CORE 210 meet with assessment team members to refine the common assessment rubric so that it meets the needs of the courses and to adjust the language to be more consistent.

**Room for Improvement.** Considering adaptations in the rubric and pedagogical and curriculum improvements, it is hoped that the assessment data will exhibit improvements in the near future. As faculty work to “close the loop,” it is anticipated that discussions will include successful learning strategies, refinement and improvement of the wording in the prompts for the assessment paper, and adaptations in clarity in the rubric. CORE 110—Cornerstone took 3 years of assessment changes to “close the loop”. Results from courses that are BCOR prerequisites have also shown improvement, so it is expected that similar gains in assessment will occur for BCOR in 2015-2016.

#### Suggestions for Further Research

2014-2015 was a year of change. In the midst of this change, several possibilities exist that may account for the drop in scores from fall 2014 to spring 2015.

Appendix F

- The former Director of General Education left the university in the summer of 2014, leaving a period of time of transition. Before the departure, the Director of BCOR met regularly with the Director of General Education to discuss curriculum and plan meetings with faculty.
- An Interim Director of General Education was selected in the fall of 2014 and was in place by April of 2015.
- The Director of BCOR was not engaged with the BCOR faculty in the spring of 2015. Because of workload issues, the Director of BCOR has chosen to step down.
- While there is currently no Director of BCOR, the Interim Director of General Education has scheduled a faculty meeting in early fall 2015 to consult with current faculty for the course.
- It is the recommendation of the Director of Pursuit that a new Director of BCOR be selected as soon as possible to continue and increase the gains begun in 2014-2015.

# EXPLORE II Rubric—for CORE 210 and BCOR 310

Revised 5/16

## SLO 1.1. Students will understand and appropriately use scholarly sources.

Rubric Item	Exemplary (4)	Competent (3)	Emerging (2)	Unacceptable (1)	Score		
<b>ONE</b>	<b>Determine the nature and the extent of information needed</b>  <i>Obj 1.1.A</i>	Effectively defines and narrows the scope of the research question/topic.	Defines the scope of the research question/topic completely.	Defines the scope of the research question/topic or incompletely (parts are missing, remains too broad or too narrow, etc.).	Has difficulty defining the scope of the research question/topic.		
		Types of information (sources) selected directly relate to concepts or answer research questions.	Types of information (sources) selected relate to concepts or answer research question.	Types of information (sources) selected partially relate to concepts or answer research questions.	Types of information (sources) selected do not relate to concepts or answer research questions		
<b>TWO</b>	<b>Access the needed information effectively and efficiently</b>  <i>O1.1.B</i>	Citations represent various scholarly or academic sources.	Most citations represent scholarly or academic sources.	Citations represent a limited range of scholarly or academic sources.	Citations are from only one scholarly or academic source.		
			Cited resources are used appropriately.	Most cited resources come from reliable sources.	Some cited resources come from reliable sources.		Few cited resources come from reliable sources.
			All resources are appropriate for the target audience.	Most resources are appropriate for the target audience.	Some resources are appropriate for the target audience.		Few resources are appropriate for the target audience.
<b>THREE</b>	<b>Access and use information ethically and legally (information use strategies)</b>  <i>Obj 1.1.C</i>	Citations and references are correct APA or MLA citation style.	Citations and references are APA or MLA style with few errors.	Citations and references are consistent, but aren't APA or MLA style.	Citations and references do not resemble a citation style.		
			Paraphrases, summarizes, or quotes in ways that are true to original context.	Paraphrases, summaries, or quotes are close to the original context, but do not rely too heavily on quoting or have too little summary.	Papers relied too heavily on quotes. Paraphrases, summaries, or quotes are too broad to reflect the original content.		Annotations are absent or do not reflect content of the article

**SLO 1.2. Students will integrate knowledge to frame researchable questions and to develop strategies to seek answers.**

Rubric Item		Exemplary (4)	Competent (3)	Emerging (2)	Unacceptable (1)	Score
FOUR	Describe theories or perspectives relevant to the thesis <i>Obj 1.2.A</i>	Theories and perspectives are thoroughly described and relevance to the thesis is discussed, recognizing the strengths and limitations of each theory.	Theories and perspectives are identified and adequate description of relevance to the thesis is provided.	Most theories and perspectives are identified with limited description of thesis provided.	Several theories and perspectives are described but are not all relevant to the thesis. Not all relevant theories and perspectives are identified and described.	
	Interpretations are applied relevant to a thesis. <i>Obj 1.2.B</i>	Analysis/interpretations are thoroughly described using formal academic writing. Interpretations are applied to the thesis and extensions are made to other relevant connections.*	Analysis/interpretations are presented and described using formal academic writing. Interpretations are clearly connected to the thesis. *	Analysis/interpretations using formal academic writing are presented and summarized. May lack some formal academic writing. Interpretation of how findings are relevant to the thesis. *	Analysis/interpretations are presented in limited terms. Lacks formal academic writing. Little to no interpretation of how findings are relevant to the thesis. *	

**SLO 1.3. Students will analyze, interpret, and/or evaluate information and make and implement research-informed decisions.**

Rubric Item		Exemplary (4)	Competent (3)	Emerging (2)	Unacceptable (1)	Score
SIX	Evaluate information and its sources critically <i>Obj 1.3.A</i>	Carefully evaluates the relevance of contexts when presenting a position.	Identifies own and others' assumptions or biases and several relevant contexts when presenting a position.	Questions some assumptions or biases. Identifies several relevant contexts when presenting a position. May be more aware of others' assumptions or biases than one's own (or vice versa).	Shows an emerging awareness of present assumptions or biases (sometimes labels assertions as assumptions or biases). Begins to identify some contexts when presenting a position.	
	Use info effectively to accomplish a specific purpose <i>Obj 1.3.B</i>	Communicates, organizes, and synthesizes information from sources to fully achieve a specific purpose, with clarity and depth.	Communicates, organizes, and synthesizes information from sources. Intended purpose is achieved.	Communicates and organizes information from sources. The information is not yet synthesized, so the intended purpose is not fully achieved.	Communicates info from sources. The info is fragmented and /or used inappropriately (misquoted, taken out of context, or incorrectly paraphrased, etc.); purpose not achieved.	

\*Formal academic writing or professional language varies with the profession. In some professions, use of a personal pronoun is unprofessional. The assessment teams will not consider the use of a personal pronoun unprofessional. Formal academic writing does not include contractions or colloquialisms and is clear and concise.

If faculty will submit prompts for student papers, the assessment teams will use the prompts to clarify the definition of formal academic writing for each class.

## Capstone Assessment 2014–15 Report

*Dr. Phyllis Bolin*  
*Dr. David Hendricks*



### Background

This report communicates the results from the first assessment of capstone papers. The assessment outcomes are those

The assessment team consisted of six faculty members. Dr. David Hendricks (Mathematics), Rodney Ashlock (Bible, Missions and Ministry), Brad Crisp (School of Information Technology and Computing), Shelly Sanders (Language and Literature), Tracy Shilcutt (History and Global Studies), and Sam Stewart (Teacher Education) assessed the capstone papers.

During the fall and spring semesters, the university had 38 sections of courses that departments had designated as a capstone experience and 37 of these sections submitted capstone papers. There were a total of 667 students enrolled and 619 papers were submitted to the Pursuit Office. A simple random sample of 60 papers was assessed from the 619 papers submitted.

Two members of the assessment team rated each paper. The scores from the first and second raters were averaged for each paper in the sample. These scores were used to calculate the average score for each Student Learn Outcome (SLO) objective, the number of papers meeting the acceptable and ideal targets for each SLO objective, and the composite score for each SLO.

### Student Learn Outcomes Assessed

- 2.1.A Students will demonstrate effective use of information literacy skills through writing.
- 2.1.B Students will apply information to planning and creation of a product or performance.
- 2.1.C Students will demonstrate critical thinking as they develop, produce, and evaluate product or performance.

The assessment team used a rubric with six categories to assess these learning outcomes with two categories for each learning outcome:

- Use of Sources to Answer Question (2.1.A)
- Ethical and Appropriate Use of Sources (2.1.A)
- Organization or Structure (2.1.B)
- Mechanics (2.1.B)
- Purpose of Project (2.1.C)
- Integrative Learning (2.1.C)



## Results

### ***SLO Objective 2.1.A – Students will demonstrate effective use of information literacy skills through writing.***

#### *Use of Sources to Answer Question*

The QEP report calls for an acceptable target of 73% of the sample papers be scored at or above 2.5 and an ideal target of 85% of sample papers be scored at or above 2.5 for this objective. In the 2014–2015 assessment, 43.3% of the sample papers scored at or above 2.5. The inter-rater reliability was good for this objective with 53.3% of the papers receiving the same score, 43.3% of the papers receiving scores within one point of each other, and 3.3% of the papers receiving scores that differ by two points.

<b>Rubric</b>	<b>Capstone Experience</b>	<b>QEP Year 4 2014–2015</b>
Use of Sources to Answer Question	Score $\geq$ 2.5	43.3%
	Acceptable Target (73%)	Not met
	Ideal Target(85%)	Not met
	Average of Samples	2.1

#### *Ethical and Appropriate Use of Sources*

The QEP report calls for an acceptable target of 73% of the sample papers be scored at or above 2.5 and an ideal target of 85% of sample papers be scored at or above 2.5 for this objective. In the 2014–2015 assessment, 50.0% of the sample papers scored at or above 2.5. The inter-rater reliability was good for this objective with 58.3% of the papers receiving the same score, 33.3% of the papers receiving scores within one point of each other, and 8.3% of the papers receiving scores that differ by two points.

<b>Rubric</b>	<b>Capstone Experience</b>	<b>QEP Year 4 2014–2015</b>
Ethical and Appropriate Use of Sources	Score $\geq$ 2.5	50.0%
	Acceptable Target (73%)	Not met
	Ideal Target(85%)	Not met
	Average of Samples	2.1

***SLO Objective 2.1.B – Students will apply information to planning and creation of a product or performance.***

*Organization or Structure*

The QEP report calls for an acceptable target of 73% of the sample papers be scored at or above 2.5 and an ideal target of 85% of sample papers be scored at or above 2.5 for this objective. In the 2014–2015 assessment, 83.3% of the sample papers scored at or above 2.5. The inter-rater reliability was relative good for this objective with 44.2% of the papers receiving the same score, 49.2% of the papers receiving scores within one point of each other, and 6.7% of the papers receiving scores that differ by two points.

<b>Rubric</b>	<b>Capstone Experience</b>	<b>QEP Year 4 2014–2015</b>
Organization or Structure	Score $\geq$ 2.5	83.3%
	Acceptable Target (73%)	Met
	Ideal Target(85%)	Approaching
	Average of Samples	2.7

*Mechanics*

The QEP report calls for an acceptable target of 73% of the sample papers be scored at or above 2.5 and an ideal target of 85% of sample papers be scored at or above 2.5 for this objective. In the 2014–2015 assessment, 83.3% of the sample papers scored at or above 2.5. The inter-rater reliability was OK for this objective with 48.3% of the papers receiving the same score, 45.0% of the papers receiving scores within one point of each other, and 6.7% of the papers receiving scores that differ by two points.

<b>Rubric</b>	<b>Capstone Experience</b>	<b>QEP Year 4 2014–2015</b>
Mechanics	Score $\geq$ 2.5	83.3%
	Acceptable Target (73%)	Met
	Ideal Target(85%)	Approaching
	Average of Samples	2.7

***SLO Objective 2.1.C – Students will demonstrate critical thinking as they develop, produce, and evaluate product or performance.***

*Purpose of Project*

The QEP report calls for an acceptable target of 73% of the sample papers be scored at or above 2.5 and an ideal target of 85% of sample papers be scored at or above 2.5 for this objective. In the 2014–2015 assessment, 80% of the sample papers scored at or above 2.5. The inter-rater reliability was relatively good for this objective with 55.0% of the papers receiving the same score, 41.7% of the papers receiving scores within one point of each other, and 3.3% of the papers receiving scores that differ by two points.

<b>Rubric</b>	<b>Capstone Experience</b>	<b>QEP Year 4 2014–2015</b>
Purpose of Project	Score $\geq$ 2.5	80%
	Acceptable Target (73%)	Met
	Ideal Target (85%)	Approaching
	Average of Samples	2.7

*Integrative Learning*

The QEP report calls for an acceptable target of 73% of the sample papers be scored at or above 2.5 and an ideal target of 85% of sample papers be scored at or above 2.5 for this objective. In the 2014–2015 assessment, 46.7% of the sample papers scored at or above 2.5. The inter-rater reliability was not good for this objective with 35.0% of the papers receiving the same score, 43.3% of the papers receiving scores within one point of each other, and 21.7% of the papers receiving scores that differ by two points.

<b>Rubric</b>	<b>Capstone Experience</b>	<b>QEP Year 4 2014–2015</b>
Integrative Learning	Score $\geq$ 2.5	46.7%
	Acceptable Target (73%)	Not met
	Ideal Target (85%)	Not met
	Average of Samples	2.3

## Commendations and Recommendations

1. Departments and Capstone faculty are to be commended for their high rate of participation and submission of students' Capstone papers this first year.
2. Dan Brannan, Stephen Baldrige, Suzie Macaluso, Sarah Lee, Nancy Jordan, Rodney Ashlock, Brenda Bender, and Denise Barnett are to be commended for developing a rubric that the committee could use to assess the first round of Capstone papers.
3. The committee recommends that the rubric be tweaked. It is not clear who would make the decision on changing the rubric. Items mentioned by the committee to consider are the following:
  - Improve consistency in the levels of the rubric. For example, adequate is used at the effective level in purpose of project and is used at the emergent level for organization or structure.
  - Provide explicit quantitative expectations. The emergent level for integrative learning states "few connections." This is too ambiguous—is it one, two, three or fewer.
  - Possibly consider collapsing the rubric into three levels from the four. Having four levels does require the committee members to divide the papers into above average and below average. Having only three levels would
4. The committee recommends that someone oversee the Senior-Year Integrative Capstone. Although discussions about eliminating some CORE classes are under way, CORE 120, CORE 210, and BCOR 310 each have a course director that coordinates with CORE instructors about required syllabus components and course outcomes. A Capstone director would, similarly, coordinate with Capstone faculty about required assignments in a Capstone course.

# CREATE Rubric—for use with Capstone Projects

revised 5/2015

Category / Dimension	Exemplary (4)	Effective (3)	Emergent (2)	Elementary (1)	Score
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Purpose of Project</b></p> <p>Obj. 2.1.C – Demonstrate critical thinking as they develop, produce, evaluate product or performance.</p>	Clearly and concisely directs the project development; scope is suitable for assigned task and focuses all elements of work; firmly establishes significance of project	Adequately directs the project development; generally focused and specific; reasonably addresses assigned task; demonstrates significance of project	Purpose of project is present but vague and offers limited significance of the project	Purpose of project is not clear or appropriate and offers little to no explanation of the significance of the project	
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Organization or Structure</b></p> <p>Obj. 2.1.B – Apply information to planning &amp; creation of a product or performance</p>	Superior and carefully organized response to the topic. Each paragraph has a focused idea and excellent supporting detail. Sources are critically synthesized to address chosen topic. Appropriate, logical conclusions are made and connected to the project purpose.	Effective response to topic. Synthesis of information is coherent. Conclusions are appropriate and connected to the project purpose.	Adequate response to topic: moderately sustained and developed ideas and acceptable analysis of topic ideas. Conclusions are made, but not entirely supported by presented information or do not attempt to fully address the purpose of the project.	Inadequate response to the topic: ideas are undeveloped, confused or disconnected. Conclusions are not present or are not connected to presented information or project purpose.	
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Integrative Learning</b></p> <p>Obj. 2.1.C – Demonstrate critical thinking as they develop, produce, evaluate product or performance</p>	Relevant and critical connections exhibited from a variety of diverse learning and experiences. Demonstrates deep understanding of connections with past experiences and future trends.	Makes generally effective connections from a variety of diverse learning and experiences. Shows an understanding of connections with past experiences and future trends.	Makes few connections from a variety of diverse learning and experiences but with little understanding of past experiences and future trends.	Underdeveloped or missing connections to a variety of diverse learning experiences.	

Category / Dimension	Exemplary (4)	Effective (3)	Emergent (2)	Elementary (1)	Score
<p><b>Use of Sources to Answer Question</b></p> <p>Obj. 2.1.A – Demonstrate effective use of information literacy skills through writing.</p>	<p>Information appropriately and fully answers the proposed question. Sources are appropriately synthesized in a way that addresses chosen topic. Appropriate, logical conclusions are made and connected to the research question.</p>	<p>Information is mostly linked to the proposed question. Synthesis of information is coherent. Conclusions are appropriate and mostly connected to the research question.</p>	<p>Attempts are made to relate information to proposed question. Information is connected, but not adequately synthesized. Conclusions are made, but not entirely supported by presented information or do not attempt to fully answer question.</p>	<p>No link between information presented and original proposed question. Sources are not connected with little to no synthesis. Conclusions are not present or are not connected to presented information or research question.</p>	
<p><b>Ethical and Appropriate Use of Sources</b></p> <p>Obj. 2.1.A – Demonstrate effective use of information literacy skills through writing.</p>	<p>Students correctly implement all of the following strategies: 1) selects critical sources; 2) adheres to proper citation and reference style; 3) paraphrases, summarizes, or quotes in ways that are true to original context; 4) distinguishes between common knowledge and ideas requiring attribution. Practices ethical and legal restrictions on the use of published, confidential, and/or proprietary information.</p>	<p>Students correctly use three of the information use strategies and practices ethical and legal restrictions on the use of published, confidential, and/or proprietary information.</p>	<p>Students correctly uses two of the information use strategies and practices ethical and legal restrictions on the use of published, confidential, and/or proprietary information.</p>	<p>Students correctly use one or none of the information use strategies and practices ethical and legal restrictions on the use of published, confidential, and/or proprietary information.</p>	
<p><b>Mechanics</b></p> <p>Obj. 2.1.B – Apply information to planning &amp; creation of a product or performance</p>	<p>Excellent command of standard English that skillfully communicates meaning to readers with clarity and fluency, and is virtually error-free.</p>	<p>Sufficient command of standard English that adequately communicates meaning to readers with infrequent errors in grammar, punctuation or usage. Paper flows well.</p>	<p>Less than adequate command of standard English. Errors in grammar, punctuation, or usage are present but do not compromise meaning.</p>	<p>Inadequate command of standard English. Major errors or repeated minor errors in grammar, punctuation, or usage obscure meaning.</p>	

Authors: Dan Brannan, Stephen Baldrige, Suzie Macaluso, Sarah Lee, Nancy Jordan, Rodney Ashlock, Brenda Bender, and Denise Barnett.

## Appendix H: Research Project: Student Self-Rating of Project Report

**Note: This assessment must accompany the Student Reflective Journal as a Culminating Evaluation.**

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Faculty Sponsor \_\_\_\_\_

	4	3	2	1	Does Not Apply
Purpose of Project	My question or focus was clear and required high level thinking skills.	My question or focus was clear and required moderately high level thinking skills.	My question or focus was incomplete and unclear.	My research question or focus was vague and superficial.	
Organizing	I carefully monitored my time and remained focused on the tasks, made revisions when I needed to, and developed a clear method to organize my information.	I worked within the time frame my mentor gave me. I developed a system to organize my information and made revisions with assistance from my teachAppendixr.	I needed consistent guidance from my mentor to list, organize and revise what I needed to do. Some steps were missing in my planning.	I did not work within an organized plan or appropriate time limits.	
Gathering or Seeking	I used a variety of resources and carefully selected only the information that answered my question or fulfilled my focus. I continually revised my search based on information I found.	I used many resources to find information that answered my question or fulfilled my focus. I experienced some problems revising my search.	I used one or more sources while trying to answer or respond to my original question or focus. I should have made revisions, as I made errors selecting references.	I lost focus during the gathering process; therefore, my information was not accurate and complete.	
Appraising	I thoroughly selected appropriate and precise information that answered my question or focus in a organized way.	I sorted and organized information that answered my question or focus without too many errors.	I tried to organize the information I found, but I made some mistakes. I didn't always choose exact information that would answer my question or focus.	I was unable to sort and organize the information I found and was unable to answer the question or achieve my focus.	

## Appendix H: Research Project: Student Self-Rating of Project Report

**Note: This assessment must accompany the Student Reflective Journal as a Culminating Evaluation.**

Synthesizing or Constructing Knowledge	I evaluated the complex information and ideas, theories, or perspectives. I elaborated on my understanding, explanation, and conclusion of the project goals.	I completed the project but was unable to satisfactorily explain or evaluate the results at the conclusion of the project.	I adapted my project to consider alternative solutions but was unable to explain or evaluate the results at the conclusion of the project.	I was unable to explain or evaluate the results of my project.	
Evaluating the Final Product	My product reflects a sophisticated blend of meaningful information used to create an original product that clearly answered the question or focus with accuracy, detail and understanding.	My product answers the question or focus in a way that reflects learning that uses some detail and accuracy while achieving some level of originality.	My product is not complete and only answers part of the question or focus.	My product is incomplete, missing details and lacking accuracy.	



## Undergraduate Research – 2014-2015 Report



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*Dr. Autumn Sutherland*

**3.1: Students will publicly disseminate independent scholarly, and creative work in a public setting.**

**Objective 3.1.A. Students will produce independent scholarly and/or creative products.**

**Measurement: Students producing scholarly or creative work for the Undergraduate Research Festival must submit abstracts describing the product. Faculty reviewers assess the abstracts using the Review of Submitted Abstracts Rubric.**

Acceptable target: 80% of abstracts will have 3.0 or higher on each item. [Adapted to 7 or higher out of 12]

Ideal target: 80% of abstracts will have a 3.3 or higher on each item. [Adapted to 8 or higher out of 12.]

Results: In 2015, 126 abstracts were submitted to the ACU Undergraduate Research Festival, a slight decrease from 131 in 2014. This is still a significant increase over the 98 abstracts submitted in 2013. One hundred and twenty three of the abstracts were submitted by ACU Students, consistent with 124 in 2014 and up from 92 in 2013. Only three abstracts were rejected two of which were by ACU students. Sixteen abstracts were not reviewed by their departments. These abstracts went before the final review committee which reviews abstracts that receives 2's on the rubric to decide whether they should be accepted to the conference. This committee does not score the abstracts on the rubric, therefore, 16 ACU abstracts do not have scores. Before the conference, three presentations were withdrawn.

Of the 107 scored abstracts submitted by ACU students, 105 (98.1%) reached the Acceptable Target. Eighty-three abstracts (94.0%) reached the Ideal Target.

Table: Abstracts Reaching or Exceeding Acceptable and Ideal Target.

	2013	2014	2015
Abstracts Reviewed	92	116	107
Abstracts with an acceptable score	86 (93.5%)	111 (95.7%)	105 (98.1%)
Abstracts with an ideal score	83(90.2%)	109 (94.0%)	98 (91.6%)

Analysis: These are the first three years that rubric data for abstract for the ACU Undergraduate Research Festival exists. The percentage of abstracts receiving both acceptable and ideal scores is very high for both years. This could be due to a few factors. The first is that as faculty have gained experience coaching their students on the proper writing of an abstracts. The second is that as more students have completed the Research Literacy portion of their Core Classes, students will have the tools they need to write a better abstract. The third is that the rubrics are posted online so that students know what is expected of them. The fourth and most likely cause is that rubrics are evaluated by the departments that the students come from as they are most familiar with the fields and therefore know whether a presentation is appropriate for their field. This may however lead to inflation of abstract scores.

**Measurement: Students who received grants from the Office of Undergraduate Research, Honors College, or Pursuit Grants will submit a paper or creative work based on their project to their mentoring faculty member. Faculty members submit the report to the Pursuit Team. Faculty reviewers will assess the work using Writing Assessment Rubric.**

Acceptable Target: 80% of papers or creative work will receive a total score of 15 out of 25 points or higher on the rubric.

Ideal Target: 80% of papers will receive 20 out of 25 points or higher.

Results: The office of Undergraduate Research does not collect this data.

**Measurement: Students who received grants from the Office of Undergraduate Research, Honors College, or Pursuit Grants will submit a self-assessment entitled Research Project: Student Self-Assessment with their final report to their faculty mentor. Faculty members submit the report to the Pursuit Team.**

Acceptable Target: 80% of papers or creative work will receive a total score of 15 out of 25 points or higher on the rubric.

Ideal Target: 80% of papers will receive 20 out of 25 points or higher.

Results: The office of Undergraduate Research does not collect this data as this is not a requirement of the Office of Undergraduate Research grants.

**Objective 3.1.B Students will demonstrate professionalism in the presentation of scholarly and creative products beyond the classroom.**

**Measurement: Student work accepted to the Undergraduate Research Festival will be assessed using Papers/Verbal Presentations Rubric or Posters/Presentations Rubric. Faculty score the papers/posters products.**

Acceptable target: 70% of products/presentations will score 50 or higher out of a total score of 90 on the rubric. [Adapted to a total score of 38.9 points out of 70 points on the verbal presentations rubric and 36.1 points out of 65 points on the poster presentations rubric.]

Ideal target: 80% of products/presentations will score 65 or higher out of a total score of 90 on the rubric. [Adapted to 50 out of a total score of 70 points on the verbal presentations rubric and 46.9 points out of 65 points on the poster presentations rubric.]

Results:

At the 2015 ACU Undergraduate Research Festival, 116 presentations were given by 182 ACU students. Four students from another university also participated in the Research Festival. Their data is not included here.

Verbal Presentations: Seventy-seven verbal presentations were made by ACU students at the 2015 Undergraduate Research Festival. Of the verbal presentations, **64 presentations (83%) scored above the Acceptable Target** with a total of 38.9 or higher. **Twenty-three verbal presentations (30%) scored at or above the Ideal Target.** In 2014, 56 presentations (79%) scored above the Acceptable Target with a total of 38.9 or higher. Nine verbal presentations (13%) scored at or above the Ideal Target. In 2013, 75% of the verbal presentations scored above the Acceptable Target and 45% scored above the Ideal Target. In 2012, 61% of the verbal presentations scored above the Acceptable Target and 14% scored above the Ideal Target.

Poster Presentations: Forty-three poster presentations were made by ACU students. Of the 39 poster presentations, **31 presentations scored a total of 36.1 or higher or 80% of presentations scored within the Acceptable Target** on the Poster Presentations Rubric. **Four poster presentations or 10% scored at or above the Ideal Target.** This compares to 93% at or about the Acceptable target and 33% at or above the Ideal target in 2014. In 2013, 60% scored above the Acceptable Target and 10% above the Ideal Target in 2013. In 2012, 66% scored above the Acceptable Target and 6% above the Ideal Target..

Total: At the 2015 ACU Undergraduate Research Festival, **82% of the presentations scored at or above the acceptable target. Twenty-three percent of the presentations scored at or above the ideal target.** In 2014, 93% of the presentations scored at or above the acceptable target. Thirty-three percent of the presentations scored at or above the ideal target. Seventy percent scored at the Acceptable Target at

the 2013 ACU Undergraduate Research Festival. At the 2012 ACU Undergraduate Research Festival, 63% scored at or above the Acceptable Target and 11% scored at or above the Ideal Target.

Table: Presentations Reaching or Exceeding the Acceptable Target.

	2012 Number of Presentations (%)	2013 Number of Presentations (%)	2014 Number of Presentations (%)	2015 Number of Presentation (%)
Verbal Presentations	34 (61%)	45 (75%)	56 (79%)	64 (83%)
Poster Presentations	23 (66%)	18 (60%)	40 (93%)	31 (80%)
Total presentations	57 (63%)	63 (70%)	106 (93%)	95 (82%)

Table: Presentations Reaching or Exceeding the Ideal Target.

	2012 Number of Presentations (%)	2013 Number of Presentations (%)	2014 Number of Presentations (%)	2015 Number of Presentations (%)
Verbal Presentations	8 (14%)	27 (45%)	9 (13%)*	23 (30%)
Poster Presentations	2 (6%)	3 (10%)	14 (33%)	4 (10%)
Total presentations	10 (11%)	30 (33%)	23 (20%)	13 (23%)

\*2014 Ideal Verbal presentations may have been calculated with the wrong score for the ideal target.

Analysis: In 2015, the Acceptable Target of having 70% of presentations reach 38.9 or higher out of 70 for verbal presentations or 36.1 or higher out of 65 for poster presentations was well exceeded with 80% passing these scores. Several factors may have contributed to reaching this goal. The first is that it was the 7<sup>th</sup> ACU Undergraduate Research Festival and faculty mentors have learned how to better advise their students in preparation for the Research Festival. Second, rubrics and helpful hints were provided on the Research Festival Blog and at poster preparation workshops to the students and faculty before the conference to aid the students in their preparation for the Research Festival. Third, all the students, except fifth or sixth year seniors had completed at least part of the Research Literacy material through the university core courses.

The drop in students reaching the Ideal Target is most likely due to better trained judges. These rubrics are used for the competition portion of the Research Festival. Judges are instructed that a good all-around presentation should be given 3's in all categories. This would give the student a score of 42 for verbal presentations and 39 for

poster presentations. To reach the score for the ideal target, that means that 80% of the students would score close to a 4 or above in every category. This would make it very difficult to distinguish among the very good presentations and the exceptional presentations. Because our students' presentations had become so good, the judging was readjusted to give more room at the top of the scores. This adjustment allows good presentations to score in the acceptable range, but makes it very difficult for many to score in the ideal range.

General Education Review – Findings and Recommendations  
January 2015

Committee Members:

Stephen Baldrige, Orneita Burton, Neal Coates,  
Lauren Lemley, Greg Straughn, Trevor Thompson  
ex officio – Phyllis Bolin, Eric Gumm, Chris Riley

## CHARGE

In March 2007, the General Education Review Steering Committee produced its final report to the faculty, entitled *Liberal Arts Core Curriculum at ACU: Building a 21<sup>st</sup> Century Education*. This document was ratified by a full faculty vote on May 17, 2007. Faculty worked for the next three years to construct a sequence of courses that would actualize the ideals set forth in the document, specifically the learning outcomes that form our current general education. The first Cornerstone class, taught in Fall 2010, ushered in a new era of general education at ACU – one shaped by the essential learning outcomes and high-impact practices articulated by *LEAP* (Liberal Education and America’s Promise), sponsored by the American Association of Colleges and Universities.

The final objective in the *Liberal Arts Core Curriculum at ACU* document articulated the following systematic review of general education:

*12. Implement an on-going review of the Liberal Arts Core Curriculum.*

Because the world changes, professors’ methods of teaching change, knowledge of disciplines changes, and the nature of the student body changes, students will be best served by an on-going review process that includes at least the following considerations:

- The nature, experiences, knowledge, and skills of our incoming students.
- The best practices and current research on student learning.
- A straightforward and sustainable assessment system that supports a consistent focus on student learning outcomes, measurement of our success in achieving the outcomes, and thoughtful and continual response to assessment data.
- Annual review of assessment data.
- Comprehensive review of curriculum every three years.

These five points formed the basis of the current General Education Review Committee’s charge, specifically: to review ACU’s general education and CORE courses with a specific reference to the above criteria and also with respect to:

- cost of delivery – both human resources and financial resources, with attention to potential cost-saving strategies
- transferability of credit – with attention to pressures faced by students transferring more and more hours to ACU, with a goal offer more “transfer friendly” options

- reduction of hours – with a goal to provide strategies by which General Education might aid in a plan to reduce the hours of an ACU degree from 128 to as low as 120
  - NOTE: this committee will work with in tandem with staff in the Provost’s Office
- how data from various outcomes and artifacts (annual analyses, Pursuit, Board End Statements) and student satisfaction point to trends and evidence for overall effectiveness

## PROCESS

The Review Committee hosted a number of conversations with faculty – both at large and in key groups – as well as administrators and students. General faculty meetings were held in the Adams Center on October 21 and 27; additionally, faculty in the College of Arts and Sciences engaged in a SWOT analysis of ACU’s General Education on October 7. A focus group of ten students was engaged on October 28, followed by a survey of 512 students taking CORE 210 or BCOR classes in the Fall 2014 semester; 70 students responded (13.7%). Finally, the Provost’s Cabinet included a lengthy discussion of general education on their October 1 meeting.

All of these meetings were framed in a similar fashion: the current five general education outcomes were outlined, followed by a discussion of their propriety for students, the strengths and weaknesses of the current system/distribution of courses, and suggestions for changes.

## CONTEXTS

The committee notes several key commendations that mark both the maturity of the current general education system and its embodiment of LEAP practices. Descriptions such as “enduring relevance” ([Hechinger Report](#)), “America’s future” ([Council of Independent Colleges](#)), “real value” ([US News and World Report](#)), and “immense power” ([Fareed Zakaria, CNN](#)) appear in numerous recent articles regarding the liberal arts. Indeed, for all the concerns over the “value of a college education,” the conversation regarding liberal arts in specific has trended more positively, thanks in part to the broader adoption of [LEAP standards](#) as well as a [national report](#) that shows the long-term professional success and earnings power of liberal arts graduates.

In 2006, the Texas Coordinating Board for Higher Education convened the Undergraduate Education Advisory Committee and charged it with reviewing the state’s core curriculum. In 2011, the Advisory Committee produced its white paper, “[Revising the State Core Curriculum: A Focus on 21<sup>st</sup> Century Competencies](#),” where it noted that the core curriculum in place since the mid-1990s did not “adequately address the kinds of knowledge and skills students need to be successful in the 21st Century” (1). Central recommendations include the adoption of six “Core Curriculum Objectives” that would replace the cafeteria-style system in place for decades: critical thinking skills, communication skills, empirical and quantitative skills, teamwork, social responsibility, personal responsibility (12). Additionally, the Committee recommended that campuses “should use the AAC&U VALUE rubrics as guidelines for core objective assessment” (11). These are the same assessment rubrics that ACU uses in the

assessment of our core classes and competencies. In January 2014, Texas became one of ten designated “[LEAP States](#)” by the American Association of Colleges and Universities, and as such, created “a capacity for inter-institutional collaboration in robust and authentic assessment, and embedding high-impact practices in the undergraduate curriculum.” It is important for ACU to recognize this context in making changes to its core curriculum. Put simply, the state core now looks more like ours, and will continue to do so as subsequent phases are implemented; we should not radically alter the competencies of our core curriculum.

## COMMENDATIONS

The General Education Review Committee notes several commendations that are worth recognizing and celebrating. These represent the work of faculty to provide high-level, meaningful, and rigorous instruction to students.

CORE Classes: The perception, delivery, reception, and assessment of Cornerstone is significantly improved. This is important as it reflects a major shift away from the early concerns that noted inconsistent sections, lack of coherent focus, and seeming irrelevance to the work done in majors. While there is always room for improvement, the focus on the steps and process of critical thinking form a respected and relevant foundation to support the work in majors. Faculty are to be commended for their commitment to supporting a well-crafted curriculum and for providing assessment artifacts that support the Pursuit initiative. Subsequent CORE classes were praised for their engagement in reflective critical thinking, especially in ways that relate to identifying and posing solutions to social issues. It is important to note that the final approval for the CORE 210 course took place in May 2012 (following the faculty vote to combine the 120 (Identity) and 220 (Community) courses into a single class; while the final approval for BCOR only took place in October 2013.

Faculty Relationships: The ability for faculty to get to know students, especially in first-year classes, was noted on several occasions. Additionally, the use of peer-leaders in Cornerstone was highlighted as a good way to create community among students. Cultivating faculty/student relationships is central to the Cornerstone experience, though it should be noted that fewer full-time faculty are teaching the course than originally planned.<sup>1</sup> Because of the large student:faculty ratio of Bible courses, the committee notes that it is exceptionally difficult to nourish such relationships with most students. This will be addressed in the recommendation section.

Owning our 128 hours: Several times throughout the discussions, faculty recommended that we do a better job of making the “extra” courses in our 128-hour degrees a marketable, value add. In essence, we should better recognize that our general education curriculum includes 15 hours of Bible, and we should “sell” this to parents and students as a significant feature of an

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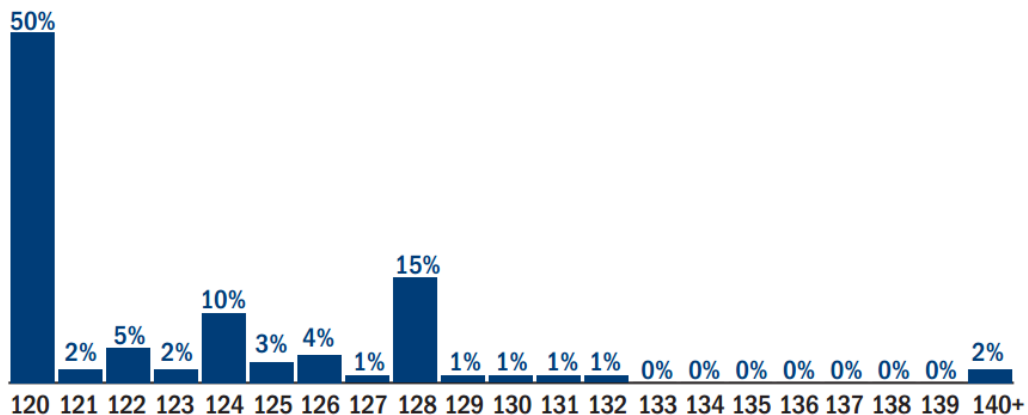
<sup>1</sup> In Fall 2010, 37 Cornerstone sections were offered: 35 (94%) were taught by full-time faculty; 1 (3%) by staff; 1 (3%) by adjunct faculty. In Fall 2014, 36 sections were offered: 14 (39%) were taught by full-time faculty; 3 (8%) by staff; 19 (53%) by adjuncts. This represents a 55% decrease in the number of sections taught by full time faculty in the four year period from 2010 to 2014.



education at ACU. This is especially true in the context of our Block Tuition Model, which does not translate direct cost to the student; in essence, we bill for 144 hours (36 hours per year x 4 years) but have a 128 hour degree plan, making 16 hours unnecessarily billed. A reduction in hours in combination with the increase in the average hours taken, an effect of the Block Tuition model, should create a very attractive and marketable strategy for students to move more rapidly through their coursework.

It is important to recognize that the SACS expectation for undergraduate degrees is 120 hours. As we continue to construct 3+1 or 4+1 combination programs (such as the Masters in Education), we will need to attend to the total number of undergraduate hours as a fraction of the overall program. According to the [2012 Complete College America survey](#), half of the 85 programs from the 310 universities surveyed require only the 120-hour minimum. And while the survey is weighted toward public institutions, it does provide context for our decision making, given how often we compete with public institutions for students.

### Bachelor's Degree Credit-Hour Program Requirements



#### RECOMMENDATIONS

**Timing of Changes:** The Review Committee recognizes that the implementation of any change to General Education represents a significant alteration of degree plans throughout the university. Therefore, the first recommendation is to set a deadline of the last day of school in the Fall Semester to be date by which general education changes should be voted on for inclusion in the catalog. This means that they will have undergone previous discussion and approval by the UGEC, UUAC, and (when appropriate) the full faculty. This provides ample time for discussion as well as the entire Spring semester for departments to implement necessary changes to degree plans.

**Assessment:** There is not a clear and consistent assessment plan for courses populating the various menus within general education (i.e. Sciences; Social Sciences; Fine Arts/Humanities; Cultural Competency). The committee recommends broadening the existing assessment plan

so that, for each course used to fulfill a general education requirement, there is an articulation of the specific artifacts that will be collected, the parties responsible for assembling and analyzing the artifacts, and the mechanism by which those results will be communicated to the General Education Office. Both the Pursuit initiative and the University's reporting to SACS of its general education outcomes rely on data from courses in these menus; therefore, a penalty for non-compliance should be implemented (e.g. reducing the Academic Enrichment and Technology [AET] funds for departments that do not provide the expected assessment data).

Faith Integration in the Discipline: As a leader in Christian Higher Education, ACU has long embraced the practice of integrating faith and learning. We recognize that there is nothing to be feared from pursuing truth, creativity, learning, industry, theory, or pedagogy under the lordship of Jesus Christ. However, our curriculum should better reflect this serious intent. The current capstone requirement includes "an assignment that demonstrates the student's ability to think critically about faith and vocation as it is expressed in a particular discipline." We should build on this beginning by capturing artifacts from Capstone classes and developing university-wide rubrics for assessment. Further, key faculty and administrators should advance the national conversation about faith and learning.

Transfer Credit: The need to be "transfer friendly" has been raised many times over the last several years – from the strategic planning task force conversations to the ad hoc group led by the Provost and Executive Vice President to consider and implement transfer strategies. One of the key strategies implemented recently was the development of CORE 115 as a "combination" of Cornerstone and CORE 210 courses for students bringing in 24 or more hours. This has facilitated community building among transfer students, a parallel to the function of Cornerstone for first-time full-time students. Additionally, BIBL 103 was developed to serve as a survey of the New Testament, combining BIBL 101 and 102 courses for transfer students bringing in 24 or more hours.

In terms of general education, the committee recognizes the need for ACU to align with common expectations of courses throughout Texas.

- The university should resist the temptation of removing the "general education elective" in order to reduce hours. Instead, that elective could be specified for a particular use, especially among the social sciences or humanities.
- Greater flexibility is needed among awarding credit for communication courses by accepting all of the Texas common core courses. Additionally, developing some specializations within our COMS 211 that would broadly serve different disciplines would be helpful.
- Likewise, accepting more of the Texas common core courses in mathematics would provide a measure of flexibility for students in various non-science related degree programs.

Historical Literacy: Throughout the committee's conversations, the lack of a consistent approach to the study of history was noted as a significant concern. It is important to recognize

that history was not the only area to see its “protected menu” of offerings altered in the adoption of our current general education model; the Fine Arts requirement was merged with social sciences/humanities menu, and the Kinesiology requirement has been reduced by half (what was 4 hours is now 2). The committee recommends converting the general education elective to a three-hour historical literacy requirement that could be satisfied by a menu of courses that require engagement with appropriate historical outcomes to be determined and approved by the UGEC in conjunction with the Department of History and Global Studies (e.g. engagement with primary sources, assessment of influence and change over time or space). Including courses such as Church History, Art History, Music History, History and Philosophy of the Sciences, or History of the English Language as well as HIST-prefix courses menu will facilitate the incorporation of this requirement in degree plans; survey courses in American History and Western Civilization should also be included in this menu in order to maintain transfer flexibility.

#### POSSIBLE HOUR REDUCTIONS:

##### *CORE class reduction (3 hours)*

Currently, there are nine hours of CORE classes: CORE 110-Cornerstone; CORE 210-Human Identity and Community; BCOR 310-The Search for Meaning (the last of which serves also as part of the 15 hours of Bible courses required of each student). The student faculty ratio in these classes is 30:1, and this ration should be maintained moving forward. CORE can be reduced by three hours in one of two ways:

- 1) Make each of the three courses 2-credits each;
- 2) Remove one of the classes from the curriculum.

The former preserves the sequential nature of the classes; one of the best practices outlined in the LEAP standards. It also minimizes the reduction of Bible courses and the difficulties inherent in such a decision.

The latter preserves the three-hour heft of courses but would impact the gathering of artifacts for the Pursuit initiative by eliminating BCOR. This impact might be mitigated by the timing of implementation, namely that the change would not take place until Fall 2016, and there would still be BCOR classes taught to help students complete degrees. The completion of the Pursuit initiative would be during the 2016-17 academic year. However, if BCOR is eliminated, a significant reduction in Bible courses would also happen. Solutions to mitigate this impact might include a more robust faith/learning component included in Capstone or a graded chapel experience that requires reflective writing based on a chapel curriculum (for example, we might expand on Pepperdine’s model).

Reducing each course by one hour allows Spotlight sessions in Cornerstone to continue, though perhaps with somewhat reduced frequency. Further, it facilitates the teaching of subsequent classes in non-traditional times – such as the January inter-semester, or summer semesters.

- One central question that will need to be answered if this option is pursued: What are the ramifications to teaching load if the classes are two-credit hours each?
  - Should faculty receive 3 or 2 teaching load hours per class?
  - Might there be a stipend involved (e.g. receive 3 credits = no stipend; 2 credits includes a stipend; if so, how much of a stipend?)

### *English Class Reduction (3 hours)*

The increase in Freshman students bringing in hours continues and is likely not going to abate as more and more high schools offer dual credit programs. Additionally, the most commonly transferred course is ENGL 111 (Composition and Rhetoric – ENGL 1301 in the Texas Common Course Numbering System). Consider the following:

	Fall 07	Fall 08	Fall 09	Fall 10	Fall 11	Fall 12	Fall 13
Hours Brought in FR Year	5565	6456	7321	8438	7564	8359	8755
Individual FR Bringing in Hours	448	480	525	594	548	569	566
Average Hours Brought in FR Year	12	13	14	14	14	15	15
Individuals bringing in ENGL 111	327	376	386	435	409	430	401
Hours Brought in of ENGL 111	981	1128	1158	1305	1227	1290	1203
ENGL 111 Hours as % of All Hours	17.6%	17.5%	15.8%	15.5%	16.2%	15.4%	13.7%

Approximately 40% of the Freshman class transfers in ENGL 111 each year. This represents, on average, 16% of the hours brought in each year over the last seven years.

If the learning outcomes for ENGL 111 were part of the entrance requirements, three additional hours could be reduced from the overall General Education. To account for the frequency with which the course is brought in by students and to allow students a way to “count” their ENGL 111 hours so as not to delay graduation, the following procedure could be adopted:

- Students bringing in the equivalent of ENGL 111 with a C or better would be allowed to use the Literature class they take at ACU (British, American or World) to satisfy three hours in the Humanities menu.

Scores on the ACT would still place students into remedial classes. Also, incorporating either an entrance exam or a rising junior exam would allow the university to assess basic written communication proficiency and would provide a mechanism to remediate those not meeting a standard.

Immediate Budgetary Reductions: The Core has never been funded at the level originally approved by faculty; additional cuts were made in the first years that necessitated further changes away from approved plan. Currently, almost all the departments that hired faculty to support their participation in CORE classes are not receiving the transfer of funds expected to cover the new faculty’s salary. While faculty *are* being paid, this means constant budget overruns in almost every department that teaches CORE classes. Curricular reductions need time to

be discussed, voted on, and incorporated into degree plans, but several immediate changes can be made that will realize budgetary savings.

- Reduce the number of CORE 210 and BCOR offerings. While over the past two years, there have been unfilled seats in each semester the courses are offered, much progress has been made to align available seats with demand. As always, further alignment is possible.
- Reimagine the Assistant Provost for General Education position away from a full-time administrator to a stipend position.
- Reduce the number of team-taught sections.

The last recommendation was borne out of conversations that recognized the opportunity to streamline teaching, especially if faculty had participated in team teaching the course previously. While not doing away with team-teaching completely, it would be possible to make significant reductions across many sections. This would have ramifications with the BCOR class, since one of those teachers is required to be a Bible professor. However, those could be solved by:

- Acknowledging that only Bible professors (or professors appropriately credentialed) will teach BCOR, effectively making it a Bible class;
- Or reducing the number of required Bible hours, thereby allowing any faculty to teach BCOR. (A course prefix change such as CORE 310 might help avoid confusion if this is implemented).

## CONCLUSION

The strategies outlined above reduce six (6) hours from the General Education at ACU, moving the minimum hours for a degree to 122. If reducing two additional hours is desired, conversations should commence about affecting such reductions within major-specific courses.

The committee recognizes that not all the strategies voted on in 2007 were implemented. The recommendations in this report are intended to build on what is currently in practice. This means that items not yet fully implemented, or items that were adapted since the 2007 vote would remain not implemented or adapted, whichever is appropriate.

General Education is a work in progress. The committee thanks the many faculty and administrators who gave input to this document. The work of the UGEC and UUAC will build upon this report and should lead to a resolution for faculty vote sometime in the Fall 2015 semester.