



Section #1: Contact Information of Person Submitting Application

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Award Application: Learning Assessment
Boise State University Foundational Studies Program

Section #3: Application Summary

Include a summary of the award application. Please begin the narrative with a brief description of your institution and the time frame for the process. Briefly explain your process and why you think it equates with quality. *The summary shouldn't exceed 150 words.* The text box may be increased in size as necessary.

Boise State University, an urban metropolitan university with 16,000 undergraduates, redesigned its undergraduate curriculum and student learning outcomes through a grassroots process that began in 2007 with faculty investigating how the core supported the liberal arts goal of a lifelong learning foundation. In a swiftly moving process, 300 faculty and staff developed a new curriculum, learning outcomes, certified new and redesigned courses and launched the Foundational Studies Program (FSP) between 2008 and 2012. The attached proposal explains how this new curriculum, a four year scaffolded general education program which emphasizes high impact practices and mandated an integrated assessment plan, meets the criteria for excellence represented by this award. The philosophy and practices integral to the assessment approach demonstrate assessment that is integral to teaching and learning, honors authentic assessment supporting continuous improvement to strengthen teaching and learning, and that integrated assessment can both satisfy regulators and reform teaching and learning.

Section #4: Award Criteria

Criterion 1: Supporting and Defining Learning

An exemplary application should clearly describe why the goal of the learning area or domain addressed in the application is important to stakeholders and aligns with the institution's mission. The application should clearly detail the processes essential to engaging all key players in a dialogue to operationally define the goal in terms of learning outcome(s).

Provide a description of how your institution supports and operationally defines learning for one learning goal or area of learning. What are your learning outcomes for this goal, and what is the evidence your institution collects to show that graduates have acquired the desired general education knowledge, skills, or values? Address the following issues:

- How the goal of this learning area aligns with your mission
- What process your institution used to operationally define this goal's learning outcome(s)
- Who participated in the development of this definition and what level of support exists for the goal and outcomes
- How your institution communicates this definition to faculty, students, and other interested parties
- What collaborative efforts members of your institution are making to achieve these learning outcome(s), including efforts to ensure shared understanding and alignment among the faculty, and across multiple programs, courses, and sections.

Please limit your response to two pages. The following text box may be increased in size as necessary.

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This application for an AGLS Award for Improving General Education through Learning Assessment describes Boise State's program of University Learning Outcomes (ULO) assessment. Boise State has adopted 11 LEAP inspired learning outcomes which capture desired learning outcomes achieved through 5 Disciplinary Lenses (mathematics, literature and humanities, visual and performing arts, social sciences, natural and applied sciences), communication (written and oral) plus critical thinking, innovation through teamwork, ethics, diversity. We have an institutional goal for 90% of our students to achieve a level of "good" or "exemplary" on these outcomes by the time they graduate according to our university wide rubrics. We are committed to a system of authentic assessment that is integrated into our four year general education curriculum which we call the Foundational Studies Program.

General education and its associated ULOs are widely supported by Boise State faculty/staff and integrated into the University's mission and strategic plan. Boise State's mission and strategic plan were revised at the same time the Foundational Studies Program was initiated—both were introduced in 2012. The Strategic Plan emphasizes our general education program; we have committed to "Develop the Foundational Studies Program into a memorable centerpiece of the undergraduate experience" and a "charter project" of the Strategic Plan includes "achieving the ULOs." Linking our goals for general education to these institutional documents demonstrates the university's commitment to the program and support for assessment of the ULOs.

Institutional commitment to general education and assessment of the learning outcomes is not top down, however. Our institutional changes began with a grassroots movement initiated by faculty and student affairs professionals who sought a curriculum that would support students' lifelong learning through engagement in the liberal arts and intentional support for the skills and habits of mind captured in our 11 ULOs. In an effort that began in 2007 and culminated with the design of a new curriculum in 2011, over 300 faculty and staff were involved. Faculty Senate committees including University Curriculum Committee, Academic Policies and Standards, and Diversity committees are directly involved with general education program oversight and policy development. The Foundational Studies Program Council – composed of 20 faculty representing all undergraduate colleges and areas of our general education curriculum as well as professional staff representing student affairs – guides the continuous development of the program and the University Learning Outcomes. Finally, an Assessment Coordinating Council (comprised of the Director of Institutional Research, General Education, Instructional Development, First Year Writing, the Asst. Vice President of Student Affairs, and a representative from the Learning Technologies group) provides steering and coordination for the many departments involved in our assessment efforts.

Communication of the goals for General Education and the ULOs is integrated into our teaching and learning as well as admissions/advising areas. Our general education goals (as captured by the ULOs) are integrated into our two-day new student orientation. For example, before we introduce the curriculum to new freshmen, our advisors lead students in a team challenge constructing a tower out of paper, tape, and string. They guide the students in a brief reflection on the team experience and talk about the importance of this outcome as well as innovation in our general education curriculum. The tower itself also serves as a metaphor – the foundation for an undergraduate degree must be broad to support the narrower learning that follows in upper division courses. It is through this process that we

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introduce new learners to our general education program and the teamwork learning outcome.

Faculty are introduced to the ULOs associated with general education courses through the course design tables (CDTs) that guide the general education courses they teach. These CDTs, which follow Fink's (2003) backward design model for course design, are maintained digitally and shared publicly on the Foundational Studies program website. In 2011-2012, all courses, whether existing or new, were required to be designed to address the learning outcomes and required approval. Faculty designing or redesigning courses in general education were enrolled in course design workshops during which they were supported in connecting course outcomes to the ULOs. Faculty teaching other courses are also familiar with the ULOs because our general education curriculum intersects with all majors through the Communication in the Disciplines course (a written and oral communication intensive course required in every major) and the Finishing Foundations course (every major has its own capstone in which communication, critical inquiry, innovation and teamwork are integrated and assessed). In addition, academic program of study learning outcomes are mapped to the learning outcomes. An example of the connections we are making between Engineering program outcomes and our ULOs is included in Table 1.

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Table 1: Example of program outcomes to University Learning Outcomes.

Foundations Program University Learning Outcomes	Write effectively in multiple contexts, for a variety of audiences.	Communicate effectively in speech, both as speaker and listener.	Engage in effective critical inquiry by defining problems, gathering & evaluating evidence, & determining the adequacy of argumentative discourse.	Think creatively about complex problems in order to produce, evaluate, and implement innovative possible solutions, often as one member of a team.	Contributes to a team in a way that helps the team move forward, engages other to facilitate their contributions, meets assigned deadlines, and fosters a constructive team climate.	Analyze ethical issues in personal, professional, and civic life and produce reasoned evaluations of competing value systems and ethical claims.	Apply knowledge of cultural differences to matters of local, regional, national, & international importance, including pol., economic, and environmental issues.		Apply knowledge and the methods of reasoning characteristic of mathematics, statistics, and other formal systems to solve complex problems.	Apply knowledge and the methods characteristic of scientific inquiry to think critically about and solve theoretical and practical problems about physical structures and processes.	Apply knowledge and methods characteristic of the visual and performing arts to explain and appreciate the significance of aesthetic products and creative activities.	Apply knowledge and the methods of inquiry characteristic of literature and other humanities disciplines to interpret and produce texts expressive of the human condition.	Apply knowledge and the methods of inquiry characteristic of the social sciences to explain and evaluate human behavior and institutions.	
	Intellectual Foundations (UF 100)					Civic and Ethical Foundations (UF 200)		Disciplinary Clusters (D-L M, N, V, L, S)						
	ABET EAC Program Outcomes	1	2	3	4A	4B	5	6		7	8	9	10	11
a) an ability to apply knowledge of mathematics, science and engineering							◆		◆					
b) an ability to design and conduct experiments, as well as to analyze and interpret data									◆					
c) an ability to design a system, component or process to meet desired needs within realistic constraints such as economic, environmental, social, political, ethical, health and safety, manufacturability and sustainability				◆										

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d) an ability to function on multi-disciplinary teams					◆									
e) An ability to identify, formulate, and solve engineering problems.											◆			
f) an ability to understand professional and ethical responsibility							◆							
g) an ability to communicate effectively	◆	◆												
h) the broad education necessary to understand the impact of engineering solutions in a global, economic, environmental, and societal context								◆						◆
i) A recognition of the need for, and an ability to engage in life-long learning														
j) a knowledge of contemporary issues								◆						
k) an ability to use the techniques, skills, and modern engineering tools necessary for engineering practice.														

Additionally, all syllabi for any of the courses that support the ULOs must include a syllabus statement, following the template below:

Boise State's Foundations Program provides undergraduates with a broad-based education that spans the entire university experience. [Course name] satisfies [#] credits of the Foundation Program's Disciplinary Lens-[category] requirement. It supports the following University Learning Outcomes, along with a variety of other course-specific goals.

#11 – Apply knowledge and the methods of inquiry characteristic of the social sciences to explain and evaluate human behavior and systems.

[Insert department specific language about the ways the course integrates the learning outcome].

The structures and methods of communication discussed above help provide the connections on campus to ensure that general education and our ULOs are well integrated into the campus and not left to chance. These efforts are important as we move forward with a collaboratively developed assessment plan. In the sections to follow we will discuss the ULO assessment plan:

All 11 learning outcomes will be assessed across a 4 year cycle with one of the four phases unfolding for each ULO each year.

- Phase 1 is called Active Assessment. This includes the collection and evaluation of evidence and developing recommendations for change.
- Phase 2 is Distribution and Development. This phase stresses “community sense making,” a key to developing solutions and making change happen and faculty development.
- Phase 3 is Implementation of change efforts and progress review (includes faculty development as well)
- Phase 4 is Maintenance and Revision with additional formative assessment occurring at this point.

A three year pilot research project has provided the data on which the phases of this assessment process were tested and also included a feedback mechanism to develop and test methods for assessment data collection.

Phase 2 assessment processes involve feedback of data not only to the faculty members directly assessing their courses, but also in the course groups or categories they represent. For example, data collected from First-Year Writing is shared in a faculty community involved in collaborative assessment. The findings from the assessment process are fed back into the faculty to collaboratively determine development efforts. Similarly, learning outcomes data generated in the Intellectual Foundations (UF 100) course regarding critical inquiry and oral communication not only guides continuous improvement in the course, but it is also shared with faculty teaching writing and other first-year courses so that they can support skill development across the curriculum. As ENGL 101-102 and UF 100 are required courses for all students, the broad distribution of assessment findings are important for all faculty to understand. Data assessment, evaluation, and dissemination practices will be discussed in greater detail in response to Criterion 2.

Criterion 2: Completing the Assessment Process

An exemplary application should clearly describe the assessment method used and how its implementation was accomplished. The application should provide a helpful model for getting a significant number of decision makers involved in the development of the assessment process and in gaining support for the assessment tools. The methods presented should be manageable and provide useful data.

Describe how your institution assesses the learning identified in Criterion 1 above.

Address the following issues:

- What assessment methods and tools your institution has developed and uses, including the rationale for the method selected, as well as details about the measures of learning, levels of student learning, types of assignments/activities, identification of the student population[s] to be assessed, and the program[s] assessed
- Who participates in the selection and/or development of the assessment tools
- What institutional support exists for the development of the assessment tools
- How the assessments are completed and who participates in the process (a **brief** process description)

Please limit your response to two pages. The following text box may be increased in size as necessary.

The heart of University Learning Outcomes (ULOs) assessment at Boise State is the direct assessment of student learning. Our assessment plan specifies the use of assessment that is intentionally integrated into the curriculum and individual courses and is assessed by faculty teaching the Foundational Studies courses. Additional indirect learning outcomes data are generated through surveys (e.g. NSSE, entry and exit surveys, CIRP) and ad hoc methods. The discussion that follows pertains to the direct assessment strategy described in greater detail in the attachment to this application.

The charter documents for the Foundational Studies Program included the explicit instruction for a variety of assessment related features:

- Courses structured around a small number of specific, clearly-articulated learning outcomes to inspire confidence that the goals of general education are being met
- Inclusive and relevant learning outcomes: ethics, diversity, internationalization, teamwork and innovation are fully integrated with traditional academic learning outcomes
- Built-in assessment process for learning outcomes to foster efficient program review for improvement and accreditation.
- ULO's are "university-level" to enhance the connection between general education and majors.

A primary rationale for assessment to be "built in" to courses was to ensure that faculty remain central to the assessment process and that assessment is built into the continuous improvement process at the course and program level. The consensus of the faculty was that external measures (e.g. standardized test) could make assessment less relevant to the content and pedagogical choices faculty made. Course

design institutes were offered at the inception of the new program to ensure that “all course types are organized around carefully-articulated, course-level learning outcomes with associated assessment rubrics designed to determine a student’s level of success in achieving the target outcomes” ([Boise State University Foundational Studies Program Legislation, 2010](#)). The resulting course design tables are publicly posted on the University’s website. They are referenced during assessment activities and updated to ensure that the delivered course matches the planned course. All new courses added to the Foundational Studies curriculum are required to submit a course design table which is reviewed by at least two members of our general education council, the Foundational Studies Program Council, plus the director of the Foundational Studies Program using a rubric for approval. The philosophy of the assessment approach, as stated above, emerged from a grass roots review of the undergraduate curriculum during the Foundational Studies development process (2007-2010), which broad institutional involvement.

The work of developing the most fitting approach for our assessment tools has been firmly placed in the hands of faculty. An exciting intersection of research and development enabled us to develop our assessment reporting survey at the same time we focused on enhancing high impact instructional practices (active learning) when we received a grant involving faculty teaching STEM courses in the Foundational Studies Program. The project (CALIPER), an NSF funded study designed to explore the connection between teaching activities and learning outcomes assessment, has involved almost 50 faculty teaching general education (100 and 200 level) courses in STEM. This group of faculty helped us design a system to collect ULO assessment data that they evaluated against the ULO rubrics. The project activities included faculty development to connect teaching activities to assessment activities, teaching observations, plus individual or focus group interviews to better understand the teaching and assessment choices faculty were making. The project also focuses on the high impact practice of active learning for student engagement. The resulting instrument asks faculty to report on the class average proficiency on ULO criteria and to reply to three open ended questions:

1. Please provide a summary of the reporting data collected during this semester (e.g. what types of student artifacts did you assess, roughly how many times did you collect it?)
2. What conclusions have you drawn from your assessment data about the students’ learning?
3. Describe the ways in which the conclusions that you have drawn above have implications for future course planning or instructional methods.

In order to determine how a reporting form designed based on input from STEM faculty would be interpreted by faculty in other disciplines, the Foundational Studies Program Council asked faculty teaching in our Literature and Humanities (DLL) area to pilot the form for Fall 2014 assessment reporting. Reporting was optional and assessment reports were submitted by 39 faculty. Based on the feedback provided, a larger implementation took place in Spring 2015. A report including data from the 2014-2015 assessment is attached to this application.

In addition to the development of an assessment reporting survey, Boise State launched the first phase of the e-portfolio program in 2013 after a group of faculty and staff winnowed a list of possible platforms down to two choices (a review rubric is available by request). The final two platforms were reviewed by a larger group of faculty and then approximately 50 faculty and department chairs

attending an overview presentation given by the CEO of Digication, our top choice. Given the positive response, this learning and assessment platform was selected to help support coherence and connection in the Foundational Studies Program and the majors. The university has funded a full time coordinator to support the e-Portfolio initiative and it has been incorporated into our Center for Teaching and Learning instructional design team's responsibilities. Additional appropriated and student fee funding supports the platform within the English and Foundational Studies Departments. Finally, the university invested in a four year enterprise (university-wide) subscription for e-portfolios. In short, the university has placed significant resources into this effort.

Our assessment process is steeped in approaches that will generate conversations between faculty about assessment, pedagogies, and curriculum design. That is why, perhaps more important than the selection of the tools, the feature of our assessment plan that seems to be helping us make the most progress toward learning goals is the conversations the process fosters. The assessment plan (attached) details the process of reviewing artifacts, synthesizing results and providing feedback to stakeholders. Individual faculty are responsible for periodic reporting of assessment results in the phases discussed above. A summary of the process that takes place during reporting years follows:

1. Faculty provide a report summarizing assessment results for the course, assignment(s) used to assess ULOs, examples of student work (along with the associated assignment), evaluation criteria. [Phase 1]
2. If teaching in an e-Portfolio program, faculty may submit assessment rubrics through Digication. First-Year Writing, UF 100, UF 200, and UF 300 all use e-Portfolios. [Phase 1]
3. FSP collaborates with Institutional Research to synthesize assessment reports. [Phase 2]
4. Assessment reports are returned to academic departments for faculty conversations. [Phase 2]
5. A report summarizing the assessment synthesis and the faculty report from their "community sense making" regarding proposed improvements and next steps is sent back to FSP Council so that faculty development and other supports can be planned. The Center for Teaching and Learning is a partner in needed faculty development. [Phase 3]
6. Reassessment of changes instituted by the faculty take place as described in the steps above feeding into a continuous improvement cycle. [Phases 3-4]

We are pleased with the reception we are getting to this assessment process and offer feedback from one faculty member following a UF 300 assessment review meeting, "I do sincerely appreciate the 'care and feeding' you provide for us. It does really help one feel connected to a larger picture as opposed to just slugging away out there and wondering if anyone notices." He then continues to share the changes he is making to "fine tune" and "revisit" course content and to add a book a peer had discussed during the assessment meeting. Fostering opportunities for faculty to share practices toward continuous improvement is at the heart of our assessment program.

Criterion 3: Analyzing Assessment Results

An exemplary application should clearly detail the process used to evaluate assessment data and should serve as a helpful model for others. The application should clearly describe all those who were involved in the discussion of the data and implications, and how broad consensus was gained concerning the meaning and implications of the results. Specific data must be presented in the application.

Describe how your institution analyzes assessment results to identify, select, and implement improvements. Address the following issues:

- Who analyzes the data and what level of collaboration exists
- What processes are used to analyze the results
- What the results reveal about student learning, and which learning results are viewed as most significant, and what strategies and/or areas were targeted for further improvement
- How internal or external benchmarking is used (or might be used) to validate the learning or lack of it
- What the results reveal about your assessment tools and methods
- How extensively the results are communicated to faculty, students, and administration

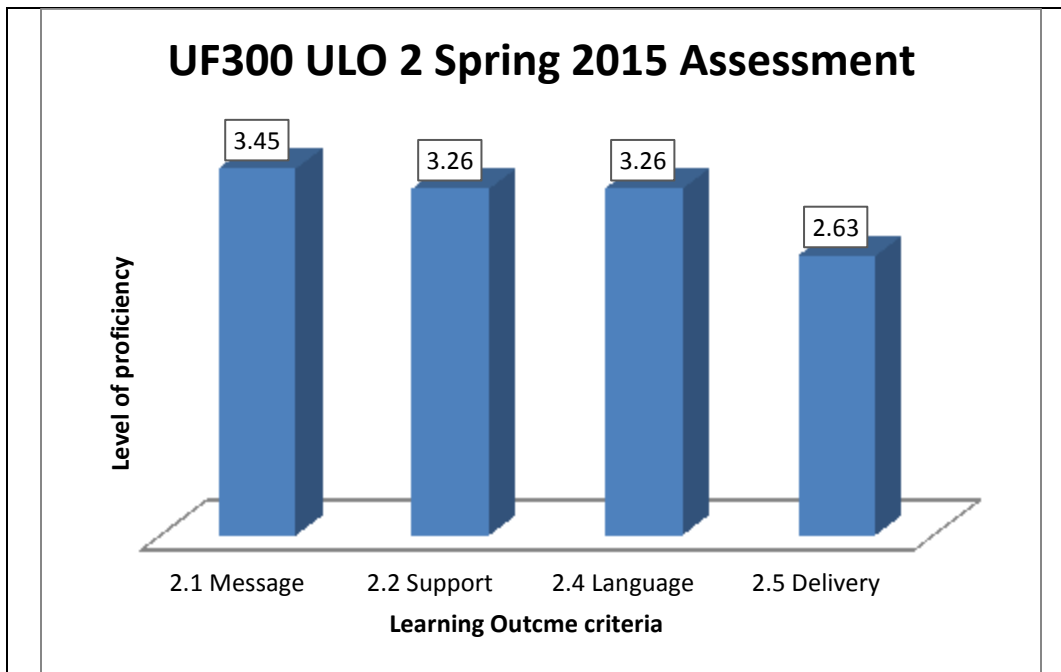
Please limit your response to two pages. The following text box may be increased in size as necessary.

Assessment survey data are analyzed by the Foundational Studies Program and the Institutional Research office. E-Portfolio data are summarized for faculty review (using Digication reporting tools) by the Foundational Studies Office. Means for ULO proficiency scores are charted and qualitative responses are read for recurring themes. Qualitative and quantitative data are summarized for faculty to review with the intent to identify patterns or themes in general, taking care not to identify faculty. All faculty who teach the course or area being reviewed are invited to participate in the “community sense making” process as part of phase 2 of our assessment process. An example of a report from UF 300 and from the DLL and DLV assessment are included in this application packet.

The First-Year Writing program has a long history of a robust assessment process. They integrated their practice to our new plan and began assessing ULO 1: Written Communication via e-portfolio in Spring 2014. The data were collected on ULO criteria as well as on the e-portfolio process. All sections of ENGL 101 and ENGL 102 were assessed and a sample of two portfolios per course section was assessed by a subcommittee of approximately 20 writing faculty including full time, adjunct, and graduate students. Phase 2: Distribution and Development took place in Fall 2014-Spring 2015. The assessment results included identifying two specific program needs for teaching: (1) training and development provided to First-Year Writing faculty on e-portfolio teaching; (2) more faculty support for course and assignment development. These results led to identification of a lead faculty member within the department to support e-portfolio learning in the writing curriculum and identification and recognition of 5 e-portfolio “Power Users” – faculty who will serve as role models within the program of active pedagogies and e-portfolio integration. Phase 3: Implementation and progress evaluation will take place in Fall 2015.

Assessment in UF 100, 200, and 300 has followed a similar pattern to that of First-Year Writing. A random sample of artifacts are collected from each course and a subcommittee of faculty from each course evaluates the artifacts and considers implications for continuous course development. The findings are shared with the full faculty teaching the course for collaborative solutions to shortcomings and refocused efforts. As an example, an abridged version of our UF 300 assessment report is included below, followed by our reflection on how this data is used and what it reflects about our assessment process. Please note that each of the bars in the table below apply to the criteria of Oral Communication (ULO 2). In prior years UF 300 assessed Critical Inquiry (ULO 3) and Teamwork (ULO 4).

UF 300 Assessment Report. Spring 2015.



Ten sections represented (31 Artifacts)

(2 Digitation Assessments Outstanding and Five Manually Assessed)

Faculty evaluated 31 artifacts from ten sections of UF 300 (Transitional Foundations). The reported rubric scores (each reviewed by two faculty) revealed that students were performing satisfactorily on criteria 2.1 Message (“Communicate effectively as a speaker: message”), 2.2 support (“communicate effectively as a speaker: support”), and 2.3 language (“communicate effectively as a speaker: Language”). The score for delivery (“communicate effectively as a speaker: delivery”) was deemed lower than satisfactory by the faculty and marked as an area for focused improvement. See rubric for criteria descriptions (<http://goo.gl/RX9Zyy>)

Review of Assessment – Report

On May 22, 2015 eight faculty who teach UF 300 met to review the data summarized above. Each had reviewed artifacts contributing to the report and shared insights as well.

Insights about areas for improvement:

- Criteria description “lack of preparation or discomfort” in the criteria for 2.5 (delivery) does not seem assessable. They may be nervous despite preparation.
- “What background do we draw upon for teaching oral communication?” Faculty need more PD to teach this outcome.
- Faculty should “try to do the thing we’re asking students to do” in order to teach them oral communication skills, we must try out the assignment.
- How do we evaluate presentation if the artifact is a video?
- We need to spend more time teaching students to use the digital tools they’re using for presentations.
- When models of good presentations were available, the quality of students’ presentation improved (compared to first semester)
- Connecting communication skills to other projects in the course has been helpful – using the signature assignment.
- Need more clarity on how to submit team portfolios for assessment.

Proposed Improvements

- A portfolio will be built to share the standout student presentations from the course. Any faculty member will be able to share that with their students.
- Professional development will be provided next year for faculty to build their knowledge and skills about teaching communication.
- Professional development will be provided next year for faculty on e-portfolios (addressing team portfolio issues and other questions about assessment of artifacts). Focus will be on building faculty comfort with Digication.
- Book suggestion: *Presentation Zen*.

Our review of our assessment efforts, generally, reveals the decisions we have made about the place of assessment in our curriculum. We have chosen to generalize review of student learning for large groups and link to teaching practice rather than to monitor individual student learning gains. Given the size of our university (16,000 undergraduate students) we must work with samples and generalizations to keep the data manageable. Because the intention of our assessment is to enhance student learning by focusing faculty attention on the transferrable skills in their courses and not content from various courses or disciplines, we are confident that our approach is appropriate. The tools that we are using also privilege description over statistical reliability. Again, **these process decisions are consistent with the philosophy that our faculty voted on to guide the assessment.**

Results of the ULO assessment are reported to the larger university community through publication in our annual report. Social media is used to publicize the report so that interested parties may read about it. While the annual report and social media suffices for the general public, we are more targeted in the way we communicate assessment to the other academic departments and faculty. Any department with courses involved in assessment receives a department specific report with the assessment findings. For example, the Literature and Humanities (DLL) and Visual and Performing Arts (DLV) phase 1 assessment data from spring 2015 has been analyzed in aggregate. During summer 2015 that data will

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be divided and assessment results connected to World Languages, English, Art, History, Music, Philosophy, and Theater will be sent to their respective departments. Support from the Center for Teaching and Learning will be offered for faculty development and course design for improvements that the faculty teaching in those departments identify. FSP will provide funds (for a meal or snacks) for a faculty meeting to review assessment findings. As indicated above, the assessment philosophy at Boise State is that assessment is part of teaching, as is continuous improvement. This philosophy is tied to our approach to data sharing and collaborative meaning making.

External benchmarking is not presently part of our process. The data we are collecting and analyzing now, however, provides a baseline for the university as our state prepares to develop an assessment process for the statewide General Education Matriculation (GEM) learning outcomes. As that statewide system is developed, Boise State will be better positioned to collaborate with our statewide peers in terms of achieving student learning goals in general education.

Internally we are using year to year reports as part of our continuous improvement efforts, particularly in the UF courses which are required for all students. While other courses engage in less frequent phase 1 assessment, the UF courses are assessing one learning outcome each year and using the findings about process and learning to inform the subsequent year's process. See Criterion 4 for more about these assessment activities.

Criterion 4: Making Improvements

An exemplary application should present a useful model of how to select data-driven improvement projects, especially focusing on high impact, active learning strategies, that include faculty development activities aimed to prepare faculty for the improved learning strategies.

Describe your institution's efforts to identify needed learning and methods improvement projects following the analysis of assessment data. Address the following issues:

- What learning improvement projects your institution has selected, including high-impact, active learning strategies, and/or faculty development activities
- What assessment method improvements your institutions has selected (if applicable)
- What outcome statement improvements/adjustments have been made (if applicable)
- Who has collaborated on targeted learning or methods projects and at what level of activity
- What level of institutional support exists for the improvement projects, such as funding, personnel, and faculty development
- What plans exist to follow up on targeted improvement projects to check for improvement
- What results, if any have been collected to date following the improvement efforts
- What lessons have been learned from the improvement process

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Boise State's approach to learning outcomes assessment is intended to provide support for enhanced teaching and learning (including high impact practices such as integrated communication skills, civic engagement, and active learning). Above we referenced specific areas of outcomes assessment: (1) assessing the Disciplinary Lens (disciplinary general education courses such as Introduction to Art, Spanish 101, etc.) through our assessment survey, and (2) ULO Assessment in First-Year Writing, UF 100, 200, and 300 through our e-Portfolio platform. Below, responses to the criteria 4 questions provide a sampling of the improvements identified and enacted.

Learning improvement projects selected:

(1) An area of emphasis in our Disciplinary Lens courses has been to shift faculty away from an over reliance upon lecture to add active learning strategies to their course designs. Data from our assessment surveys and interviews with CALIPER project participants provide a picture of the strategies that faculty are employing in their classes and the ways they are connecting their teaching and learning activities with the students' achievement of the ULOs. Examples of data demonstrating this connection follow:

- Since my assessment of the data, I am interested in making the classroom yet more student oriented. One idea that comes to mind is to have one exam replaced by some kind of group activity that would equally measure student performance. Other than this, the data has at least given me something to work from as far as how to set up my future classes.

- If I want a better outcome on questions asking for higher learning goals then I have to work more in class/homework towards those goals. Students do not take topics seriously if not sufficiently counting towards grade. [...] I want to implement formative assessment techniques to gauge the problems students have in bridging skills/knowledge between the different topic areas of Calculus II.
- Instructionally I will restructure the group activities so that the class begins with a group (or pair?) activity in which we recall what we did in the previous lecture and group activity.

(2) Assessment activities in the First-Year Writing and UF 200 & 300 classes via e-Portfolio in Spring 2014 revealed that the e-Portfolio platform was viewed as an “add on” to the curriculum and was not supporting reflection and integrative thinking as we had intended. Activities during the 2014-15 academic year have focused on developing support structures (including providing buy-out time for faculty mentors and faculty development) for better integration of this active learning platform in our classes.

Assessment method improvements:

(1) Having gathered faculty input on active learning methods used via qualitative methods on our assessment survey, we are in the process of converting the open ended question into a question that can be quantitatively evaluated so that we can measure our progress toward this learning goal. Additional revisions to the assessment tool will be gathered in fall 2015 meetings.

(2) Initially e-portfolio was being stressed as an assessment platform. This approach undermined our goal for students to see it as a way to tell the story of their learning. A shift (2014- 2015) has been to focus on integration and reflection. Next year, rather than stressing submission of e-portfolios, our efforts with faculty and students will be supporting student reflection. We will be able to address submission of artifacts after building more understanding of e-portfolios from a teaching and learning standpoint. Additionally, we will be introducing a first-year portfolio to link First-year writing and Intellectual Foundations (UF 100).

Outcome statement improvements

Faculty revised our outcome criteria for oral communication (ULO 2) based on feedback from our assessment processes in UF 100 and 300 that the criteria were too narrowly based on communication in formal speech settings. At the same time, Boise State provided leadership in a statewide general education meeting where a new oral communication rubric was developed which more purposefully linked oral communication to critical thinking. The new rubric aptly positions communication as integral to critical inquiry and opened up the notion of multi-media presentations. Our faculty will vote on the newly revised learning outcome in fall 2015.

Collaboration on targeted learning or methods projects

(1) A team of four faculty and four faculty-administrators began supporting active learning, primarily through our CALIPER action research project. This team is working directly with departments to disseminate our findings through faculty development, curriculum development and support for active learning on a department wide basis in the STEM disciplines. Partially as a result of the CALIPER activities, a second grant (WIDER) was awarded

to focus on pedagogy, assessment and curriculum design in STEM departments (including general education and major courses). Subsequently, a team of 10 faculty and administrators have proposed a plan to carry the initiative into the social sciences, literature, and humanities curriculum. That proposal and funding request is currently under review. Thus, the effort initiated in general education assessment is spreading throughout the curriculum.

Level of institutional support for the improvement projects

(1 & 2) The university invested approximately \$200,000 in our e-portfolio initiative to provide enterprise level access for all undergraduate students for four years. In addition, a Project Coordinator (professional staff) position was created to support assessment, e-Portfolio and civic engagement activities in Foundational Studies. Additionally, the Provost provided funding for a faculty assessment scholar to work in our Institutional Research office in support of these assessment activities and for four faculty scholars in our Center for Teaching and Learning.

Plans for follow up on targeted improvement projects

(1 & 2) As indicated above, the expansion of our CALIPER project into other non-STEM academic departments has been proposed. This proposal has an associated grant and, as such, as an evaluation process that is built into it. Additionally, we are continuing to develop the assessment survey to support monitoring of active learning pedagogies being reported by faculty. In the coming year, we will be requiring faculty teaching UF 100, 200, and 300 to participate in faculty development and to create a faculty learning e-Portfolio to emphasize the importance of reflection and to immerse faculty in the creation of e-Portfolio, building their familiarity and comfort with the platform.

Evidence of results collected to date

(1) As indicated above, analysis of the assessment survey data we have evidence that our efforts to intentionally encourage faculty to see the connection between active learning strategies and assessment of learning outcomes are proving effective.

(2) In Fall 2014 we began collecting e-Portfolio survey data from students about their perception of the e-Portfolio. The surveys to date corroborate the faculty assessment that the platform was viewed as an “add on” and not integral to learning. The survey remains open and will provide a way to continuously gauge our efforts to integrate it more seamlessly into teaching and learning and to support student reflection on learning.

Lessons have been learned from the improvement process

(1) A forthcoming article drawing upon assessment survey data, focus group interviews, and classroom observations provides strong evidence of these connections and supports continuing to invest in faculty development to support the kinds of changes in practice needed to support student learning.

(2) We have learned the importance of helping students see the value of the e-Portfolio for reflection and integration. This must come BEFORE an emphasis on assessment; otherwise its value is undermined. Additionally, we have learned that the faculty must use e-Portfolios in a way that mirrors student use. Thus we have built a faculty teaching e-Portfolio into the development requirements for our Foundational Studies faculty.

References

Cooperrider, D.L. & Whitney, D (2001) A positive revolution in change. In Cooperrider, D. L. Sorenson, P., Whitney, D. & Yeager, T. (eds.) *Appreciative Inquiry: An Emerging Direction for Organization Development* (9–29). Champaign, IL: Stipes.

Fink, L. D. (2003). *Creating significant learning experiences: An integrated approach to designing college courses*. San Francisco, Calif: Jossey-Bass.

Attachment:

Boise State University Assessment Plan

Boise State University Learning Outcomes Assessment Plan

AIMS: The goal of the ULO Assessment Plan is to provide course and category (e.g. DLL, DLM) level learning outcomes assessment reporting in such a way that the university can inform decisions about course alignment, content, and pedagogy with the intention of supporting stronger learning gains within the undergraduate student population.

Important assumptions guiding this plan include:

- Assessment is part of teaching and learning
- Assessment that is authentic (connected to) the course is most effective
- Assessment should not be conducted for the sole purpose of satisfying external regulators. Assessment that is generative for faculty and students will satisfy external.

PROCESS:

Assessment Plan

Periodic Assessment of all ULOs over 4 year cycle

Year 1 Assessment Group	Oral Communication (2)	DL Visual & Performing Arts (9)	DL Literature and Humanities (10)
Year 2 Assessment Group	Diversity (6)	DL Social Science (11)	Ethics (5)
Year 3 Assessment	Critical Inquiry (3)	DL Mathematics (7)	DL Natural, Physical, Applied Science (8)

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Group			
Year 4 Assessment Group	Writing (1)	Teamwork/Innovation (4)	Review of Assessment Process

* See “rationale for periodic review” below for explanation of the assessment cycle.

Guiding Question

The assessment questions will be: How well are students achieving the outcomes? And how do you know?

Faculty will provide: Report summarizing assessment results for the course, assignment(s) used to assess ULOs, examples of student work (along with the associated assignment), evaluation criteria.

Sampling strategy: Faculty may sample student work for ULO assessment based on the sampling strategy included in the table below. Non-academic programs may use the same sampling approach based on program/event population.

Class size	Number of random samples drawn
<50	5
51-100	10
101 +	15

Course reports (program reports from non-academic units) will be sent to the FSP Council.

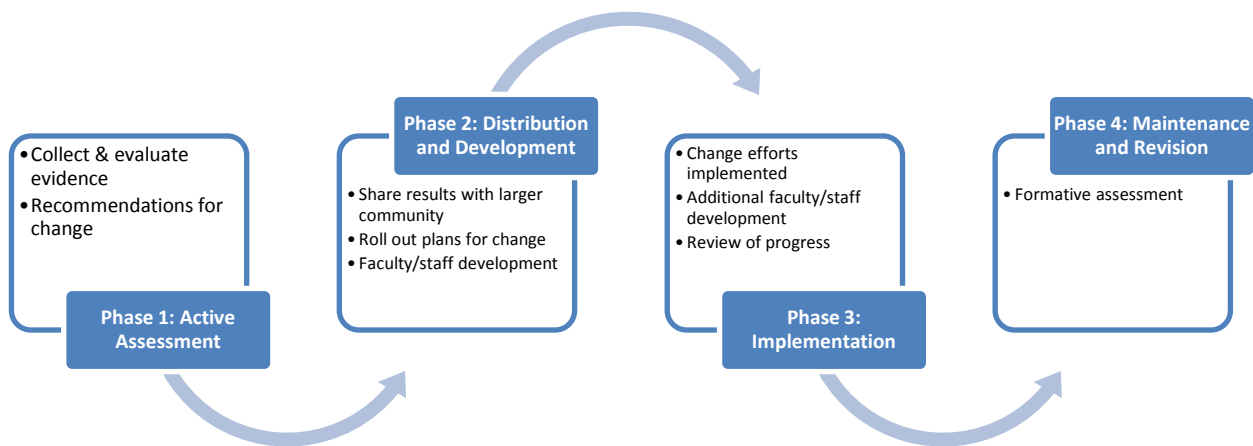
Assessors would review the assessment results and aggregate all sections of a course to provide a course level report for departmental reporting use.

[Ideally, in departments or programs a team of individuals would have reviewed reports for potential changes and enhancements to support learning prior to sending to the FSP Council. Doing so, however, is not currently funded centrally and would need to be incorporated into department or program workload.]

Assessors would then aggregate all course/non-academic program reports for category level reports (e.g. all DLV courses would be aggregated and the data would be assessed). Category level reports would be routed to the Provost’s office (for accreditation reporting) and to the appropriate faculty senate subcommittees.

Continuous Improvement Cycle

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* The cycle recommendations were made to balance the assessment across the four year period. We wanted to spread the signature learning outcomes (1-6) over the 4 year period. We were mindful of the courses that were still being rolled out (in 2014-15 CIDs will be fully implemented and in 2015-16 FFs will be fully implemented). We also considered the time needed to establish the e-Portfolio on campus and to support expansion into classes beyond the first year.

The first year ULOs 2, 9, and 10 were chosen because we are already assessing Oral Communication in UF 100 and 300. The faculty teaching CID courses can be added in 2014-15. DLV is a small category and most of the courses are similar in size and structure (large lecture classes). DLL includes two disciplines that have been working on and thinking about assessment for some time (World Languages and English) and most of the courses use writing as a mode for instruction.

The second year inclusion of ULOs 5 & 6 in conjunction with ULO 11 (Social Sciences) brings together issues of culture and difference shared across all the ULOs, albeit in very different ways. ULOs 5 & 6 are assessed annually in UF 200 and 300.

The third year adds 3, 7, and 8. We have been assessing all three of these ULOs in smaller ways. ULO 3 is assessed annually in UF 100 and 300. ULOs 7 and 8 have been assessed in DL courses for STEM majors through an NSF funded research project, CALIPER.

The fourth year includes ULO 1 and 4 (Teamwork & Innovation). Again, both have been assessed elsewhere annually in UF 100, 300, and in the FYW Program. We will be adding assessment from CIDs and FF courses to those ongoing assessment efforts. The FFs will have had time to get up and running and the e-Portfolio system should be fully integrated by this time.

Timeline	ULO 2, 9, 10	ULO 5, 6, 11	ULO 3, 7, 8	ULO 1, 4
2014-15	Phase 1			
2015-16	Phase 2	Phase 1		
2016-17	Phase 3	Phase 2	Phase 1	
2017-18	Phase 4	Phase 3	Phase 2	Phase 1
2018-19	Phase 1	Phase 4	Phase 3	Phase 2

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2019-20	Phase 2	Phase 1	Phase 4	Phase 3
2020-21	Phase 3	Phase 2	Phase 1	Phase 4

DETAILS:

- Faculty may use quantitative methods and/or qualitative methods as well as sampling of student generated assessment artifacts for assessment.
- Faculty will generate assessment reports based on the student learning outcomes in their course.
- Assessment reports are shared by the faculty within a course for the purpose of informing course design decisions.
- Following the phases above, faculty committees will review assessment reports from multiple courses to determine if we are meeting our learning outcomes goals for students within that category. See phase notes for more on this process.
- The emphasis will be to provide faculty development and course development support intended to bolster continuous improvement of teaching and learning.
- Findings from course category groups will be shared with FSP and with appropriate faculty senate bodies. Summaries of findings and action plans will be shared with the Provost's office for accreditation reporting.

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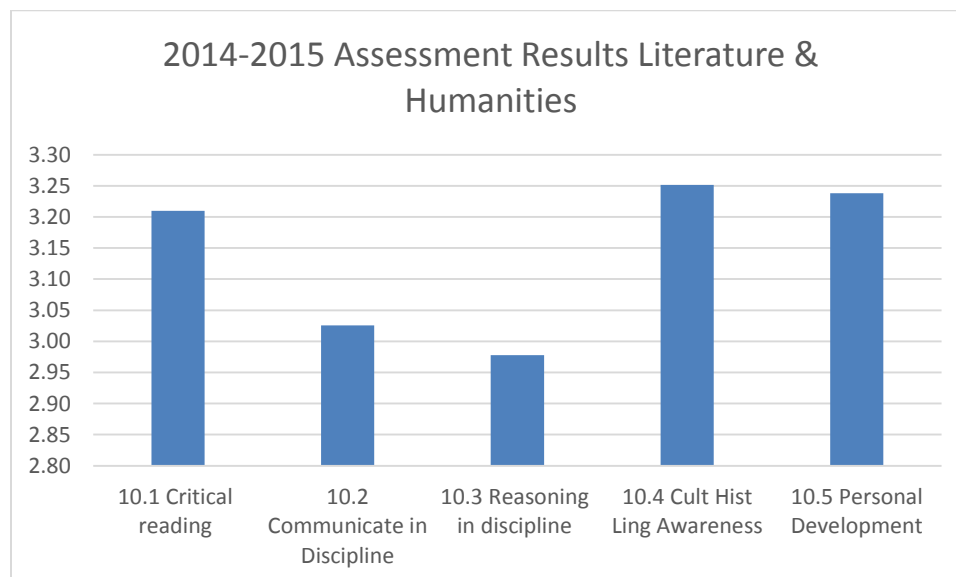
2014-2015 Assessment Reporting

Phase 1 of the ULO Assessment Plan for Boise State was launched in 2014-15 with a pilot assessment of ULOs 9 (Visual and Performing Arts) and 10 (Literature and Humanities). Faculty submitting data in the fall were told that they would not have to resubmit data in the spring. Small adjustments were made to the submission form between the fall and spring semesters based on the feedback of the pilot group. Table 1 indicates the number of courses that were represented in the response (faculty were encouraged to combine multiple course sections on one report). In Spring 2015, 112 course reports were requested and 76 were completed for a 68% response rate.

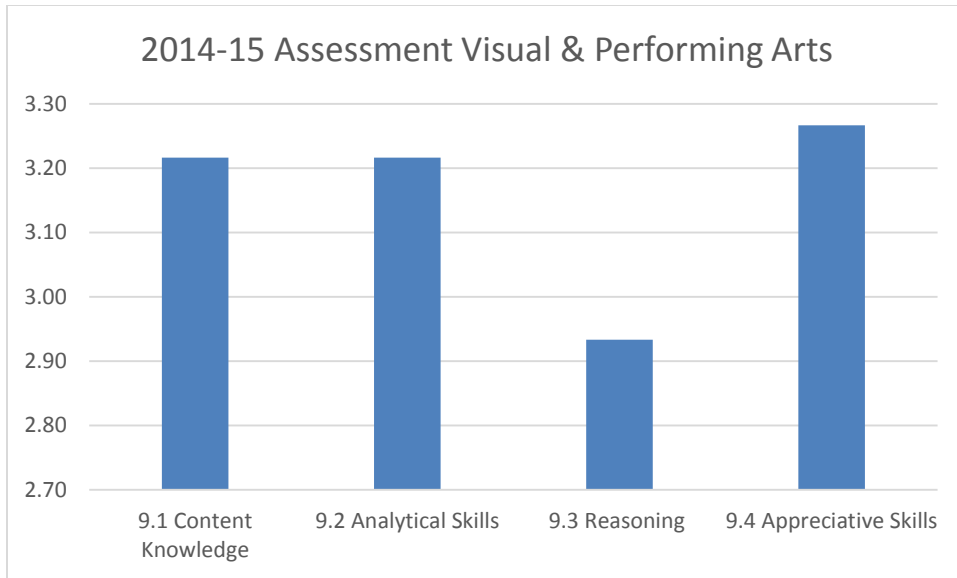
Table 1: Reports per department

	FA 14	SP 15	Total	Response Rate*
WL	18	49	67	
ART		3	3	
ENGL	9	7	16	
HIST	5	5	10	
MUS		1	1	
PHIL	7	8	15	
THEA		3	3	
	39	76	115	68%

Faculty were asked to report on the average course proficiency based on their assessment of direct artifacts of learning collected during the semester. If courses had enrollment below 50 faculty were asked to randomly select a 5 sample artifacts for reporting. Classes with 51-111 were to review 10 randomly selected artifacts and those with more than 101 enrolled were asked to review 15 artifacts. Possible score range for proficiency is 1 (unsatisfactory) to 4 (exemplary).



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NOTE: This is a Phase 1 report to which we will add the themes from the qualitative data and then it will be reviewed by a subcommittee of faculty in Fall 2015.