

CAPSTONES AT PLU: A REVIEW 2016-17

Executive Summary January 2018

Introduction/Rationale

The capstone experience at PLU is one aspect of General Education that falls within the purview of the General Education Council's annual review process. In our current models, the capstone serves dual roles as the culminating experience for both the General Education experience and that of the major.

During the 2010-11 academic year, the General Education Council gathered information on the design and assessment of capstone experiences. The summary document from May 2011 is attached as Appendix A to this report. Appendix B provides a brief summary of the materials submitted by each department/program in their Annual Assessment Report in July 2017.

This Executive Summary provides a documentation of any significant changes during the past six years.

Building on the 2011 Summary

The definition and purpose of the capstone experience remains as documented in 2011. The types of experiences, models presented, and common options are also consistent with the evidence provided by units in 2017. Those strategies recommended as "keys" to a successful capstone experience continued to emerge in the 2017 reports. In particular, it is clear that many department and programs have continued to develop a culture of expectation focused on the capstone experience, inviting majors to attend the capstone presentations of senior students. Overall, faculty are engaged as crucial audience members in student capstone presentations and provide important feedback and support across the capstone experience as mentors. The structural considerations listed remain the same; however, more departments and programs have chosen a two-semester sequence, particularly when there is not a pre-requisite methods experience within the set curriculum. In some cases, the capstone credit requirement is limited to 2-credits, based on curricular requirements.

Developing Trends from the 2017 Reports

- Clear learning objectives for the capstone experience are listed in syllabi, and are clearly linked to the overall learning outcomes for the major.
- Most units have developed rubrics for the evaluation and assessment of capstone products. These rubrics are reviewed in light of student success, and consistently redesigned to best support and communicate student expectations for the capstone experience.
- Clear documentation of the relationship of the design of the capstone product to professional expectations (e.g., from professional organization standards).

- Departments and programs continue to seek ways to create meaningful and purposeful experiences for students.
- Departments and programs continue to seek ways to provide scaffolded experiences across their curricula to support student learning and success at the capstone level. For example:
 - Many majors require a 300-level methods course prior to the capstone.
 - Some majors weave particular experiences throughout their upper division courses, particularly with in-depth writing experiences.
- Many capstone experiences are designed to incorporate significant peer review and response to support student success.
 - Some capstone experiences are team-based projects.

Initiatives to Support Capstone Work at PLU

Immediately following the 2011 report and recommendations:

- Capstone workshops were provided for faculty, including the opportunity to share processes, rubrics, and other strategies.
- Resources on the Faculty Development website were provided.
- The Communication Department provided presentation guidelines and support documents.
- The Associate Provost for Undergraduate Programs, on behalf of the Council, began to collect and post the capstone presentation schedules for each department/program/school/division and posted them to the Office of the Provost website.

Current initiatives include:

- The development of a Capstone website, accessible from the Office of the Provost website.
 - Includes capstone titles and abstracts as available.
 - Provides the capstone schedules, either by Division/School, or individual programs/departments.
- Ongoing conversations regarding the overlap between student-faculty research opportunities and how these can align with the annual research symposium.
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Responding to the 2011 recommendations:

- The role of the Integrative Learning Objectives is still unclear. The emerging consensus would suggest that we have too many layers of learning objectives, making for a complicated narrative.
- Can the AAC&U high impact practices be present in the capstone experience?

Emerging Questions from the 2017 Report

Capstones at PLU
 Summary of Evidence
 Academic Year 2016-17

Compiled January 2018

Division/ School	Department/ Program	Length of Capstone	Methods course/ Pre-req	Other requirements? (e.g., internship, collaborative research)	Clear learning outcomes	Rubric/standardized measure of evaluation	Public Presentation/ Documentation
Humanities							Division-wide program documents all presentations, titles, description
	English	1 semester Offered both Fall and Spring	ENG 300 in old program; New lit program requires ENG 400 in addition	Lit and Wr majors have separate capstone experiences	Lit, yes NEED WR	Need examples of Rubrics used	Faculty attend presentations and respond via a common rubric
	Languages & Literatures	1 semester Offered both Fall and Spring	HISP, yes Other languages + Classics are combined into one experience; 400 level courses provide pre-req skills/abilities	HISP stand alone Other languages together	Yes	Yes, HISP Yes, L&L	Faculty attend presentations and respond via the designated rubric

Division/ School	Department/ Program	Length of Capstone	Methods course/ Pre-req	Other requirements? (e.g., internship, collaborative research)	Clear learning outcomes	Rubric/standardized measure of evaluation	Public Presentation/ Documentation
	Philosophy	2 semesters, 2 credit course for Fall and Spring	PHIL 499A is designed synthesize knowledge and prepare for the capstone writing in 499B		Yes	Need Rubric	
	Religion	1 semester, with 498 as a pre-req for a year-long sequence	RELI 498 is the pre-req Should be a year long sequence		Yes	Yes, both within the syllabus and the rubric faculty use to evaluate both the presentation and paper	

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Natural Sciences							All departments provide opportunities; some during the Academic Festival the first weekend in May
	Biology	1 semester 2 credits Offered both semesters	BIO 330 plus two upper division courses	Research focused on faculty expertise Small group research projects with faculty	Yes	Yes For all aspects (presentation, paper)	During finals week
	Chemistry	2 semesters 499A, 499B one-year sequence 2 credits total			Yes	Yes	During Academic Festival, first week in May Online program

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	Computer Science	2 semesters, 499A, 499B 4 credits total	CSCI 390		Yes	Yes	
	Geosciences	498 (1) + 499 (2) year long sequence	8 semesters hours of upper division GEOS courses	Poster presentation format	Yes	Yes	
	Mathematics	499A (2) + 499B(20)	MATH 331, senior or second semester junior		Yes	Need??	
	Physics	499A (1) + 499B (1)	PHYS 223 with C- or higher; two upper division PHYS courses, one can be taken concurrently with 499A		??	??	

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Social Sciences	Anthropology	499 (4) 1 semester Spring only	ANTH 480 Anthropological Inquiry Two 300-level ANTH courses		Yes	Mentioned, need examples	Yes, within scheduled class times
	Economics	499 (4) 1 semester Fall only	ECON 101, 102, 301 or 302, senior standing; satisfactory completion of two 300-level economics courses other than ECON 301 or 302, all with grade of a C- or above, and declared economics major; or consent of instructor		Yes	Yes	Yes
	History	499 (4) 1 semester Fall and Spring	HIST 301		Yes	Yes (Bowdoin example)	Yes

	Politics & Government	499 (4) 1 semester Spring only	POLS 301 (check??)		Yes	Yes	Yes	
Division/ School	Department/ Program	Length of Capstone	Methods course/ Pre-req	Other requirements? (e.g., internship, collaborative research)	Clear learning outcomes	Rubric/standardized measure of evaluation	Public Presentation/ Documentation	
	Psychology	499 (4) 1 semester offered both Fall and Spring	PSYC 242	Internal process of approval, begins the semester before HPRB process embedded Experiential Learning: All Psychology majors are required to take a minimum of 2 semester hours of PSYC 495, 496 or 497.	Yes	Yes	Psychology Research Conference each semester, poster presentations	

	Social Work	498	SOCW 245. 350, 360		Yes	Yes	Saturday in May
	Sociology	499 (4) 1 semester Spring only	SOCI 232, 496; STAT 233; senior status; declared major or minor		Yes	Yes	Saturday in May
Division/ School	Department/ Program	Length of Capstone	Methods course/ Pre-req	Other requirements? (e.g., internship, collaborative research)	Clear learning outcomes	Rubric/standardized measure of evaluation	Public Presentation/ Documentation
Interdisciplinary Programs							
	Chinese Studies	499 As part of the Languages & Literatures cohort					
	Environmental Studies	499 (4) Spring only	ENVT 350 ENVT 498	Pre-approved Experiential Learning Activity	Yes	Yes	Yes
	Global Studies	499 (4)	GLST 210		Yes	Yes	Yes
	Women's and Gender Studies	499 (4)	WMGS 301 and 16 hours of WMGS courses completed	Community engagement activity	Yes	Yes	Yes

Division/ School	Department/ Program	Length of Capstone	Methods course/ Pre-req	Other requirements? (e.g., internship, collaborative research)	Clear learning outcomes	Rubric/standardized measure of evaluation	Public Presentation/ Documentation
School of the Arts and Communication	Art & Design	499A (2) + 499B (2) 2 semester sequence	499A for 499B Junior/Senior status	Mentor forms at particular benchmarks	Yes	??	Gallery showcase, presentation in class
	Communication	499 (4) Spring and Summer	399	Required internship	Yes	Yes	Presentations over finals week
	Theatre	499 (2) Only fall, first half of the semester			Yes	Yes	Yes
	Music	Capstone Sequence (6) MUSI 398: Keystone: Introduction to Music Research (2) MUSI 498: Music Research Seminar (2) MUSI 499: Capstone Senior Project	398 for 498/499A/499B	A culminating project of substantial proportions, presented in a public forum, undertaken in the senior year. For the Bachelor of Arts degree, the project integrates musical studies with a broader liberal arts	??	??	Performance schedule on the SOAC website.

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School of Business		499 1 semester offered Fall and Spring	BUSA 302, 305, 308, 309, 310, Senior Standing	Case Analysis model Strategy Consulting Project	yes	yes	Yes
School of Education							
	Education	450 Fall and Spring	Final semester, in conjunction with Student Teaching		??	??	Yes
	Kinesiology	499 + 495 Fall, Spring, Summer	Major declaration, 10 upper division credits	Internship required as part of the capstone requirement	Yes	Yes	Yes
School of Nursing		499 Fall and Spring	Cohort model, final semestr		Yes	Yes	Yes