

**Interdisciplinary Studies Program Assessment**  
**Humanities Department**  
**Spring 2017**

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Rala Diakité (IDIS 4004 course developer and instructor)

**Assessment goals:**

As well as completing the recommended template for our annual program assessment report, we also wished to gain more insight into two general issues concerning the program. The first of these was to assess the changes we made to the program in 2014 (in particular, the required critical and creative thinking course, and the three-part sequence culminating in the capstone course) to get a sense if they were useful for meeting student learning outcomes. The second issue is how to build on what we have accomplished to further improve and refine the program.

**Assessment process:**

Data: capstone papers, student self-assessment/reflection essays, Phase 1 data, SSC data.  
Process: the three of us began with a general agreement about SLOs, based on the course outcomes provided by Dr. Diakité's syllabus for IDIS 4004, which are aligned with the student learning outcomes for the IDIS program as a whole. We each approached the assessment process from a different angle (see attached reports), and then discussed our findings and conclusions.

**Conclusions drawn from the assessment data:**

Using our three different assessment methods, we independently came to very similar conclusions about the strengths and weaknesses of the program. We were all impressed by the quality of the capstone papers, and pleased by the feedback provided by the reflective responses. We found that virtually all the papers met the threshold of sufficiency, and about 1/4 to 1/3 of the papers were in the excellent range. In particular, all of the students were able to define a truly interdisciplinary question or research topic, and follow through with effective research and a focused, organized paper. The chosen topics were interesting and relevant to contemporary society and/or the students' life goals.

As a result of our assessment, we have identified some changes we would like to make to improve the program:

- Continue to develop more coordination and communication between the faculty who teach the three sequence courses (IDIS 1004, 2140 and 4004), in order to instill interdisciplinary thinking earlier and more consistently.
- Build more assessment opportunities into the earlier phases of the program (annotated bibliographies, reflective self-assessments, etc.) to track more precisely where SLOs are being met.
- Use this more "longitudinal" assessment to facilitate curriculum mapping of core interdisciplinary courses, including IDIS electives, to help us refine and focus the program.

### **Notes on the assessment process:**

- The only data we collected to assess was from the final phase of the students' journey through IDIS. Obviously, this does not provide as much insight as we would like into how the various components of the program are working together or building on one another. We plan to correct this in the upcoming year by creating more assessment opportunities throughout the program.
- The SSC data included in the template was not at all helpful for our assessment, primarily because it all pertains to the period *before* we revised the IDIS curriculum in 2014. We look forward to the time when SSC will begin to capture revised curriculum, at which point the data should begin to be a valuable measure of the effectiveness of the sequenced core requirements in particular.
- Retention rates as a measure of program success in IDIS are complicated by the fact that most students do not start out as IDIS majors, as most switch to this major at least four semesters into their college careers, which complicates our ability to track and compare their progress within the IDIS major. But the important role the IDIS program plays in the overall retention rates of FSU needs to be noted; many students who might otherwise leave FSU when their first choice of major does not work out for them, are encouraged to stay and complete their degrees through IDIS.
- The data concerning the minors offered by the Humanities Dept. are generally not directly relevant to the IDIS program; nonetheless this information is included in the template because without a specific Humanities major outside of the options within IDIS, the various Humanities minors are key programs that we can monitor and improve. They play a crucial secondary role to the major for many students at FSU, and in some cases a central role for IDIS students.

### **Projections for IDIS:**

- We will continue to refine our assessment process, as discussed above.
- We will pursue increased involvement in discussions of other interdisciplinary initiatives at FSU, so that our knowledge base will be of benefit.
- We hope to provide more co-curricular events and opportunities for real-world application of interdisciplinary problem solving.

We have a core group of people within Humanities who have been working on the IDIS program for some time now. The improvements we have made appear to be leading the program in a fruitful direction, and we hope to have the opportunity to build on what we have accomplished thus far, collaborating with other interdisciplinary initiatives at the university.

## **Undergraduate Program-Specific Student Learning Outcome and Success Annual Report**

### **I. Program Information**

Program/Department: ***Interdisciplinary Studies—Humanities***

Department Chair: **Petri Flint**

Department Assessment Committee Contact: **Jessica Robey**

### **II. Program-Specific Student Learning Outcomes (Educational Objectives)**

*List ALL Program-Specific SLOs first, and the assessment timeline (annual or bi-annual) for assessing each program SLO.*

<b>Program SLO</b>	<b>Expected Timing of assessment (annual, semester, bi-annual, etc.)</b>
Understanding of the benefits, methods, and outcomes of interdisciplinary study, applying these also to life-long goals.	Annual
Ability to critically evaluate and use secondary research across multiple fields of study.	Annual
Ability to develop and carry out an original research project that conceives and articulates an original topic, asks an original question, and uses a primary research method to address this question.	Annual
Ability to enter the academic “conversation” within and between fields of study through use of secondary research and the undertaking of primary research that “speaks” to an academic community.	Bi-annual
Strengthen your skills in academic writing, and find resources and assistance to aid in the writing process	Bi-annual

### **III. SLO Assessment (Please report on the SLO's most recently reviewed)**

Using the table below, list and briefly describe the direct methods used to collect information assessing whether students are learning the core sets of knowledge (K), skills (S) and attitudes (A) identified as essential.

<b>Dept. SLO #</b>	<b>Assessment description (exam, observation, national standardized exam, oral presentation with rubric, etc.)</b>	<b>When assessment was administered in student program (internship, 4<sup>th</sup> year, 1<sup>st</sup> year, etc.)</b>	<b>To which students were assessments administered (all, only a sample, etc.)</b>
Understanding of the benefits, methods, and outcomes of interdisciplinary study, applying these also to life-long goals.	Reflective self-assessment about the value of the IDIS program.	Senior year.	All IDIS majors in Day program before graduation.
Ability to critically evaluate and use secondary research across multiple fields of study.	Capstone research paper.	Senior year.	All IDIS majors in Day program before graduation.
Ability to develop and carry out an original research project that conceives and articulates an original topic, asks an original question, and uses a primary research method to address this question.	Capstone research paper.	Senior year.	All IDIS majors in Day program before graduation.
Ability to enter the academic “conversation” within and between fields of study through use of secondary research and the undertaking of primary research that “speaks” to an academic community.	Capstone research paper.	Senior year.	All IDIS majors in Day program before graduation.

**IV. Summary of Findings:** Briefly summarize the results of the assessments reported in Item III above and how do these compare to the goals you have set?

<b>Other than GPA, what data/evidence is used to determine that graduates have achieved the stated outcomes for the degree? (e.g., capstone course, portfolio review, licensure examination)</b>	<b>Who interprets the evidence? What is the process? (e.g. annually by the curriculum committee)</b>	<b>What changes have been made as a result of using the data/evidence?</b>
Reflective self-assessment about the value of the IDIS program.	Humanities Department Assessment Committee will review these annually.	This evidence largely confirms that students are finding great value in the Interdisciplinary major as it is currently constituted. Students report feeling that they better understand the interrelationship in their overall coursework as a result of the core IDIS courses, that they appreciate the ability to personalize their combination of fields, and that they are better able to think about their educational choices in terms of their life and career goals.

Capstone research paper.	<p>Humanities Department Assessment Committee will review the Capstone papers annually.</p>	<p>The data drawn from a review of the Capstone projects is very encouraging. Students overall are meeting or exceeding expectations in all of the significant SLOs we have reviewed in this assessment, and showing particular strength in their ability to formulate an original research question and address it effectively through interdisciplinary research.</p> <p>In terms of assessment process, a weakness in relying solely on an assessment of the final Capstone projects is that it does not tell us how much of their success is a direct result of the Capstone course itself, as distinct from the cumulative effects of the IDIS program as a whole. To further clarify how well the sequential aspects of the program are functioning prior to the Capstone course, we plan to institute new assessments to be administered in each of the earlier sequenced courses, IDIS 1004 &amp; IDIS 2140 (see Part VII).</p>
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## V. SSC Data

Indicate a student success performance measure(s) that the department identified as a key measure that it wants to improve. Freshman retention, bottleneck courses, graduation rates, at risk student retention etc.

**\*N.B. SSC data is quite unhelpful to assessing the current effectiveness of the IDIS major, due to the date range from which the data is drawn.** There was a large-scale revision to the IDIS major requirements that went into effect in September, 2014, and SSC data does not capture any of the impact of the changes that were made to the program at that point, but only reflects performance metrics under the old, pre-2014 system. We have selected a few elements in SSC data for analysis that may have some small relevance to the current structure of the major. These do **not**, however, reflect “key measure(s)...to improve,” because the crucial performance measures that we value are not captured by SSC data. Our previous assessment of the weaknesses in the program were addressed by curricular changes that went into effect in Fall 2014, when a sequence of core courses were created to more strongly develop interdisciplinary habits of mind. At this point, the key measures to assess are those that will allow us to determine how well the 2014 changes have succeeded in addressing the previously identified weaknesses, and what can be done to strengthen the program further. We look forward to future years when SSC data will reflect more directly on the program as it is currently constituted.

Student Success Measure (data point from SSC)	Rationale for selection	Planned or Implemented Intervention	Current score/ Target Score
*Graduation rate by grade earned in MUSC 2000 & PHIL 2600.	These courses were core electives options under both the old and new IDIS major requirements, and therefore may still have some slight predictive relevance.	No planned intervention. The predictive difference between the two classes in “cutoff” is largely explained by the lower average grade in PHIL 2600. There is nothing to indicate that any of the courses that existed in the old system have predictive relevance in the new system, as they were not then part of a sequence of courses.	SSC assigned a predicative cutoff grade of “B” to MUSC 2000 and “D” to PHIL 2600, but for both classes the most meaningful drop off was for “F” and “W” grades, where grad rates fell to roughly 30% for both.

*Graduation rate by previous major	While the IDIS program has changed, many of the reasons that students switch into it from other majors remain a constant.	This data is worth noting, but would need to be tracked over time to see whether curricular or advising changes are warranted, and in some cases, changes have already been made in the 2014 curriculum revision to address some structural problems, particularly with regard to how EDUC students who don't pass the MTELs are handled.	For the previous majors, from which students switch into IDIS, SSC data shows: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>high degree completion rates of &gt;75% for Nursing, Early Childhood EDUC, and SPED Mod Dis;</li> <li>mid-range results of 55-75% in PSY, EXSS, and SPED;</li> <li>lower results of 40-55% in HMSV and BSAD.</li> </ul>

## VI. Phase I Data

Indicate department success performance measure(s) that the department identified as a key measure that it wants to improve (from phase 1 data). Number of graduates, number of majors, credit production, substitutions etc.

<b>Department Performance Measure (data point from Phase 1)</b>	<b>Rationale for selection</b>	<b>Planned or Implemented Intervention</b>	<b>Current score/ Target Score</b>
<b>IDIS Major:</b> Track Pre-Law IDIS enrollments to monitor progress with the only package that existed before the IDIS major changes went into effect in AY 2015 (newer packages were created after the program revisions).	Goal to make IDIS major a more proactive, intentional choice for students, rather than purely a fallback major, highlighted as a key objective by working group that revised the major over AY2012-13, with changes effective 9/2014. Pre-packaged IDIS options were proposed as a way to highlight the possibilities of the IDIS major, and Pre-Law IDIS was only package that existed before the changes went into effect in AY 2015.	Target future growth in 2 areas: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Increase number of pre-packaged options to further highlight the possibilities of the IDIS major, and its relevance to personal and professional student goals.</li><li>• Align IDIS major as an option that dovetails with work being done around AIMS (meta-majors) to highlight interdisciplinary thinking.</li></ul>	Pre-Law IDIS enrollments saw steady growth from 4 in AY2014 to 11 in AY2016. Target: over next 3 years , to increase overall numbers of students declaring an IDIS major by their sophomore year.
<b>IDIS Major:</b> Track retention rate.	Required performance measure.	Not a meaningful measure of retention, given how few students declared IDIS as a major as freshmen in the years covered by this data. However, many students who would otherwise leave FSU or fail to complete their degree, after leaving another major, are able to create a new viable Interdisciplinary option for themselves in IDIS.	Score went from 50% in 2014 to 100% in 2015 & 2016. This data doesn't capture the important role that the IDIS major plays in retention of students at FSU overall.

<p><b>Humanities Minors:</b> Track number of declared minors in the Humanities from AY2014 to AY 2016: <u>Strong &amp; growing:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• MUSC: 11 to 22</li> <li>• PHIL: 14 to 24</li> <li>• ART: 32 to 73 includes Art (General), Art History, and Studio Art minors</li> </ul> <p><u>Strong and stable:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• SPAN: 33 to 36</li> </ul> <p><u>Weak overall (3 or fewer declared minors all years):</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Asian Studies</li> <li>• French</li> <li>• Italian Studies</li> <li>• Romance Languages</li> </ul>	<p>Without a specific Humanities major outside of the options within IDIS, the various Humanities minors are key programs that we can monitor and improve. They play a crucial secondary role to the major for many students at FSU.</p>	<p>The visibility of the Asian Studies and Italian Studies minors should be heightened by the ongoing initiative to organize/highlight Interdisciplinary minors on campus.</p> <p>We'll need to work to highlight the French and Romance Language minors as part of a broader initiative to centralize listings of language/culture offerings and advertise them to FSU community.</p>	<p><b>Minor enrollments AY2014 to AY 2016:</b></p> <p><u>Strong &amp; growing:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• MUSC: 11 to 22</li> <li>• PHIL: 14 to 24</li> <li>• ART: 32 to 73 includes Art (General), Art History, and Studio minors</li> </ul> <p><u>Strong and stable:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• SPAN: 33 to 36</li> </ul> <p><u>Weak overall (3 or fewer declared minors):</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Asian Studies</li> <li>• French</li> <li>• Italian Studies</li> <li>• Romance Languages</li> </ul> <p><b>Target:</b> Increase enrollments in the weakest minors to 5 students within 3 years.</p>
<p><b>Humanities Minors:</b> Track course substitutions for each minor by year (Phase 1 data is missing for AY2016).</p>	<p>Course substitutions are a measure of how well the structure of minor requirements is working, and may highlight the need to revisit the minor requirements or course rotation in each field.</p>	<p>Re-examine the PHIL minor requirements, &amp; the “Group 2” course options in particular, as they may not best reflect current course rotation (this re-examination is already underway based on the anecdotal evidence of substitution petitions processed).</p>	<p>Course substitutions were minimal in all minors except PHIL.</p> <p><b>Target:</b> Reduce the percentage of students needing course PHIL substitutions significantly within 2 years through curricular adjustments to be made during AY2018.</p>

<p><b>Humanities Overall:</b> Track adjunct % over time, as the Phase 1 data has understated the overall level of adjunct teaching, due in part to the way exemptions have been recorded. Dividing the line for FT faculty by FTE faculty shows the actual adjunct % overall:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• AY2014 = 22%</li> <li>• AY2015 = 33%</li> <li>• AY2016 = 40%</li> </ul> <p>Also, overall Humanities data understates the adjunct % in certain areas, such as ART &amp; PHIL, where the % is unreasonably high.</p>	<p>To ensure academic quality, and to further program and curricular goals, it is crucial to maintain an appropriate level of full-time faculty in all areas of the department</p>	<p>Ensure that adjunct exemptions are not over-stated in future adjunct request forms, to get a more accurate reading of our reliance on adjunct faculty.</p> <p>Continue to request additional FT faculty lines in ART &amp; PHIL, which have the highest adjunct %.</p>	<p>63% of our Studio ART classes (all fully enrolled) were taught by adjuncts in AY 2016-17 (47% by adjuncts <u>after</u> exemption calculations, but it is worth noting that, while still very high, the exemption formula understates the real impact of this over-reliance on adjunct faculty).</p> <p>In PHIL, adjunct-taught courses <u>after</u> exemptions have totaled 35% over AYs 2015-16 and 2016-17, which again understates the real impact from the fact that 43% of PHIL courses were taught by adjuncts over this 2-year period .</p>

## VII. Activities and Adjustments to/Deviation from the Department Assessment Plan

Describe any changes in the assessment plan including new SLOs, new assessments.

Looking ahead, we plan to create assessments to be administered earlier in the sequenced, required IDIS core courses, IDIS 1004 and IDIS 2140, to better capture how interdisciplinary thinking and research skills are developed longitudinally throughout all phases of the IDIS major program. Anecdotally, through ongoing conversations among faculty who have been responsible for teaching these classes since the program revisions took effect in FY 2015, our sense is that too many of the program's student learning outcomes, particularly with regard to developing interdisciplinary research skills, are having to be developed at the level of the Capstone course. We would have a better understanding of the extent to which that is true, however, with a better developed longitudinal assessment plan. Therefore, we envision introducing the following new, additional assessments:

1. Assessment of the culminating assignment for IDIS 2140, *Interdisciplinary Research Methods Seminar*, which is a research project proposal with annotated bibliography of relevant sources. Since this proposal is intended to serve as the starting point for the Capstone research project, it would be an ideal vehicle to better assess to what extent students have mastered the expected outcomes **before** the Capstone course itself.
2. Also, we are considering adding simple self-assessment assignments at the beginning of each of IDIS 1004 & IDIS 2140 would allow us two further data points at which to capture student progress longitudinally. Many students enter IDIS 1004, *Introduction to Interdisciplinary Studies Seminar*, without a clear understanding of the value and purpose of interdisciplinary inquiry. We intend to develop a simple, short assessment assignment that asks them to discuss how they see the relationship between their 2-3 declared fields of study. The goal of the assessment would be twofold:
  - a. to assess the degree to which they see and are able to articulate an inter-relationship among their fields of study
  - b. to assess the extent to which they are aware of how the different modes of inquiry of each discipline can be deployed together to create a richer examination of an issue

Interdisciplinary Studies Program Assessment:  
Assessment of IDIS 4004, Spring 2017  
Jessica Robey

In assessing twenty-five completed capstone research papers, and nine reflective self-assessment student responses, from Dr. Rala Diakité's IDIS 4004 capstone class, produced in spring semester 2016, my goal is to identify common strengths and weaknesses, which should allow us to improve and refine the capstone process by clarifying what approaches are bearing fruit, and which areas might profit from a more systematic emphasis. This is intended to be a qualitative, integrated assessment of how the students fulfilled the desired outcomes for the course.

These are the prompts for the self-assessment in-class writing assignment:

- 1) How did I come to this major, and how did I feel about it at the beginning?*
- 2) What did I learn (subject matter, skills, ways of knowing and working)? What changes happened in my attitude, my confidence, my way of going about or looking at things?*
- 3) How well do I feel that my courses for this major, including content areas and interdisciplinary electives, combine to create an integrated whole? Could they help me solve a specific problem or shed new light on an existing issue? Give an example.*
- 4) Do I feel that what I learned in this major will be useful in a future career? Explain why or why not.*

These are the course outcomes as stated on the syllabus for IDIS 4004, taught by Dr. Diakité, which are aligned with the student learning outcomes for the IDIS program as a whole:

- 1) Understand the benefits, methods, and outcomes of interdisciplinary study, applying these also to life-long goals.*
- 2) Critically evaluate and use secondary research across multiple fields of study.*
- 3) Develop and carry out an original research project that conceives and articulates an original topic, asks an original question, and uses a primary research method to address this question.*
- 4) Enter the academic "conversation" within and between fields of study through use of secondary research and the undertaking of primary research that "speaks" to an academic community.*
- 5) Form an engaging and productive "scholarly community" through group discussion, peer review of work in progress, and reaching out to experts in the field.*
- 6) Strengthen your skills in academic writing, and find resources and assistance to aid in the*

writing process.

7) *Present the results of your research to others, and lead a stimulating discussion, where you teach and learn.*

I am focusing in particular on the outcomes 1, 2, 3, 4, which in my view are the most essential ones in an interdisciplinary program.

For the most part, these capstone papers offer a well-rounded look at a specific issue. They identify a problem or question, bring in a range of different perspectives, provide appropriate context, and have clearly articulated conclusions. They are well organized and thoughtful on the whole. Nearly all are what I would consider “satisfactory,” with the top third or so in the “excellent” range.

Most of the topics/questions are truly interdisciplinary by nature, and are interesting, focused, and relevant to contemporary society. A good number of the students chose topics that could be linked to a specific career trajectory, so it appears that the capstone paper is serving as a bridge to life after college. There seems to be a genuine interest and passion for the topics chosen, and the students do a good job of articulating why their topic is important. Many of these topics deal directly with contemporary social problems; they offer good insights into the nature and scope of these problems, and offer intriguing solutions in many cases. Reviewing these capstone, one of the encouraging things I have learned about our students is that they have a strong sense of social responsibility and are determined to find practical ways to improve people’s lives.

One common shortcoming is too much reliance on secondary sources to define the parameters of the topic. While virtually all of them had valid, thoughtfully chosen and well-researched topics, only about a third of students appeared to formulate an interdisciplinary topic out of diverse primary sources; the others relied more heavily on secondary sources that had already begun synthesizing data and ideas in an interdisciplinary manner from primary sources. Thus, rather than formulating original topics or questions, about half the students are reporting on the coverage of the topic by others. However, this reliance on secondary sources is probably a realistic expectation for students at this point in their development, and an appropriate way to learn how to write a critical research paper. Developing a truly original research question is generally a skill learned in graduate school.

Despite this limitation, most of the students were successful in finding an appropriate balance between what others have said, and their own argument and conclusions. Mostly they engaged with sources that supported the argument they wanted to make, of course, but there were also effective examples of the use of naysayers and debates within the field, which allowed for more nuanced and insightful discussions. This is a skill that should be encouraged further; perhaps the writing handbook by Gerald Graff, *They Say, I Say*, would be helpful here. Students I have spoken with who have used this book in their writing courses report that it is a helpful resource.

Another issue that I observe here is some ongoing confusion about what is a legitimate source, and the difference between primary and secondary sources. This is a common problem for our students, and one that they are apparently still grappling with at the capstone phase. But I think

the annotated bibliography included at the end of the capstone paper is very helpful in teaching the students to think more critically about the nature of their sources. Perhaps a more rigorous and systematic focus on this during the research methods class would be appropriate.

The reflective responses submitted by the students confirm the benefits of the IDIS program. Many applauded the focus on critical thinking and the broadening of horizons. Most also reveled in the chance to personalize their curriculum, and spoke about how they discovered new interests and developed more inspiring life goals because of the program. A few of the students had entered the IDIS program before 2014, and therefore had not benefitted from IDIS 1004 and IDIS 2140 before taking the capstone class. They regretted this, and said they were not as well prepared as the students who had taken the full sequence of courses. This suggests that the changes we made to the IDIS curriculum in 2014 have been largely successful in preparing students for the capstone, since those on the old system notice such a stark difference.

I recommend we also ask for some sort of self-assessment throughout the sequence of IDIS core courses, where the students identify their two or three disciplines of study, reflect on the interdisciplinary aspect of their topics, and discuss their research process. More discussion of how their capstone project connects with their life goals would also be useful. Perhaps early drafts of this can be done at the end of the introduction course and the research methods course, with a final draft submitted as an appendix at the end of the capstone paper. A comparison of these versions would be useful for our assessment of these courses, as well as providing students the self-reflection that is such an important component of learning. This would also help fulfill the first of Dr. Diakité's course outcomes; one of the goals of IDIS should be to foster a deeper understanding of the nature and methods of interdisciplinary research, as well as expertise in a specific interdisciplinary topic.

Assessment Data for IDIS 4004 – May 2017

25 capstone papers were reviewed for the following outcomes:

- A. Critically evaluate and use secondary research across multiple fields of study.
- B. Develop and carry out an original research project that conceives and articulates an original topic, asks an original question, and uses a primary research method to address this question.
- C. Enter the academic “conversation” within and between fields of study through use of secondary research and the undertaking of primary research that “speaks” to an academic community.

The ratings of student performance in these are applied are as follows

1 – insufficient    2 – developing    3 – meets expectations    4 – exceeds expectations

Paper #	A. Secondary research...across multiple fields	B. ...Original research project	C. Enter academic conversation
1	3	4	3
2	4	4	4
3	3	4	4
4	2.5	3	2.5
5	3	4	3
6	2	3	2.5
7	3	3	3
8	2	3	2
9	1	2	1
10	2	1.5	2
11	2	2.5	2
12	4	4	4
13	2.5	3	2
14	3	3	2
15	2	3	2
16	4	4	4
17	3	3.5	4
18	3	4	4
19	2	3	2
20	4	4	4
21	2	3	2
22	4	4	4

23	4	4	4
24	3	3	4
25	3	4	3
	Average 2.84 / median 3	Average 3.34 / median 3	Average 2.96 / median 3

Comments:

None of the outcomes above measured solely the interdisciplinary nature of the projects, as that was an assumed characteristic, and indeed all would have met this criterion fully, as this was the primary criteria for the research topic.

The fact that we saw higher student performance on outcome B than the other two is important to note, because developing and refining an original and successful topic was an important part of the work for the course. This work was largely completed during the first third of the semester. The fact that the other two outcomes (both tied to strength of research skills) have slightly lower ratings may attest to the fact that there was not enough time to address them fully, given the way that the series of 3 IDIS core courses are currently structured.

Interdisciplinary Studies/Humanities Assessment of Capstone Projects, SP17:

24 capstone papers, primarily from SP16 & FA16, were reviewed for the following student learning outcomes:

1. Critically evaluate and use secondary research across multiple fields of Study.
2. Develop and carry out an original research project that conceives and articulates an original topic, asks an original question, and uses a primary research method to address this question.
3. Enter the academic “conversation” within and between fields of study through use of secondary research and the undertaking of primary research that “speaks” to an academic community.

Student performance in relation the above SLO was rated according to the following scale:

1 = Insufficient

2 = Satisfactory

3 = Exceeds Expectations

	1=Insufficient	2=Satisfactory	3=Exceeds Expectations
SLO #1	0	18 (75%)	6 (25%)
SLO #2	0	16 (67%)	8 (33%)
SLO #3	0	18 (75%)	6 (25%)

Overall, the data provided by review of the Capstone projects showed that, at the point of graduation from the program, students indeed do demonstrate that they have developed a strong aptitude for interdisciplinary inquiry. The particularly strong outcomes for the second SLO indicate that they are succeeding well in coming up with an original research questions and exploring them from an interdisciplinary vantage point that often shows meaningful real-world applications. The relative weaknesses show up a bit more in SLOs #1 & 3, which reflect the fact that their ability to evaluate and effectively utilize secondary source material lags somewhat behind their ability to formulate and pursue an original interdisciplinary question.