University of Houston (Main Campus)

Core Curriculum Assessment Plan

January 2023

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Introduction

Since 2013, the University of Houston has conducted assessments of the six Core Curriculum Objectives (Critical Thinking, Communication, Quantitative and Empirical Reasoning, Teamwork, Personal Responsibility, and Social Responsibility) as directed by the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board (Texas Administrative Code, Title 19, Part 1, Chapt. 4, Sub B, Rule § 4.30). The Statement of Purpose for the Texas Core Curriculum can be found in Appendix B. These core objectives drive the assessment activities and each core curriculum course must align to at least core objective.

The Office of Institutional Effectiveness and the Undergraduate Committee (a subcommittee of the Faculty Senate) collaborated to engage faculty in the adoption of Core Curriculum Objective Rubrics and disseminate the Core Curriculum Assessment Results. The Office of Institutional Research worked to identify Core Curriculum Courses within the PeopleSoft System to provide for easy identification of potential sources of student products for consideration from the pool of courses offered in any given semester. A cross-disciplinary team of Assessment Specialists from the Office of Institutional Effectiveness were trained on the use of each rubric and conducted the actual scoring of student work.

The original proposal, developed in 2013, proposed that the faculty complete the scoring in alignment with the rubrics that were previously mentioned. However, over time, the scoring of the student work shifted to the Office of Institutional Effectiveness. The scoring is completed, and the report submitted to the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board twice a year.

The intent of the revised proposal is to propose a more collaborative process that will involve both the Office of Institutional Effectiveness and UH Core Curriculum Faculty to insure the evaluation of the core curriculum courses is optimized and results in a more authentic continuous improvement in the core curriculum courses.

Component One: Core Curriculum Courses

The University of Houston Undergraduate Committee of the Faculty Senate is tasked with developing and executing a process for identifying courses that would fulfill the core curriculum requirements set forth by the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board (THECB). As stated on the committee's website, the Undergraduate Committee is "charged with the responsibility of advising the Office of the Senior Vice President for Academic Affairs and Provost about the qualitative development of undergraduate programs and activities, recommending changes in existing policies or suggesting the need for new ones, and approving new courses, course changes and/or deletions for final approval by the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board (https://uh.edu/faculty-senate/standing-committees/uc/).

The framework for inclusion of appropriate core courses centers on the application process. Undergraduate academic programs submit course proposals to the Undergraduate Committee (UC) for review. These proposals include a Course Proposal form, Core Supplement, and a course syllabus. Both the Course Proposal and Core Supplement ask program personnel to provide key information about the course, as well as how the core objectives may be assessed that help the committee determine whether it is suitable for inclusion in the core.

In order to help programs complete the necessary documentation for the submission process, the Undergraduate Committee developed a set of guiding documents and links to resources posted on their Sharesite https://uofh.sharepoint.com/sites/uc/SitePages/Home.aspx. These resources include a Core guide that explains the purpose and structure of the Core Curriculum, the required Core Component Areas and Core Objectives, as well as guidelines for meeting Core designation.

Completed proposal forms are submitted to the Undergraduate Committee for review by annual deadlines. The proposals are reviewed by UC Subcommittees to prepare recommendations to the full committee for approval to revise or add Core courses to the UH Core Curriculum. Course proposals, including Core Curriculum courses, are archived on the Undergraduate Committee site.

The original Core Curriculum Assessment Plan included 1000, 2000, 3000, and 4000 level courses. The revised proposal recommends that the courses selected for evaluation are limited to the 1000 and 2000 level courses. Currently, there are seventeen 4000 level courses that are approved core curriculum courses, so the impact of the elimination of these courses would be minimal. There are approximately one hundred 3000 core curriculum courses. Inclusion of the 3000 and 4000 level courses could distort the assessment of core curriculum instruction. Students enrolled in these courses could be transfer students, be too far removed from the 1000 and 2000 level courses, or have additional program influences at this level, thus confounding the assessment results for the targeted population.

There are over one hundred and fifty 1000 and 2000 core courses which is 57% of the total core curriculum course inventory and more than an adequate representation of the targeted student population. Most of these courses are offered each semester with large class sizes. Narrowing the scope of the review will help to focus the evaluation process on the key demographic and result in more targeted curricular specific improvement plans. This will enhance the efforts to develop

coordinated stakeholder action plans that result in curricular enhancements for students in their freshmen and sophomore years. It will also keep the reviewers from broadly applying the rubrics to student work created at the freshmen to senior levels.

Currently, 8-12 artifacts are requested from each of the courses that are approved for each core objective. If the number of courses are reduced, the number of artifacts requested will increase to approximately 15. This transition will be minimal and allow the Office of Institutional Effectiveness to work more closely with the affected colleges and departments. Further, applying the rubric to fewer assignments fifteen times versus eight also helps to maintain more consistency with less time to adjust the application as the reviewers move from one student artifact to the next. There will be a more demonstrative closing of the loop with the data collected from each assessment cycle.

Component Two: Core Curriculum Course Identification Process

Prior to each semester, a Core Curriculum Objective is targeted for assessment. After Official Reporting Day (ORD) the following semester, the Office of Institutional Research (OIR) is asked to pull a list of the courses and course rosters offered, that have identified the target objective as a focus of study and to include a student headcount. This listing is vetted, and 50-55 courses are randomly selected for inclusion in the assessment. From this subset of courses, OIR is requested to pull the student roster for each selected course. From these rosters, currently 8-12 students are selected for study and listed by course. This number would increase to approximately 15 under the revised plan. The total numbers may vary depending on the number of courses included in the Core Objective being assessed. (For example, there are far more courses identified as teaching Critical Thinking than are identified for the Personal Responsibility Core Objective).

The Director of Institutional Effectiveness, Assessment, and Accreditation notifies the Deans and Department Chairs of the inclusion of their course(s) in the upcoming assessment cycle for the following semester. After the Official Reporting Day, the course list will be finalized and detailed e-mails are then sent to each professor informing them that their course has been selected for inclusion and reminding them of their commitment to the Core Curriculum Assessment Process. Each professor is asked to identify the student artifact that best demonstrates their learning as related to the target Core Objective and when it will be completed. They must either agree to email products or specify where the assignment can be found in Blackboard, the Learning Management System. Office of Institutional Effectiveness Assessment Specialists gather the student artifacts and prepare them for anonymous review.

Once the departments are notified, training for new core curriculum faculty will be offered during the semester preceding the actual assessment. The training will cover the development of assessment tools that align with each of the rubrics relevant for that assessment cycle. Examples of assessment tools are essays, examinations, presentations, team projects, laboratory assignments, etc. This training will be available for all full-time, part-time, and adjunct faculty that are scheduled to teach core curriculum courses identified for following semester.

Component Three: Core Objective Assessment Plan

A. Description of the process to determine the appropriate level of attainment of each Core Objective.

The Undergraduate Committee determines the appropriate level of attainment for each Core Objective based on expected performance on a series of rubrics. The Office of Institutional Effectiveness researched best practices in the evaluation of core curriculum. One such practice is the adoption of the AAC&U Valid Assessment of Learning in Undergraduate Education (VALUE) Rubrics for the Core Curriculum Assessment Efforts. The VALUE rubrics were developed by teams of faculty experts representing colleges and universities across the United States through a process that examined many existing campus rubrics and related documents for each learning outcome: Critical Thinking, Oral/Written Communication, Quantitative Literacy, Teamwork, Civic Engagement- Local and Global, and Ethical Reasoning. All of the rubrics align with the Texas Core Objectives.

It is believed that the adoption of these rubrics will allow for consistent evaluation of student performance across the University of Houston System and other universities nation-wide. The AAC&U Rubrics were used as a basis for the development of the current rubrics. Since that time, AAC&U has updated their rubrics to more accurately reflect current practices nationwide. AAC&U offers calibration training for reviewers which the Office of Institutional Effectiveness is currently undergoing (Fall 2022 Semester). This will also allow for the changes to be more readily adopted without having to go through deeper adaptation/committees each time a change is made. Finally, this provides University of Houston Main Campus a framework that be can be used to maintain consistency throughout the evaluation process. The University of Houston Downtown, Clear Lake, and Victoria have all adopted the VALUE Rubrics to assess core objective artifacts again touting the opportunity for consistency in evaluation across the UH System.

Each rubric articulates fundamental criteria for each learning outcome, with performance indicators demonstrating progressively more sophisticated levels of attainment. Four rating levels—Capstone (4), Milestones (3), Milestones (2), and Benchmark (1)—are used to describe performance relative to each criterion. The task posed to the members of the Undergraduate Committee was to define a level of student performance in the core courses that would indicate an acceptable degree of achievement relative to the performance criteria that underlie each objective. Because the core curriculum is intended as foundational, the guiding principle of performance in these courses is on development, especially in the 1000-2000 level courses. It is not the intent of these courses to result in exemplary performance for all students, although it is likely some students will achieve that level. Rather, students in the core, especially Freshmen, are viewed as building competence in these areas. For this reason, minimum acceptable objective attainment is defined as 70% for student work.

B. Description of the Core Objective Assessment
    a. Assessment Methods

In support of these ongoing assessments, the Core Course Proposals submitted by academic departments to the Undergraduate Committee includes the description, for each Core Objective required for each course. Also, the number of the course assignment(s) which, when completed by students, will provide evidence of the core objective. Multi-disciplinary faculty will be invited to annual trainings that provides background information about THECB's directive and assists them in identifying or creating appropriate assignments for core assessment. Becoming familiar with the AAC&U Rubrics and developing a strong network of experienced professors in the field is important to supporting inexperienced teaching faculty. These training opportunities are expected to be quite robust as faculty are encouraged to engage with the AAC&U Rubrics to ensure that their student work samples will demonstrate the greatest level of performance for each Objective.

b. Methodology

Two-stage probability-proportional-to-size (PPS) cluster sampling will continue to be employed to provide a representative sample of student work for the direct assessments. Ratings are collected and tabulated through Excel spreadsheets and SPSS.

C. Frequency and Timeline of Assessment- Assessment of each objective will take place over the course of six semesters, devoted respectively to sample selection, data collection, rating of work samples, and analysis and writing of findings for distribution. Each core objective will be assessed every three years. It should be noted that fall courses will be evaluated in the spring term and spring courses will be evaluated in the summer/fall terms. The schedule for assessment of the Core Objective is included in Appendix D.

D. Criteria/Targets - As described in the Core Objective Assessment Plan section, each VALUE rubric is comprised of several performance dimensions or criteria. For example, the rubric for evaluating critical thinking has four dimensions: "Evidence," "Influence of Context and Assumptions," "Student's Position," and "Conclusions and Related Outcomes." Performance on each of these criteria is evaluated by multi-disciplinary Assessment Specialists who score the work samples using the given performance levels. The performance target is that 70% or greater of sampled student work from 1000-2000 level courses is rated as Milestone 2 or better for each rubric criterion.

E. Analysis- The Office of Institutional Effectiveness (OIE) will have primary responsibility for conducting analysis of Core Objective Performance Data. OIE personnel will focus on compiling results of scoring and examining the distribution of outcomes in terms of the four performance levels that define each Core Objective Rubric. These results will be reported to the Undergraduate Committee on a yearly basis. The Office of Institutional Effectiveness will also conduct any follow-up analyses that may be necessary, particularly when Core Objective Performance Targets are not met. The Undergraduate Committee of the Faculty Senate will forward

the results to the Faculty Senate and the Office of the Provost. OIE will be responsible for submitting the results to the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board.

F. To ensure the Core Curriculum Faculty are included in the review process, it is recommended that there be a six-person Core Curriculum Assessment Committee, a subcommittee comprised of members from the Executive Council of the Undergraduate Committee. The function of this committee will be limited to reviewing the overall scoring of the specific core objective being reviewed that semester and the subsequent final report before it is submitted to the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board. This subcommittee will also disseminate the same report to the Undergraduate Committee Members of the Faculty Senate. The Office of the Institutional Effectiveness (OIE) will then submit the final report to the faculty members sampled in the report.

G. Actions and Follow Up- The Office of Institutional Effectiveness (OIE) will conduct analyses of the core assessment outcomes relative to the performance targets, reporting results to the Undergraduate Committee. Once a year, the University will conduct a review of overall performance on each Core Objective assessed during that year. If the performance does not meet expectations, a more detailed review will be conducted to investigate the reasons for this disparity. This may involve follow-up studies to examine particular areas or courses which may, in turn, result in changes in course design or instruction. Whenever possible or appropriate, resource support will be provided to address issues that are identified during the review. In addition, each department included in the review cycle will receive a copy of the report to discuss in curriculum committee meetings. These reports will be shared twice a year.

   As an aspirational goal, every five years, the Undergraduate Committee will conduct a course inventory to ensure all courses remain in alignment with the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board requirements.

Appendix A: Sample Communication (Provost Communication to Deans)

Date: May 4, 2022

To: Dr. Andrew Davis, Dean, Kathrine G. McGovern College of the Arts Dr. Daniel P. O'Connor, Dean, College of Liberal Arts and Social Sciences

From: Paula Myrick Short, Senior Vice Chancellor/Senior Vice President for Academic Affairs and Provost

Re: Assessment of the Core Curriculum

As part of the state-required assessment of the UH Core Curriculum, a random sample of core courses is selected every semester in order to evaluate student learning in one core objective. The particular focus of the Spring 2022 assessment cycle will be on Personal Responsibility Core Objective

A list of the selected courses in your college and the faculty members teaching these courses is attached. As part of this process, a student work product (e.g., essay, exam) addressing learning in the area of Personal Responsibility will be identified by the selected faculty members. In the coming days, my staff will be contacting the faculty members to notify them of their selection and ask them to verify the student work product to be collected for the assessment. Ultimately, work samples from fifteen randomly selected students in each class will be collected by my staff.

Training will be provided for faculty that are teaching classes that align with this core objective. I appreciate your support in making sure this process runs smoothly. If I can answer any questions, please let me know.

Appendix A: Sample Communication (Director's Communication to Core Curriculum Faculty)

Dear Professor «FAC_LAST_NAME», Your course,

«Subject» «Catalog» number «CLASS_NBR» has been selected for inclusion in the state-required assessment of the UH Core Curriculum.

The focus of the Spring 2022 assessment process is on personal responsibility skills, one of the six core learning objectives. Your course was included in the sampling pool because personal responsibility skills is among the core objective areas addressed by the class (see Core Curriculum application below). As part of this process, the institutional effectiveness office will collect samples of student work from each of the selected courses.

ACTION NEEDED: The first step is to identify the appropriate student work product. The Core Curriculum application for this class (see link below) identified an assignment that prompts students to demonstrate learning related to personal responsibility skills. Your assignment may have changed since the application was submitted, if that is the case simply notify the Office of Institutional Effectiveness of the current assessment. If this assignment has changed since the application was submitted, let us know. By Friday, June 3rd, please send to your college assessment contact, «Contact», «Contact_Email», the following information: • A description of the student work product from your course to be used for this assessment. • The date when the work product will be available, and whether the product will be submitted via Blackboard. CORE APPLICATION:«Link»

Work from fifteen randomly selected students will be collected. The attached list identifies the selected students from your course. Do not be concerned if a selected student does not turn in an assignment or drops the course; we can oversample to help mitigate missing work. Student work may be submitted through the end of the academic term as it becomes available. If assignments are submitted through Blackboard, these can be accessed directly by my staff and once you've notified us of the name of the assignment and that it is in Blackboard, no further action is required on your part. Most instructors elect to provide written work samples. These will be evaluated using a faculty-developed rubric for personal responsibility skills (see attached).

Responses to multiple-choice items may also be submitted (four for each domain). The format for submitting multiple-choice data is explained on page two of the attached rubric. The assessment contact for your college, will be happy to address any questions you may have. We appreciate your cooperation with this process.

Appendix B: Statement of Purpose (THECB)

Statement of Purpose: Through the Texas Core Curriculum, students will gain a foundation of knowledge of human cultures and the physical and natural world, develop principles of personal and social responsibility for living in a di verse world, and advance intellectual and practical skills that are essential for all learning.

Core Objectives-

•Critical Thinking Skills - to include creative thinking, innovation, inquiry, and analysis, evaluation and synthesis of information

•Communication Skills - to include effective development, interpretation and expression of ideas through written, oral and visual communication

•Empirical and Quantitative Skills - to include the manipulation and analysis of numerical data or observable facts resulting in informed conclusions

•Teamwork - to include the ability to consider different points of view and to work effectively with others to support a shared purpose or goal

•Personal Responsibility - to include the ability to connect choices, actions and consequences to ethical decision-making

•Social Responsibility - to include intercultural competence, knowledge of civic responsibility, and the ability to engage effectively in regional, national, and global communities

Foundational Component Areas-

•Communication - Courses in this category focus on developing ideas and expressing them clearly, considering the effect of the message, fostering understanding, and building the skills needed to communicate persuasively. Courses involve the command of oral, aural, written, and visual literacy skills that enable people to exchange messages appropriate to the subject, occasion, and audience.

•Mathematics - Courses in this category focus on quantitative literacy in logic, patterns, and relationships. Courses involve the understanding of key mathematical concepts and the application of appropriate quantitative tools to everyday experience.

•Life and Physical Sciences - Courses in this category focus on describing, explaining, and predicting natural phenomena using the scientific method. Courses involve the understanding of interactions among natural phenomena and the implications of scientific principles on the physical world and on human experiences.

•Language, Philosophy and Culture - Courses in this category focus on how ideas, values, beliefs, and other aspects of culture express and affect human experience. Courses involve the exploration of ideas that foster aesthetic and intellectual creation in order to understand the human condition across cultures.

•Creative Arts - Courses in this category focus on the appreciation and analysis of creative artifacts and works of the human imagination. Courses involve the synthesis and interpretation of artistic expression and enable critical, creative, and innovative communication about works of art.[10]

•American History - Courses in this category focus on the consideration of past events and ideas relative to the United States, with the option of including Texas History for a portion of this component area. Courses involve the interaction among individuals, communities, states, the nation, and the world, considering how these interactions have contributed to the development of the United States and its global role.

•Government/Political Science - Courses in this category focus on consideration of the Constitution of the United States and the constitutions of the states, with special emphasis on that of Texas. Courses involve the analysis of governmental institutions, political behavior, civic engagement, and their political and philosophical foundations.

•Social and Behavioral Sciences - Courses in this category focus on the application of empirical and scientific methods that contribute to the understanding of what makes us human. Courses involve the exploration of behavior and interactions among individuals, groups, institutions, and events, examining their impact on the individual, society, and culture.

•Component Area Option - Courses used to complete the Component Area Option must meet the definition and criteria specified in one or more of the foundational component areas above. The Core Objectives required in the corresponding foundational component area apply to each course used to fulfill the Component Area Option.

Appendix C: Core Curriculum Assessment Schedule

Order	CORE Area	Last	FA 2022	SPR 2021	SU 2022	FA 2022	SPR 2023	SU 2023	FA 2023	SPR 2024	SU 2024
1	**COM**	SP 2016				Sample selection	Data collection	Rating work samples	Analysis & reporting		
2	**SR**	SP 2018						Sample selection	Data collection	Rating work samples	Analysis & reporting
3	**PR**	FA 2018	Analysis & reporting						Sample selection	Data collection	Rating work samples
4	**CT**	SP 2019	Data collection	Rating work samples	Analysis & reporting						Sample selection
5	**EQS**	FA 2019	Sample selection	Data collection	Rating work samples	Analysis & reporting					
6	**TW**	FA 2020			Sample selection	Data collection	Analysis & reporting				

The complete schedule is available at [new_core_schedule.xlsx (sharepoint.com)]

Appendix D: Sample VALUE Rubric (Critical Thinking)

Definition

Critical thinking is a habit of mind characterized by the comprehensive exploration of issues, ideas, artifacts, and events before accepting or formulating an opinion or conclusion.

Evaluators are encouraged to assign a zero to any work sample or collection of work that does not meet benchmark (cell one) level performance.

	Capstone 4	Milestones 3	 2	Benchmark 1
Explanation of issues	Issue/problem to be considered critically is stated clearly and described comprehensively, delivering all relevant information necessary for full understanding.	Issue/problem to be considered critically is stated, described, and clarified so that understanding is not seriously impeded by omissions.	Issue/problem to be considered critically is stated but description leaves some terms undefined, ambiguities unexplored, boundaries undetermined, and/or backgrounds unknown.	Issue/problem to be considered critically is stated without clarification or description.
Evidence *Selecting and using information to investigate a point of view or conclusion*	Information is taken from source(s) with enough interpretation/evaluation to develop a comprehensive analysis or synthesis. Viewpoints of experts are questioned thoroughly.	Information is taken from source(s) with enough interpretation/evaluation to develop a coherent analysis or synthesis. Viewpoints of experts are subject to questioning.	Information is taken from source(s) with some interpretation/evaluation, but not enough to develop a coherent analysis or synthesis. Viewpoints of experts are taken as mostly fact, with little questioning.	Information is taken from source(s) without any interpretation/evaluation. Viewpoints of experts are taken as fact, without question.
Influence of context and assumptions	Thoroughly (systematically and methodically) analyzes own and others' assumptions and carefully evaluates the relevance of contexts when presenting a position.	Identifies own and others' assumptions and several relevant contexts when presenting a position.	Questions some assumptions. Identifies several relevant contexts when presenting a position. May be more aware of others' assumptions than one's own (or vice versa).	Shows an emerging awareness of present assumptions (sometimes labels assertions as assumptions). Begins to identify some contexts when presenting a position.
Student's position (perspective, thesis/hypothesis)	Specific position (perspective, thesis/hypothesis) is imaginative, taking into account the complexities of an issue. Limits of position (perspective, thesis/hypothesis) are acknowledged. Others' points of view are synthesized within position (perspective, thesis/hypothesis).	Specific position (perspective, thesis/hypothesis) takes into account the complexities of an issue. Others' points of view are acknowledged within position (perspective, thesis/hypothesis).	Specific position (perspective, thesis/hypothesis) acknowledges different sides of an issue.	Specific position (perspective, thesis/hypothesis) is stated, but is simplistic and obvious.
Conclusions and related outcomes (implications and consequences)	Conclusions and related outcomes (consequences and implications) are logical and reflect student's informed evaluation and ability to place evidence and perspectives	Conclusion is logically tied to a range of information, including opposing viewpoints; related outcomes (consequences and implications) are identified clearly.	Conclusion is logically tied to information (because information is chosen to fit the desired conclusion); some related outcomes (consequences and implications) are identified	Conclusion is inconsistently tied to some of the information discussed; related outcomes (consequences and implications) are oversimplified.

Sample VALUE Rubric (Teamwork)

Definition

Teamwork is behaviors under the control of individual team members (effort they put into team tasks, their manner of interacting with others on team, and the quantity and quality of contributions they make to team discussions.)

Evaluators are encouraged to assign a zero to any work sample or collection of work that does not meet benchmark (cell one) level performance.

	Capstone 4	**Milestones** 3	2	**Benchmark** 1
Contributes to Team Meetings	Helps the team move forward by articulating the merits of alternative ideas or proposals.	Offers alternative solutions or courses of action that build on the ideas of others.	Offers new suggestions to advance the work of the group.	Shares ideas but does not advance the work of the group.
Facilitates the Contributions of Team Members	Engages team members in ways that facilitate their contributions to meetings by both constructively building upon or synthesizing the contributions of others as well as noticing when someone is not participating and inviting them	Engages team members in ways that facilitate their contributions to meetings by constructively building upon or synthesizing the contributions of others.	Engages team members in ways that facilitate their contributions to meetings by restating the views of other team members and/or asking questions for clarification.	Engages team members by taking turns and listening to others without interrupting.
Individual Contributions Outside of Team Meetings	Completes all assigned tasks by deadline; work accomplished is thorough, comprehensive, and advances the project. Proactively helps other team members complete their assigned tasks to a similar level of excellence.	Completes all assigned tasks by deadline; work accomplished is thorough, comprehensive, and advances the project.	Completes all assigned tasks by deadline; work accomplished advances the project.	Completes all assigned tasks by deadline.
Fosters Constructive Team Climate	Supports a constructive team climate by doing all of the following: • Treats team members respectfully by being polite and constructive in communication. • Uses positive vocal or written tone, facial expressions, and/or body language to convey a positive attitude about the team and its work. • Motivates teammates by expressing confidence about the importance of the task and the team's ability to accomplish it. • Provides assistance and/or encouragement to team members.	Supports a constructive team climate by doing any three of the following: • Treats team members respectfully by being polite and constructive in communication. • Uses positive vocal or written tone, facial expressions, and/or body language to convey a positive attitude about the team and its work. • Motivates teammates by expressing confidence about the importance of the task and the team's ability to accomplish it. • Provides assistance and/or encouragement to team members.	Supports a constructive team climate by doing any two of the following: • Treats team members respectfully by being polite and constructive in communication. • Uses positive vocal or written tone, facial expressions, and/or body language to convey a positive attitude about the team and its work. • Motivates teammates by expressing confidence about the importance of the task and the team's ability to accomplish it. • Provides assistance and/or encouragement to team members.	Supports a constructive team climate by doing any one of the following: • Treats team members respectfully by being polite and constructive in communication. • Uses positive vocal or written tone, facial expressions, and/or body language to convey a positive attitude about the team and its work. • Motivates teammates by expressing confidence about the importance of the task and the team's ability to accomplish it. • Provides assistance and/or encouragement to team members.
Responds to Conflict	Addresses destructive conflict directly and constructively, helping to manage/resolve it in a way that strengthens overall team cohesiveness and future effectiveness.	Identifies and acknowledges conflict and stays engaged with it.	Redirecting focus toward common ground, toward task at hand (away from conflict).	Passively accepts alternate viewpoints/ideas/opinions.

Sample VALUE Rubric (Written Communication)

Definition

Written communication is the development and expression of ideas in writing. Written communication involves learning to work in many genres and styles. It can involve working with many different writing technologies, and mixing texts, data, and images. Written communication abilities develop through iterative experiences across the curriculum.

Evaluators are encouraged to assign a zero to any work sample or collection of work that does not meet benchmark (cell one) level performance.

	Capstone 4	**Milestones** 3	2	**Benchmark** 1
Context of and Purpose for Writing *Includes considerations of audience, purpose, and the circumstances surrounding the writing task(s).*	Demonstrates a thorough understanding of context, audience, and purpose that is responsive to the assigned task(s) and focuses all elements of the work.	Demonstrates adequate consideration of context, audience, and purpose and a clear focus on the assigned task(s) (e.g., the task aligns with audience, purpose, and context).	Demonstrates awareness of context, audience, purpose, and to the assigned tasks(s) (e.g., begins to show awareness of audience's perceptions and assumptions).	Demonstrates minimal attention to context, audience, purpose, and to the assigned tasks(s) (e.g., expectation of instructor or self as audience).
Content Development	Uses appropriate, relevant, and compelling content to illustrate mastery of the subject, conveying the writer's understanding, and shaping the whole work.	Uses appropriate, relevant, and compelling content to explore ideas within the context of the discipline and shape the whole work.	Uses appropriate and relevant content to develop and explore ideas through most of the work.	Uses appropriate and relevant content to develop simple ideas in some parts of the work.
Genre and Disciplinary Conventions *Formal and informal rules inherent in the expectations for writing in particular forms and/or academic fields (please see glossary).*	Demonstrates detailed attention to and successful execution of a wide range of conventions particular to a specific discipline and/or writing task (s) including organization, content, presentation, formatting, and stylistic choices	Demonstrates consistent use of important conventions particular to a specific discipline and/or writing task(s), including organization, content, presentation, and stylistic choices	Follows expectations appropriate to a specific discipline and/or writing task(s) for basic organization, content, and presentation	Attempts to use a consistent system for basic organization and presentation.
Sources and Evidence	Demonstrates skillful use of high- quality, credible, relevant sources to develop ideas that are appropriate for the discipline and genre of the writing	Demonstrates consistent use of credible, relevant sources to support ideas that are situated within the discipline and genre of the writing	Demonstrates an attempt to use credible and/or relevant sources to support ideas that are appropriate for the discipline and genre of the writing	Demonstrates an attempt to use sources to support ideas in the writing.
Control of Syntax and Mechanics	Uses graceful language that skillfully communicates meaning to readers with clarity and fluency, and is virtually error-free.	Uses straightforward language that generally conveys meaning to readers. The language in the portfolio has few errors.	Uses language that generally conveys meaning to readers with clarity, although writing may include some errors.	Uses language that sometimes impedes meaning because of errors in usage.

Sample VALUE Rubric (Oral Communication)

Definition

Oral communication is a prepared, purposeful presentation designed to increase knowledge, to foster understanding, or to promote change in the listeners' attitudes, values, beliefs, or behaviors.

Evaluators are encouraged to assign a zero to any work sample or collection of work that does not meet benchmark (cell one) level performance.

	Capstone 4	**Milestones** 3	2	**Benchmark** 1
Organization	Organizational pattern (specific introduction and conclusion, sequenced material within the body, and transitions) is clearly and consistently observable and is skillful and makes the content of the presentation	Organizational pattern (specific introduction and conclusion, sequenced material within the body, and transitions) is clearly and consistently observable within the presentation.	Organizational pattern (specific introduction and conclusion, sequenced material within the body, and transitions) is intermittently observable within the presentation.	Organizational pattern (specific introduction and conclusion, sequenced material within the body, and transitions) is not observable within the presentation.
Language	Language choices are imaginative, memorable, and compelling, and enhance the effectiveness of the presentation. Language in presentation is appropriate to	Language choices are thoughtful and generally support the effectiveness of the presentation. Language in presentation is appropriate to audience.	Language choices are mundane and commonplace and partially support the effectiveness of the presentation. Language in presentation is appropriate to	Language choices are unclear and minimally support the effectiveness of the presentation. Language in presentation is not appropriate to audience.
Delivery	Delivery techniques (posture, gesture, eye contact, and vocal expressiveness) make the presentation compelling, and speaker appears polished and confident.	Delivery techniques (posture, gesture, eye contact, and vocal expressiveness) make the presentation interesting, and speaker appears comfortable.	Delivery techniques (posture, gesture, eye contact, and vocal expressiveness) make the presentation understandable, and speaker appears tentative.	Delivery techniques (posture, gesture, eye contact, and vocal expressiveness) detract from the understandability of the presentation, and speaker appears
Supporting Material	A variety of types of supporting materials (explanations, examples, illustrations, statistics, analogies, quotations from relevant authorities) make appropriate reference to information or analysis that significantly supports the presentation or establishes the presenter's credibility/authority on the topic.	Supporting materials (explanations, examples, illustrations, statistics, analogies, quotations from relevant authorities) make appropriate reference to information or analysis that generally supports the presentation or establishes the presenter's credibility/authority on the topic.	Supporting materials (explanations, examples, illustrations, statistics, analogies, quotations from relevant authorities) make appropriate reference to information or analysis that partially supports the presentation or establishes the presenter's credibility/authority on the topic.	Insufficient supporting materials (explanations, examples, illustrations, statistics, analogies, quotations from relevant authorities) make reference to information or analysis that minimally supports the presentation or establishes the presenter's credibility/authority on the
Central Message	Central message is compelling (precisely stated, appropriately repeated, memorable, and strongly supported.)	Central message is clear and consistent with the supporting material.	Central message is basically understandable but is not often repeated and is not memorable.	Central message can be deduced, but is not explicitly stated in the presentation.

Sample VALUE Rubric (Quantitative Literacy)

Definition

Quantitative Literacy (QL) – also known as Numeracy or Quantitative Reasoning (QR) – is a "habit of mind," competency, and comfort in working with numerical data. Individuals with strong QL skills possess the ability to reason and solve quantitative problems from a wide array of authentic contexts and everyday life situations. They understand and can create sophisticated arguments supported by quantitative evidence and they can clearly communicate those arguments in a variety of formats (using words, tables, graphs, mathematical equations, etc., as appropriate).

Evaluators are encouraged to assign a zero to any work sample or collection of work that does not meet benchmark (cell one) level performance.

	Capstone 4	**Milestones** 3	2	1
Interpretation *Ability to explain information presented in mathematical forms (e.g., equations, graphs, diagrams, tables, words)*	Provides accurate explanations of information presented in mathematical forms. Makes appropriate inferences based on that information. *For example, accurately explains the trend data shown in a graph and makes reasonable predictions regarding what the data suggest about future events.*	Provides accurate explanations of information presented in mathematical forms. *For instance, accurately explains the trend data shown in a graph.*	Provides somewhat accurate explanations of information presented in mathematical forms, but occasionally makes minor errors related to computations or units. *For instance, accurately explains trend data shown in a graph, but may miscalculate the slope of the trend line.*	Attempts to explain information presented in mathematical forms, but draws incorrect conclusions about what the information means. *For example, attempts to explain the trend data shown in a graph, but will frequently misinterpret the nature of that trend, perhaps by confusing positive and*
Representation *Ability to convert relevant information into various mathematical forms (e.g., equations, graphs, diagrams, tables, words)*	Skillfully converts relevant information into an insightful mathematical portrayal in a way that contributes to a further or deeper understanding.	Competently converts relevant information into an appropriate and desired mathematical portrayal.	Completes conversion of information but resulting mathematical portrayal is only partially appropriate or accurate.	Completes conversion of information but resulting mathematical portrayal is inappropriate or inaccurate.
Calculation	Calculations attempted are essentially all successful and sufficiently comprehensive to solve the problem. Calculations are also presented elegantly (clearly, concisely, etc.)	Calculations attempted are essentially all successful and sufficiently comprehensive to solve the problem.	Calculations attempted are either unsuccessful or represent only a portion of the calculations required to comprehensively solve the problem.	Calculations are attempted but are both unsuccessful and are not comprehensive.
Application / Analysis *Ability to make judgments and draw appropriate conclusions based on the quantitative analysis of data, while recognizing the limits of this analysis*	Uses the quantitative analysis of data as the basis for deep and thoughtful judgments, drawing insightful, carefully qualified conclusions from this work	Uses the quantitative analysis of data as the basis for competent judgments, drawing reasonable and appropriately qualified conclusions from this work	Uses the quantitative analysis of data as the basis for workmanlike (without inspiration or nuance, ordinary) judgments, drawing plausible conclusions from this work	Uses the quantitative analysis of data as the basis for tentative, basic judgments, although is hesitant or uncertain about drawing conclusions from this work
Assumptions *Ability to make and evaluate important assumptions in estimation, modeling, and data analysis*	Explicitly describes assumptions and provides compelling rationale for why each assumption is appropriate. Shows awareness that confidence in final conclusions is limited by the accuracy of the assumptions	Explicitly describes assumptions and provides compelling rationale for why assumptions are appropriate.	Explicitly describes assumptions.	Attempts to describe assumptions.
Communication *Expressing quantitative evidence in support of the argument or purpose of the work (in terms of what evidence is used and how it is formatted, presented, and contextualized)*	Uses quantitative information in connection with the argument or purpose of the work, presents it in an effective format, and explicates it with consistently high quality.	Uses quantitative information in connection with the argument or purpose of the work, though data may be presented in a less than completely effective format or some parts of the explication may be uneven.	Uses quantitative information, but does not effectively connect it to the argument or purpose of the work.	Presents an argument for which quantitative evidence is pertinent, but does not provide adequate explicit numerical support. (May use quasi-quantitative words such as "many," "few," "increasing," "small," and the like in place of

Sample VALUE Rubric (Ethical Reasoning)

Definition

Ethical Reasoning is reasoning about right and wrong human conduct. It requires students to be able to assess their own ethical values and the social context of problems, recognize ethical issues in a variety of settings, think about how different ethical perspectives might be applied to ethical dilemmas, and consider the ramifications of alternative actions. Students' ethical self-identity evolves as they practice ethical decision-making skills and learn how to describe and analyze positions on ethical issues.

Evaluators are encouraged to assign a zero to any work sample or collection of work that does not meet benchmark (cell one) level performance.

	Capstone 4	Milestones 3	 2	Benchmark 1
Ethical Self-Awareness	Student discusses in detail/analyzes both core beliefs and the origins of the core beliefs and discussion has greater depth and clarity.	Student discusses in detail/analyzes both core beliefs and the origins of the core beliefs.	Student states both core beliefs and the origins of the core beliefs.	Student states either their core beliefs or articulates the origins of the core beliefs but not both.
Understanding Different Ethical Perspectives/Concepts	Student names the theory or theories, can present the gist of said theory or theories, and accurately explains the details of the theory or theories used.	Student can name the major theory or theories she/he uses, can present the gist of said theory or theories, and attempts to explain the details of the theory or theories used, but has some inaccuracies.	Student can name the major theory she/he uses, and is only able to present the gist of the named theory.	Student only names the major theory she/he uses.
Ethical Issue Recognition	Student can recognize ethical issues when presented in a complex, multilayered (gray) context AND can recognize cross- relationships among the issues.	Student can recognize ethical issues when issues are presented in a complex, multilayered (gray) context OR can grasp cross- relationships among the issues.	Student can recognize basic and obvious ethical issues and grasp (incompletely) the complexities or interrelationships among the issues.	Student can recognize basic and obvious ethical issues but fails to grasp complexity or interrelationships.
Application of Ethical Perspectives/Concepts	Student can independently apply ethical perspectives/concepts to an ethical question, accurately, and is able to consider full implications of the application.	Student can independently apply ethical perspectives/concepts to an ethical question, accurately, but does not consider the specific implications of the application.	Student can apply ethical perspectives/concepts to an ethical question, independently (to a new example) and the application is inaccurate.	Student can apply ethical perspectives/concepts to an ethical question with support (using examples, in a class, in a group, or a fixed-choice setting) but is unable to apply ethical perspectives/concepts independently (to a new example.).
Evaluation of Different Ethical Perspectives/Concepts	Student states a position and can state the objections to, assumptions and implications of and can reasonably defend against the objections to, assumptions and implications of different ethical perspectives/concepts, and the student's defense is adequate and effective.	Student states a position and can state the objections to, assumptions and implications of, and respond to the objections to, assumptions and implications of different ethical perspectives/concepts, but the student's response is inadequate.	Student states a position and can state the objections to, assumptions and implications of different ethical perspectives/concepts but does not respond to them (and ultimately objections, assumptions, and implications are compartmentalized by student and do not affect student's position.)	Student states a position but cannot state the objections to and assumptions and limitations of the different perspectives/concepts.

Sample VALUE Rubric (Civic Knowledge and Engagement)

Definition

Civic engagement is "working to make a difference in the civic life of our communities and developing the combination of knowledge, skills, values, and motivation to make that difference. It means promoting the quality of life in a community, through both political and non-political processes." (Excerpted from *Civic Responsibility and Higher Education*, edited by Thomas Ehrlich, published by Oryx Press, 2000, Preface, page vi.) In addition, civic engagement encompasses actions wherein individuals participate in activities of personal and public concern that are both individually life enriching and socially beneficial to the community.

Evaluators are encouraged to assign a zero to any work sample or collection of work that does not meet benchmark (cell one) level performance.

	Capstone 4	Milestones 3	 2	Benchmark 1
Diversity of Communities and Cultures	Demonstrates evidence of adjustment in own attitudes and beliefs because of working within and learning from diversity of communities and cultures. Promotes others' engagement with diversity.	Reflects on how own attitudes and beliefs are different from those of other cultures and communities. Exhibits curiosity about what can be learned from diversity of communities and cultures.	Has awareness that own attitudes and beliefs are different from those of other cultures and communities. Exhibits little curiosity about what can be learned from diversity of communities and cultures.	Expresses attitudes and beliefs as an individual, from a one-sided view. Is indifferent or resistant to what can be learned from diversity of communities and cultures.
Analysis of Knowledge	Connects and extends knowledge (facts, theories, etc.) from one's own academic study/field/discipline to civic engagement and to one's own participation in civic life, politics, and government.	Analyzes knowledge (facts, theories, etc) from one's own academic study/field/discipline making relevant connections to civic engagement and to one's own participation in civic life, politics, and government.	Begins to connect knowledge (facts, theories, etc) from one's own academic study/field/discipline to civic engagement and to tone's own participation in civic life, politics, and government.	Begins to identify knowledge (facts, theories, etc) from one's own academic study/field/discipline that is relevant to civic engagement and to one's own participation in civic life, politics, and government.
Civic Identity and Commitment	Provides evidence of experience in civic-engagement activities and describes what she/he has learned about her or himself as it relates to a reinforced and clarified sense of civic identity and continued commitment to public action.	Provides evidence of experience in civic-engagement activities and describes what she/he has learned about her or himself as it relates to a growing sense of civic identity and commitment.	Evidence suggests involvement in civic-engagement activities is generated from expectations or course requirements rather than from a sense of civic identity.	Provides little evidence of her/his experience in civic-engagement activities and does not connect experiences to civic identity.
Civic Communication	Tailors communication strategies to effectively express, listen, and adapt to others to establish relationships to further civic action	Effectively communicates in civic context, showing ability to do all of the following: express, listen, and adapt ideas and messages based on others' perspectives.	Communicates in civic context, showing ability to do more than one of the following: express, listen, and adapt ideas and messages based on others' perspectives.	Communicates in civic context, showing ability to do one of the following: express, listen, and adapt ideas and messages based on others' perspectives.
Civic Action and Reflection	Demonstrates independent experience and *shows initiative in team leadership* of complex or multiple civic engagement activities, accompanied by reflective insights or analysis about the aims and accomplishments of one's actions.	Demonstrates independent experience and *team leadership of* civic action, with reflective insights or analysis about the aims and accomplishments of one's actions.	Has clearly *participated* in civically focused actions and begins to reflect or describe how these actions may benefit individual(s) or communities.	Has *experimented* with some civic activities but shows little internalized understanding of their aims or effects and little commitment to future action.
Civic Contexts/Structures	Demonstrates ability and commitment to *collaboratively work across and within* community contexts and structures *to achieve a civic aim*.	Demonstrates ability and commitment to work actively *within* community contexts and structures *to achieve a civic aim*.	Demonstrates experience identifying intentional ways to *participate in* civic contexts and structures.	Experiments with civic contexts and structures, *tries out a few to see what fits*.