

University of La Verne

Capstone Assessment of University Values and Competencies: Diversity, Values Orientation, Life-long learning and Writing

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Executive Summary

Purpose

The purpose of the capstone assessment project was to evaluate the extent to which the following learning outcomes and Mission elements are attained in capstone projects at the undergraduate, masters and doctoral levels institution-wide: Diversity and Community, Values Orientation, Life-long Learning (Critical Thinking), and Writing.

Method and Procedure

Through the office of Institutional Research a total random sample of 127 capstone projects were collected from across the university: 41 undergraduate senior projects/papers, 40 masters projects and 46 doctoral dissertations. Five different types of capstone projects were identified: 65 were empirical in nature, 22 were applied, 17 were theoretical, 1 was creative, and 19 were business strategic analyses. The projects were completed between 2006 and 2008, and came from three colleges: College of Arts and Sciences, College of Business and Public Management, and College of Education and Organizational Leadership.

Four learning outcomes were assessed: Diversity and Community, Values Orientation, Lifelong Learning (Critical Thinking) and Written Communication (Mechanics, Organization, Development of Thesis, Project Appropriate Formatting and Citation). Global rubrics accompanied by articulated criteria especially developed for different types of capstone projects addressing each of the learning outcomes were developed and used to assess the projects. The rubric ratings were made on a 4-point scale: 4=Accomplished, 3=Developed, 2=Developing, 1=Undeveloped.

A pilot study was conducted in the summer of 2008 that established the sensitivity of the rubrics to identify the variability in the projects, and reliably assess the degree to which the four learning outcomes were attained in capstone projects. Another sample of projects was collected in 2009 and compared to the 2008 pilot data. Showing no significant differences, the two samples were combined. Group comparisons were made among different degree levels (undergraduate, masters and doctoral) and different types of projects (empirical, applied and other types of projects that combined theoretical, creative and strategic analysis). If 70% or more of the projects received ratings of Accomplished or Developed on a particular learning outcome it was considered high level of attainment; between 50% and 69% was considered moderate level of attainment (needing improvement), and below 50% was considered low level of attainment (needing serious attention).

Highlights of Findings

- **Diversity and Community:** Doctoral dissertations reflect the Diversity and Community learning outcome at high levels of attainment, and empirical projects do so at a moderate level of attainment. Applied and other types of projects and projects at the undergraduate and masters levels reflect the Diversity and Community learning outcome at low levels of attainment.
- **Values Orientation:** Doctoral dissertation and the empirical projects reflect the Values Orientation learning outcome at high and moderate levels of attainment, respectively. Applied and other types of projects and projects at the undergraduate and masters levels reflect the Values Orientation learning outcome at low levels of attainment.
- **Lifelong Learning (Critical Thinking):** Doctoral dissertations and empirical projects reflect Lifelong Learning skills at high and moderate levels of attainment, respectively. Applied and masters projects show moderate levels of attainment. The other types of projects as well as undergraduate projects reflect Lifelong Learning skills at low levels of attainment.
- **Written Communication:** In general, mechanics, organization and projects-appropriate formatting tend to be at high levels of attainment especially in graduate and empirical projects, and thesis development and citation skills tend to be at moderate or low levels of attainment, especially in undergraduate and the other types of capstone projects.

Overall there appears to be room for improvement in all three of the mission elements in the extent to which they are reflected in capstone projects. However, doctoral and masters capstone projects do better than undergraduate programs in reflecting the mission elements. Also, empirical and applied projects do better than other types of project reflecting the mission elements. In writing, overall, capstone projects do well in mechanics, organization and formatting, with room for improvement in thesis development and citations. While doctoral, master as well as empirical and applied projects show high attainment of writing skills, undergraduate and other types of project need serious attention.

Recommendations

- a. Encourage faculty in various colleges to develop action plans to address the learning outcomes that need improvement with special attention given to learning outcomes at moderate and low levels of attainment.
- b. Encourage individual departments across the university to use the rubrics developed here to continuously evaluate these learning outcomes in their capstone courses to create a database to assess and track departmental as well as institutional progress.

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Purpose

The purpose of the capstone assessment project was to evaluate the extent to which the following learning outcomes and Mission elements are attained in capstone projects at the undergraduate, masters and doctoral levels institution-wide: Diversity and Community, Values Orientation, Life-long Learning (Critical Thinking), and Writing.

Method

Sample

Through the office of Institutional Research a total random sample of 127 capstone projects were collected from across the university: 41 undergraduate senior projects/papers, 40 masters projects and 46 doctoral dissertations. Five different types of capstone projects were identified: 65 were empirical in nature, 22 were applied, 17 were theoretical, 1 was creative, and 19 were business strategic analyses. Three data sheets had missing information on type of project, and were excluded from the analysis of project types. All the doctoral projects were in the empirical category. The projects were completed between 2006 and 2008, and came from three colleges: College of Arts and Sciences, College of Business and Public Management, and College of Education and Organizational Leadership.

Learning outcomes

Altogether four learning outcomes were assessed. Two of the outcomes were based on the Mission of the University: Diversity and Community, and Values Orientation. Two of the outcomes were skills-based reflected in the General Education Learning Outcomes: Lifelong Learning focused on critical thinking, and Written Communication including Mechanics, Organization, Development of Thesis, Project Appropriate Formatting and Citation.

The following definitions of these learning outcomes are based on University's Mission statement and/or General Education Guidelines:

Diversity and Community is defined as a systematic effort to explore and examine an issue(s) or population(s) that reflects the biological, personal, social and political, cultural, and/or economic realities of differences for the purpose of creating sustainable communities, and includes one or more of the following areas: race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, ability, age, SES, political perspective, belief systems, as well as diversity in the natural world.

Values Orientation is defined as a systematic effort to explore and examine beliefs or principles of human conduct in various historical, social and/or personal context and their ethical implications.

Lifelong Learning (Critical Thinking) is defined as the ability to think critically by obtaining, evaluating and integrating information effectively, and making appropriate inferences using relevant and current technology.

Written Communication (Writing Skills) is the ability to utilize standard American English mechanics, apply appropriate organization methods, and develop the thesis statement and supporting points in a discipline-specific written presentation with correct citation formats, parenthetical references-attributions and credits.

Rubrics

Global rubrics were created for Diversity and Community, Values Orientation and Lifelong learning (See Appendix A for the global rubrics). Additionally, to facilitate the use of the global rubrics, separate criteria (varying in number from 3 to 6 depending on the type of project) were articulated for each of the 5 types of projects, regardless of degree levels. The rubric for Written Communication targeted 5 separate criteria for use across all 3 degree levels and 5 types of capstone projects: Mechanics, Organization, Development of Thesis, Project-Appropriate Formatting and Citation. Several of the writing criteria did not apply to some types of projects because of the nature of the projects and were rated as “Not applicable” on the rating forms (See Appendix B for the articulated criteria and definition of types of projects).

The rubrics for Diversity and Community, Values Orientation and Lifelong Learning utilized 4-point rating scales:
4=Accomplished; 3=Developed; 2=Developing; 1=Undeveloped

The 4-point rating scale for Written Communication was operationalized as follows:

4=Accomplished (Mastery)—Criterion is met thoroughly with no shortcomings or deficiencies)

3=Developed (Adequate)—Criterion is met with occasional, minor shortcomings or deficiencies)

2=Developing—Criterion is minimally met with numerous minor shortcomings and deficiencies and one or more major shortcomings and deficiencies)

1=Undeveloped (Underdeveloped)—Criterion is not met at an acceptable level and contains numerous major and minor shortcomings and deficiencies)

Procedure

A group of 12 faculty members volunteered for each of two evaluation sessions, one in the summer of 2008 and the other in the summer of 2009. The evaluation session of 2008 was used to pilot the rubrics and the process. The faculty came from the three colleges (College of Arts and Sciences, College of Business and Public Management, and College of Education and Organizational Leadership) with teaching and capstone supervision experiences. Four faculty members were involved in evaluating the projects at any particular degree level. Each of the projects were read by two faculty members who independently rated a project using the rubrics and then reached a consensus if there were discrepancies in their ratings. Each faculty member read about ten projects. When a discrepancy of more than one point was involved and/or consensus was not reached a third reader was involved—this happened very infrequently. In several instances consensus was reached to average the ratings when the discrepancy was one point. The evaluators were given note sheets to record their impressions on the various learning outcomes as they read through the projects, for possible use during consultations with the second evaluator (See Appendix C for the master and individual evaluator rating forms, and the note sheet).

The evaluation of the projects took a day and a half. The first two hours were spent on norming and getting familiar with the global rubrics and the articulated criteria. At the end of the evaluation process a debriefing session was held when faculty made comments and suggestions regarding the rubrics and the process (See Appendix D for a summary of the comments).

Analysis of Data

The data from the 2008 evaluation was used to establish the reliability and sensitivity of the rubrics to differentiate the projects on the level of accomplishments of the mission elements and the learning outcomes. The 2008 sample used 62 capstone projects: 21 undergraduate, 20 masters, and 21 doctoral dissertations; 34 were empirical, 15 applied and 13 were other types. The distribution of the ratings across the 4 rating categories of the rubrics was inspected. This was done for the overall sample, as well as separately for each degree level and type of project. Inspection of the frequency distribution of ratings showed that evaluators were able to identify projects at all four rating levels of the rubrics, ranging from Accomplished to Undeveloped. Such a pattern was observed for the entire sample as well as for all the degree levels and types of projects. This suggests that the rubrics were sensitive to the variations in the degree to which projects reflect the learning outcomes being assessed.

The ratings of the learning outcomes were correlated to determine if there was a tendency for projects evaluated higher in one area to also be evaluated higher in another areas. In the total sample generally moderate levels of correlations (.40 - .70) were obtained among the learning outcomes of Diversity and Community, Values Orientation, Lifelong Learning and writing criteria.

If a project was rated higher on one outcome there was a tendency for it to be rated higher on the others. This was not necessarily the case across the board. Moderate, weak and even nonexistent correlation patterns were observed for different degree levels and types of projects. Such patterns further suggest that the evaluators were using the rubrics to make differentiated and fairly independent judgments about the learning outcomes, adding to the confidence about the usefulness of the rubrics and the quality of the evaluation process.

The mean ratings were compared across the degree levels (undergraduate, masters and doctoral) for each of the four learning outcomes. The mean ratings were also compared across different types of projects for each of the learning outcomes. The theoretical, creative and strategic analysis projects were combined into one category called "other", because of small sample sizes, for comparison with the empirical and applied projects. Predictable statistically significant differences were obtained: higher degree levels of projects were generally scored higher on the mission elements and the writing skills. Differences were also observed between different types of projects. Such group differences further reinforce the value of the rubrics and the adequacy of the evaluation process to differentiate the different accomplishment levels of the learning outcomes.

Being confident of the sensitivity of the rubrics and the evaluation process new sample projects were evaluated in the summer of 2009. About 50% of the faculty was from the previous year that had evaluated the projects. After determining that there were no significant differences between the total sample means of the four outcomes between the 2008 and the 2009 samples. Consequently, the data were combined for further analysis.

The Accomplished and Developed ratings were combined to represent the percentage of projects for each degree level and project type: If 70% or more of the projects had ratings as Accomplished or Developed on a particular learning outcome it was considered high level of attainment; between 50%-69% was considered moderate level of attainment; and below 50% was considered low level of attainment.

Mean comparisons with statistically significant differences ($p < .05$) and percentages of Accomplished/Developed projects are presented under Findings separately for each outcome. Comparisons are made between different levels of projects: undergraduate, masters and doctoral, and different types of projects: empirical, applied and other. In the combined sample there were 19 projects of the strategic analysis type. However, there were no statistical differences between the strategic analysis types and the remaining types (theoretical and creative) of the other types of projects, and thus were grouped together for comparison with empirical and applied projects.

Findings

Tables 1 and 2 summarize the findings for the total sample of 127 projects on Diversity and Community, Values Orientation and Lifelong Learning. Overall at the institutional level, the mean scores fall in the middle range of the 4-point scale between Developed and Developing with a spread of about one point, with Lifelong Learning in the moderate level of attainment (60% rated as Developed and Accomplished). Diversity and Community (47%), and Values Orientation (49%) fall in the low attainment level.

Table 1

Means and standard deviations for all levels and types of projects combined on mission elements

Mission Elements	N	M	SD
Diversity and Community	127	2.38	1.06
Values Orientation	127	2.51	.97
Lifelong Learning	127	2.68	1.01

Note: 4=Accomplished; 3=Developed; 2=Developing; 1=Undeveloped; combined 2008 and 2009 samples

Table 2

Percentages (Accomplished and Developed) for all levels and types of projects on mission elements

Mission Elements	N	%		
		Developed	Accomplished	Combined
Diversity and Community	127	27	20	47
Values Orientation	127	29	20	49
Lifelong Learning	127	33	27	60

Note: 4=Accomplished; 3=Developed; 2=Developing; 1=Undeveloped; Combined 2008 and 2009 samples

Below, each mission element is discussed separately. Tables 3 to 6 summarize the findings for Diversity and Community, Values Orientation, and Lifelong Learning disaggregated by degree levels and types of project.

Diversity and Community

While for the **overall sample** (N=127), the mean score on Diversity and Community is 2.38 on a 4-point scale, and 47% of the projects are at the Accomplished or Developed levels, the mean comparisons of the **degree levels** show that doctoral dissertations (3.0) are significantly higher than undergraduate (1.8), and masters (2.3) projects, which are not different from each other. Diversity and Community themes are present in 74% of the doctoral dissertations at the Accomplished or Developed levels. However, only 43% of masters and 20% of undergraduate projects are at the Accomplished or Developed levels. Mean comparisons of **types of projects** show that empirical projects (2.8) are significantly higher than the applied (2.1) and other types of projects (1.9), which are not different from each other. Diversity and Community themes are present in 64% of the empirical projects at the Accomplished or Developed levels. However, only 37% of applied and 25% of other projects are at the Accomplished or Developed levels. In **summary**, it appears that at the institutional level doctoral dissertations reflect the Diversity and Community learning outcome at high levels of attainment, and empirical projects do so at a moderate level of attainment. Applied and other types of projects and projects at the undergraduate and masters levels

reflect the Diversity and Community learning outcome at low levels of attainment. **Recommendations:** (a) To improve the institutional level of attainment of the Diversity and Community learning outcome in capstone projects faculty in various colleges should develop action plans to address the issue in applied and other types of projects and in projects at the masters and undergraduate levels; (b) Individual departments across the university are encouraged to use the rubric and the articulated criteria for Diversity and Community to continuously assess this learning outcome in their capstone courses.

Table 3

Means and standard deviations comparing undergraduate, masters and doctoral capstone projects on mission elements

Mission Elements	Project Levels										
	Undergraduate			Masters			Doctoral			F	Sig
N	M	SD	N	M	SD	N	M	SD			
Diversity and Community	41	1.8 ^a	.9	40	2.3 ^b	1.0	46	3.0 ^{ab}	1.0	17.81	<.001
Values Orientation	41	2.0 ^a	.8	40	2.4 ^b	.9	46	3.2 ^{ab}	.9	20.85	<.001
Lifelong Learning	41	2.0 ^{ab}	1.0	40	2.8 ^{bc}	1.0	46	3.3 ^{ac}	.7	23.57	<.001

Note: 4=Accomplished; 3=Developed; 2=Developing; 1=Undeveloped; Combined 2008 and 2009 samples; Means with common superscripts are significantly different at p <.05 level.

Table 4

Percentages (Accomplished and Developed) comparing undergraduate, masters and doctoral capstone projects on mission elements

Mission Elements	Project Levels								
	Undergraduate (N=41)			Masters(N=40)			Doctoral(N=46)		
	%			%			%		
	Developed	Accomplished	Combined	Developed	Accomplished	Combined	Developed	Accomplished	Combined
Diversity and Community	15	5	20	28	15	43	37	37	74
Values Orientation	17	5	22	30	10	40	39	41	80
Lifelong Learning	17	10	27	33	28	61	48	41	89

Note: 4=Accomplished; 3=Developed; 2=Developing; 1=Undeveloped; Combined 2008 and 2009 samples

Table 5

Means and standard deviations comparing empirical, applied and other types of capstone projects on mission elements

Mission Elements	Types of Projects									F	Sig
	Empirical			Applied			Other				
	N	M	SD	N	M	SD	N	M	SD		
Diversity and Community	65	2.8 ^{ab}	1.0	22	2.1 ^b	1.2	37	1.9 ^a	.8	9.03	<.001
Values Orientation	65	2.9 ^a	.9	22	2.4	1.0	37	2.1 ^a	.8	8.44	<.001
Lifelong Learning	65	3.0 ^a	.9	22	3.0 ^b	1.0	37	2.2 ^{ab}	1.0	8.92	<.001

Note: 4=Accomplished; 3=Developed; 2=Developing; 1=Undeveloped; Combined 2008 and 2009 samples; Means with common superscripts are significantly different at p <.05 level.

Table 6

Percentages (Accomplished and Developed) comparing empirical, applied and other types of capstone projects on mission elements

Mission Elements	Types of Projects								
	Empirical (N=65)			Applied (N=22)			Other (N=37)		
	%			%			%		
	Developed	Accomplished	Combined	Developed	Accomplished	Combined	Developed	Accomplished	Combined
Diversity and Community	35	29	64	14	23	37	22	3	25
Values Orientation	37	29	66	18	18	36	22	5	27
Lifelong Learning	37	32	69	27	41	68	30	11	41

Notes: 4=Accomplished; 3=Developed; 2=Developing; 1=Undeveloped; Combined 2008 and 2009 samples

Values Orientation.

While for the **overall sample** (N=127), the mean score on Values Orientation is 2.51 on a 4-point scale, and 49% of the projects are at the Accomplished or Developed levels, the mean comparisons of the **degree levels** show that the doctoral dissertations (3.2) are significantly higher than the undergraduate (2.0) and the masters (2.4) projects, which are not different from each other. Values Orientation themes are present in 80% of the doctoral dissertations at the Accomplished or Developed levels. However, only 40% of the masters and 22% of the undergraduate projects are at the Accomplished or Developed levels. Mean comparisons of **types of projects** show that empirical projects (2.7) are no different than applied (2.4) and significantly higher than other (2.1) types of projects, which are not different from each other. Values Orientation themes are present in 66% of the empirical projects at the Accomplished or Developed levels. Only 36% of the applied and 27% of the other projects

are at the Accomplished or Developed levels. In **summary**, it appears that at the institutional level the doctoral dissertation and the empirical projects reflect the Values Orientation learning outcome at high and moderate levels of attainment, respectively. Applied and other types of projects and projects at the undergraduate and masters levels reflect the Values Orientation learning outcome at low levels of attainment. **Recommendations:** (a) To improve the institutional level of attainment of the Values Orientation learning outcome in capstone projects faculty in various colleges should develop action plans to address the issue in applied, empirical and other types of projects and in projects at the masters and undergraduate levels; (b) Individual departments across the university are encouraged to use the rubric and the articulated criteria for Values Orientation to continuously assess this learning outcome in their capstone courses.

Lifelong Learning (Critical Thinking)

For the **overall sample** (N=127), the mean score on Lifelong Learning is 2.68 on a 4-point scale, and 60% of the projects are at the Accomplished and Developed levels. Mean comparisons of **degree levels** show that doctoral dissertations (3.3) are significantly higher than the undergraduate (2.0) and master's (2.8) projects, and the master's level projects are significantly higher than the undergraduate projects. Lifelong Learning skills are present in 89% of the doctoral projects at the Accomplished or Developed levels. However, 61% of masters and 27% of undergraduate projects are at the Accomplished or Developed levels. Mean comparisons of **Types of projects** show that the empirical projects (3.0) are significantly higher than other (2.2) types of projects, and the applied (3.0) projects are significantly higher than the other types of projects, and no different from empirical projects. Lifelong Learning skills are present in 69% of empirical projects at the Accomplished or Developed levels. And, 68% of applied and 41% of other projects are at the Accomplished or Developed levels. In **summary**, it appears that at the institutional level, doctoral dissertations and empirical projects reflect Lifelong Learning skills at high and moderate levels of attainment, respectively. Applied and masters projects show moderate levels of attainment. The other types of projects as well as undergraduate projects reflect Lifelong Learning skills at low levels of attainment. **Recommendations:** (a) To improve the institutional level of attainment of the Lifelong Learning skills, as demonstrated in capstone projects, faculty in various colleges should develop action plans to address the issue in applied and other types of projects and in projects at the masters and undergraduate levels; (b) Individual departments across the university are encouraged to use the rubric and the articulated criteria for Lifelong Learning to continuously assess this learning outcome in their capstone courses.

Writing

Tables 7 to 12 summarize the findings regarding writing skills. The five skills evaluated under writing are discussed separately below.

Table 7

Means and standard deviations for all levels and types of projects combined on writing skills

Writing Skills	N	M	SD
Mechanics	125	3.0	.9
Organization	124	3.0	.9
Development of Thesis	119	2.8	1.1
Project Appropriate Format	125	3.0	.9
Citation	125	2.9	1.1

Notes: 4=Accomplished; 3=Developed; 2=Developing; 1=Undeveloped; Combined 2008 and 2009 samples

Table 8

Percentages (Accomplished and Developed) for all levels and types of projects combined on writing skills

Writing Skills	N	%		
		Developed	Accomplished	Combined
Mechanics	125	35	37	72
Organization	124	36	36	72
Development of Thesis	119	30	36	66
Project Appropriate Format	125	32	42	74
Citation	125	23	43	66

Notes: 4=Accomplished; 3=Developed; 2=Developing; 1=Undeveloped; Combined 2008 and 2009 samples

Table 9

Means and standard deviations comparing undergraduate, masters and doctoral capstone projects on writing skills

	Project Levels									F	Sig
	Undergraduate			Masters			Doctoral				
Writing Skills	N	M	SD	N	M	SD	N	M	SD		
Mechanics	39	2.3 ^{ab}	.9	40	2.8 ^{bc}	.9	46	3.8 ^{ac}	.4	38.66	<.001
Organization	39	2.2 ^{ab}	.9	40	2.9 ^{ac}	.9	45	3.7 ^{bc}	.5	38.66	<.001
Development of Thesis	39	1.9 ^{ab}	.9	34	3.0 ^a	1.0	46	3.4 ^b	.8	32.28	<.001
Project Appropriate Format	39	2.3 ^{ab}	.8	40	3.1 ^{ac}	.9	46	3.7 ^{bc}	.5	36.53	<.001
Citation	39	1.9 ^{ab}	1.0	40	2.9 ^{ac}	1.0	46	3.8 ^{bc}	.5	47.66	<.001

Note: 4=Accomplished; 3=Developed; 2=Developing; 1=Undeveloped; Combined 2008 and 2009 samples; Means with common superscripts are significantly different at p <.05 level

Table 10

Percentages (Accomplished and Developed) comparing undergraduate, masters and doctoral capstone projects on writing skills

Writing Skills	Project Levels								
	Undergraduate(N=39)			Masters (N=40)			Doctoral(N=46)		
	%			%			%		
	Developed	Accomplished	Combined	Developed	Accomplished	Combined	Developed	Accomplished	Combined
Mechanics	36	10	46	43	20	63	26	74	100
Organization	23	10	33	50	28	78	32	68	100
Development of Thesis	5	10	15	32	41	73	30	54	84
Project Appropriate Format	36	5	41	40	40	80	22	74	96
Citation	21	8	29	35	35	70	15	80	95

Note: 4=Accomplished; 3=Developed; 2=Developing; 1=Undeveloped; Combined 2008 and 2009 samples

Table 11

Means and standard deviations comparing empirical, applied and other types of capstone projects on writing skills

Writing Skills	Types of Projects									F	Sig
	Empirical			Applied			Other				
	N	M	SD	N	M	SD	N	M	SD		
Mechanics	65	3.4 ^a	.8	22	3.1 ^b	.8	35	2.2 ^{ab}	1.0	23.16	<.001
Organization	64	3.2 ^a	.9	22	3.3 ^b	.7	35	2.3 ^{ab}	.9	12.89	<.001
Development of Thesis	65	3.0 ^a	1.0	16	3.4 ^b	.8	35	2.2 ^{ab}	1.2	9.20	<.001
Project Appropriate Format	65	3.4 ^a	.8	22	3.5 ^b	.7	35	2.3 ^{ab}	1.0	21.80	<.001
Citation	65	3.4 ^a	.9	22	2.9 ^b	.9	35	2.2 ^{ab}	1.2	14.99	<.001

Note: 4=Accomplished; 3=Developed; 2=Developing; 1=Undeveloped; Combined 2008 and 2009 samples; Means with common superscripts are significantly different at p <.05 level

Table 12

Percentages (Accomplished and Developed) comparing empirical, applied and other types of capstone projects on writing skills

Writing Skills	Types of Projects								
	Empirical(N=65)			Applied (N=22)			Other (N=35)		
	%			%			%		
	Developed	Accomplished	Combined	Developed	Accomplished	Combined	Developed	Accomplished	Combined
Mechanics	35	52	87	46	32	78	23	11	34
Organization	33	48	81	46	41	87	34	11	45
Development of Thesis	24	40	64	25	56	81	17	20	37
Project Appropriate Format	29	55	84	36	55	91	34	11	45
Citation	18	62	80	41	32	73	20	20	40

Notes: 4=Accomplished; 3=Developed; 2=Developing; 1=Undeveloped); Combined 2008 and 2009 samples

Writing Skills-Mechanics

For the **overall sample** (N=125), the mean score on Mechanic is 3.0, and 72% of the projects are at the Accomplished or Developed levels. Mean comparisons of **degree levels** show that doctoral dissertations (3.8) are significantly higher than the undergraduate (2.3) and masters (2.8) projects, which are significantly different from each other. Writing Mechanics skills are present in 100% of the doctoral dissertations and 63% of masters projects at the Accomplished or Developed levels. However, only 46% of the undergraduate projects are at these levels. Mean comparisons of **types of projects** show that the empirical (3.4) and applied (3.1) projects are significantly higher than other (2.2) types of projects. Writing Mechanics skills are present in 87% of empirical and 78% of applied projects at the Accomplished or Developed levels. However, only 34% of other types of projects are at these levels. **In summary**, it appears that at the institutional level, doctoral, empirical and applied projects reflect writing Mechanics skills at high levels of attainment, and masters' projects at a moderate level of attainment. Undergraduate and other types of projects reflect writing Mechanics skills at low levels of attainment. **Recommendations:** (a) To improve the institutional level of attainment of the writing Mechanics skills for undergraduate and other types of projects, as demonstrated in capstone projects, faculty in various colleges should develop action plans to address the issue; (b) Individual departments across the university are encouraged to use the rubric and the articulated criteria for Writing Skills-Mechanics to continuously assess this learning outcome in their capstone courses.

Writing Skills-Organization

For the **overall sample** (N=124), the mean score on Organization is 3.0, and 72% of the projects are at the Accomplished or Developed levels. Mean comparisons of **degree levels** show that doctoral dissertations (3.7) are significantly higher than the undergraduate (2.2) and masters (2.9) projects, which are also significantly different from each other. Writing Organization skills are present in 100% of the doctoral dissertations and 78% of masters' projects at the Accomplished or Developed levels. However, only 33% of the undergraduate projects are at these levels. Mean comparisons of **types of projects** show that the empirical (3.2) and applied (3.3) projects are not different from each other, and are significantly higher than other (2.3) types of projects. Writing Organization skills are present in 81% of empirical and 87% of applied projects at the Accomplished or Developed levels. However, 45% of other types of projects are at these levels. **In summary**, it appears that at the institutional level, doctoral, masters, empirical and applied projects reflect writing Organization skills at high levels of attainment. Undergraduate and other types of projects reflect writing Organization skills at low levels of attainment. **Recommendations:** (a) To improve the institutional level of attainment of the writing Organization skills for undergraduate and other types of projects, as demonstrated in capstone projects, faculty in various colleges should develop action plans to address the issue in undergraduate and other types of projects; (b) Individual departments across the university are encouraged to use the rubric and the articulated criteria for Writing Skills-Organization to continuously assess this learning outcome in their capstone courses.

Writing Skills-Development of Thesis

For the **overall sample** (N=119), the mean score on Development of Thesis is 2.8, and 66% of the projects are at the Accomplished or Developed levels. Mean comparisons of **degree levels** show that doctoral dissertations (3.4) are significantly higher than the undergraduate (1.9) projects and so are the masters' (3.0) projects, which are not significantly different from doctoral dissertations. Thesis Development skills are present in 84% of the doctoral dissertations and 73% of masters projects at the Accomplished or Developed levels. However, only 15% of the undergraduate projects are at these levels. Mean comparisons of **types of projects** show that the empirical (3.0) and applied (3.4) projects are significantly higher than other (2.2) types of projects and not different from each other. Thesis Development skills are present in 64% of empirical and 81% of applied projects at the Accomplished or Developed levels. However, only 37% of other projects are at these levels. **In summary**, it appears that at the institutional level, doctoral, masters' and applied projects reflect Thesis Development skills at high levels of attainment, and empirical projects are at moderate level of attainment. Undergraduate and other types of projects reflect thesis development skills at low levels of attainment. Empirical and applied projects are at moderate levels of attainment, and could be improved. **Recommendations:** (a) To improve the institutional level of attainment of thesis development skills for undergraduate and all different types of projects, as demonstrated in capstone projects, faculty in various colleges should develop action plans to address the issue;(b) Individual departments across the university are encouraged to use the rubric for Writing Skills-Development of Thesis to continuously assess this learning outcome in their capstone courses.

Writing Skills-Project Appropriate Format

For the **overall sample** (N=125), the mean score on Project Appropriate Format is 3.0, and 74% of the projects are at the Accomplished or Developed levels. Mean comparisons of **degree levels** show that doctoral dissertations (3.7) are significantly higher than the undergraduate (2.3) projects and so are the masters' (3.1) projects, which are also significantly different from doctoral dissertations. Project Appropriate formatting skills are present in 96% of the doctoral dissertations and 80% of masters' projects at the Accomplished or Developed levels. However, only 41% of the undergraduate projects are at these levels. Mean comparisons of **types of projects** show that the empirical (3.4) and applied (3.5) projects are significantly higher than other (2.3) types of projects and not different from each other. Project Appropriate formatting skills are present in 84% of empirical and 91% of applied projects at the Accomplished or Developed levels. However, only 45% of other types of projects are at these levels. **In summary**, it appears that at the institutional level, doctoral, masters, empirical and applied projects reflect Project Appropriate formatting skills at high levels of attainment. Undergraduate and other types of projects reflect Project Appropriate skills at low levels of attainment. **Recommendations:** (a) To improve the institutional level of attainment of Project Appropriate formatting skills for undergraduate and other types of projects, as demonstrated in capstone projects, faculty in various colleges should develop action plans to address the issue;(b) Individual departments

across the university are encouraged to use the writing rubric to continuously assess this learning outcome in their capstone courses.

Writing Skills-Citation

For the **overall sample** (N=125), the mean score on Citation skills is 2.9, and 66% of the projects are at the Accomplished or Developed levels. Mean comparisons of **degree levels** show that doctoral dissertations (3.8) are significantly higher than the undergraduate (1.9) projects and so are the masters (2.9) projects, which are also significantly lower than doctoral dissertations. Citation skills are present in 95% of the doctoral dissertations and 70% of masters' projects at the Accomplished or Developed levels. However, only 29% of the undergraduate projects are at these levels. Mean comparisons of **types of projects** show that the empirical (3.4) and applied (2.9) projects are significantly higher than other (2.2) types of projects and not different from each other. Citation skills are present in 80% of empirical and 73% of applied projects at the Accomplished or Developed levels. However, only 40% of other types projects are at these levels. **In summary**, it appears that at the institutional level, doctoral, masters and empirical and applied projects reflect Citation skills at high levels of attainment. Undergraduate and other types of projects reflect citation skills at very low levels of attainment. **Recommendations:** (a) To improve the institutional level of attainment of citation skills for undergraduate, applied and other types of projects, as demonstrated in capstone projects, faculty in various colleges should develop action plans to address the issue;(b) Individual departments across the university are encouraged to use the Writing Skills-Citation rubric to continuously assess this learning outcome in their capstone courses.

Comparison of Writing Skills Criteria

For the **overall sample** inspection of the 5 writing criteria shows that Mechanics, Organization and Project Appropriate formatting skills are present at high levels of attainment: over 70% of the capstone projects are rated at the Accomplished or Developed levels in these areas. The writing criteria of Thesis Development and Citation skills are present at moderate levels of attainment: 66% and 66%, respectively, of capstone projects are rated at the Accomplished or Developed levels in these areas. Doctoral dissertations and masters projects show high levels of attainment of all the writing skills: Over 70% of these capstone projects are rated at Accomplished or Developed levels. Undergraduate projects demonstrate low levels of attainment of all the writing skills criteria with 41% or fewer of the projects being rated as Accomplished or Developed. Thesis Development and Citation skills are particularly low: 15% and 29%, respectively, are rated Accomplished or Developed. Empirical projects show high levels of attainment (Over 70% are rated Accomplished or Developed) on all criteria except on thesis development skills being at the moderate level(64% rated Accomplished or Developed). Applied projects show high levels of attainment on all of the writing skills (Over 70% are rated at Accomplished or Developed levels). Other types of projects (theoretical, creative and strategic analysis combined) show low levels of attainment of all the writing skills: Less than

50% are rated at the Accomplished or Developed levels. **In summary**, Mechanics, Organization and Projects Appropriate formatting appear to be at high levels of attainment, especially in graduate and empirical and applied projects, and Thesis Development and Citation skills appear to be at low levels of attainment, especially in undergraduate and other types of capstone projects.

Summary

Tables 13-15 summarize the overall institutional findings as well as for different degree levels and types of projects. Overall, there appears to be room for improvement in all three of the mission elements in the extent to which they are reflected in capstone projects. However, doctoral and masters capstone projects do better than undergraduate programs in reflecting the mission elements. Also, empirical and applied projects do better than other types of project reflecting the mission elements.

In writing, overall, capstone projects do well in mechanics, organization and formatting, with room for improvement in thesis development and citations. However, while doctoral, master as well as empirical and applied projects show high attainment of writing skills, undergraduate and other types of project need serious attention.

Table 13

Overall institutional findings

Outcomes	High Attainment ($\geq 70\%$ Developed & Accomplished)	Moderate Attainment (50% - 69% Developed & Accomplished)	Low Attainment ($< 50\%$ Developed & Accomplished)
Diversity and Community			X
Values Orientation			X
Lifelong Learning (Critical Thinking)		X	
Writing—Mechanics	X		
Writing—Organization	X		
Writing—Thesis Development		X	
Writing—Formatting	X		
Writing—Citation		X	

Table 14

Mission elements by degree level and type of project

Outcomes	High Attainment ($\geq 70\%$ Developed & Accomplished)	Moderate Attainment (50% - 69% Developed & Accomplished)	Low Attainment ($< 50\%$ developed & Accomplished)
Diversity and Community	Doctoral	Empirical type	Undergraduate Masters Applied type Other project types
Values Orientation	Doctoral	Empirical type	Undergraduate Masters Applied type Other Project types
Lifelong Learning (Critical Thinking)	Doctoral	Masters Empirical type Applied type	Undergraduate Other project types

Table 15

Writing by degree level and type of project

Outcomes	High Attainment ($\geq 70\%$ Developed & Accomplished)	Moderate Attainment (50% - 69% Developed & Accomplished)	Low Attainment ($< 50\%$ developed & Accomplished)
Writing—Mechanics	Doctoral Empirical type Applied type	Masters	Undergraduate Other project types
Writing—Organization	Doctoral Masters Empirical Applied		Undergraduate Other project types
Writing—Thesis Development	Doctoral Masters Applied type	Empirical	Undergraduate Other project type
Writing—Formatting	Doctoral		Undergraduate

	Masters	Other project types
	Empirical type	
	Applied	
Writing—Citation	Doctoral	Undergraduate
	Masters	Other project types
	Empirical	
	Applied	

Appendix A

Global Rubrics for All Project Types and Degree Levels

For

Diversity and Community

Values Orientation

Lifelong Learning

University of La Verne Capstone Global Assessment Rubrics

4=Accomplished	3=Developed	2=Developing	1=Undeveloped
DIVERSITY AND COMMUNITY			
The capstone project explicitly explores or examines issues of socio-cultural diversity and/or sustainability of human or natural communities with much detail and complexity in narrative content, methodology/process, and includes references to more than one of the following: race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, ability, age, SES, political perspectives, belief systems or the natural world	The capstone project explicitly explores or examines issues of socio-cultural diversity and/or sustainability of human or natural communities with few details and some complexity in narrative content or methodology/process, and includes references to one of the following: race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, ability, age, SES, political perspectives, belief systems or the natural world	The capstone project tangentially refers to issues of socio-cultural diversity and/or sustainability of human or natural communities with few details but lacks complexity in narrative content or methodology/process, and includes references to one of the following: race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, ability, age, SES, political perspectives, belief systems or the natural world	The capstone project lacks direct reference to issues of socio-cultural diversity and/or sustainability of human or natural communities in narrative content or methodology/process, and might refer to one of the following indirectly : race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, ability, age, SES, political perspectives, belief systems or the natural world
VALUES ORIENTATION			
The capstone project explicitly explores or examines beliefs or principles of human conduct in various historical, social, economic and/or personal context and/or in the natural world and their ethical implications with much detail and complexity in narrative content, methodology/process with inferences and implications for the human condition/natural world	The capstone project explicitly explores or examines beliefs or principles of human conduct in various historical, social, economic and/or personal context and/or in the natural world and their ethical implications with few details and some complexity in narrative content, methodology/process with inferences and implications for the human condition/natural world	The capstone project tangentially refers to beliefs or principles of human conduct in various historical, social, economic and/or personal context and/or in the natural world and their ethical implications with few details but lacks complexity in narrative content, methodology/process with inferences and implications for the human condition/natural world	The capstone project lacks direct reference to beliefs or principles of human conduct in various historical, social, economic and/or personal context and/or in the natural world and their ethical implications and makes a passing remark in narrative content, methodology/process on the impact of the project on the human condition/natural world
LIFELONG LEARNING			
Through the capstone project, the student demonstrates an exceptional ability to think critically by obtaining, evaluating and integrating information effectively , using relevant and current technologies (e.g. databases, software, analytical tools), and in making inferences and drawing conclusions very effectively acknowledges shortcomings and personal bias, and avoids overgeneralization, political agenda and/or unfair financial gain	Through the capstone project, the student demonstrates a strong ability to think critically by obtaining, evaluating and integrating information well with minor deficiencies , using relevant and current technologies (e.g. databases, software, analytical tools), and in making inferences and drawing conclusions acknowledges few shortcomings and personal bias, and demonstrates occasional overgeneralization, personal bias, political agenda and/or unfair financial gain	Through the capstone project, the student demonstrates a fair ability to think critically by obtaining, evaluating and integrating information with several minor and few major deficiencies , using somewhat relevant and current technologies (e.g. databases, software, analytical tools), and in making inferences and drawing conclusions superficially acknowledges shortcomings and personal bias with several instances of overgeneralization, personal bias, political agenda and/or unfair financial gain	Through the capstone project, the student demonstrates a marginal ability to think critically by obtaining, evaluating and integrating information with numerous minor and few major deficiencies , using marginally relevant and current technologies (e.g. databases, software, analytical tools), and in making inferences and drawing conclusions fails to acknowledge shortcomings and personal bias with several instances of overgeneralization, personal bias, political agenda and/or unfair financial gain

Appendix B

Articulated Criteria for all Degree Levels and Types of Projects

For

Diversity and Community

Values Orientation

Lifelong Learning

Written Communication

Diversity and Community

<u>Empirical Projects</u> (Involve original data collection – qualitative or quantitative in nature to answer questions or test hypotheses)	<u>Applied Projects</u> (Involve utilization of knowledge to intervene, prevent, ameliorate or to solve a problem in social contexts, work or natural environments)	<u>Theoretical, Reflective or Analytical Projects</u> (Involve systematic library, bibliographic and/or documentary research)	<u>Creative and Artistic Expression</u> (Involve paintings, sculptures, musical performances and theatre productions)	<u>Strategic analysis</u> (Involve utilization of business and organizational skills and principles to analyze the essential features of real-world business or organizational structures or processes)
1. Topic, problem and purpose statements focus on population(s) or issue(s) that reflect diversity	1. Topic, problem and purpose statements clearly focus on a population(s) or issue(s) that reflect diversity	1. Topic, problem and thesis statements clearly focus on a population(s), issue(s) or event(s) that reflect diversity	1. Content of the projects, as articulated in accompanying written statements and reflections, explicitly address issues related to diversity	1. Global and socio-cultural diversities (ethnic, gender, SES, etc), environmental/sustainability issues are considered or addressed in the strategic analysis of the organizational structure and control systems
2. Literature reviews theory and research that examine issues of diversity	2. Literature reviews theory and research that examine issues of diversity	2. Research material cover perspectives that reflect points of view inclusive of diverse populations	2. Creative or artistic piece and/or process explores the diversity of the human condition	2. Global and socio-cultural diversities (ethnic, gender, SES, etc), environmental/sustainability issues are considered or addressed in the strategic analysis of the marketing, promotion and customer relations areas
3. Hypotheses or research questions identify diversity related variables	3. Procedures and strategies used in the applied project reflect awareness and sensitivity to the diversity of the population(s)	3. Narrative or essay explicitly addresses issues, concepts and concerns pertinent to diverse populations, cultural contexts or perspectives		3. Global and socio-cultural diversities (ethnic, gender, SES, etc), environmental/sustainability issues are considered or addressed in the strategic analysis of employee relations and human resources management areas
4. Sampling, measurement instruments, and data collection procedures are sensitive to diversity issues	4. Discussion and critique of the project consider implications for the sustainability of diverse communities	4. Conclusions, implications and recommendations have relevance for the sustainability of diverse communities		
5. Findings are interpreted in terms of their implications for the sustainability of diverse communities				

Values Orientation

<u>Empirical Projects</u> (Involve original data collection – qualitative or quantitative in nature)	<u>Applied Projects (Involve utilization of knowledge to intervene, prevent, ameliorate or to solve a problem in social contexts, work or natural environments</u>	<u>Theoretical, Reflective or Analytical Projects (Involve systematic library, bibliographic and/or documentary research)</u>	<u>Creative and Artistic Expression (Involve paintings, sculptures, musical performances and theatre productions)</u>	<u>Strategic Analysis (Involve utilization of business and organizational skills and principles to Analyze the essential features of real-world business or organizational structures or processes)</u>
1. Topic, problem and purpose statement clearly indicate a focus on the exploration and examination of a value(s) or belief system(s) in general social context, natural environment or the work environment	1. Topic, problem and purpose statement clearly indicate a focus on an ethical or moral issue to affect conduct that could help intervene, prevent or ameliorate a problem in social context or work environment	1. Topic, problem and thesis statement clearly focus on an ethical or moral issue that allow the exploration of values and belief systems or have implications for human conduct in social context, natural environment or the workplace	1. Content of the project, as articulated in written statements, stories, scripts and reflections, systematically and explicitly explore the impact of beliefs or principles of human conduct and their ethical implications on the human condition	1. Strategic analysis of an organization’s structure and control systems considers beliefs and values in the global/cross-cultural context, ethical practices and sustainability implications
2. Literature reviewed includes theory and research related to values and beliefs and/or standards of professional conduct	2. Background literature reviewed explores and examines the ethical and/or moral issues under consideration	2. Research material covered deal with values and belief systems with implications for human conduct in social context, natural environment or the workplace	2. Creative or artistic piece and/or process explores the impact of beliefs or principles of human conduct and their ethical implications on the human condition	2. Strategic analysis of an organization’s marketing and promotional/customer relations policies and procedures considers ethical/moral conduct by management and employees
3. Methodology and procedure reflect compliance with professional standards that protect participants (human or animal) from harm or undue pain and honor copyright guidelines	3. Sampling and implementation procedures protect participants (human or animal) from harm or undue pain and maintain anonymity, and/or allow for expression of values and belief systems	3. Narrative or essay critically examines and explores ethical and moral issues from variety of sources and perspectives		3. Strategic analysis of an organization’s employee relations, human resource and labor policies and procedures considers their ethical/moral and sustainability implications in the global context
4. Discussion of findings reflect an effort to systematically address the implication of the study for personal or social conduct in the workplace or the natural environment, or clarification of beliefs or value systems in general	4. Discussion and critique of the project consider implications for belief systems and moral conduct in society, workplace or the natural environment	4. Conclusions and recommendations explicitly indicate implications for human conduct and/or belief systems in society, natural environment or the workplace		

Lifelong Learning

<u>Empirical Projects</u> (Involve original data collection – qualitative or quantitative in nature)	<u>Applied Projects</u> (Involve utilization of knowledge to intervene, prevent, ameliorate or to solve a problem in social contexts, work or natural environments)	<u>Theoretical, Reflective or Analytical Projects</u> (Involve systematic library, bibliographic and/or documentary research)	<u>Creative and Artistic Expression</u> (Involve paintings, sculptures, musical performances and theatre productions)	<u>Strategic Analysis</u> (Involve utilization of business and organizational skills and principles to analyze the essential features of real-world business or organizational structures or processes)
1. Problem and purpose statement identify variables clearly and provide a rationale based on verifiable existing information and free of personal bias	1. Problem and purpose statement identify variables clearly and provide a rationale based on verifiable existing information and free of personal bias	1. Problem and purpose statement identify variables and issues clearly and provide a rationale based on verifiable existing information and free of personal bias	1. Reflections elaborating on the theme analyze elements or principles used in the work	1. Strategic analysis of an organization demonstrates effective utilization of relevant and current technology and information sources
2. Literature review covers material obtained using appropriate technology cited according to professional standards and format of a discipline	2. Literature review and background information covers material obtained using appropriate technology cited according to professional standards and format of a discipline	2. Narrative or essay covers material obtained using appropriate technology cited according to professional standards and format of a discipline	2. Reflections clearly describe the content and its meaning in the work	2. Strategic analysis of an organization demonstrates effective evaluation and integration of information that is evidence based and free of personal bias
3. Literature review demonstrates the ability to evaluate relevant evidence and integrates information coherently	3. Literature review demonstrates the ability to evaluate relevant evidence and integrates information coherently	3. Narrative or essay demonstrates the ability to evaluate relevant evidence and integrates information coherently	3. Reflections clearly demonstrate the ability to solve problems encountered in the development of the work	3. Strategic analysis of an organization demonstrates appropriate and evidence based inferences
4. Methodology and procedure identify measurement instruments and approaches that have documented reliability and validity	4. Application of knowledge to intervene or solve a problem is unbiased by personal beliefs, political agendas or economic gain	4. Conclusions are inferred appropriately from the analysis and presentation of information free of personal bias, political agenda or economic gain	4. Work demonstrates the appropriate use of relevant and current technology	
5. Analysis of the data is conducted using appropriate technology and established statistical method	5. Application is inferred appropriately from existing verifiable information demonstrated to be effective			
6. Findings are appropriate inferences from the analysis and discussion and conclusions integrate the findings	6. Discussion and critique of the project appropriately identifies shortcomings and presents a balanced unbiased conclusion about its effectiveness and future implications			

Written Communication

Projects of all types: Empirical, Applied, Theoretical/Analytical, Creative/Artistic and Strategic Analysis
1. Mechanics – Effective use of Standard American English mechanics appropriate to the purpose for and audience of the text
2. Organization – Effective organization including smooth transitions and successful sequencing
3. Development of Thesis – Well developed thesis with effective use of support
4. Project Appropriate Formatting – Consistent style and project-appropriate formatting
5. Citation – Adequate summarizing and paraphrasing, with appropriate and correct citation formatting (MLA, APA, Chicago, etc.)

Appendix C

Master and Individual Rating Forms

And

Evaluator Note Sheets

**ULV
Capstone Global Rubric Rating Form
MASTER**

Capstone Project ID Number: _____

Date: _____

Type of project: 1=Empirical 2=Applied 3=Theoretical 4=Creative 5=Simulation

Level of project: 1=Undergraduate 2=Masters 3=Doctoral

Year Project Completed: _____

Outcomes	4 Accomplished	3 Developed	2 Developing	1 Undeveloped
Diversity and Community	4	3	2	1
Values Orientation	4	3	2	1
Lifelong Learning	4	3	2	1
WRITING				
Mechanics	4	3	2	1
Organization	4	3	2	1
Development of Thesis	4	3	2	1
Project-appropriate Formatting	4	3	2	1
Citation (APA , etc) Format and Paraphrasing	4	3	2	1

Comments:

**ULV
Capstone Global Rubric Rating Form**

Individual Evaluator

Capstone Project ID Number: _____

Date: _____

Type of project: 1=Empirical 2=Applied 3=Theoretical 4=Creative 5=Simulation

Level of project: 1=Undergraduate 2=Masters 3=Doctoral

Year Project Completed: _____

Evaluator's Initials: _____

Outcomes	4 Accomplished	3 Developed	2 Developing	1 Undeveloped
Diversity and Community	4	3	2	1
Values Orientation	4	3	2	1
Lifelong Learning	4	3	2	1
WRITING				
Mechanics	4	3	2	1
Organization	4	3	2	1
Development of Thesis	4	3	2	1
Project-appropriate Formatting	4	3	2	1
Citation (APA , etc) Format and Paraphrasing	4	3	2	1

Comments:

Project ID: _____

Type of Project: _____

Evaluator Notes

Diversity

Values Orientation

Lifelong Learning

Writing

Appendix D

Faulty Evaluators' Comments and Suggestions

Follow Up Notes from Capstone Assessment Project

By Faculty Evaluators

Present at the debriefing discussion:

Kathy Duncan, Marga Madhuri, Richard Simpson, Aghop Der Karabetian, Jeanne Flora, Kent Badger, Jerry Kearns, Sonja Lopez, Cathy Irwin, Christine Broussard

Overall Comments on the Process

- Everyone agreed that working with people across disciplines was a valuable experience
- People liked reading and scoring papers from different programs
- Might be a valuable process for each program to use in scoring their own capstone projects
- Having a total of 10 papers to score per team was a workable amount. If we add more papers to the process, we'll need more people to score them
- When collecting projects from Business, collect the Strategic plans or Strategic audits; the Simulations are not amenable to this process
- Talk to Fine Arts chairs, or people whose projects have little writing to see if they can complete the rubrics during grading for more accurate results (rather than reading a small reflection paper on what was basically a performance or fine arts piece)
- Do we want to include the actual assignment so we know what was required?
- Time frame: It took about 3 hours for the initial orientation, and about 6-7 hours for most pairs to do the scoring
- Scoring got easier as scorers became familiar with the rubrics

Considerations for During Scoring:

- Group project by type (applied, theoretical/empirical, etc.) for scoring. It's hard to change mindsets by going back and forth between types of projects
- Continue to group by level

- Be aware that reading one paper (say that's weak) might bias a reader for next paper
- It was challenging to delineate between the Values and Diversity categories
- Different words might have different meanings/connotations across disciplines (e.g. correlation)
- Tip for scoring dissertations/longer projects—Read the introduction and conclusion thoroughly, and spot read the rest

Considerations for Analysis

- Check for correlations between Values and Diversity
- Compare types of projects and by college

Regarding the Rubrics

- Overall, people really felt the rubrics were clearly written, and it was helpful to have both the Global and articulated rubrics.
- Might be helpful to give students the rubrics as guides in assisting them in selecting a senior project
- Add some way to delineate between a score of “Undeveloped” due to a lack on the student’s part vs. an “Undeveloped” score due to lack of appropriateness to the assignment

Writing Rubric

- Add a “Not appropriate” column to rows 3-5. Some of the projects don’t have a thesis, or won’t use APA format
- Unclear between the “Project appropriate formatting” section and the “Appropriate and correct citation formatting” section. We discussed the difference being the format matching the type of project vs. APA/MLA etc.
- More articulated rubric for each of the 4 levels would be helpful

Global Rubric

- Add “/natural world” to the end of the sentence for each level of the Values Orientation row.
- Add “or acknowledgement of” after the “personal bias” statement for each level of the Lifelong Learning row.

- Correct the typo in the level 4 part of the Lifelong Learning section (it says “the students demonstrates” and should be “student.”)

Articulated Diversity & Community Rubric

- Take out “of the human condition” from the Creative and Artistic expression column.

For the Future

- Share results with the scorers to bring closure to the process
- Redo the process every 2-3 years and build a bank of scores which will then allow us to see trends in different programs
- Share results with the different colleges in the University
- Consider how these issues are threaded through all our courses, not just as part of the capstone projects

