

Adult & Higher Education (AHE) Assessment Plan 2015 **Sondra Cuban, Director, AHE**

Program Overview and Aims/Goals of AHE

The AHE program prepares students to become leaders in diverse adult and higher education professional and academic settings and in various capacities ranging from practitioner to administrator to researcher. Students are expected to know how to connect practice with theory to policy and research in order to learn about the AHE field in a comprehensive way. They do this through inquiry based practices, thematic course work, and literacy practices (information, academic, digital and critical), and with a focus on issues related to social justice, self-knowledge, and diversity to develop their identities as public intellectuals and scientist-practitioners. The goals of the program are guided by standards developed by the Commission on Professoriate in Adult Education (CPAE) and the Association of American Colleges and Universities (AACU) and which also integrate the aims of the Department of Health & Community Studies, as well as the missions of Woodring College of Education <https://wce.wvu.edu/mission-vision> and WWU <http://www.wvu.edu/president/strategic-plan.shtml>.

Mission

It is the mission of the Adult and Higher Education (AHE) program to foster critically reflective, scholarly practitioners in the field of adult and higher education and to socialize leaders to the discipline of adult and higher education as well as to apply principles of adult learning across diverse professional settings. The AHE program mission incorporates the missions of Woodring College of Education and WWU, as well as that of the Department of Health & Community Studies. More specifically this mission:

- Promotes self-directed, autonomous active learning among adults
- Makes education relevant to current trends
- Honors individual and cultural differences and facilitates access for all learners
- Models best practices in teaching and training adult learners
- Integrates research, theory, and personal knowledge in guiding the practice of educating adults
- Links evaluation with program goals and objectives to assure continual program improvement
- Involves diverse organizations in action learning and action research that benefits the community by increasing its capacity and the quality of learning among students

Learning Outcomes

The learning outcomes were redeveloped in 2013 and are integrated throughout the program. They are explicit in student-based materials---from the AHE website to the *Student Handbook* to learning objectives evident in each syllabus. All required courses, together, address the following Learning Outcomes as well as the Learning Objectives (see below):

- 1) **Diversity & Social Justice** – This outcome concerns the examination and application in real world settings of sociocultural perspectives, ethics, power, identities, struggle, and social action in terms of the foundations of the field.
- 2) **Research & Evaluation** – This outcome concerns the use of and examination and application of inquiry-based practice, evaluation and assessment, as well as action research.
- 3) **Adult Learning Theories** – This outcome concerns the understanding and application of learning issues and philosophies of AHE, including adult learning and development and critical reflection and their practical and theoretical application through organizations, classrooms, administration and policies.
- 4) **Teaching & Facilitation** – This outcome concerns the examination and application of assessment, teaching methods, instructional technology, instructional design, and e-learning and blended learning to adults in formal, non-formal, and informal environments in international and national contexts.
- 5) **Leadership** – This outcome concerns the comparison and contrast of various leadership styles, processes, and outcomes within organizational learning, educational policies, and program development.

Learning Objectives

The following objectives reflect the Program OVERVIEW AND AIMS and Learning Outcomes (see above) and appear in AHE course syllabi, as “course objectives.” The required courses contain these Objectives (with electives as supportive) and the addendum below illustrates this harmonization. These Objectives are explicit in required courses, especially the culminating portfolio and research course, AHE 588. Upon graduation, students in AHE will be able to:

- 1) *Formulate, analyze, and appraise* foundations of the AHE field and apply this knowledge to historical and current settings as well as develop and expand these to fit with themes of social justice and diversity. These objectives encapsulate Learning Outcome 1 above. The AHE 554 and AHE 555 courses highlight this the most.
- 2) *Determine, design and choose* relevant research and evaluation methods and approaches and apply these to professional and academic settings. These objectives are reflected in Learning Outcome 2 above. The AHE 501, 571, and 592 courses highlight this the most.
- 3) *Examine, manage, and evaluate* AHE learning and development practices and issues in educational organizations and institutions for adults concerning all levels and settings of the field and with regard to best practices in adult learning. These objectives are detailed in learning outcome 3 above. The AHE 577 and AHE 580 courses highlight this the most.
- 4) *Debate, construct, and compare and contrast* teaching and assessment practices and policies and apply these to national and international settings. These objectives are captured in learning outcome 4 above. The AHE 546 and 580 courses highlight this the most.
- 5) *Differentiate, propose, and appraise* leadership styles, processes, and policies in adult and higher education. These objectives are captured in Learning Outcome 5 above. The AHE 576 and AHE 592 courses highlight this the most.

Assessment of Objectives

All AHE course syllabi clearly articulate these Learning Objectives (stated above) in course objectives, which are normally in a bulleted list and are appropriate to the subject matter of a course. Direct measures of assessment include students being required to articulate in both oral and written form and in electronic and face-to-face formats their mastery over the course

objectives, through discussions, presentations, and academic papers and they are evaluated through systematic criteria, that is, in rubrics. The instructor creates and then gives an appropriate letter grade. Each syllabus contains explicit and clearly written criteria for assessing the degree to which those objectives have been met (i.e., rubrics or lists) and which have been recently reviewed to ensure they are present and appropriate. All courses, additionally, contain both formal and informal assessments that are interwoven into the curriculum, and at various points to demonstrate student progress on the Objectives. All Learning Objectives (and Outcomes) are present in the culminating course, AHE 588, which demonstrates students' comprehensive knowledge of the field of Adult & Higher Education, and which are captured in the required and elective courses of the AHE program. Students cannot graduate from the AHE program until they fulfill the requirements in this capstone course (see Addendum on page 4).

Assessment Mechanisms for Accountability

The following assessment activities are integrated into the program to ensure that students are meeting the Learning Objectives set forth in the AHE program (described above) and with coherence across the Department and Woodring College Of Education. They will be fully accounted for by the end of the summer 2016 term:

- 1) Curriculum Review by Director - This process started Fall 2015 and will continue as an annual event each Fall term, as a way to improve the curriculum and continuously update it. Syllabi from all required and elective courses will be reviewed and discussed with instructors to monitor and improve curriculum and ensure that assessment is a key feature. Moreover with the more rigorous overhaul of curriculum in AHE 588, the Director will be interviewing both students and instructors to assess the degree to which the changes have been effective. See Addendum on page 4 below which captures required courses aligned to Learning Outcomes.
- 2) Regular Team meetings To Assess Progress of Students – Bi-quarterly meetings focused on student progress in the program will enable the team to directly deal with any student problems and issues as well as those exceeding expectations.
- 3) GSAC Annual Program Survey – A comprehensive program survey in the Spring term of each year will assess the degree of satisfaction students have with the program and pinpoint areas needing improvement.
- 4) Quarterly Meetings with Department Chair & Directors – Meetings to discuss ideas for program improvement and in collaboration with other programs as a means for improving AHE program assessment mechanisms
- 5) Data Collection of Coordinator – Annual summer data collection of student persistence in the program in conjunction with bi-weekly meetings with the Director to assess the degree to which students appear to be progressing within the program and align to Learning Outcomes and Objectives. This is communicated to the team to find ways to improve student persistence, in line with number 2 above. Additionally, the Coordinator is collecting data on the lifecycle of prospective students from how they heard about the program to their attendance at an Information Session to their application to the program. This enables the team to gauge a baseline for prospective students' persistence and their progress
- 6) Advisory Board Feedback – Each year the advisory board will meet with the team to recommend ways to improve the learning outcomes and objectives and the general accountability of programs. Two such meetings have already occurred and implementation plans have been undertaken beginning Fall 2015.
- 7) Closing the Loop report - Annual report due at the end of the fall term explaining progress, problems and any changes (statistically and narratively) within the program and in terms of students' tenure stages, from retention to post-completion, with key university-wide student data to support the analysis.

- 8) A sampling of student work and interviews with random students from each year will indicate the degree to which the Learning Objectives are being met and any improvements needed in the present and following year.

Addendum: Learning Outcomes of All Required Courses*

Course number and title	Explicit Learning Outcomes Addressed In Order (As Appropriate to Course)
AHE 501-Understanding Educational Research	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Research & Evaluation • Leadership
IT 546-Instructional Technology and Digital Literacy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teaching & Facilitation • Diversity & Social Justice
AHE 554-Foundations of Adult Education & Diversity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Diversity & Social Justice • Leadership • Adult Learning
AHE 555-Foundations of Higher Education & Diversity (new course)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Diversity & Social Justice • Leadership • Adult Learning
AHE 571-Research & Evaluation Methods	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Research & Evaluation • Leadership
AHE 576-Leadership & Management of Educational Programs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Leadership • Diversity & Social Justice • Research & Evaluation
AHE 577-Learning in Adulthood	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adult Learning • Teaching & Facilitation • Research & Evaluation • Diversity & Social Justice
AHE 580-Teaching & Instructional Design	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teaching & Facilitation • Adult Learning • Leadership • Diversity & Social Justice
AHE 588-Portfolio & Applied Research Proposal	ALL FIVE LEARNING OUTCOMES ADDRESSED
AHE 592-Field Experience	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Leadership • Research & Evaluation • Teaching & Facilitation

* These Outcomes are captured in Learning Objectives of the Program which in turn are listed as “course objectives” in AHE syllabi.