

"CLOSING THE LOOP": PROGRAM IMPROVEMENT DOCUMENTATION

ACADEMIC YEAR: 2022-2023

Please submit to your College Dean with your Annual Report by the End of the 2022-2023 academic year and also to jackherring@wwu.edu at that time

COLLEGE: WOODRING

DEPARTMENT OR PROGRAM: HCS/AHE

CHAIR OR DIRECTOR: SONDRA CUBAN

ASSESSMENT COORDINATOR: N/A

One of this year's assessment tasks is to document program improvements informed by SLO assessment and other forms of evidence. Use this form to document your improvements and the evidence and discussion that informed them.

The following SLOs reflect both the [AHE program mission](#) and especially [Learning Outcomes and Objectives](#). These are explicit in AHE course syllabi "course objectives." The required courses contain these SLOs which are explicit in required courses, especially the culminating portfolio and research course, AHE 588. Upon graduation, students in AHE will fulfill all the SLOs:

SLO 1: Social Justice and Diversity. Objective: *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, Social Justice, and Diversity. The AHE 555 course, Higher Education and Diversity most highlights this objective.

SLO 2: Research and Evaluation. Objective: *Determine, design, and choose* relevant research and evaluation methods and approaches and apply these to professional and academic settings. As a research-based master's program, these objectives are reflected in Learning Outcome 2, Research & Evaluation, with AHE's four-part research sequence: AHE581, Readings in Adult & Higher Education, AHE 501, Introduction to Research and AHE 571, Research Methodology (all taken in the beginning of students' tenure in AHE) as well as AHE 588, Portfolio (taken in the last year of the students' program). AHE 592, Field Experience, may also involve research and evaluation projects.

SLO 3: Adult Learning Theories. Objective: *Examine, manage, and evaluate* AHE learning practices and issues in educational organizations and in technology for adults at various levels and settings within the field and about best practices in adult learning. These objectives are detailed in Learning Outcome 3, Adult Learning Theories. The AHE 577 Learning in Adulthood course highlights this objective the most along with IT 546, Digital Literacy

SLO 4: Teaching and Facilitation. Objective: *Debate, construct, and compare and contrast* teaching and assessment practices and policies and apply these to state-wide, national, and international settings. These objectives are captured in Learning Outcome 4 (Teaching and Facilitation). The course AHE 580, Instructional Design and Facilitation course highlights this objective the most along with IT546, Digital Literacy.

SLO5: Leadership *Differentiate, propose, and appraise* leadership styles, processes, and policies in adult and higher education. These objectives are captured in Learning Outcome 5 (Leadership). The AHE 576, Leadership and AHE 592, Field Experience courses highlight this objective the most.

All AHE course syllabi clearly articulate these SLOs in course objectives, which are normally in a bulleted list and are appropriate to the subject matter of a particular course. Direct measures of assessment of these SLOs include students being required to articulate in both oral and written form and in electronic and face-to-face formats their mastery over them, through discussions, presentations, and academic papers and they are evaluated through systematic and explicit criteria. The instructor creates and then gives an appropriate letter grade (or S/U in two courses) based on the fulfillment of the identified criteria. This criterion is clearly written into each syllabus as rubrics or lists and assesses the degree to which those objectives have been met and which have been recently reviewed to ensure they are present, explicit, 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 SLOs. All SLOs are present in the culminating course, AHE 588, which demonstrates students' comprehensive knowledge, skills, and dispositions needed within the field of Adult & Higher Education, and which are also 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.

2022-2023 Type of Change	SLOs Targeted	Description of Program Improvement	Rationale and Level of Faculty Involvement	Evidence that will demonstrate if this change improves student learning.
Student work (Evaluation of AHE papers)	All SLOs, especially SLO2	40 AHE papers were collected of AHE students in the AHE588 course to assess the extent to which students are achieving all the SLOs above. All SLOs are measured, assessed, and deemed to meet standards as well as one needing development, such as SLO 2 (which is too soon to be judged since AHE581 was just introduced as a foundational research requirement)	One faculty who teaches the AHE588 course assessed the degree to which improvement was needed for the SLOs. Since we recently brought in SLO2 in a four-part research series, which students are to take in the beginning of the program, in 2022, it may be too soon to judge. Many students struggled to locate a Big idea for SLO2 and there were a couple papers that were deemed to be partial and with the need to revise them (which students did, along with further instructional guidance)	Students were able to take a "big idea: from each of the SLOs (and Outcomes of AHE, see above) and write a reflective paper that connected it to their former work demonstrating metacognitive thinking and skills as well as knowledge of the AHE field. Each of the students passed this part of the course, and some wrote model papers. SLO2 was deemed to need improvement prior to this 2023 course, and changes will be made to the AHE501 course to improve research learning
Advising (Focused interviews)	All SLOs, especially SLO5	Regular announcements each quarter were made in 22-23 to invite students to an advising session and an advising pathway was created along with the use of Degree works to help students get on this pathway and stay on it. Most of the 47 students in AHE in 22-23 had Zoom or phone advising interviews during the year and were able to put a plan in place for their studies. It was also an opportunity for the director to speak with them about issues and ways they could improve their studies	All SLOs were assessed during these advising interviews in which students also discussed ways they could improve their studies in AHE and persist. Previously, the schedule for each year rotated on a 2-year basis and sometimes caused anxiety in students who didn't know what courses would be offered and what they should take. So, a pathway and schedule were developed this year to reduce this uncertainty in addition to more regular advising sessions to ensure that all the SLOs were being met especially their work in Field Experience,	All students were assessed in these advising interviews about the SLOs and areas to improve were often in the form of leadership (SLO 5) especially in terms of their own self-directed learning in AHE and career development.

			and ensuring they took AHE588 at the correct time in their studies.	
Survey on AHE learning activities	All SLOs, especially 4 and 5	A survey was conducted at the end of the year to determine how the new Saturday residential was to happen and learning activities that would prefer to do and students gave their input. 25 students answered the questions and of those a majority said that it would be easier or good for them to come on a Saturday and they had innovative ideas for learning activities	To assess and model community building and learning, and develop SLOs 4 and 5 at a more personal level so they could model adult learning and teaching and facilitation, where the concepts could come alive	This will assist with persistence measures in the program that compliment advising, pedagogy and curriculum (SLOs 4 and 5). Students in surveys and in workshop socials said that they were able to receive information and input on the schedule and their advising courses, and learn and teach as well as mentor one another in adult learning theories and pedagogy and that they were interested in more career advising (to be focused on next year's September residential)
Meetings with Faculty to Assess Student SLOs	All SLOs	Two meetings with NTTs, one at the beginning and one at the end of the year were aimed to discuss the SLOs with relation to the students, support needs, and issues to be resolved which was found to be a supportive and productive for all. These were followed up by 1:1 emails and phone calls or F2F sessions	The meetings were a way to share news and information and dialogue about issues in teaching and areas for improvement, in addition to discussing improving SLOs for students, especially individual students	Indirect evidence to assist/support faculty to deal with student issues and achievement in their classrooms including sharing information about students that could help them to teach individual students better and assist them to persist
Student social/workshops	SLOs 3 and 5	AHE hosted three social and workshop gatherings for students with food in December, February, and May to assess leadership issues, career issues, community, and adult learning	The meetings allowed students to form community, work with the GA, and instructors in an informal way, and demonstrate leadership related to their studies. Other SLOs (3) were assessed and developed	A total of 32 students attended these socials/workshops. Photos were taken from one of the socials, with data from the workshop portion of it. At this social, one activity led by the director, instructor and GA was followed by an analysis of supports and barriers in graduate students' lives that impact persistence. In another workshop, students engaged in a shark tank exercise, assisted by three other faculty to come up with innovations in Higher Education

Type of Change	AHE Improvements
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Curricular	<p>Change prerequisites or GE requirements; Add required courses; Replace existing courses with new ones; Change course sequence; Add internships, labs, and other hands-on learning opportunities.</p> <p><u>Improvements:</u> changed syllabi and curriculum for NTTs in academic year 22-23 to build off, such as AHE577 and we discussed this and readings; added AHE581 as a requirement as first part of the research sequence; reduced the amount of electives from 4 to 3 in order to have more focused required curriculum; we introduced rotating unlimited electives, AHE518 with title changes for/catalog/transcript/Class finder, got rid of MAT test in 2019 to reduce application barriers and increased Information Sessions for prospective students (bi-quarterly) to promote the lack of barriers towards the application process; changed AHE588, portfolio course to include previous papers to make it more rigorous as well as a process section in the reflection papers; changed AHE590 to make it discussion-based and focused on comparative education through a case study approach. Plans were put into place to make AHE501 more rigorous now that it's followed by AHE581</p>
Faculty Support	<p>Increase number of TAs or peer mentors; Add specialized support to faculty (Library, Academic Technology, etc.); Increase support to promote dialogues and community among faculty.</p> <p><u>Improvements:</u> increased NTTs and faculty meetings (followed by 1:1s) for them to exchange ideas and receive support; plus, more 1:1 communique; have regular communications and paid meetings</p>
Faculty Development	<p>Provide targeted professional development opportunities.</p> <p><u>Improvements:</u> one TT colleague suddenly retired so I had to pull in NTTs at the last minute and fortunately I had good people to choose from who had already taught for AHE; consolidated schedule for NTTs, presented at two conferences this year; worked with GA and made newsletters w/conference information; assisted with masters in nursing program, search committee for AHE</p>
Pedagogy	<p>Change course assignments; Add more active-learning components to course design; Change textbooks; Increase opportunities for formative feedback and peer-assisted learning.</p> <p><u>Improvements:</u> more e-readings in courses so students can better access them (as we have a commuter population), more formative feedback in discussion posts for AHE590</p>
Student Support	<p>Increase tutors; Add more online resources; Improve advising to make sure students take the right courses; Provide resources to encourage community building among students and between students and faculty; Bring graduates back to discuss work opportunities related to the major. The program had changed its schedule to better accommodate those students from out-of-town (to a 2x/quarterly) Saturday schedule and attract more students, especially from around the state.</p>

	<p><u>Improvements:</u> more supports and social opportunities (3 community-building activities for AHE in one year), advising intensive and developing an advising pathway and Saturday residential schedule for a commuting population, change to a 2x/Saturday schedule and applied to WWU to classify AHE officially as a “hybrid” program</p>
Resources	<p>Change the course management system; Improve or expand lab spaces; Provide resources to support student independent research.</p> <p><u>Improvements:</u> offered 500 and 691 options, huge scheduling change, and residentials planned for next year including scheduling change. An initiative was undertaken to focus on Latinx issues, starting this summer, with a course that Daisy Padilla is teaching, Latinx students in Higher Education, Families and Communities. A GA, Lily Saldana was also hired and will be focusing on Latinx programming/supports with AHE’s student population, which has been a burgeoning student population in AHE, coming especially from Skagit and Whatcom Counties. Additionally, Ivette Bayo will be teaching a course in the Fall on Latinas in Technology.</p>
Assessment Plan	<p>Refine SLO statements; Change methods and/or measures; Change where (e.g., courses) the data are collected; Collect additional data; Improve data reporting and dissemination mechanisms.</p> <p><u>Improvements:</u> New CTL reports are written at the end of every year (for the previous year) and patterns are detected from year to year as well as over a 5-year and 10-year span in student demographics and enrollments. The director, with the coordinator, observes patterns in the data in these CTL reports in AHE. There are some clear patterns, for example, younger and younger students are attending AHE. More students of color have entered the program. There is more geographic diversity as well (along the I-5 corridor). And to this extent, AHE appears to now be an overwhelmingly higher education ‘hub’ for state employees, using state waivers, who wish to be upskilled leaders across WA state’s community colleges and universities. AHE’s incremental changes to curriculum nearly every year has focused more heavily on social justice and diversity issues, and it is now a more rigorous research-based program. These changes have attracted more students in the Higher Education field who are interested in learning about the connections between research, theory, policy and practice and innovating with these in mind.</p> <p>Please see the CTL Report, 2022-23, which contains descriptive data about the socio-demographics of the AHE student population as well as enrollment figures GPAs, and other program activities: https://wce.wwu.edu/ahe/program-assessment-data</p>