Department: Health & Community Studies, Human Services Program  
Assessment Coordinator: Raine Dozier, Chair

Departmental Mission:  
The goal of the Human Services Program is to offer a rigorous, liberal-arts focused, professional education that cultivates both professional skills and a critical analysis of human services and need. The curriculum of the Human Services Program emphasizes collaboration, community engagement, the acquisition of professional knowledge and skills, and the development of both written and verbal critical thinking abilities.

Department Student Learning Outcomes:  
Upon graduation, Program majors will be able to:

1. Examine and describe the dynamics of a variety of structures and systems (e.g., global, community, institutional) and their impact on the human experience  
2. Understand the scope of conditions that promote or inhibit human functioning  
3. Define and assess processes and dynamics of creating change including historical and contemporary strategies  
4. Understand how to critically analyze and evaluate a variety of types of claims and evidence  
5. Identify the practical, political, and ethical considerations of working in the field of human services  
6. Demonstrate an understanding of a variety of strengths-based approaches to working with people and communities  
7. Demonstrate knowledge, theory, and skills pertaining to the administrative aspects of the services delivery system  
8. Effectively communicate information verbally, visually, and in writing to a variety of audiences

GUR Student Learning Outcomes  
N/A

Student Learning Outcomes Assessed This Year:

Overview and assessment strategy:  
The Human Services Program is the only program in the Department of Health & Community Studies that follows the university specifications regarding assessment. During 2015-16, the Human Services Program undertook a curriculum revision with four goals in mind: to rethink the Capstone Portfolio, to offer students greater opportunity to shape their education to their interests, to strengthen the emphasis on structural explanations for social positions within Program courses, and to examine the possibility of shifting from a cohort
model in order to better meet the needs of students with a variety of academic paths. The revision was implemented beginning winter of 2016 and all students were enrolled in the new curriculum by fall 2016. The table in Appendix B explains some of the curricular changes, their rationale, and how the program might measure their influence on student experience and learning. Over the year, it became apparent that these data collection strategies would not yield enough information about how the revision is influencing student learning. Some of the evidence suggested such as senior exit surveys, especially measures that assess the value of coursework and the quality of the major, time to graduation for double majors and/or minors, and number of students with minors, double majors and/or study abroad experiences may not be available until 2018. Students graduating in 2018 will be the first cohort to spend their entire time under the curriculum revision. Because of these limitations, the program sought information about the influence of the curriculum revision in other ways.

Over the year, the Program collected a variety of types of data as specified in the table below. As a result of informal feedback, particularly about the cohort model, we collected additional data addressing some of the curricular changes. Data was collected via a meeting with NTTs, a meeting with tenure/tenure-track faculty, interviews with program staff, and a survey of seniors who had been involved in a cohort-like experience as juniors (they took a series of classes together). Over the year, faculty also discussed perceptions of the revised courses and their influence on student learning during program meetings. The following pages summarize the evaluation of the curriculum revision. Appendix A summarizes what is addressed in this year’s curriculum revision evaluation and what will be addressed spring 2018.

Curriculum revision evaluation
In order to evaluate this initial phase of the curriculum revision, I talked with staff, tenured and tenure-track faculty, and a few non-tenure track faculty. In addition, I distributed a survey to 22 students who participated in a partial-cohort during their junior year. That is, a significant portion of students in their class had at least two classes together over a two-quarter sequence. Sixteen of these students completed the survey (see Appendix C for a full summary of their responses).

Feedback from staff and faculty indicate that, overall, students were pleased with the idea of tailoring their course of study to their interests through electives. There were some mixed views by faculty about changes in classes, but, overall, they rated the change positively. They also noted students spontaneously mentioned that course offerings were more academically rigorous. Conversely, some seniors indicated the 402, 404, 406 courses (previously a sequential series) were less rigorous due to the presence of juniors in the classroom. Combining juniors and seniors resulted in more repetition and the need to cover topics that seemed remedial to seniors. Hope Corbin who teaches HSP 406 concurred. Universally, no one regretted the loss of the Capstone Portfolio. Below I summarize feedback from faculty, staff, and students about the curriculum revision. Please see all of the data from the survey of seniors at the end of the document.

Loss of cohort
Overall, faculty and staff felt the departure from students having several courses together negatively impacted students’ experience including their participation and, possibly, learning. The opportunity to form community, especially during the junior year, was viewed as important and a hallmark of the Human Services Program experience.
Student surveys indicate that almost all students believe that the partial-cohort model they experienced increased their class participation, increased their learning, and created a strong bond among students. One student noted the loss of that connection in their senior year, "Because I took some of my senior core classes out of sequence, I missed out on continuing to build some of the relationships with my peers that had made the program so enriching for me originally.”

In faculty discussion about the cohort model, one faculty member reminded the group of the motivations to eliminate cohorts: to separate instructors from cohorts so students do not receive so much instruction from one faculty member; to allow faculty to teach to their strengths/interests; and to provide greater flexibility to students.

Incorporating some aspects of the cohort model while not completely re-implementing it may be able to foster connections among students without compromising the original motivations to eliminate cohorts. Originally, faculty had planned for students to have a mini-cohort experience their first 2 quarters in HSP 301 & HSP 340, but somehow this plan was not implemented. Faculty believe that it would benefit students to create mini-cohorts by having students remain with their group in at least 1 class over at least 2 quarters. For example, HSP 301 and HSP 303 during the first two quarters in the major. See below for “actions already taken” on steps taken to encourage this type of connection for students.

If one advantage of the loss of the cohort model is the abandonment of course series (e.g., HSP 402 in fall, HSP 404 in winter). The new curriculum has allowed some students to graduate faster and save money. The Bellingham program coordinator believes more students are exploring quicker graduation. In addition, it offers flexibility for working students and those who want to study abroad or intern out of the area.

Faculty and staff are concerned that the increased flexibility can cause students to take heavier credit loads than they can handle, and may increase their stress and decrease their likelihood of success. Ultimately, faculty decided it is up to students to calculate those risks. The program will monitor whether students with heavier loads (i.e., 16-17 credits) are less likely to pass their classes.

**Electives**

One major component of the curriculum revision is the addition of electives that allow students to focus their education on their particular interests. The addition of electives seems to be positive. A staff member reports that prospective students are excited to see the list of potential electives and that there is interest among other students and faculty outside the major in the elective offerings.

In the survey, the great majority of students reported that electives are relevant to their interests, but only 44% believed electives allowed students to tailor the major to their interests. In addition, 38% reported that they couldn’t get into their elective choice and 56% believed there were not enough elective choices.

Students have frequently requested the substitution of other WWU classes for HS elective credits (25% of survey respondents). Faculty and staff expressed some concern with students substituting external courses for Human Services electives, but overall they felt positively about offering students options and support the current policy of at least one relevant substitution (with advisor approval). Reasons for allowing more than one substitution might include cost & time savings for a student with lots of credits, a relevant minor or second major, and outside courses that are relevant to student’s goals.

There may be some confusion over the term electives. One faculty member believes that students might view electives as less important. A staff member said it is difficult for students to differentiate between the university-required electives (i.e., courses outside the major and not GURs) to graduate and HSP electives needed to fulfill the major requirements. There is a suggestion to use a word
like “Specialties” or “Area of Focus” to address this issue. For example, advisors can explain, “this is the area of the curriculum where you get to choose what you will focus on” or “this is a specialty area you can highlight on your resume.” The program could also group electives under specialty topics (such as Health, Policy Development, etc.) in order to further this process.

Thus far, one of the major problems with electives is predicting the number of spots needed. This is especially difficult because of multiple factors: substituting outside courses, predicting how many Everett students will attend F2F classes, predicting how many distance and Everett students need additional electives as community college transfer students, etc. The Bellingham distance-delivery spots have been filling up quickly, leaving little wiggle room for adding Everett and distance students. Over time, the program should be able to better predict student behavior regarding electives. In the meantime, the Program remains flexible in adding extra sections or electives or increasing class size for distance-delivery courses as needed.

Here are additional, relevant observations from interviews and focus groups with faculty and staff about electives:

- Faculty appreciated teaching electives that are not so strictly aligned with a course plan relative to required classes. It allows for instructors to take advantage of current events and contemporary issues.
- Some students seem to choose their classes according to what fits into their work/internship/life schedules, rather than their interests or value to their career.
- Since electives are sometimes taught by NTT faculty, the program needs to assure there isn’t overlap with required courses. For example, including motivational interviewing within HSP 450 Addictions and Dependencies or HSP 410 Mental Health when it is addressed in HSP 325 Interviewing and Interventions.
- Adding electives gave students the opportunity to try different things and be more flexible with their schedules. The increased interest in graduate school might be a result of this flexibility and focus on critical thinking.

Elimination of 341 (Practicum)

While there were no anticipated drawbacks to eliminating HSP 341 Practicum, the mixing of juniors and seniors in the HSP 440 Internship Seminar sections has proven challenging. Although the work of HSP 341 was similar to the work of HSP 440, students experiencing their first internship have different needs in the seminar relative to students who are more experienced.

Faculty tried several approaches to address this problem this year including seniors mentoring juniors and providing a variety of modules and workshops that students select. One faculty member reported that offering workshop options was well received by experienced interns, but new interns needed more support. Alternating classroom time for juniors and seniors worked, but the groups were small and the instructor must plan and teach two courses rather than one. It seems that the program needs to develop a strategy to separate the new interns from the experienced interns. Faculty discussed whether they could differentiate sections by naming them 440a, 440b, and 440c or something similar.

Combination of 303/5

Overall, the combination of HSP 303 and HSP 305 has been met positively by faculty who believe the students experience fewer redundancies and a more intellectually engaging curriculum. The class focusing on small group systems (HSP 305) was deemed less important in a major that incorporates small group work in most classes, helping students foster an understanding of small group dynamics and functioning.
**Combination 325/45**

Overall, the merging of these courses seems to be positive after some initial scrambling to figure out what material to include in a combined course. Since not all students plan to use case management skills, perhaps a more extensive course could be offered as an elective for interested students. As a side note, faculty noted that evaluating students’ interviewing skills is incredibly labor intensive.

**Capstone Portfolio**

While some students may miss the sense of culmination and accomplishment that came from compiling the Capstone Portfolio, no one believed that eliminating the Capstone Portfolio was a loss for students. Over the course of two separate program evaluations, students have consistently reported that the Portfolio did not enhance their learning, felt like busy work, and prevented them from taking more relevant and educational courses. Faculty have noticed some students trying to create a capstone-like project for themselves through independent studies, HSP 430, or creative projects in other classes. Yet only 13% of students surveyed reported that they wish they had a senior project or thesis. Perhaps in the future, a more advanced course could serve the needs of students interested in a culminating project. Faculty suggested it be entitled *Applied Research II* or something similar in order to attract students with a scholarly focus.

**Other Curriculum Feedback**

One unanticipated effect of not sequencing the 400 level courses is that seniors believe that instructors have to go over previous material for the juniors. Seventy-five percent of student survey respondents reported that having juniors in their classes was challenging. Some faculty noticed this while others believed it is good to mix it up. One student wrote, “Now in my senior year the classes are extremely mixed, with different levels of understanding which honestly have been a bit of a set back and it feels as if it has actually stunted my education. When I'm sitting in a 400 level class it is frustrating having to hear the teacher explain what critical thinking is or why something that someone says is problematic. Similarly, 402, 404 and 406 should most definitely be a sequence! I've really enjoyed the senior level classes but feel like I could have learned more if there wasn't so much pauses teaching other students the basics in simply talking about social justice and equity.”

Faculty are continuing to discuss this unanticipated issue in order to develop a plan to address it. On another note, it was noted in a faculty discussion that the more we infuse our classes with scholarly rigor, the more work involved for both students and faculty. Student and faculty load might be better managed with 5-credit courses rather than 4-credit. If the program moved to 5-credit classes, 3 or 4 courses would probably need to be eliminated (possibly the elective requirement) and/or the major changed to 80-credits. The faculty quarterly course load would also change. Moving to 5-credit courses might help students manage their schedules and prevent overloading. Some faculty believe many of the content and workload of many courses is already at the 5-credit level.

**Actions already taken**

1. Create a mini-cohort with new fall students, asking them to register for the same day/time 301 and 303 in fall and winter. Students will be encouraged through advising, Classfinder notes, HS web site schedule notes, and/or overrides. This is mainly a Bellingham issue since Everett and distance students take most of their courses together.
2. Create a 2-year plan of classes so that students can see what electives will be available during their time in the program
3. Explore strategies to foster connection between junior and senior cohorts in the Everett program

**Recommended Actions**
1. Continue to monitor senior experience in 400 level courses. Consider changing the prerequisite to 303 or use scheduling to make it more difficult for juniors to sign up for 402, 404, or 406
2. Explore additional electives including advanced research and case management courses
3. Continue to monitor elective scheduling and student access to desired electives
4. Examine outcomes for students taking 16 or more credits (e.g., decreased time to graduation, increased risk of failure)
## Assessment Measures

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assessment Measures</th>
<th>SLOs Assessed</th>
<th>Results</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Senior exit surveys, especially measures that assess the value of coursework and the quality of the major</td>
<td>1, 2, 3</td>
<td>Evaluate spring 2018</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Quality of work and assignments in courses focused on examining and describing the dynamics of a variety of structures and systems (e.g., global, community, institutional) and their impact on the human experiences, defining and assessing processes and dynamics of creating change, and understanding the conditions that promote or inhibit human functioning.</td>
<td>1, 2, 3</td>
<td>Program evaluation 2017 suggests that previously senior-level courses (402, 404, 406) that incorporate both junior and seniors result in increased redundancy. Program will seek ways to limit juniors in 400-level classes. Evaluation suggests that increased electives offer students intellectually-engaging courses that enhance understanding of conditions that promote or inhibit human functioning and increased skills and knowledge about creating change. In addition, faculty find greater focus on structures and systems in many classes.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Improved time to graduate for double majors and/or students with minors.</td>
<td></td>
<td>Evaluate spring 2018</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Number of students with minors, double majors and/or study abroad experiences.</td>
<td></td>
<td>Evaluate spring 2018</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• All syllabi explicitly state CSHSE standards covered in coursework.</td>
<td></td>
<td>All syllabi are available. Most syllabi explicitly state the CSHSE standards and learning outcomes. A few of the new electives are missing the connection to CSHSE standards which will be addressed in 2017-18.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Other: student perceptions of changes to the program</td>
<td>1.2.3</td>
<td>Program evaluation including interviews with NTT, tenured, and tenure-track faculty and survey of small groups of seniors. See above summary of the evaluation. Will evaluate changes in items from the senior exit survey in spring 2018.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## Appendix B

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of Change</th>
<th>SLOs Targeted for Improvement</th>
<th>Description of Program Improvement</th>
<th>Rationale</th>
<th>Evidence that will demonstrate if this change improves student learning</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Curricular</td>
<td>1, 2, 3</td>
<td>Revision of curriculum including combining courses (303 &amp; 305, 325 &amp; 345), discontinuing the Capstone Portfolio (HSP 495), and requiring 3 Human-Services related electives to complete program.</td>
<td>The curriculum revision committee reviewed student work, syllabi, and student evaluations, finding that students consistently reported that the Capstone Portfolio did not contribute to their learning. In addition, faculty noted significant overlap in course content of HSP 303 &amp; HSP 305 and HSP 325 and HSP 345. The addition of electives allows students to pursue particular interest areas in more depth (e.g., youth work, international work).</td>
<td>Quality of work and assignments in courses focused on examining and describing the dynamics of a variety of structures and systems (e.g., global, community, institutional) and their impact on the human experiences, defining and assessing processes and dynamics of creating change, and understanding the conditions that promote or inhibit human functioning.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Curricular</td>
<td>1, 2, 3</td>
<td>Transition from a cohort model to better support diverse educational pathways including students who wish to pursue minors, double majors, part-time study, and international opportunities.</td>
<td>Faculty advisors and the curriculum revision committee discussed students frustrations with the lack of flexibility with the cohort model, especially when trying to complete minors or study abroad. A less scripted program would allow students to take advantage of opportunities as they arose.</td>
<td>Senior exit surveys, especially measures that assess the value of coursework and the quality of the major.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| Assessment | 1 | Phasing out Capstone Portfolio, using course completion as assessment of particular standards outlined in the CSHSE standards and reflected in the program learning objectives | Students and faculty consistently reported that the Capstone Portfolio did not contribute to their learning and substituting an elective would both contribute to their learning and allow them to pursue particular interest areas in more depth | • Senior exit surveys, especially measures that assess the value of coursework and the quality of the major.  
• All syllabi explicitly state CSHSE standards covered in coursework. |
Appendix C
Compilation of Results: Senior Student Survey
N=16

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Being in a class with many of the same students each quarter...</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Increased my participation in class</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>75%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Made me feel uncomfortable or left out</td>
<td>81%</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Contributed to my learning</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>50%</td>
<td>44%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Is an important part of the HSP experience</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>81%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Meant too much time with one instructor</td>
<td>31%</td>
<td>63%</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Created a strong bond among students</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>19%</td>
<td>75%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Increased the quality of classes</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>50%</td>
<td>44%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Anything else you found challenging or positive about the way the program is currently constructed? Please describe

- I remember hearing from students who were in the major before me felt so close with their peers, and I feel like our class missed out on that a little bit.
- I wish I had had the cohort experience throughout the entire program.
- I really wish we had the ability to continue in the cohort model again for our senior year. I don't think having the same professor is as necessary, but having a majority of the class room be close friends/familiar people, made the learning process much better. Now in my senior year the classes are extremely mixed, with different levels of understanding which honestly have been a bit of a set back and it feels as if it has actually stunted my education. When I'm sitting in a 400 level class it is frustrating having to hear the teacher explain what critical thinking is or why something that someone says is problematic. Similarly, 402, 404 and 406 should most definitely be a sequence! I've really enjoyed the senior level classes but feel like I could have learned more if there wasn't so much pauses teaching other students the basics in simply talking about social justice and equity.
- I was hoping we would have kept previous core classes. I felt that it was a stronger bond between students. Also now with juniors seniors mixed it feels like a lot of old stuff gets covered so that juniors can learn it as well. It's also nice feeling more comfortable with a core group of students you stay with. When it was switched all the sudden it caused a bit of confusion in my opinion.
I think when the cohorts end and students become intermixed with juniors and seniors that it's important to encourage new connections. I felt that we almost split into two groups of cohorts in the mixed classes. There's a lot of separation between the cohorts and friendships in them. I think the cohorts are great but we need to encourage connection between them.

I really loved having the same students in our classes during our junior year and it bonded us together quite a bit!

I appreciated being able to take some of the classes out of sequence because this allowed me to graduate early. However, I also think there is much to be said about the cohort model and keeping people together. Because I took some of my senior core classes out of sequence, I missed out on continuing to build some of the relationships with my peers that had made the program so enriching for me originally.

Having the same people in classes made it a lot more enjoyable. I think having mixed Juniors and Seniors makes it more complicated. Some classes like electives it works to have it mixed. But core classes were way better when everyone came in with about the same amount of knowledge.

It was very convenient being in a cohort with the same people my junior year. It got chaotic and not as enjoyable when there were a mix of juniors and seniors in my classes senior year.

The gap between juniors and seniors has a lot to do with the internship experience. Being able to grow as a cohort helped attribute to my growth and perspective challenges.

I would like to see some kind of cohort model. Having more flexibility in classes makes sense but also was not totally helpful when times were consistent throughout program. For example, you have class 10-2 or 2-6

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
<th>Not sure</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Having juniors and seniors in the same class is challenging</td>
<td>75%</td>
<td>19%</td>
<td>6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I wish I had a senior project or thesis</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>63%</td>
<td>25%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I had lots of flexibility in scheduling my classes</td>
<td>69%</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Not sure</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
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<td>-----</td>
<td>---------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The electives available are relevant to my interests</td>
<td>81%</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I have not been able to get into electives that I want</td>
<td>38%</td>
<td>63%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>There are enough choices in electives</td>
<td>56%</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>19%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I am substituting an external course for at least one of my electives</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>63%</td>
<td>13%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Electives have helped me tailor the major to my interests</td>
<td>44%</td>
<td>44%</td>
<td>13%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I prefer to take electives online</td>
<td>19%</td>
<td>81%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Is there anything else you would like to add about the courses in the major or your experiences with electives, other students, or instructors?**

- Electives like grant writing are very challenging to take online, I also wish I had more elective options
- I wish electives were also courses outside of the major. Would have loved to been able to specialize this major with education/sociology/psych classes. As someone who doesn't intend to be a case manager/social worker a lot of the courses didn't seem applicable to me.
- I don't feel like 485 should be one of the last courses or considered one of the more difficult courses. Class is enjoyable but fairly simple and seems more like a 300 level course. Maybe that's just because of the teaching style of the course.
- I wish electives were offered more often and more electives were offered
- This program is already strong. If there is anything I would change, it would be adding more content related to conflict resolution and de-escalation.
- N/A
- Some of the classes were very closely linked in information. I would have liked to get even more extensive knowledge or more focus on electives. When classes go back over information we already heard, or talked about in another class it seemed too repetitive.