

Bachelor of Liberal Arts Annual Assessment Report
School of Arts & Sciences, University of Alaska Southeast
AY 2018-2019

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Overview:

This report provides continuing assessment of student learning outcomes and the Bachelor of Liberal Arts for academic year 2018-2019. The Bachelor of Liberal Arts (BLA) is a multidisciplinary degree program and its students take classes from faculty in multiple departments (Humanities, Social Science, Math, Alaska Native Studies and Languages, Natural Science, etc.). BLA enrollments continue to be among the highest within Arts and Sciences degree programs, and average student achievement of the learning outcomes for the degree exceeds expectations for all categories. Bill Urquhart and Andrea Dewees have regular phone meetings to manage student waivers, curriculum proposals, graduating students, and prepare for the annual meeting throughout the academic year. Faculty actively involved in assessing the student learning outcomes and the BLA: Andrea Dewees, Rosemarie Alexander-Isett, Jeremy Kane, Forest Wagner and Stephen Florian (Ketchikan). Faculty met to discuss the BLA on Thursday, March 19th, 2020. In addition to faculty mentioned above, Sol Neely participated in the meeting. Our meeting agenda includes course planning for the required Hum 210 and the Hum 499 Capstone option, as well as discussion of catalog proposals to forward to Humanities.

Program Student Learning Outcomes:

Upon completion of the BLA degree, students will be able to:

1. Articulate ideas, content, and personal goals through purposeful written or artistic expression.
2. Demonstrate interdisciplinary competency in chosen field(s).
3. Create original work or research in chosen field(s).
4. Critically engage assumptions, presuppositions and gaps in thought, social discourse, and creative expression within their chosen field(s).
5. Engage with the cultures and environment of Southeast Alaska.

Assessment of Program Student Learning Outcomes:

Students assemble an academic portfolio in the Hum 499 Capstone class that is now stored on Google Drive (organized by Dr. Urquhart in AY 18-19). Materials collected in the portfolio (CV, goals essay, academic writing and creative work samples, diversity statements, etc.) are evaluated by the BLA faculty committee. Faculty assign scores to the following fields using a 5- point scale:

Outcome 1: BLA Outcomes Essay
Outcomes 1, 4 and 5: Language Competency and Diversity Statement

Outcome 1: Professional C.V. or resume
Outcome 1: Professional Portfolio Overall
Outcome 2: Competency in designated Emphasis, independent design or primary field (if interdisciplinary)
Outcome 2: Competency in secondary field (if interdisciplinary)
Outcome 2: Overall quality of writing in samples
Outcome 3: Example of Research or Creative Work
Outcome 3: Overall quality of the upper division sample
Outcome 4: Evidence of thoughtful examination of issues from multiple perspectives and reflection on assumptions, etc.
Outcome 5: Statement of Community involvement

5-point scale

0 = Nothing (no or incorrect materials)

1 = Minimal Evidence (inadequate)

2 = Some Evidence (underdeveloped)

3 = Meets Expectations (satisfactory)

4 = Exceeds Expectations (above average)

5 = Superior (high-level presentation, analysis, critical thinking and/or synthesis)

The professors of the capstone class (Hum 499) also conduct an exit survey each semester along with an exit interview, and these are also saved to Google Drive. We note that, starting this year (19-20), Drs. Urquhart and Dewees have managed the portfolio requirement and exit survey for students who elect another option than HUM 499.

Assessment of Academic Year 2018-19

Faculty evaluated approximate two-thirds of the portfolios from AY 2017-2018 (11 portfolios). These were selected at random from distance and face to face HUM 499 classes. [For n<11 faculty reviewers were unable to find a relevant artifact to score and so that portfolio was eliminated for the average].

	Mean	Min	Max	n
BLA Outcomes Essay	4.44	3	5	9
Language Competency and Diversity Statement	4.3	2	5	10
Professional C.V. or resume	4.3	3	5	10
Professional Portfolio Overall	4.6	3	5	10
Competency in Primary Field	4.4	3	5	5
Competency in Secondary Field	4.6	3	5	5
Overall quality of writing in samples	4.62	3	5	8
Example of Research or Creative Work	4.45	3	5	11
Overall quality of the upper-division example	4.55	3	5	11
Evidence of thoughtful examination of...	4.55	3	5	11
Statement of Community Involvement	4.09	2	5	11

Faculty reviewers noted that the portfolios were of higher quality this year, and that the writing quality in particular was improved. Faculty note that there are still frequent typos in the writing samples, and continue to advocate for increased copyediting as part of the process.

We note that the exit surveys stored on Google Drive are difficult to find and difficult to summarize. Going forward we should create and use a Google form for this purpose. Similarly, the coordinators should find a way to summarize the information gathered in the Exit Interview. For this report we only have data from the Juneau Hum 499 course.

Summary of Juneau HUM 499 exit interview (April 23, 2019):

Program Strengths:

independent design flexibility and space for a year-long study away. all courses fit into the degree really easily.

art shows, student run shows, independent shows

taking classes in two different areas

transfer student flexibility, directed study options

opportunities for jobs within the degree: TA for language classes, student position in NRSC perfectly aligned with degree. work with Outer Coast in the summer. Value of student governance, community service and academics. Building Alaska Native Studies and Language into the curriculum that they are creating.

teaching and office assistant for health services, State Museum internship, bringing anthropology into CNA classes, intercultural competence.

Opportunities for Improvement:

Came in with an AA, required to take GERs.

want to take an Art class for the AKNS requirement, but it can't count both places.

issues with the registrar and international study. signed the form and then the university was not honoring the agreement. bureaucratic issues.

issue with individual affiliation agreement: requirement for UAS resident credits. 12 credit limit on independent studies

primary concentration in anthropology, it would be nice to be more specific about

decreased course offerings, signing up for classes but not guaranteed that they would go because of low enrollment. time conflicts for classes that were required/wanted to take and forced to choose between them.

only 2 professors teaching Alaska Native Studies classes

Curricular changes

The past two years of curricular changes sought to increase flexibility for students in the degree, namely the removal of HUM 200 and alternatives to HUM 499 for the capstone. We worked with advising to alert students of these changes, and with the registrar to make these options more visible within Degreeworks. We also proposed a Cultural Geography Primary and Secondary option with the Interdisciplinary Studies degree as additional options starting AY 20-21. As a committee we are considering having just the Alaska Native Knowledge Graduation Requirement with no additional core requirement for the degree.

Future Plans for Assessment and Future Plans to improve Student Learning

**please note: many of the goals for Fall 2019 are carried over here. This is the result of an unexpected retirement of a Humanities faculty member in Spring 2019 and two Humanities faculty sabbaticals in Fall 2019. Because of these factors, and the Juneau BLA coordinator's fall workload, some of the Fall 2019 goals were impossible to complete without an overload (and an overload was fiscally undesirable).*

By Fall 2020:

- We updated our instructions for the portfolio in Fall 2019 and will finalize these, along with our portfolio assessment rubric and process. We would like to add a note for students to visit the Writing Center to assist with copyediting portfolio statements and the artifact. One student wrote in the exit survey that the portfolio requirements were onerous for those not enrolled in Hum 499 so we may look to streamline this.
- We will continue to communicate with faculty, advisors, and students about the language requirement waiver process
- We will update the exit survey questions to better reflect our revised learning outcomes and come up with a more efficient way to collect data.
- We will co-develop a marketing strategy for the BLA with recruitment staff
- we reiterate the suggestion made in the 2011-2012 Annual Report: "Complete the process of building a cadre of core, tenure-track faculty dedicated to the BLA degree program." Humanities has lost two Juneau-based tenure-track Communication Faculty, two Juneau-based Art Faculty, a PhD faculty member in Alaska Native Languages and Studies, and two faculty in English (one who also taught in Alaska Native Studies). These losses have negatively affected the program by overburdening faculty members who are responsible to other degrees

and program, by reducing the pool of faculty available to serve as advisors for the program and, finally, by diminishing the curricular diversity of the BLA committee.