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CAPILANO UNIVERSITY IN CONTEXT 2015

As the first Canadian institution to seek accreditation from the Northwest Commission on Colleges and Universities (NWCCU), Capilano University has always found it necessary to provide a deeper level of context than might be expected from other peer institutions. But although we have no clear precedents to follow, we are gratified that other Canadian universities are learning from our example. Canadian post-secondary systems are different from those of the United States (US), and because education is a provincial rather than a federal responsibility, our province of British Columbia (BC) drives our mandate, our aspirations and our accomplishments.

Post-secondary education is the purview of the Ministry of Advanced Education\(^1\) and BC makes a distinction between Institutes, Colleges, and Universities.

**Universities** in B.C. offer an array of undergraduate degree programs and a range of programs at the graduate level. Some also offer courses and programs in trades, vocational, and career technical studies leading to certificates and diplomas, as well as developmental programs that prepare adult learners for post-secondary studies. Some universities undertake original and applied research in a range of disciplines, while others undertake applied research and scholarly activities in support of their programming.

**Colleges** offer developmental programs that prepare adult learners for post-secondary studies, as well as courses and programs in trades, vocational, career technical and academic studies leading to certificates, diplomas, associate degrees and applied degrees.

**Institutes** are organized according to career, vocational and technical specialties, covering a variety of occupations. They may offer credentials from certificates to degrees. One institute has an Aboriginal focus.\(^2\)

In BC there are eleven universities, eleven colleges, and three institutes. This includes five new universities that were created in September of 2008. Capilano University is one of these new universities, having begun its life as Capilano College in 1968.

Capilano University’s main campus is located in the District of North Vancouver, one of the twenty-three local authorities that make up Metro Vancouver, which is one of the official regional districts of British Columbia. The university also serves the Sunshine Coast at a facility in Sechelt, BC and the Howe Sound or Sea-to-Sky Corridor with a facility in Squamish, BC. Our campuses stand on traditional territories of the Squamish, Sechelt, Lil’wat, Tsleil Waututh, and Musqueam Nations and we continue to honour and work closely with these Nations, building on our long history of collaboration.

While we have always been committed to these geographic regions, our students actually come from every part of Metro Vancouver, every province in Canada and many nations including the US, bringing diverse beliefs and different experiences, varying levels of preparation and ever-changing expectations.

\(^1\) [http://www.aved.gov.bc.ca/](http://www.aved.gov.bc.ca/), August 14 2015

\(^2\) [http://www.aved.gov.bc.ca/publicpsed/welcome.htm](http://www.aved.gov.bc.ca/publicpsed/welcome.htm), August 14 2015
They come in part because Capilano University has been and continues to be a space of opportunity, a place to succeed in post-secondary learning and an institution dedicated to supporting the goals and aspirations of all students in our various communities. These commitments are reflected in our mission, vision and core themes, as well as our institutional, programmatic and course outcomes. Perhaps even more important, they are the cornerstone of our newly developed academic and strategic plans, approved by the Senate and Board in 2014 and 2015 respectively.

Also articulated within our academic and strategic plans is our institutional response to previous NWCCU recommendations. We were asked to consider the validity of our foundational statements, especially our core themes, and in response we have chosen to build into our planning the regular review and revision of our institutional identity and profile. Because we are in the process of changing that identity, we have been undergoing changes in our degree offerings and a wholesale review of our credentials and programs. This has resulted over the past several years in the closing of some programs and the development or redevelopment of some degrees. It has also resulted in policy changes, including the development of a teaching out policy.³

Another recommendation focused on Capilano University’s culture of assessment, which has been growing steadily and is well-represented in this Mid-Cycle Review. Finally, and perhaps most significantly, NWCCU has recommended that Capilano develop a general education component for its students. The idea of general education, beyond basic breadth offerings, is relatively new to Canada and there are very few colleges or universities that offer general education of the kind found in most US institutions. Yet Capilano University has always been dedicated to preparing students for not only for their future as taxpayers, but also their future as citizens. To this end we have committed to providing our students with a program of study that mirrors the best practices of general education. To this end we have developed a collaborative process that we believe will lead to a robust interdisciplinary general education⁴ for all students before the Year Seven Review.

As stated above, Capilano was originally created as a two-year, transfer-oriented college devoted to supporting regional populations. We are now a university offering a wide range of degrees to students from around the world. Since becoming a university in 2008, we have undergone enormous change, but it was really our affiliation with NWCCU that helped Capilano re-imagine itself as a new kind of learner-centred, teaching-centred, and outcomes-driven institution. In 2013, we began drafting our first academic plan, and in 2014 that document was approved by both the Senate and the Board. Shortly thereafter, both bodies approved our first strategic plan as a university, and the implementation of that vision has been occurring ever since. Central to that strategic plan was a formal commitment by Capilano University to foster, support, assess and improve student success. That may sound like a commonplace, but for us and our peer institutions it was a bold step.

Additionally, the last several years have seen both fiscal and administrative challenges. Budgets for BC colleges and universities have been reduced significantly during the last three years, prompting a reduction in services and administrative support. In other words, we now have fewer people doing more work with less money. We are also in the midst of a presidential search, which will no doubt be informed and perhaps shaped by the work represented in this Mid-Cycle Review. Finally, during the last

³ [http://www.capilanou.ca/about/governance/policies/Policies](http://www.capilanou.ca/about/governance/policies/Policies)
⁴ Appendix 1: General Education Report
year, we were involved in contract negotiations with both our staff and faculty unions. In each case, a resolution was reached but only after strike action put a strain on university relations and relationships.

It is with all this in mind that we approach the opportunity of a Mid-Cycle Review. Capilano University now has a clear path forward, several years of labour stability ahead and, perhaps most important, a renewed understanding of our shared responsibility for student success in all programs, for all students. We begin the 2015-2016 academic year with 100% participation in learning outcomes unit review, an increase in student support budgets and the prospect of both an interdisciplinary general education curriculum and a new alignment between our credentials on the horizon. It has been a tough three years, but at the midpoint in our NWCCU journey we are well on our way to mission fulfilment and fully committed to our core themes and the learning outcomes they promise.
MID-CYCLE SELF-EVALUATION PURPOSE AND PROCESS

As an institution, Capilano University has benefitted significantly from the process of accreditation. Unlike colleges and universities in the US, we are not required by the federal government to seek accreditation from a regional body such as NWCCU. In fact, our provincial government has its own annual process for institutional accountability. So for Capilano University, NWCCU provides an important touchstone, a marker for what we consider to be the best approach to ensuring student success and institutional accountability. To this end, we have embraced outcomes assessment as the basis for mission fulfillment at the institutional, programmatic and course levels, not to mention in the non-academic areas ranging from finance and facilities to human resources and campus recreation. Our purpose throughout this process has always been the embedding of outcomes assessment into the very fibre of our institution, and our process in achieving this goal has been one of inclusion, participation and above all transparency.

In our self-directed evaluation, we grapple with the extent to which we are developing the capacity to provide evidence of mission fulfillment and sustainability via outcomes assessment, at the macro (institutional) and the micro (functional unit) levels. In order to address these concerns, we have answered all of the guiding questions posed by NWCCU, and have provided what we consider to be representative examples of our work at the program level. We have chosen the program level because one example (Communications) includes a great deal of the course-level work being accomplished on the academic side of the house, and the other (Registrar’s Office) provides a window into the administrative efforts which are, we believe, representative of our institutional commitment.

Overall, we are happy with our progress to date. Capilano University has, within a relatively short period of time, developed through collaborative and collective efforts, a single voice for our mission, values, core themes and outcomes. We have also taken significant steps towards a harmonious blending of assessment processes that we believe will lead to a truly shared understanding of how student learning outcomes form the through-line for all that we do as an institution. In looking at our accomplishments at Capilano University, we see the creation, articulation and alignment of learning outcomes at the course, program and institutional levels. We see a shared commitment to student success made real in our structures and processes, and subject to constant review and improvement. Most important for this Mid-Cycle Review, we see complete participation in an institutional accountability process that will see all functional units at the university preparing an annual report on efforts to assess, analyze and improve learning outcomes achievements.

Although this process is still in its early stages, and there have been many tough lessons learned along the way, we believe that Capilano University is well on its way to embedding mission fulfillment and learning outcomes assessment within the culture of the institution. When taken as a whole, along with our newly developed Academic Plan and Strategic Plan, this report indicates that Capilano University is on the road to a successful Year Seven review, and we look forward to working with our mid-cycle evaluators to better observe, assess and accomplish the steps along the way.
PART I: ASSESSMENT PLAN OVERVIEW

In the framing of this narrative Capilano University has been vigilant in its attention to Standard One, Standard Three and Standard Four, with a view to successfully addressing Standard Five in the years to come. We have consistently articulated our purpose in a widely distributed and generally available mission statement, fully approved and recognized by both the Senate and the Board of Governors. This guides our approaches to academic and non-academic practices and is represented by our three essential core themes.

Mission Statement: We are a teaching-focused university offering a wide range of programs and services that enable students to succeed in their current studies, in their ongoing education, in their chosen careers, in their lifelong pursuit of knowledge and in their contribution as responsible citizens in a rapidly changing and diverse global community.

Core Themes: Opportunity, Learning, and Community.5

Capilano University has also been involved in an ongoing, participatory planning process that has included all stakeholder communities and yielded two important planning documents: the 2014-2018 Academic Plan6 and the 2015-2018 Strategic Plan.7 Both documents build on the work surrounding the development of our mission and core themes, and included open forums, individual and collective material submissions, and the collaborative development of language and direction by a small committee with individuals representing students, staff, faculty and administration. The Academic Plan includes an Executive Summary that states, in part:

This plan began with a great deal of listening, learning, and consideration; it was crafted collectively and collaboratively, taking into account the ideas, thoughts, suggestions, and dreams of our community. It is a declaration of hope; not a mirror, but a telescope that looks ahead so we can move forward. Because it is a living document, this plan must be made real on a daily basis through hard work and good faith effort. Indeed, the most important aspect is not any single element, but the collective will of our community to embrace change and participate in growth toward a goal that is different from and perhaps more challenging than any experienced. 8

The Academic Plan goes on to address academic principles, programming, support structures and closes with a promise that Capilano University will provide “a supportive place where students learn how to succeed in post-secondary education, “a clear path that students can follow to post-secondary success and completion,” and “real-world preparation for all students in all credential programs.”9 Shortly after adopting the Academic Plan, Capilano University crafted its Strategic Plan, which articulates student success as the ultimate institutional goal.

5 Appendix 2: Academic Plan 2014-2018, p. 34
6 Appendix 2: Academic Plan 2014-2018
7 Appendix 3: Strategic Plan 2015-2018
8 Appendix 2: Academic Plan 2014-2018, p. 4
9 Appendix 2: Academic Plan 2014-2018
Capilano University is committed first and foremost to student success. It is our defining feature, the standard by which all things will be measured. During the next three years, Capilano will organize its activities to maximize the opportunity for all students to succeed in their educational objectives. This will happen not only in academic areas, but also across the university as a whole. While students themselves will have the final responsibility in this regard, everything we do as a teaching-centered institution will foster, support, and celebrate our students’ success while attending Capilano and beyond. 10

In support of student success, we also provided a strategic direction for future programming: “Capilano University’s way forward will provide our learners with an education that helps them become engaged, informed and committed citizens who are well prepared for success through career-related and professional degree pathways.” 11 This is the point to which we have progress at the time of our mid-cycle review.

To address fulfillment of this mission, through these core themes, in support of this goal and direction, Capilano University initiated an institution-wide academic program assessment process in 2008, with the first reports being submitted in 2009. The ultimate goal of program assessment at Capilano is to improve student learning and facilitate student success. We place strong emphasis on continuous improvement in our program assessment. All programs are required to have program student learning outcomes that describe what successful students will know, do and value at the end of the program. Each year in September, programs are required to create a plan to help them collect and analyze data that will determine how well students are achieving these learning outcomes. Throughout the academic year, all programs collect and analyze student work in order to determine how well students are meeting their learning outcomes. In June, programs submit reports outlining the findings of their data collection and suggesting program improvements. Within programs, there is one assessment coordinator who is responsible for organizing the assessment activities for that program and for ensuring all faculty members are involved in the process.

Additionally during the last academic year, all non-academic functional units have been engaged in a parallel assessment process, which has as its goal the same annual review and re-evaluation of data, analysis and opportunities for improvement. While this has been a difficult process for some areas not directly linked to the student experience, it continues to be fruitful for our ongoing institutional conversation about the many facets of student success and the ways in which we seek to achieve it. Furthermore, in the coming year we are looking to a more integrated approach to the gathering, analysis and sharing of information across academic and non-academic areas in an effort to build synergies and increase our capacity for accountability and improvement.

In these ways, we are striving as an institution to combine the micro-level course, program and unit approaches to outcomes assessment with the macro-level indicators and methods of institutional accountability, all within the meta-level frame of regional, provincial, national and international benchmarking and evaluation. Capilano University serves many masters, from our students and their parents to our neighbors and their local economy, from the provincial labour market to the international community of creative industries. It is with all of these stakeholders in mind that we

approach our mid-cycle self-assessment. And as we answer the questions posed, we remain conscious of the fact that we are only half-way through the first stage of our journey.

**What is Capilano University's process of assessing mission fulfillment and who is involved?**

Capilano University is committed to continuous improvement in all areas of operation, both academic and non-academic. All areas of the university complete an annual report describing the initiatives they have undertaken contributing to mission fulfillment. We refer to this process as “unit review” and it has become, in a very short period of time, one of the “through-lines” of our institutional narrative. These reports include a guided process of unit goal setting, determining the desired range of measurable outcomes, collecting and analyzing pertinent and compelling data to help understand these outcomes and the extent to which they are being achieved, summarizing findings for internal and external stakeholders in a transparent and formative process and finally identifying areas in need of improvement and strategies for moving forward.

Our goal is to develop a framework of measurement that supports the continuous improvement of our programs and departments in the fulfillment of our mission, and leads ultimately to innovation and success in learning, teaching and institutional planning. Because institutional buy-in is key to achieving this goal, we have focused our efforts on unit-specific and interally-articulated outcomes, self-determined and externally validated modes of data collection and analysis, institutional review at the Senate subcommittee level, public sharing of processes and products and most importantly transparency and consistency in all aspects of guidance, review, assessment and improvement.

Our core themes of “Opportunity, Learning, and Community” provide a clear pathway to mission fulfillment, a focal point for measurement of key strategic outcomes and a framework for continuous improvement for all Faculties, divisions/schools, departments and non-academic functional units. They provide the basis for developing the goals and objectives of the institution and its various constituencies, as well as our indicators of success and failure. These assessments of the goals and objectives are incorporated into our strategic plan, make up part of our Faculty terms of reference, and are represented in the outcomes statements of our functional units.

**How is Capilano University's Board of Governors involved?**

According to the directives of the *The University Act of British Columbia*, the provincial legislation under which Capilano University and all public post-secondary institutions operate, there are specific and separate duties assigned to the Senate and the Board. Capilano University operates under a bicameral system of governance - the Board of Governors and Senate. The management, administration and control of the property, revenue, business and affairs of the university are vested in the Board. The academic governance of the university is vested in the Senate.

The Capilano University Board of Governors directs the affairs of the university and sets policies in accordance with the University Act of British Columbia. The Board is responsible for the management, administration and control of property revenue, business and affairs of the University. The Board of Governors is composed of 15 members: the Chancellor; the President; two faculty members elected by the faculty; eight persons appointed by the Lieutenant Governor in Council; two of whom are to be appointed from among persons nominated by the alumni association; two students elected from students who are members of an undergraduate student society or a graduate student society; and one
person elected by and from the employees of the university who are not faculty members. No remuneration is paid to any member of the Board of Governors in respect of their service as a governor.

The Senate is established in conformity with the University Act and is responsible for policies concerning student evaluation, withdrawal, academic standing, appeals, grading, awards for excellence and curriculum content. The Board of Governors obtains advice from Senate on a variety of matters. Senate is composed of twenty-six voting representatives, which includes ten faculty, five Deans, four Students, two Staff, the Chancellor, President, the Academic Vice-President, Chief Librarian and one Alumni Member appointed by the President. In addition, there are non-voting members that includes a Board member, the Registrar, representative from Faculty, Staff and the Student Union and from each Faculty there is an alternate member that becomes a voting member when one of the voting member of that Faculty is away.

At every stage of the accreditation process and during each step in the development of our academic and strategic plans, the Board of Governors has played a key role as contributor and evaluator of our institutional identity. Through regular reports, provided by the President and the Vice President Academic and Provost, the Board maintains oversight of our institutional direction and progress towards mission fulfillment. The Board also has the final authority over all our official documents and processes, so to that end they review and when necessary request adjustments to our Institutional Accountability Plan and Report or IAPR (produced annually for the Ministry of Advanced Education, the most recent included in this report as Appendix 4), our academic and strategic plans, and our NWCCU reports.

But perhaps most important for the current self-evaluation, the Board was involved in the drafting and determination of our Vision, Mission, Core Themes and Institutional Learning Outcomes. They have been an integral contributor to and frequent friendly critic of our attempts to encourage and promote accountability at all levels of the institution. Representatives of the Board have participated in developmental forums and public debates, they hold the institution’s feet to the fire and insure that we are fulfilling our promises and our potential. Although the Board is constantly in flux, and each year there is the need to orient new members, they remain vigilant in their oversight of Capilano University’s operations and activist in their dedication to mission fulfillment and student success.

Are Capilano University’s core themes and learning objectives still valid?

There is no question that Capilano University’s core themes and learning objectives are still not only valid, but constantly being applied to the assessment and review of all our institutional practices. The hard work that went into creating our academic and strategic plans was deeply rooted not only in the articulated core themes and objectives, but also in the very process used to develop those core themes. The consultation process that led to the adoption of “Opportunity, Learning and Community” as Capilano’s core themes was the starting point for all our work on institutional identity, academic planning and strategic implementation.

Capilano University’s 2014-2018 Academic Plan was adopted in June 2014, and in it can be found the progeny of our work on core themes and learning outcomes. It charts a course for institutional renewal that will enable the University to remain sustainable in the changing post-secondary landscape. Most importantly, the Academic Plan articulates Capilano University’s commitment to providing “a supportive place where students learn how to succeed in post-secondary education,” “a clear path that students can follow to post-secondary success and completion,” and “real-world preparation for all students in all
credential programs.” This is for us the next step towards providing opportunity, learning and community for all our students.

But articulating next steps and taking them are two different things, and it was the latter which was determined by our new strategic plan, approved in November 2014, that will help Capilano University fulfill its commitment to helping learners become engaged, informed and committed citizens—people who are well prepared for success through career-related and professional degree pathways. During the next three years, Capilano will focus on determining program offerings, managing student enrolment and enhancing learning environments all in support of the overarching goal of student success.

Is Capilano University’s satisfied that the core themes and indicators selected are providing sufficient evidence to assess mission fulfillment and sustainability?

As Capilano moves towards a more data-informed model of decision making in support of student success, we continue to use the core themes as our guide to mission fulfillment. Opportunity, learning and community manifest throughout our academic programming, and are tied directly to the key performance indicators chosen by the Ministry of Advanced Education, university administration, the Senate Academic Planning and Program Assessment Committee (SAPPAC) and individual programs. These indicators are diverse, and include both quantitative and qualitative measures.

Examples of measures linked to the core theme of “opportunity” include:

- Traditional and non-traditional student enrolment and success in their programs including retention and credential completion for student cohorts.
- Student use of and satisfaction with advising, career, learning and counselling services.
- International student enrolment and participation in programs and Canadian student enrolment in Study Abroad programs, including Canadian student participation in learning projects in other countries.

Examples of measures linked to the core theme of “learning” include:

- Increase the number of programs developing and using Program Learning Outcomes data for program improvement.
- Increase the number of programs that link, embed and assess our institutional learning outcomes in their program assessments.
- Student participation in Service Learning projects, local and international partnerships for learning, Co-op opportunities and ChangeMaker projects.
- Increase in the use of e-portfolios to document teaching innovation and student progress.
- Increase in number of faculty recognized for accomplishments in innovative teaching.

Examples of measures linked to the core theme of “community” include:

- Increase collaborations with international partners and assessments of student learning outcomes resulting from these projects.
- Participation in and satisfaction with workshops, conferences and other informative activities in the assessment of learning outcomes for other BC institutions.
• Student and faculty participation in synergistic community projects including community
gardens, lecture series, community presentations, Centre for Performing Arts events, life-long
learning opportunities responsive to community needs, transition training for new immigrants
and tutoring for children of new immigrants.

Each year Capilano University provides the BC Ministry of Advanced Education with an Institutional
Accountability Plan and Report\textsuperscript{12} which includes provincial measures of success and progress. The
administration has been using key performance metrics such as graduation rate, time to completion,
grade distribution, etc. to make decisions for the university as a whole, and during the Fall of 2015, we
anticipate the launching of a data dashboard which will provide real-time measures and comparables to
all our stakeholders. SAPPAC is the Senate committee charged with large-scale assessment processes
and in the last year, they have taken the first steps toward consistent performance indicators linked to
our functional unit review. While not all of these various approaches are linked explicitly to the core
themes and mission fulfillment, connections are made within this document and in all of
administration’s reports to the Ministry, the Board and the campus community.

As an institution, we are still growing in our understanding of how a data-informed environment will
support our goal of student success, and as a result we are constantly assessing, reassessing, revising
and reconsidering our indicators. So it is safe to say that we are satisfied with our current indicators, but
realize we can and will be expanding the scope of those indicators and constantly improving the linkages
between data and mission fulfillment.

Is Capilano University's contemplating changes in core themes and indicators?

As a developing institution we are always reassessing our core themes and indicators, and the 2014-
2018 Academic Plan is explicit in its intention to formally review all of our guiding statements on a
regular schedule. The next review will be complete before the seven year review.

Are Capilano University's indicators proving to be meaningful?

Our indicators have proven to be meaningful at all levels. Ministry indicators inform our relationships
with other BC universities. Senate indicators have expanded the dialogue about measures of success
and strengthened the entire community’s view of data informed decision-making. At the individual unit
level, we are in the midst of a steep learning curve that includes the use of comparable indicators as well
as the development of program and area specific indicators. As we are in the early stages of these
functional unit reviews it is impossible to say whether all of the indicators will prove meaningful.

Does Capilano University have too many or too few indicators?

At the institutional level we are always looking for new ways to measure and improve student success,
so it is fair to say we still have too few indicators that are widely understood and used. However, at the
program and unit level the indicators tend to be “home grown” and as a result they have been allowed
to propagate without much pruning. There are currently too many indicators in use across the campus,
but that is an important step towards understanding and valuing such metrics and their validity.

\textsuperscript{12} Appendix 4: Capilano University Institutional Accountability Plan and Report
What has Capilano University learned so far and how is this learning driving change?

Capilano is still very much in the early stages of data-informed practice, especially at the level of the functional unit. Some areas are still grappling with the selection of indicators and whether or not they are best suited to the assessments they seek. At the institutional level, however, Capilano has learned much from the use of indicators over the last several years. Mapping patterns of enrolment and completion has solidified our understanding of the role that Arts and Sciences plays at the institution, while conversion and time to degree has provided important information about laddered credentials and transfer patterns. All of this has led to a process of credential review, degree redesign, course realignment and market placement. And these are only some of the examples. But perhaps the most important thing that Capilano University has learned during this process is the importance of clarity, dissemination and transparency in the gathering and use of data. To this end we are focusing our efforts not only on the selection and use of indicators, but on the clear communication of how indicators and data in general lead to institutional decision making, planning and process determination and ultimately improvement of student learning.

What has been Capilano University’s progress using the data?

As an institution we have made significant progress in our use of indicator data, especially in the areas of recruitment, conversion, admissions and retention. In many ways, the data has been most useful at identifying areas in need of improvement, especially in the student services areas. There has also been a significant increase in the number of data requests, indicating a sea change in the institutional culture.

Does the data tell Capilano University what it needs to know?

All of the data being collected has proven useful and, in the sense that we are moving from a data-poor to a data-rich environment, any information on indicators and metrics is helpful. We are focusing our resources on areas that are most fruitful for decision-making and most likely to provide much needed change.

How is data being collected, analyzed, and utilized at Capilano University?

Data is being collected from four main sources: government, Institutional Research, Registrar’s Office and individual programs. Government data is collected provincially and include information from past and present students, as well as other post-secondary institutions. Data provided by IR and the Registrar’s Office include standard quantitative metrics as well as a variety of home-grown measures tailored to meet the needs of the institution.

Due to the variety of data being collected, analysis is often a challenge, especially in terms of comparability. Government data is most valuable for placing Capilano University within the context of other BC institutions, as all universities use and report on the same sources. However, each institution also generates its own data independent of government directives and because there is no central data clearing house for all of the institutions in the province, this data is often not available for comparison. Three key sources of information are: the post-secondary data warehouse, the student outcomes survey, and the student transition project.

The Central Data Warehouse (CDW) contains data about student demographics, programs, credentials, FTE enrolments, headcount enrolments for twenty-one public post-secondary institutions in BC. Interactive tools allow filtering by student headcount, academic year and credentials awarded by
academic, fiscal and calendar year, student contact hours, facility inventory and system accountability information. The Student Outcomes Survey collects information from former students nine to twenty months after they complete all, or a significant portion of their post-secondary programs. Diploma, Associates, Credential Student Outcomes Survey (DACSO) surveys sub-baccalaureate degree completers and collects data about programs, demographics, satisfaction, employment, financial aid, and other relevant educational and post-graduation experiences. The Baccalaureate Graduates Survey (BGS) surveys baccalaureate completers one, two, and five years after degree completion. The Student Transitions Project links data about students in the BC public post-secondary education system with their kindergarten to Grade twelve information and provides aboriginal data, high school GPA data, transfer data across institutions, sectors, and regions.

Our office of Institutional Research (IR) gathers a wealth of information that can be used longitudinally for internal purposes, but trying to link such data beyond the institution has proven to be difficult. Major internal reports produced by IR include: Key performance Indicators (KPI) including Applied- Offered-Registered (A-O-R) Report by program of applicants, offers made, conversion rate, registration, yield rate, enrolment headcount and activity FTE by course and program, seat utilization (percent full by section, course, program, and institutional level); Drop-Withdrawals-Fail Report show the number and percent of students at the course level who drop, withdraw or fail; student retention which tracks entry cohorts new to a program who continue to subsequent year, drop or graduate from the program; Graduation Reports that provides a graduation rate for first time full-time bachelor degree seeking students. Additionally, IR provides on going Student Activity reports (program and course registration); Course Grade detail reports, and Application, FTE and enrolment projections. IR also accommodates several ad hoc requests (two or three times a week with various degrees of complexity) and conducts several major surveys. The Registrar’s Office routinely collects and analyzes data (both in person and electronically) regarding admission processing, financial aid utilization, recruitment function attendance, advising demand, social media engagement, and service levels. The Registrar’s Office utilizes this data to optimize the allocation of resources; to establish predictable patterns and to determine opportunities for process improvement to support our goals of recruitment and retention. Combining and assessing this data from a variety of sources can be a challenge, and we are constantly aware of the need for comparative and transparent processes.

Yet these challenges are nothing compared to the issues arising from program-level and unit-provided data, which tends towards more qualitative measures and less consistent modes of collection and analysis. This data is profoundly diverse, ranging from anecdotal information about student enrolment patterns and registration justifications, to statistical information regarding employment outcomes, to the narrative profile of students producing and performing in the region. Comparing the indicators of success between programs in motion picture arts and theatre arts has its own challenges, but it is even more difficult to compare data sources from disparate disciplines such as music therapy and, for example, economics. Then again, we are undertaking annual assessment of all areas, so we also grapple with data from Human Resources, Facilities, Finance, and Continuing Studies.

The answer to this question of how data is used at Capilano University is not straightforward, but it does represent much of the work we are undertaking during the next several years. As we begin to better understand the needs of functional areas, we gain a greater appreciation of what is valued in terms of data by each of the units at the university. In some cases, there has been a remarkable synthesis of approaches, with areas taking pages out of other units’ playooks, and throughout the process we have
learned a great deal about what we value as an institution and how we can improve at all levels. Contending with the volume and variety of information will be our main concern for the next few years.

**How are the findings being communicated to constituents?**

At the program level, findings are shared with functional areas through committees and deans, directors or managers. These are then provided to IR and distributed to SAPPAC (for academic areas) and the two vice presidents (for non-academic areas). Capilano is committed to making all of its assessment data available to stakeholders, and to this end is developing a dashboard that will house indicator data for public use. We also publish all accountability reports required by the government on our website.

**What will Capilano University need to do moving forward to the Year Seven review?**

Because Capilano is only now seeing the full cycle of unit assessment, the main focus of our progress towards Year Seven Review will be ensuring that all areas are not only collecting accountability data but also using that data to improve and progress towards mission fulfillment. This will require ongoing review of data gathering and analysis, sharing and comparing of data across units and a wholesale review of the cumulative impact these changes are having on students at every level.

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PART II: REPRESENTATIVE EXAMPLES

In 2012, NWCCU made a recommendation “that all University functions and units have outcomes assessment plans established, implemented and published and that the results of these assessment are evaluated and lead to improvements. In particular, the evaluation committee recommends a focus on student learning outcomes for all academic courses and programs.” Capilano University has invested a great deal of effort in following this recommendation and is proud of the progress we have made in the last three years. The section that follows outlines our efforts using specific examples and highlights our plans for continued improvement.

The program assessment process was initiated at Capilano University in 2008, with the first reports being submitted in 2010. Over the last few years, the Capilano community has experienced considerable progress in its understanding of how to use student learning outcomes assessment for continuous improvement. The ultimate goal of program assessment at Capilano University is to improve student learning and facilitate student success, our institutional strategic goal. We require all academic and non-academic units to submit outcomes assessment plans at the end of September each year. Throughout the year, plans are reviewed and data is collected with the help of SAPPAC and the IR department. In June, all areas submit reports outlining the findings of their data collection and suggesting improvements that will help them to close the loop (see appendix 5 for our outcomes assessment templates). These reports are submitted to IR, vetted by SAPPAC, and shared with all members of functional area. Some reports are also shared campus-wide and provided as examples for other areas.

Capilano University makes a concerted effort to support all outcomes assessment efforts. Each year, members of SAPPAC review assessment reports, plans and other supplementary documents and provide written feedback to programs. We also have a Program Assessment Facilitator, housed in the IR department who supports and assists programs. In addition to providing individual consultations, the Program Assessment Facilitator runs program assessment workshops throughout the year. A group of expert faculty advisors has also been established to provide further support and to oversee the process. We continue to work toward building a culture of assessment on our campuses. This year, SAPPAC organized its first Program Assessment Lunch and Poster Exhibit with the aim of encouraging collaboration among faculty and celebrating the hard work put into the program assessment process (see appendix 6 for examples of posters submitted for this event).

In order to provide NWCCU with a balanced view of our assessment project, we have included two examples representing work in progress on both sides of the institution, academic and administrative. The academic case example comes from the School of Communications, selected for its attention to a wide variety of data sources but also because it is representative of the applied nature of our degrees. Communication is neither the oldest nor the youngest of our schools, but it is one of the most nimble and responsive areas on campus. The administrative case example is provided by the Registrar’s Office, which has taken to heart the commitment to student success, perhaps more than any other unit on campus. The Registrar’s Office represents not only the self-aware and improvement-oriented aspects of our assessment process, but also the ways in which an administrative unit can make inroads into the academic programming and culture of a university. Additionally, Capilano University recently commissioned a report on our strategic enrolment management structures, which highlighted the importance of the Registrar’s Office in achieving student success in this area. Because of the significance of this report and its recommendations, we felt the Registrar’s Office was an important case for us, as an institution, to consider.
CASE STUDY EXAMPLE: SCHOOL OF COMMUNICATIONS

The School of Communications has a well-established reputation at Capilano University and in the broader professional community of BC and Western Canada. The School of Communications offers programs and courses in applied and scholarly communication: applied communication involves practical skills in writing, editing and public speaking; scholarly communication involves the analysis of communication technologies, media, institutions and processes in relation to pertinent social, political and economic issues. In fusing both approaches, Capilano’s School of Communications focuses on “professional communication” – that is, the study of communication as a strategic practice.

When we became a University in 2008, Communications was one of the first areas to develop their degree program. The School has engaged fully in student learning outcomes assessment from the very beginning of our accreditation process. Indeed, Communications is a good example of the benefits NWCCU affiliation has brought to Capilano University and the possibilities such work has made possible at the program level. After developing student learning outcomes and data collection tools, the School has been fully engaged in the outcomes assessment reporting process since 2011. Over the last four assessment cycles, the department expressed that they have developed a much stronger understanding of the value of the assessment process.

The outcome assessment results for 2014-2015 show strong improvements in student learning on all outcomes, with very significant increases in the two outcomes, which were to focus of the 2013-2014 assessment cycle.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Outcome</th>
<th>Student Achievement of outcomes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Apply and adapt principles of strategic communication within standards of professional practice in a variety of fields.</td>
<td>72% 85%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Identify, apply and adapt appropriate theoretical, ethical &amp; critical frameworks to communication processes, practices and contexts</td>
<td>48% 78%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Demonstrate critical media literacy as both producers and consumers of communication in a variety of contexts and media.</td>
<td>77% 80%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Employ research methods for advanced projects in communication studies and strategic communication.</td>
<td>51% 74%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Understand and apply strategic analysis to developmental trends and contexts in communication media, practices and industries</td>
<td>75% 83%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Are the School of Communications indicators, for the selected examples, proving to be meaningful? Are there too many indicators or too few?

In their 2014-2015 report, they stated: “The process that we have developed for assessment, cumbersome as it may be, also seems to produce meaningful results for us, and acts as an important
context for wide-ranging discussion of curriculum, teaching, assignments, and program development.”

The section below provides an overview of some of the course and program-level changes that have resulted from the indicators used for their program assessment process. The School collects data to provide evidence of student achievement of five different learning outcomes. They have found this to be a manageable number that allows them to thoroughly assess all outcomes in enough depth that meaningful changes result from the process.

What has the School of Communications learned so far and what changes are contemplated? What has been the progress to date using the data? Do the data tell the School of Communications what they are looking for?

Over the last four years, many changes have been implemented as a result of the School of Communications’ outcomes assessment process. Their data both informs the School of the need for change and influences the direction of change. For example, the following strategies were implemented as a response to the results of the department’s 2013-2014 outcomes assessment results:

- Adding a journaling component for communication theory in years one, two and three. The aim of the journaling assignments is to have the student both document the theory and apply it to relevant cases.
- Integration of research modules into year two and three courses
- Instructors of year two research methods courses, collaborated thematically in offering their courses in Spring 2014 and Spring 2015 in order to enhance research instruction and practice
- Additional scaffolding to boost analytical and research skills.

The School will also implement the following changes aimed at collecting more data in response to this year’s outcomes assessment results:

- Curriculum mapping to support the creation of a longitudinal assignment plan and
- Development of surveys for mid-term students, graduating students, alumni and practicum hosts.

In light of the need to see further improvement in their research-related learning outcomes, the School is also considering making changes to the current staging of their research methods courses. They currently offer three research methods courses, two at the 200-level and one at the 400-level. The change being considered would move one of the 200-level courses to a 300-level course and create a pathway from the 200-level to the 400-level. The hope is that avoiding the gap during third year will help students retain what they learned in second year by the time assessments are completed in fourth year.

Over the last four assessment cycles, the department has adapted their original data collection tools and added new tools to fill in any gaps noted during each cycle. After several different iterations of indicators, the School has developed a data collection plan, which provides useful, actionable results and leads to meaningful changes in curriculum, pedagogy and program development.
How is data being collected, analyzed, and utilized and the findings communicated to the School of Communications constituents?

The School of Communications has a complex process for collecting data that provides information on course, program and institutional outcomes. Each year, the department identifies several courses that will be subject to assessment. The selection of the courses is based on three factors:

- Broad links between course outcomes and program outcomes
- Major assignments that are practice-based and that can therefore demonstrate rather merely than indicate achievement of outcomes
- Complementarity across all selected courses to ensure that assessment is equally weighted to all outcomes

The assessment committee contacts instructors for each of the chosen courses and asks that they provide a random sample (at least 50%) of a major course assignment. To ensure data reliability, the samples are rendered anonymous and if a course instructor also serves on the assessment committee, they do not assess the assignments from their course. This also ensures a clear separation between the evaluation of an assignment with respect to course outcomes and the assessment of program outcomes through course assignments. All assignments from their key course, Communication 360 “Strategic Communication”, are also included in the assessment process.

Teams of two faculty members, struck from among the membership of the assessment committee, undertake the data analysis. Normally there are three such teams rotating the various assignments between them. Using the rubrics developed by the outcomes assessment committee (see Supplemental Material 2 for a copy of the rubric), each assignment is reviewed and assessed. Finally, results are analyzed by the committee in relation to projected achievements and presented to the School of Communications faculty; the result of this process is that suggestions are made for strategies of improvement in the coming year.

As might be expected, the School of Communications has a well-developed plan for communicating outcomes assessment results and engaging faculty in the process. Learning outcomes design was undertaken by the Communications faculty as a whole during the development of its degree program in 2008-2009. The Communications' Program Assessment Committee is responsible for all assessment activities. The Chair of the Assessment Committee, in conjunction with the relevant course instructors, collects all of the data. The committee conducts primary data analysis during an annual assessment exercise and the Chair of the committee performs a secondary data analysis and preparation of the report in consultation with the membership. Recommendations for changes are discussed among the School of Communications faculty as a whole once the results of the assessment are compiled. In their most recent assessment report, the School of Communications noted that they could do a better job of broadening outcomes assessment from the current committee-based process to a more intuitive part of the departmental culture. They started to work toward this in 2014-2015 academic year by making a discussion of assessment a standing item on the department meeting agenda.

The Committee agreed that this helped to introduce not only the idea of program assessment to the faculty members in the School, but to begin to make familiar the language, processes and purpose of outcomes assessment. The School is also working on the co-ordination of a professional development session for faculty members on outcomes assessment as part of their bi-annual department meeting.
They hope this session allows faculty members input into the tighter alignment of their program outcomes with the Capilano University Academic Plan, and highlights the role of each faculty member in the outcomes assessment process for 2015-2016, including the definition of specific links between course outcomes and program outcomes, and the determination of some alternative assessment objects and strategies for 2015-2016.

CASE STUDY EXAMPLE: REGISTRAR’S OFFICE

The Registrar’s Office provides enrolment services for students throughout their academic life, as well as supporting faculty and staff at the institution. It is a complex office that is responsible for many of the essential functions of the university including the following: recruitment of domestic students, support for the Centre for International Experience (CIE) and their recruitment of international students, admissions, academic advising, financial aid, course and exam scheduling, student records, evaluation of graduation requirements, managing the University’s switchboard and directory, managing all elections for the Senate and the Board, supporting the development of new programs and courses, revision of current courses and programs and development and publication of the annual university calendar. The Registrar’s Office is organized under the Registrar in three major divisions, each lead by an Associate Registrar, that work cooperatively to meet the above mentioned roles: Associate Registrar, Admissions and Advising; Associate Registrar, Records, Registration and Financial Aid; and Associate Registrar, Systems and Scheduling. All areas work toward supporting the University’s mission of student success.

All academic and non-academic units of the University align their outcomes with the University mission, core themes and strategic priorities as laid out in our strategic plan. The Registrar’s Office works toward managing student enrolment including coordinated advising, financial aid, student retention and completion and targeted recruitment. This year, the Registrar’s Office collected data to comprehensively evaluate three of their service outcomes:

- Provide timely response to student inquiries and service requests, preferably through self-service options
- Support students, faculty and staff with the following processes: admissions, curriculum approvals, financial aid, academic advising, student records and recruitment
- Facilitate access to professional development and training opportunities for staff to ensure maintenance of best practices

To evaluate the achievement of their first service outcome, the Registrar’s Office looked at data related to responsiveness to student requests (wait times and response times) and processing times for admissions and transcript requests. This data is useful in assisting the Registrar’s Office in decision-making regarding opportunities for improvement and also show areas where they are meeting and potentially exceeding expectations of service standards. In many areas, specifically “turnaround time” for transcript production and “wait time” for phone inquiries, the Registrar’s Office exceeded the internal business standards.15

To evaluate their second service outcome, the Registrar collected similarly comprehensive data analysis including the following indicators: number of curriculum approvals, number of workshops, number of appointments, number of student records process by type, number of recruitment events hosted and

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follower increase on all social media platforms. This year was the first year of collection and analysis for much of this data, therefore the data collected were used to set benchmarks for subsequent years. The Registrar’s Office made a number of important discoveries while completing their data analysis. One of the most important was that they determined the number of applications is a poor measure of successful achievement of their service outcome. They decided a better indicator would be one that measures whether the ‘right’ students were applying for the ‘right’ program and successfully completing that program.

The Registrar’s Office believes that student workshops are an excellent tool to ensure that students are making informed decisions regarding their academic career. The Registrar’s Office continually assesses current workshops to ensure they remain relevant and that new workshops are developed when there is an unfilled need. In response to data collected and analyzed for their outcomes assessment process, a new workshop is being developed for the 2015-2016 academic year for new students.

The need for ongoing training and professional development (PD) is a necessity for those in the Registrar’s Office; it is essential to optimal performance of the Registrar’s Office and therefore is absolutely essential to their contribution to student success. The final service outcome was assessed by examining participation in professional development and training opportunities.

The involvement of all staff in outcomes assessment is strongly encouraged by the University. Capilano recognizes that staff involvement helps promote dedication to the achievement of service outcomes. For this reason, one of the sections of the report template provided by Institutional Research to all functional areas asks all areas to describe the level of staff involvement in their outcomes assessment process. In the case of the Registrar’s Office, the collection of this data involved a wide range of employees. The Registrar led the selection of the service outcomes, with feedback from the Associate Registrars. The planning for data collection was facilitated by the Assistant Registrar and completed by the functional leads of each area of the Registrar’s Office. The data analysis was a coordinated effort involving the functional leads of each area and their managers. The establishment of recommendations for changes/improvements was completed during the compilation of the report by the same functional lead group, and was coordinated by the Assistant Registrar.

Finally, we believe continuous improvement needs to be considered not only in thinking about achievement of our service outcomes but also in regards to the outcomes assessment process itself. This information makes up the final section of Capilano’s report template. This year, the Registrar’s Office noted that some slight adjustments should be considered regarding the collection of data for areas that have mixed reporting practices or where outcomes can be easily misconstrued due to these reporting practices. For instance, use of number of applications as an indicator, as described above. The Registrar’s Office further noted that opportunities to increase the ease of collection of data should be considered for items such as emails received and PD/Training opportunities as collection of this data was extremely time consuming and not particularly efficient. Overall, the Registrar’s Office felt strongly that the outcomes assessment process was beneficial for their departmental planning and improvement of their contribution to student success at Capilano University.

16 Appendix 7: Unit Review Report Template
Are the Registrar’s Office indicators, for the selected examples, proving to be meaningful? Are there too many indicators or too few?

The Registrar’s Office started their outcomes assessment process with an ambitious number of indicators, but a large number of indicators is necessary for an area with such diverse functions. The Registrar’s Office found that their indicators collected meaningful data. Their indicators not only pointed them toward areas in need of improvement, but also helped direct improvement efforts. In the upcoming academic year, the Registrar’s Office will add more indicators to fill in data gaps noted this assessment cycle.

What has the Registrar’s Office learned so far and what changes are contemplated? What has been the progress to date using the data? Does the data tell the Registrar’s Office what they are looking for?

By completing their data collection and analysis process, the Registrar’s Office has noted three key areas where improvements can be made.

- First, the Registrar’s Office noticed that the majority of calls with a wait time over five minutes were immediately dealt with prior to or during the fall registration period. To address this issue, additional staff will be allocated to back-up the Registrar’s Office phones in order to decrease call wait time during the fall registration period. The Registrar’s Office will also complete a thorough review of online information to ensure ease of access to the most frequently asked questions prior to the next major registration period.

- Second, student attendance in financial aid workshops was relatively low. To support attendance, Financial Aid and Awards is continuing to work with the Registrar’s Communication Assistant to develop social media and poster campaigns that resonate with target audiences. In addition, Financial Aid and Awards is continuing to create partnerships with various departments on campus to support the promotion of and attendance at workshops.

- Finally, targeted participation in professional development and training activities needs to be a focus for the 2015-16 academic year in order to increase staff participation. The detailed debrief from this year’s participants helped to determine recommendations for future attendance. A very important finding of this year’s service outcomes data collection and analysis was that workload must be appropriately balanced in order for staff to express a desire to participate in professional development and training opportunities.

In most cases, the indicators selected provided the information that the Registrar’s Office needed. There was one indicator, number of applications, which proved to be a poor measure of successful achievement of their service outcome. The Registrar’s Office decided a better indicator would be one that measures whether the ‘right’ students were applying for the ‘right’ program and successfully completing that program. In the upcoming academic year, participation in student workshops and student recruitment events will serve as indicators for this outcome.
How is data being collected, analyzed, and utilized and the findings communicated to Registrar’s Office constituents?

The Registrar’s Office has a huge amount of data available to them. They have addressed this challenge by developing a detailed data collection plan, which they plan to expand in the future.\(^\text{17}\) Their data collection plan delegates responsibility for data collection to each of the different functional areas of the Registrar’s Office. The Registrar led the selection of the service outcomes, with feedback from the Associate Registrars. The planning for data collection was facilitated by the Assistant Registrar and completed by the functional leads of each area of the Registrar’s Office. The data analysis was a coordinated effort involving the functional leads of each area and their managers. The establishment of recommendations for changes/improvements was completed during the compilation of the report by the same functional lead group, and was coordinated by the Assistant Registrar.

Communication of outcomes assessment findings is a priority for the Registrar’s Office. The entire staff of the Registrar’s Office meets once a month with each team area meeting an additional three times per month. Information regarding outcomes assessment goals and data collection is shared on an ongoing basis at these meetings. Additionally, reports and plans can be found on the University’s internal SharePoint site.

\(^\text{17}\) Supplemental Materials 3: Registrar’s Office Assessment Plan and Report 2014-2015, p. 8
PART III: MOVING FORWARD

In light of our mid-cycle analysis and representative examples, we feel that there has been much accomplished during the last few years, with more work still to be done. As we look ahead to our Year Seven review there are some key areas of emphasis for Capilano University as an institution and as a community. These include:

- Examining not only our process of mission fulfillment, but also the extent to which our mission and core themes are to remain valid in a changing and changeable environment;
- Reviewing and expanding our assessment processes so as to involve, at a deeper level, all members of the university community, especially the Senate and the Board of Governors;
- Improving our approaches to data collection, analysis, use and communication, with particular emphasis on our service to specific populations, our strategic enrolment management approaches, our attention to the needs and mandates of British Columbia and our commitment to transparency and accountability;
- Continuing our development access points for students transitioning from high school to college, such as the Cap Year Experience, as well as re-evaluating our former identity as a transfer institution;
- Building towards the development of a robust interdisciplinary general education curriculum that promotes commitment, engagement, participation and critical understanding as a central component of all degree pathways; and,
- Fostering a cycle of inquiry and improvement, based in our mission and values, focused on our outcomes and accountabilities and directed toward student success first, foremost, and always.

While Capilano is confident that our mission, core themes and objectives are still valid, our institutional dedication to inquiry and improvement necessitate ongoing review as part of our academic planning processes. Before 2018, we are committed to initiating a program and institutional review process that will provide us with a mechanism for interrogating and if necessary revising our academic identity in light of changing circumstances. This will involve all stakeholders, and is intended to build a deeper sense of institutional ownership.

Currently, all functional units are involved in assessment for mission fulfillment. But we are still in the early stages of that process, with only a handful of academic units having gone through the cycle of review, analysis, revision and review more than once. The level of institutional involvement is still uneven, with some areas being profoundly committed to ongoing improvement and others still grappling with vocabulary, data gathering and interpretation. As we continue toward Year Seven, this level of participation and understanding will be a key indicator of progress and hopefully success. Part of that developmental process will include greater involvement from Capilano University’s Senate and Board of Governors. Both of these bodies have oversight responsibilities for our outcomes and assessments, and both are in the process of updating their policies to better reflect the work we are doing as an institution. As we continue make changes to our policy profile, we will have a better sense of direction and hopefully a greater sense of accomplishment.

\[18\] Supplemental Material 4: Policy Tracking Spreadsheet
Key to any sense of forward momentum is our knowledge and use of data in support of decision-making and institutional change. In a very real sense, Capilano University is moving from a data-poor to a data-rich environment, with all of the associated growing pains that shift suggests. The first area of emphasis in this change process has been and will continue to be our under-represented populations, especially aboriginal students and our international populations. Thanks to a new Aboriginal Student Success Strategy, we have expanded the conversations on campus around issues of indigenizing the academy and developing a welcoming culture for First Nations students. Additionally, we are in the process of reviewing our international recruitment strategy, with an eye to aligning student demand and student opportunity. This is an important part of our strategic enrolment management plan, which includes a wholesale review of admissions, advising, financial aid, student support and learning services at Capilano. Additionally, we operate as an institution within the recommendations of the BC Jobs Plan, a provincial initiative that identifies areas of high employment need with an eye to building educational opportunities to meet workplace development. All of this relies on the expansion of our data collection, analysis and dissemination potential, so as to insure that Capilano University remains accountable to its stakeholders, and more importantly itself.

Both our 2014-2018 Academic Plan and our 2015-2018 Strategic Plan spoke to the need for Capilano to develop a shared institutional experience and a coherent general education curriculum. They also reaffirmed our commitment to student access and retention through to degree attainment. These goals have been addressed, in part, through two distinct initiatives: The Cap Year Experience and General Education.

To prepare well-educated and engaged citizens, Capilano University will develop an optional first-year experience and a required interdisciplinary general education core. The Cap Year Experience, described in detail in the academic plan, will be piloted in year one. The interdisciplinary general education curriculum will be built on Capilano’s strategic goal, dedicated to foundational capacities and transferable skills, and constructed to begin operation in year two.

Work towards these goals has been ongoing, and by the time of our Year Seven review we hope to have both The Cap Year Experience and General Education up and running. During the last year, the campus community has developed two reports that will serve to guide our work in these areas, and committees have been struck for the coming term to continue their efforts.

All of this work, and more, contributes to our overarching goal of fostering a cycle of inquiry and improvement throughout the university. We are, as an institution and a community, committed to the mission and values developed collaboratively over time, and we will continue to interrogate those foundational beliefs in our ongoing commitment to improvement to understanding and improvement. At the heart of all our efforts, from information gathering and analysis to administrative review and restructuring, can be found an honest dedication to student success. This focus drives our outcomes, our intentions and above all our culture of accountability. This mid-cycle report is an important part of that process and we look forward to the upcoming formative dialogue with our NWCCU colleagues.

20 Appendix 8: Cap Year Report
21 Appendix 1: General Education Report
22 Appendix 3: Strategic Plan 2015-2018, p. 13
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Report of the General Education Committee

April 2, 2015

Submitted to Richard Gale, VP Academic and Provost

by

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Executive Summary

Although “general education” is not a term commonly used in the Canadian post-secondary context, we are all familiar with elective courses and the requirement that students complete a minimum number of credits outside their core areas of study. Capilano’s Academic and Strategic Plans articulate the university’s commitment to a general education curriculum; this report presents the context within which that curriculum should ideally be developed, including timelines to implementation with target dates of 2016 and 2017.

This document opens with background, context, and history. It presents an overview of the classic models of general education curriculum and identifies potential obstacles and challenges to the development and implementation of a general education curriculum. It offers five examples of existing general education programs as potential starting points for university-wide discussions regarding the planning and development of general education programming.

At the conclusion of this document, the general education committee recommends that:

- The university commit to a collaborative, faculty-led consultation and design process, with a general education launch date of September 2017 (see proposed timeline in Appendix B);
- The university provide budgetary support for a general education committee to guide this consultative process through the 2015-2016 academic year;
- The committee facilitate meaningful and sustained consultation with the university community, especially faculty and students, as outlined in the proposed timeline;
- The university and committee adopt and adhere to the principles and best practices outlined in this document, including identified faculty development opportunities; and
- The general education curriculum at Capilano University contain the program elements outlined in this document and include a minimum of 24-30 credits, with minimums established on a program-by-program basis.
Introduction

Since Capilano University became accredited by the Northwest Commission on Colleges and Universities (NWCCU), considerable concern has arisen around the NWCCU requirements for general education and how those requirements will be met at Capilano. While general education has long been a feature of the American post-secondary system, intentional general education programming has not been widely implemented in Canada. Concerns about the NWCCU requirements stem, in part, from our lack of familiarity with the term “general education,” which is typically used in the American educational system to describe “core concepts,” or “university studies.”

More specifically, general education programs are substantial, coherent programs of university study that are designed to provide students with a common experience that enhances their intellectual, practical, integrative and applied learning skills; their sense of personal and social responsibility; and their knowledge of human cultures, histories, and the physical and natural worlds.

In Capilano University’s Academic and Strategic Plans, the university shared its commitment to developing a general education program unique to Capilano – one that will also be unique in Canada. This program will not only meet NWCCU requirements for accreditation but also serve the mission of our institution and support student success at university and beyond. As outlined in the Academic Plan:

Employers do need educated and trained graduates—they also need socially, interpersonally, environmentally aware individuals, with broad-based knowledge and understanding, who are critical and creative thinkers, effective communicators and problem solvers. Our world changes quickly, so we need to be adaptable and equipped, academically, with transferable skills and knowledge. This is the goal of Capilano’s general education: fostering abilities and skills, literacies and understandings, perspectives and positions that cross disciplines and prepare students for meaningful engagement with their world. (Capilano University, 2014a, p. 16-17)

We are committed to these goals; we must also be committed to a development process and a general education curriculum that respects our institutional and Canadian cultures – that truly sets us apart. This report proposes the path forward. It provides an introduction to general education and its history; offers five exemplary general education models to foreground the consultation and development process; identifies potential roadblocks to development; and proposes a collaborative, faculty-led process for the design and implementation of a general education curriculum for launch in Fall 2017.
Background and Context

In response to the recommendations of Capilano University’s Academic and Strategic Plans, the Vice President Academic and Provost struck a committee on General Education with a mandate to produce a draft proposal for Capilano University’s general education curriculum by March 31, 2015. Committee members include the Vice President Academic and Provost, representatives from all five Faculties and the Library, the Dean of Arts and Sciences, and the Registrar.

Following on work completed by a sub-committee of the Ad Hoc Senate Credential Policy Review Committee, the General Education committee accepted that our current Senate Policy on Credential Requirements (S2009-03) reflects many of the definitions of general education found in the literature, and these are included in many of Capilano’s programs. However, the sub-committee’s report (Appendix A) identifies several problems or inconsistencies in the way that the so-called “general education” curriculum is implemented at Capilano, including the fact that general education requirements are not specifically defined for many Capilano credentials (baccalaureate concentrations, post-baccalaureate certificates, post baccalaureate diplomas, graduate certificates, and graduate diplomas).

Consequently, the process of implementing a robust and intentional general education curriculum will involve a careful review of all program curricula and may require some programs to “open up” their credentials, accommodating students’ need to fulfill general education credits rather than departmental electives, or to review their programming to identify where general education objectives are already being met through existing requirements.

Throughout the process of researching and writing this report, the committee members have been mindful of the need to develop general education curriculum thoughtfully and with extensive collaboration and consultation with and between faculty members, departments, and programs. A common refrain in the literature and at the AAC&U conference on General Education in Kansas City is that if we want our general education initiative to fail, we should design and implement it quickly and with minimal consultation.


A Brief History of General Education

Early university curricula, developed at institutions such as the University of Cambridge and the University of Oxford, were built on a canon of classical studies that would, it was believed, prepare students to enter society as educated individuals, well-versed in the most important texts and thinkers of the Western world (Wehlburg, 2000). In Canada, institutions such as the University of Toronto drew on this approach in designing their undergraduate programs, as did many institutions in the United States (Greenleaf, 2010).

In order to provide more choice for students in their educational planning, universities turned to an elective general education system that gave students the freedom to choose courses based on their interests. The elective system resulted in many changes in higher education; for example, students now had the freedom to build their own programs of study and declare majors and minors, the number of elective course offerings grew substantially, faculty specialization was increasingly valued, and disciplines became influential, particularly as they became housed separately (Gaff, 1983, cited in Wehlburg, 2000).

However, the elective system also had its shortcomings. Without the common canon as the foundation for a higher education, students lacked the opportunity to engage in “a common discourse” and the higher education system was now producing “graduates whose preparation level and overall capabilities varied widely” (Wehlburg, 2000, p. 5). The elective system was criticized for its fragmented approach to higher education, and universities responded by developing new requirements that students take a set of foundational courses in select disciplines alongside their electives. With this change came the emergence of general education programs (Wehlburg, 2000).

Since the 1960s, higher education institutions have grappled with how to offer general education that offers both coherence and choice while best preparing students for their future careers. Universities continue to experiment with approaches to general education that balance a substantial and coherent program of study with student choice. The general elective requirements at most Canadian universities average between 25.5-31.4 percent of an undergraduate degree. This difference alone makes the development of a general education program a major undertaking.

In the following section, we outline some of the most common models for contemporary general education programs that should inform the development process at Capilano University.
General Education Models

The purpose of general education is to provide students with an intentional, integrated course of study that provides intellectual breadth and depth in preparation for further studies, future careers, and lifelong learning. Several models of general education attempt to achieve this goal with varying degrees of success. The following are common general education models and their strengths and weaknesses.

The Core Curriculum Model

- Based on a common core of courses
- Typically delivered in years one and two
- Serves as a foundation for upper-level studies
- Often seen as courses to be “gotten out of the way”

The Distribution Model

- Students select courses from a menu (the “smorgasbord” approach)
- This model emphasizes the number and types of discipline-based courses from specific fields of study (e.g., natural sciences)
- Strength is in breadth and flexibility
- Weakness is lack of cohesion and “randomness” of courses

The Blended Distribution Model–Core Curriculum Model

- This blended model attempts to address weaknesses of Core and Distribution Models
- Students choose a defined core curriculum and select from approved additional courses outside of their primary program of study or major

The Thematic Curriculum Model

- Content organized around general themes reflective of university mission and goals (e.g., sustainability, diversity, citizenship)
- Thematically linked courses connect class content with its relevance to work and society
- Significant time and commitment required from involved faculty
- A budget that provides for its development, pilot testing, implementation, and coordination is required.

The Learning Community Model

- Follows cohort model for all or part of the general education curriculum
- Improves student retention, persistence, and transition to further studies
• Groups small numbers of students into learning communities that facilitate discussion and create a sense of belonging
• Requires significant amount of program coordination and lead-time to develop and implement.

Not surprisingly, the various models and innovative approaches to general education programming reflect reformers’ attempts to grapple with issues of depth versus breadth of knowledge, unity among elective choices versus fragmentation, the willingness of faculty specialists to collaborate in curriculum design outside their disciplines, and the shift from a Western cultural perspective to one of cultural diversity (Newton, 2000).

Whatever the model of general education, recent changes in approaches to general education are fueled by the recognition that curriculum must shift from “what students need to know” to “what students need to know and be able to do” upon graduation (Weissman & Boning, 2003, cited in Duncan, 2014, p. 15) – or rather, an outcomes-based approach rather than one based solely on content knowledge.

**Negotiating the General Education Development Process**

We know why Capilano University needs a general education program. We know how general education evolved from its beginnings. In the previous and subsequent sections, we review and summarize some of the most successful models currently implemented in North American institutions. As we prepared those summaries, we were consistently reminded that large curricular changes are rarely accomplished easily.

As we embark on our own general education development process, we acknowledge a clear message in the literature on general education reform: any major curricular change within a higher education institution is disorderly, time-consuming and provokes anxiety. There are lessons to be learned from institutions that have lived through the experience. Most notably, we believe that the university community needs to be clear on why change is necessary, and it needs to feel that it has a role to play in that change.

By focusing on this key principle, we can avoid the resentment and anxiety so common at the outset of reform efforts, and we may, in fact, significantly increase excitement over the creation of our general education program.

**Bringing People Together**

In an institution designed around disciplinary specialties – one experiencing a period of political flux – we can only overcome resistance to change through the harnessing of our “collective courage” (Carrell, 2015). We – the entire university community – need to set aside our individual goals and disciplinary boundaries and harness our “collective genius” to support student success. At the AAC&U General Education conference in Kansas City, Carrell suggested that the overarching goals set out in the University’s
mission, academic plan and strategic plan can act as strong unifying forces to help overcome territorial barriers. She expressed hope that faculty can rally around the idea of producing graduates more ready to take on the challenges of the modern world, and described how faculty “think tanks” and learning communities can encourage sharing and understanding.

Several conference speakers cautioned against ignoring resisters and discussed the importance of ensuring everyone feels heard, as part of an “intentionally iterative” process. This is the basis for our recommendation that the development process be faculty-led, collaborative, and consultative. We must not forget that the voices of our students should be front and centre during this process.

**Considering Place and Culture**

It is equally important that we avoid the urge to “import” another institution’s general education model or curriculum. We must consider the university community’s current and remembered histories and understandings of Capilano University, and that the distinguishing features of our institution, which make unique and innovating opportunities possible, can help us construct a program of general education that is a signature of our place in the world. Given the location of our campuses and the histories of the spaces we occupy, it will be important to acknowledge and be inclusive of Indigenous knowledges and understandings of who is a learner/teacher, and the unique perspectives and opportunities this brings.

**Finding the Right Words**

Terms such as *general education*, *general studies*, and *liberal studies* have competing definitions and historical associations based on the perceiver’s knowledge and experience. The committee anticipates, and has already experienced, resistance to the idea of a “general education” program based merely on our colleagues’ perceptions of the phrase. Our program should be given a name as distinctive as the program itself; we are innovators for integrative undergraduate education in Canada, and we should avoid calling our creation “the general education program.” Inviting all members of the university community to be a part of the naming of the new program will make a positive contribution to the consultation process.

**Anticipating the Impact of Compounded Change**

Since becoming a University, Capilano has experienced seismic change, with further change on the horizon, including the current Faculty Restructuring Review. It would be prudent to acknowledge the likely existence of institutional “change fatigue” and the possibility of cynicism toward or distrust of proposed changes, which will need to be heard and overcome. We can help by minimizing the ways in which this process is associated with other institutional changes and by providing examples of how similar
concerns have been successfully overcome in other universities. We want the general education development process to be revitalizing and to provide hope for faculty, which again prompts our recommendation to make the process collaborative, consultative, and faculty-led.

**Challenges of Interdisciplinarity**

The general education programs that have provided the greatest inspiration to this committee are those that have been designed and delivered by cross-faculty teams. They also take an interdisciplinary focus, creating connections between courses and scaffolding learning from year to year. There are, however, some potential barriers to achieving the interdisciplinary focus we desire for our general education program. For example:

- According to several student participants in a March 2015 focus group, it is difficult to access courses outside of a student’s area due to timetabling, time-ticket and permissions issues
- The same students also felt they would benefit greatly from more guidance in the selection of their electives
- “Off the grid“ cohort programs will face considerable scheduling challenges in providing and/or participating in a more pan-institutional and interdisciplinary education model
- Surcharges and their role in “balancing the books“ for certain resource-heavy specialized programs will have to be considered. There will be financial implications to creating a more interdisciplinary environment
- Education is expensive and time-consuming. Some students view electives as filler and may consider any increase in electives as an unfavorable change
- As general education is not a widely-used term to describe the required elective portion of a Canadian education, any increased quota of elective content, particularly in specialized applied fields, may be perceived as resulting in a less robust or less professionally valid credential in comparison to other Canadian institutions. While students would undoubtedly benefit from more interdisciplinary learning, the specialized training such curriculum would replace may be deemed a bigger loss.

These potential barriers underscore the importance of early consultation with the registrar, student advising, program areas, and marketing to ensure that the program developed can overcome these hurdles. The committee also recommends opportunities for faculty development in cross-disciplinary collaboration skills.
Recommended Best Practices for General Education

The committee’s review process, which included assessing the general education models presented at the AAC&U conference in Kansas City, has led us to identify a set of interconnected best practices. The committee recommends that the following principles and best practices inform and guide the general education development process at Capilano University.

Principles

*Principle 1* - A university’s general education program is the embodiment of the institutional mission, values, and goals at the level of courses shared in common by all students.

*Principle 2* – A general education program is a substantial and coherent program of university study that is designed to provide students with a common experience that enhances their intellectual, practical, integrative and applied learning skills; their sense of personal and social responsibility; and their knowledge of human cultures, histories, and the physical and natural worlds.

*Principle 3* - General education is the responsibility of the entire university, and all stakeholders shall have the opportunity to contribute to its development.

*Principle 4* - General education programs provide opportunities for students to synthesize and integrate the knowledge and skills that they are acquiring throughout the entirety of their degree program.

Best Practices

*Best Practice 1* - General education programs should include undergraduate courses at all levels of study with clearly mapped out laddering opportunities and course selection resources and guidelines.

*Best Practice 2* - A university’s general education program should incorporate opportunities for systematic reflection and curation through the intentional use of digital learning portfolios. Likewise, similar opportunities should be embedded in the students’ primary program of study.

*Best Practice 3* - In addition to providing a common university-wide learning experience, students should be able to make choices and select their own pathways through the general education program, which ideally also includes the opportunity to acquire transcript citations and/or secondary credentials such as minors in the process of completing general education requirements.
Best Practice 4 - All students should have the opportunity to complete a capstone project within their primary program of study and/or through the general education requirements.

Credit Requirements

In keeping with the university’s current elective requirement in S2009-03 and the committee’s review of general education programs and elective/breadth requirements at numerous American and Canadian universities, we recommend the development of a general education program with a minimum of 24-30 credits from outside a student’s primary program of study.

Sample credit ranges for general degree requirements at select local universities and institutions: BCIT = minimum of 21 credits; Kwantlen = 27-39 credits; SFU = 36 WBQ (Writing, Breadth, Qualitative) credits outside of student’s major; and UFV = 30 credits in five or more subject areas outside of major. We recommend a range of credits to accommodate the particular needs of various degree programs at Capilano, recognizing that some programs have professional accreditation or other requirements that may be seen to restrict their ability to incorporate general education curriculum.

General Education Models

As a university, we are committed to helping our students become “engaged, informed, and committed citizens who are well prepared for success through career-related and professional degree pathways” (Capilano University, 2014b, p. 7). For this to happen, our students must be able to engage with complexity both within and beyond the context of their chosen fields of study.

Providing cross-disciplinary opportunities to investigate the inter-connected geopolitical, cultural, environmental, and economic concerns central to contemporary society both locally and globally, which can be embedded an institution’s general education program, will enhance our students’ ability to reach their personal and professional goals and to participate in public discourse as critical and thoughtful citizens.

Building on the principles and best practices above, the committee recommends Capilano University develop a general education program with the following program elements:

Program Element 1: Integrated multi-level courses across all four years of baccalaureate degrees with well articulated objectives throughout the entirety of the general education program.
Program Element 2: Mix of required foundational courses and interdisciplinary pathway options with required course options distributed evenly across the lower and upper levels.

Program Element 3: Opportunity to complete transcript citations and/or interdisciplinary minors while completing coursework required for general education program.

Program Element 4: Adoption of high impact learning practices within the general education program such as peer mentoring, learning portfolios, first-year seminars, and undergraduate research (Kuh, 2008).

Beyond these program elements, we suggest the following models as inspiration for the program that will be developed at Capilano University. In each of the models, a substantial and coherent general education curriculum is integrated into the undergraduate degree as a whole. It is not something to “get out of the way” or to complete on “the way out the door.” General education is a shared experience. Students from across campus, irrespective of their home faculty and primary program, have the core curriculum in common. Select high impact learning practices have been incorporated into all of the models below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Institution</th>
<th>General Education Basics for Baccalaureate Degrees</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Chico State Chico, CA</td>
<td>GE as a percentage of total degree requirements: 37%-40%, or 48 of 120-127 units.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public 17,000</td>
<td><strong>Program:</strong> GE Foundations and Pathways</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Mission:</strong> Chico is a comprehensive university principally serving Northern California, our state and nation through excellence in instruction, research, creative activity, and public service. The University is committed to assist students in their search for knowledge and understanding and to prepare them with the attitudes, skills, and habits of lifelong learning in order to assume responsibility in a democratic community and to be useful members of a global society.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Distinctive elements:</strong> Students who complete 18 units in a single pathway (10 options) receive an interdisciplinary minor in the pathway. All Chico students must complete a capstone project in either their GE pathway and/or Major.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>College of Idaho</td>
<td>GE as a percentage of total degree requirements: 40-50%, or 51+ of 124 units.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Caldwell ID</td>
<td>Program: PEAK (Professional, Ethical, Articulate, and Knowledgeable) Program</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---------------------</td>
<td>--------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1120</td>
<td>Mission: PEAK challenges students to study broadly across the “four peaks” of social sciences and history, humanities and fine arts, natural sciences and mathematics, and professional foundations.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Distinctive elements: Students begin their studies with a first year seminar introducing them to the essential elements of academic inquiry. Seminars are arranged by topic. All students must complete a complete major and three minors (15-20 units, which in some areas of study may require additional prerequisites) across the four peaks.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Green Mountain College</th>
<th>GE as a percentage of total degree requirements: 30%, or 37 of 120 semester hours.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Poultney VT</td>
<td>Program: Environmental Liberal Arts (ELA) Core Sequence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Private</td>
<td>Mission: Green Mountain College prepares students for fulfilling lives by taking the goal of just and sustainable societies as the unifying theme for its interdisciplinary graduate and undergraduate liberal arts education. The college’s “general education” requirements are rooted directly in this mission.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>826</td>
<td>Distinctive elements: The ELA is rooted in the specific biogeographical region in which the college is located. Students complete four ELA core courses over their four years at GMC and seven additional courses from required distribution areas: Quantitative Analysis, Natural Systems, Human Systems, Aesthetic Appreciation, Moral Reasoning, Historic Context and The Examined Life. All students must complete an Environmental Liberal Arts portfolio, personal sustainability paper and a capstone project with a focus that benefits the College and/or greater community.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ithaca College</th>
<th>GE as a percentage of total degree requirements: 23-38%, or 28-45 of 120 credit hours.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ithaca NY</td>
<td>Program: Integrative Core Curriculum</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| Private               | Mission: The Integrative Core Curriculum (ICC) envisioned as a set of thought-provoking academic experiences designed to connect students from across the campus, and connect knowledge, thoughts and ideas across the disciplines to help shape students’ understanding of a
complex world.

**Distinctive elements:** All students must complete the Ithaca Seminar - an introduction to liberal arts intellectual experience and academic culture - and ICC digital learning portfolio prior to graduation. Students must complete 16 credits within a single theme. There are six thematic course clusters from which students can select.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Portland State University</th>
<th>GE as a percentage of total degree requirements: 24%, or 11 of 45 courses.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Portland OR</td>
<td><strong>Program:</strong> University Studies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public 28,000</td>
<td><strong>Mission:</strong> University Studies provides students with integrated, four-year, connected learning experiences that lay the foundation for lifelong intellectual development.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Distinctive elements:</strong> Year-long Freshman Inquiry course, Years two through four interdisciplinary clusters (15 options) - students select clusters that complement major or primary program of study, community-based capstone courses, peer mentor program, and dual credit high school Inquiry option.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

During the general education development process, we may also want to consider the potential of an “in-house” model in the form of the Liberal Studies (LBST) Minor (currently in concept paper format), which proposes giving all degree students an opportunity to complete a Liberal Studies minor as a supplement to their primary program of study.

The current 24.00 credit proposal invites students to take a mix of LBST core courses and Arts and Sciences courses in order to earn a minor in Liberal Studies. The final credit count for this proposal will be finalized once the proposed revisions to S2009-03 are approved by Senate. Revisiting and revising this proposal, especially in conjunction with the Liberal Studies interdisciplinary pathways initiatives, could offer an internal framework worth considering and further developing to meet the needs of the university community as a whole.

In short, there is an abundance of inspiring models from a wide range of institutions, including our own, for us draw upon as we move into the next phase of the development process. The appendices and resources that follow map out the various challenges and complexities associated with general education reform and development.
Conclusion

The message that has come through loud and clear in our research is that successful reform depends upon a collaborative, inclusive, dialogue-based approach to change. This approach signals a commitment to making general education “ours” as a university community and aligns with the Academic Plan’s assertion that “the process of moving forward will be both collaborative and consultative, leading to the collective transformation of learning, teaching, and academic work at Capilano University” (Capilano University, 2014a, p. 5). The collaborative and inclusive development of a general education program is most often achieved not through the design work of a single committee; the committee’s role is to design and lead the process by which all faculty, and the university community at large, may come together to design a distinctive program and curriculum that reflects the institution’s mission and culture (Roach, 2010; Brailow & Whitney, 2010; Burney & Perkins, 2010).

Our proposed timeline (Appendix B) draws on the lessons learned through the successful implementation and reform of general education programs at other institutions. The key feature of our timeline is an open submission process that allows any individual or team on campus to submit a general education proposal for consideration after a period of community education and consultation. These proposals are presented, discussed, and revised before being put to a vote. This practice has been documented at the University of Michigan-Flint, Franklin College in Indiana, and Salve Regina University in Rhode Island to great success and has proved to be revitalizing for faculty and for the programs (Roach, 2010; Brailow & Whitney, 2010).

The Academic Plan proposes that “Capilano will create an integrated general education experience for all degree students that is interdisciplinary and intentional” (Capilano University, 2014a, p. 24). In order for the program to be integrated, interdisciplinary, and intentional, we suggest a timeline featuring a faculty-led design process that culminates in a soft launch of the program in Fall 2017, rather than Fall 2016. We have included a sample timeline for a Fall 2016 launch (Appendix C), but this committee believes that taking the extra year will be crucial to the success of general education at Capilano University, despite the pressures that make a Fall 2016 launch seem desirable. Many institutions have reported the lack of success that accompanies rushed reform efforts that include only minimal consultation (e.g., Smith et al., 2001). We have included one such report from James Madison University in Harrisonburg, Virginia (Appendix E). We also include a chart that compares the merits and constraints of the Fall 2016 and Fall 2017 launch timelines (Appendix D).
Recommendations

For the reasons outlined above, in this document we do not propose a general education model or curriculum for adoption at Capilano University. Rather, we recommend a process that will result in the implementation of a community-developed general education curriculum in Fall 2017. To this end, the committee recommends that:

- The university commit to a collaborative, faculty-led consultation and design process, with a general education launch date of September 2017 (see proposed timeline in Appendix B);
- The university provide budgetary support for a general education committee to guide this consultative process through the 2015-2016 academic year;
- The committee facilitate meaningful and sustained consultation with the university community, particularly students, as outlined in the proposed timeline;
- The university and committee adopt and adhere to the principles and best practices outlined in this document, including identified faculty development opportunities; and
- The general education curriculum at Capilano University contain the program elements outlined in this document and include a minimum of 24-30 credits, with minimums established on a program-by-program basis.
References


Appendix A

Ad Hoc Senate Credential Policy Review Sub-committee Memo

Appendix B

Process Timeline to Fall 2017 Launch

Appendix C

Process Timeline to Fall 2016 Launch

Appendix D

Comparison of Merits and Constraints of 2016 and 2017 Pilot Launches

Appendix E


Appendix F

General Education at CapU – A Flowchart
Appendix A

Please see next page.
TO: Ad Hoc Senate Credential Policy Review Committee  
FROM: Alison McNeil and Nanci Lucas, Ad Hoc Committee members  
DATE: January 27, 2015  
RE: GENERAL EDUCATION: DEFINITION, DESCRIPTION AND INCORPORATION IN SENATE POLICY

Purpose

As part of the Ad Hoc Committee’s review of Senate Policy S2009-03 Requirements for Credentials, which currently contains the University’s general education requirements, we were asked to research this topic in detail and bring our findings back to the entire committee. We have examined four aspects of general education focused on the following questions:

1. Current Situation at Capilano University - How is “general education” currently described and used (e.g. in requirements for credentials)?
2. Practice at Other Institutions – How is “general education” described and used elsewhere?
3. Cap U’s Academic and Strategic Plans – What implications do these recently adopted plans have for our current “general education” description and usage?
4. Conclusions and Recommendations – What have we concluded from our research and what would we recommend to the Committee regarding description and use of general education?

1. CURRENT SITUATION AT CAPILANO UNIVERSITY

How is General Education Currently Described?

The Senate Policy S2009-03 Requirements for Credentials provides a general rationale and specific direction (including minimum credit requirements) on curriculum to program areas with respect to General Education:

Rationale:
  - “all Capilano U students are expected to receive instruction that increases their ability to function as independent learners and responsible citizens” (para. 1)

Direction on curriculum to program areas:

General
  - “Each Cap U program of 30 credits or more shall include a core of general education or related instruction at the breadth and depth appropriated for the level of the credential.” (para 1)

Specific Direction and Minimum Requirements - see table below
**Specific Direction and Minimum Requirements in Capilano U’s Current Policy:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>General Education curriculum required</th>
<th>Certificate</th>
<th>Adv Cert – 45 credits</th>
<th>Diploma – 60 credits</th>
<th>Adv Dip – 90 credits</th>
<th>Bac Degree – 120 credits</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Instruction in <strong>language and communication skills</strong> — “all programs should include English and/or communications in their curriculum” (para 2)</td>
<td>ALL CERTS - Three credit hours of English or Communications courses</td>
<td>Same as cert</td>
<td>Six credit hours of English and/or Communications courses</td>
<td>Same as Dip</td>
<td>English 100 completed within first 60 credits plus three credit hours of English or Communications courses. plus Three credits in a quantitative/analytical course approved by SCC (approved course list maintained by Cmtee Clerk) and 24 non-discipline credits, which may be used to satisfy the quantitative/analytic and English language requirements</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Competency in working with numbers and logical structures — “all programs should include quantitative/analytical or related instruction in computation” (para 2)</td>
<td>CERTS of 30 CREDITS OR MORE – 45 hours of instruction in computation</td>
<td>Same as cert</td>
<td>Same as cert</td>
<td>Same as cert</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Preparation for working with others — “all programs should include opportunities for students to increase their competency in working with others and to increase their understanding of the variety of influences on interpersonal interaction” (para 3)</td>
<td>CERTS of 30 CREDITS OR MORE – 45 hours of instruction in human relations</td>
<td>Same as cert</td>
<td>Same as cert</td>
<td>Same as cert</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Comments/Observations:**

- General Education is defined in terms of 3 areas that directly relate and reflect the 7 institutional goals of the university in our Strategic Plan: communication skills, quantitative reasoning ability and analytical thinking, and group and social interaction skills.
- Communications requirements are stated in terms of full courses (e.g. 3 and 6 credit hours) whereas the other two areas are not, and instead are stated in terms of hours of instruction.
- The other credentials listed in the Senate policy (Bacc concentrations, Post-Bac Cert, Post-Bac Diploma, Graduate Cert and Dip) do not have explicitly stated requirements for general education.
**How is General Education Currently Implemented?**

Capilano’s templates for *Non-Degree Credit Program Final Approval* and *Degree Program Final Approval* each have a General Education section in which the Senate policy is quoted and the program area is asked to: “Describe how the program meets the general requirements specified in the Senate’s policy on Requirements for Credentials.”

**2. PRACTICE AT OTHER INSTITUTIONS AND WHAT THE RESEARCH SAYS**

See Appendix A - Examples of General Education Definitions.

In terms of recent research on general education requirements, we have attached two research study papers of interest. (Chan, Brown, Ludlow, [2014] *What is the Purpose of Higher Education?* and Warner and Koeppel, [2010], *General Education Requirements: A Comparative Analysis*).

The second paper provides the following definition and observations about general education policy:
- General education is used heavily in higher education and refers to courses within a distribution schema that all students must pass as a **requirement for graduation**.
- The general education curriculum, shared by all students, demonstrates the institution’s **mission, philosophy, values and culture**.
- General education may be the most important manifestation of an **institution’s educational mission**.

**3. CAP U’S ACADEMIC AND STRATEGIC PLANS IMPLICATIONS**

Capilano’s Academic and Strategic Plans adopted in 2014 are founded on the same 7 institutional goals that are reflected in the current Senate policy.

**Strategic Plan on “General Education”**

General education is referenced on page 13 of the plan with reference to a **required interdisciplinary general education core curriculum**, an optional first year experience called “the Cap Year Experience”, foundational capacities and transferable skills:

“To prepare well-educated and engaged citizens, Cap U will develop an optional first year experience and a required interdisciplinary general education core. The Cap Year Experience, described in detail in the academic plan, will be piloted in year one. The interdisciplinary general education curriculum will build on Capilano’s strategic goal [student success], dedicated to foundational capacities and transferable skills, and constructed to begin operation in year two.”

**Academic Plan on “General Education”**

General Education is referenced on pages 16 and 17 with emphasis on outcomes for Cap graduates as: “...socially, interpersonally and environmentally aware individuals, with broad based knowledge and understanding, who are critical and creative thinkers, effective communicators and problem solvers. Our world changes quickly, so we need to be adaptable and equipped, academically with transferable skills and knowledge. This is the goal of Capilano’s general education: fostering abilities and skills, literacies and understanding, perspectives and positions that cross disciplines and prepare students for meaningful engagement of their world.”
Goals and timelines regarding developing general education are provided on pages 27 and 32:

**Goal:** Before graduating in Spring 2014 and thereafter, all degree students can demonstrate achievement of measured general education outcomes.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Summer 2014</th>
<th>Fall 2014</th>
<th>Spring 2015</th>
<th>Fall 2015</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Begin development of a Cap approach to general education</td>
<td>Development of measurable general education learning outcomes</td>
<td>Begin measurement of general education learning outcomes</td>
<td>Implementation of Capilano general education curriculum</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Development of Cap general education curriculum</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Comments/Observations:
- Currently the Registrar’s office monitors general education “outcomes”, in that it assesses whether students have completed the current general education requirements of the program when they apply for graduation.
- Program areas also assess general education outcomes through program assessments.
- The intentions with respect to general education provided, e.g. “critical and creative thinkers, effective communicators and problem solvers” are consistent with current requirements.
- The Cap year is optional, the general education requirements for degree students are not.

4. **CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

Presently Capilano U’s S2009-03 *Requirements for Credentials* does reflect many of the common definitions of General Education and these are included in many of our programs. Our current general education requirements also appear to be consistent with the 7 institutional goals in our Strategic Plan and NWCCU direction.

The questions that remain are:

1. Are there any missing pieces from our current general education requirements?
2. Do they need improved, enhanced, strengthened and/or refined in any way to better reflect our institution’s “educational mission” as articulated in our current Academic and Strategic Plans (e.g. 7 institutional goals)?
3. What more needs to be done (if anything) and by whom, to measure outcomes of general education?

Our understanding is that a campus-wide committee has been formed to examine General Education in more depth. We believe that the information and questions presented here should be sent to this new committee for further debate and work.
APPENDIX A – EXAMPLES OF GENERAL EDUCATION DEFINITIONS FROM USA INSTITUTIONS

Northwest Commission on Colleges and Universities (NWCCU)

General Education Definition
An essential collegiate-level component of associate and baccalaureate degree programs designed to foster effective independent lifelong learning by introducing students to the content and methodology of the major domains of knowledge

Policy 2.1
Programs of study for which applied or specialized associate degrees are granted, or programs of an academic year or more in length for which certificates are granted, must contain a recognizable body of instruction in program-related areas of:
1) communication,
2) computation, and
3) human relations.
Additional topics which should be covered as appropriate include safety, industrial safety, and environmental awareness. Instruction in the related instructional areas may be either embedded within the program curriculum or taught in blocks of specialized instruction. Each approach, however, must have clearly identified content that is pertinent to the general program of study.”

Onondaga College, US.
General Education enables individuals to acquire the knowledge, skills and dispositions necessary for responsible participation in society. These include the ability to reason and communicate effectively; a capacity for compassionate inquiry; a framework for intellectual, ethical and aesthetic growth; and a commitment to the well-being of self and the larger community.

Harvard University

Eight Elements of General Education
The Task Force on General Education’s final proposal for that part of undergraduate studies specifies courses in eight subject areas, in addition to the College’s requirement for some foreign-language proficiency and Expository Writing, a first-year mandate (itself subject to revision, to incorporate instruction in writing and speaking throughout a student’s academic experience). The categories are:

- Aesthetic and interpretive understanding;
- Culture and belief
- Empirical reasoning;
- Ethical reasoning;
- Science of living systems;
- Science of the physical universe;
- Societies of the world; and
- The United States in the world.

To that end, the task force recommends general-education courses in eight subjects (see box), broadly covering topics in humanities, social science, science, and quantitative and ethical reasoning, but
explicitly not in a departmental or disciplinary way (because that is the work of students’ concentrations). Indeed, to fulfill a general-education requirement, the task force would require that a course satisfy one or more of these goals:

- preparing students for civic engagement;
- teaching students to “understand themselves as products of—and participants in—traditions of art, ideas, and values”;
- preparing students to “respond critically and constructively to change”; and
- developing “students’ understanding of the ethical dimensions of what they say and do.”

**Boston University**

At the most fundamental level, a Boston University General Education should produce graduates who are:

1. Skilled at solving open-ended problems in both quantitative and qualitative environments
2. Globally and culturally aware
3. Ethically and socially responsible

To achieve those capabilities, we agree that undergraduates must demonstrate the ability to:

- think quantitatively and critically
- express themselves through communicating effectively, critically, and with discernment, orally and in writing
- engage in an active ongoing learning process
- produce and create with imaginative spirit
- know a broad body of work in science, literature, and art
- command and employ technology with competence, creativity, and ease
Appendix B

Please see attached Excel spreadsheet, “2017 Pilot” tab.
Appendix C

Please see attached Excel spreadsheet, “2016 Pilot” tab.
Appendix D

Please see next page.
## Comparison of Merits and Constraints of 2016 and 2017 Pilot Launches

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>2016 Pilot Start</th>
<th>2017 Pilot Start</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Fewer resources needed at the onset to get program running (fewer workshops, much lower time commitment by organizing body)</td>
<td>Higher resources needed at onset. However, case studies have shown that quick, low consultative processes can fail</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Meet NWCCU requirements sooner</td>
<td>NWCCU requirements met later – risk?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Faculty “get over” change sooner, but fewer support the process</td>
<td>Faculty more involved in reform – case studies indicate high faculty involvement leads to higher satisfaction of process outcome</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Higher risk of failure – case studies have shown that quick processes with minimal faculty input have resulted in failure and the requirement to restart – risk to budgets, institutional morale, marketing, etc.</td>
<td>Reduced chance of GE program failing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rushing results in more mistakes or bad decisions made throughout the process, resulting in back-tracking &amp; fixing up programming</td>
<td>Longer timelines allow for the GE program to be developed with less stress, and also allows departments more time to make program changes to allow for GE.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Faculty will have low investment – won’t be “their” program</td>
<td>Faculty take more ownership of the GE program</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Increased risk of push-back from CFA for top-down approach</td>
<td>Better likelihood of CFA support</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Faculty burn-out (GE committee, curriculum developers, Registrar’s office, SCC)</td>
<td>Less faculty burn-out, but acknowledgement that this will still be an issue, even with the longer time-line</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fewer chances for meaningful cross-campus dialogues – silos may be reinforced</td>
<td>Allowing time for meaningful cross-campus dialogues</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lower creativity</td>
<td>Higher creativity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Faculty have basic understanding of GE</td>
<td>Faculty have more in-depth understanding of GE due to heavier involvement throughout entire process</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shorter timelines may ensure things get done while there is momentum</td>
<td>Longer timeline could drag out the process – risk of losing steam/something getting in the way</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The team that has done all of the research can guide the decision – efficient, less chance of models that don’t make sense</td>
<td>Risk that proposals will be too far off based. However, a few people on the existing committee have indicated interest in proposing a model, so there should be at least one very well informed one</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stakeholders may view engagement as “token” consultation</td>
<td>Consultation more likely to be viewed as meaningful, relevant and impactful</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Curriculum development has less opportunity for cross-disciplinary collaboration with little time for community-developed learning outcomes</td>
<td>Adequate time for collaboration across disciplines and to develop agreed upon learning outcomes</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Appendix E

Please see next page.
GENERAL EDUCATION REFORM: THINKING CRITICALLY ABOUT SUBSTANCE AND PROCESS

Vardaman R. Smith
Bruce G. Brunton
Andrew I. Kohen

with
Cynthia A. Gilliatt
John C. Klippert
Caroline T. Marshall

Introduction

Any institution of higher education intending to conduct a major reform of its general education program inevitably will confront the multiple challenges of designing and delivering a curriculum with “understood purposes and proven effectiveness” (Reynolds, 1998, p.150). Successfully meeting those challenges may entail significant alteration of the substance and oversight procedures that typify the program being replaced. The relevant literature available for consultation is substantial, but typically offers case studies that are success stories. We believe, however, that much can be learned from curriculum reform experiences that are unsuccessful. Hence, in this essay we pursue two interrelated goals. First, we examine the substance of a new program of general education at James Madison University (JMU) and identify design weaknesses in the new curriculum. Second, by highlighting problems encountered in the reform process at JMU, we infer a set of strategies for effective general education reform.

Historical Background

JMU began as the State Normal and Industrial School for Women at Harrisonburg, Virginia, in 1908. It became the State Teachers
College at Harrisonburg in 1924. Its tradition was that of an industrial-vocational school with a heavy emphasis on teacher education. The school became coeducational in 1966. In the late 1960s, the faculty voted to transform the college into a liberal arts college. The curriculum was changed so that a new “general studies program” was created and organized around distribution areas in the humanities, arts, sciences, mathematics, social sciences, and history. The name of the school was changed to James Madison University in 1977. In the mid-1980s JMU revised its general education program and created the Liberal Studies Program (LSP).

The design of Liberal Studies reflected what were then new trends in general education curriculum. In addition to the basic liberal arts approach carried through from the previous program, new emphasis was given to lifelong learning, interdisciplinary perspectives, written communication skills, and critical thinking. A set of 16 learning goals was devised that required students to take courses from a prescribed range of areas, typically by choosing from an approved menu of discipline-based courses within each area. Structurally similar to most programs using distribution requirements, the LSP nonetheless had a distinctive feature in the role played by elected faculty in its design, implementation, and oversight. The faculty serving on the oversight committee, chaired by the Dean of Letters and Sciences, were drawn from the traditional “liberal arts” disciplines. These faculty developed and publicized the criteria for course approval, evaluated course proposals, and had administrative approval for periodic review of the LSP. The committee enjoyed widespread faculty support because it was composed of members whose expertise and training qualified them well to represent those entrusted with the responsibility of teaching the courses that comprised the LSP. The Liberal Studies Program was very recently replaced by the new “General Education Program” (GEP) and it is the latter program that is the subject of our essay.

**Devising the New General Education Curriculum**

There are a variety of possible structures for a general education curriculum. Most schools have chosen one of two structural types:
a core curriculum in which students take the same general education courses or a set of distribution requirements in which students choose their classes from a designated “menu” of courses.¹ The Liberal Studies Program at JMU was essentially a menu approach. The main concerns regarding the operation of this program were the fairly standard ones of quantity-quality conflicts and the need to broaden the adoption of integrative techniques. Encouraging the follow-up of widespread writing across the curriculum, for example, was recognized as an ongoing difficulty. Yet, there was no general concern among JMU’s faculty that the LSP was structurally flawed. Indeed, the extant oversight committee made no recommendations for either serious change in or complete abandonment of Liberal Studies. Thus, the central administration’s initiative to create a new general education program was a surprise to faculty.²

Working through a newly constructed General Education Committee, the design phase of the new program unfolded over roughly a two-year period. Key members of the committee had an article published in this journal describing the new General Education Program (GEP) as a “true reconceptualization of general education (one that) differs markedly from previous programs” (Reynolds, 1998, p.149). It would be grounded in an “objectives-based” approach to developing and delivering a general education program featuring “interdisciplinary” content.

This GEP was presented as a novel twist on the common core approach to structuring a curriculum. Instead of a set of common required courses, the core would be defined by a set of “learning objectives.” The goal was a “shared experience” for all students with every student able to demonstrate accomplishment of the entire range of objectives. Objectives were divided up into five groups, called “clusters.” Each cluster represented, in broad terms, the content and methods of traditional disciplines. For example, instead of a distribution requirement for mathematics and natural science, Cluster Three was called, “The Natural World.” Delivery of the new GEP was to be in the form of a series of what are called “packages.” A package is a set of two or more courses in which students ostensibly master the objectives of one of the five “clusters.” Thus, the essence of the new program was the design of packages, within which a small number of courses would cover a
broad range of cluster objectives. Regardless of which package students chose, as they scheduled courses in the five required clusters, the result purportedly would be a common outcome of accomplishing the same learning objectives.

Some of the themes of JMU’s new program will sound familiar to those who have kept abreast of the general education reform movement. The new conventional wisdom seems to be that general education in colleges should focus on integration and cohesion, on learning skills and techniques rather than traditional bodies of knowledge, and on interdisciplinary connections that break down old disciplinary barriers (see Gaff, Ratcliff, and Associates, 1997). Julie Klein (1998, p.6), for example, in summarizing major trends, cites “designing integrated core curricula, providing breadth of knowledge, clustering and linking courses, and infusing integrative skills” as elements of a directional shift toward interdisciplinary general education.

Certainly another trend in higher education in recent years is the growth of assessment efforts. Discipline-based assessment programs had already been developed and implemented at JMU prior to the recent revision of general education. However, assessment of general education had been essentially an unmapped frontier. It seemed reasonable, therefore, to design general education in a way that located specific, assessable educational targets. Early in the design phase, the General Education Committee cited the need to have “more specific objectives” as part of the rationale for general education reform. It is hard to overstate the dominance of this “objectives-based” approach on the development of the new general education program at JMU. Unpacking the content of JMU’s new GEP is a bit complicated, but doing so allows us to explain why the actual learning objectives are seen as incoherent and why the program’s claim to interdisciplinary content is spurious.

The process began with a draft statement of “sixteen broad goals for general education” written by the General Education Committee (Reynolds, p. 153). A theory of general education that rationalizes this initial set of 16 goals was never identified. The next step was to solicit and collect long lists of “learning objectives” which gave “further definition to the broad goals” (Reynolds, p. 153). An impressive number of objectives (1,352) was gathered
by various means and then winnowed to a smaller, more manageable set. The result was a set of approximately 100 learning objectives. Eventually, these remaining objectives were rewritten and arranged into what were called “clusters.” Each set of cluster objectives was then given to a separate committee composed of administratively appointed faculty. These committees revised further the set of objectives contained in their respective clusters. Members of the General Education Committee have claimed that the process of revising objectives was particularly fertile because “many (faculty members) began to have a broader vision of the content of each cluster and began to develop courses…and a sense of ownership of the objectives” (Reynolds, p. 154).

However, many faculty members thought the winnowing process had a decidedly different character, similar to the following metaphor. Suppose that the manager of a regionally renowned restaurant asked each of 200 chefs to submit seven of their favorite recipes. The chefs complied, and the entire set was given to a handpicked committee composed of individuals who had very little experience cooking, much less creating new recipes. The committee took the set of 1,400 recipes and fashioned 100 new recipes by simply mixing ingredients and cooking instructions in a way that seemed sensible to them. This set of 100 new recipes was given to a representative group of chefs. After conducting a careful review, the chefs voted overwhelmingly against adoption. Despite this, the manager ordered adoption of the committee’s recipes by the restaurant. Metaphorically speaking, this is just what occurred at JMU. For many faculty members, neither the five clusters of learning objectives nor their sum add up to a coherent whole. The General Education Committee confused a framework for organizing a curriculum with a model of student learning.

The imprecision and overly ambitious nature of the clusters of objectives left many traditional liberal arts departments in a very difficult position. To get a course/package approved it was necessary to claim that the entire set of learning objectives in a cluster would be taught. Not surprisingly, every package proposal contained the claim that it would meet this condition. The breadth of each cluster’s objectives coupled with the constraint of, at most, three three-credit courses virtually assured that the objectives
would have to be approached at a most superficial level. Absent approval criteria that would ensure academic quality and faced with strong administrative pressure for rapid implementation, faculty had every incentive to claim to teach all of the objectives in a cluster while doing their best to cover a subset. Once enough packages had been accepted by the GEC and once completion of the new program became a requirement of all entering students, this design flaw became clear to any faculty with a background in the traditional liberal arts. This, in turn, spawned a variety of efforts in pursuit of a more coherent program. In the few years since the program’s inception, the objectives in each of the clusters and the constituent packages of courses have been in an almost constant state of flux. Although these adjustments may be seen as a sign of flexibility, their impacts have been marginal and the main structural flaws remain. Moreover, the uncertainty and confusion created by such curriculum churning is an ongoing source of frustration for registration and advising personnel. To assist students they must continually re-chart possible routes through the changing course/package/cluster maze so that the general education requirements can be fulfilled. This dynamic has both expanded the number of possible routes and reduced their comparability, a development that runs counter to the GEP goal of providing a common experience for all students. Indeed, the structural weakness of the “package” approach is clearly revealed in Cluster IV entitled “Social and Cultural Processes,” because packages have been abandoned altogether. The cluster now features a distribution approach, which is utterly at odds with the structure that proponents claim distinguishes the new program.

These particular curriculum problems may be somewhat unique to JMU, but another concern is common to all reform efforts seeking to achieve a more interdisciplinary general education program. What is the best curriculum design approach to achieving the interdisciplinary learning outcomes that colleges increasingly seek for their students? Although we do not have a complete answer to this question, we can identify relevant issues related to JMU’s experience and its path to what (to date) is an unsuccessful reform.

The exact meaning of the term “interdisciplinary” has never been defined by anyone associated with the new JMU program.
Instead, it is revealed as part of a description of how the program evolved:

The five clusters of our general education \([sic]\), because they are broad areas of knowledge, necessarily span multiple academic departments. This is why the interdisciplinary nature of the program arose—the clusters are interdisciplinary by virtue of their breadth. (Reynolds, p. 156)

The idea that subject matter breadth is equivalent to interdisciplinary content might seem appealing at first, but it cannot withstand critical scrutiny. The fact that there are both discipline-bound forms of explanation that have broad focus (e.g., open-economy macroeconomics or sociobiology) and interdisciplinary literatures that are focused upon narrowly defined topics (e.g., law or nuclear weapons proliferation) means that JMU’s formulation is inadequate, \textit{prima facie}.

Indeed, we would argue that genuinely interdisciplinary work must meet two necessary conditions. First, far from being “non-disciplined,” it is highly disciplined in that it meets the standards developed within the disciplines that are reflected in its content (Hausman and McPherson, 1985, pp. 1–3). Second, such multidisciplinary content is applied to a particular problem or issue to generate a new, integrated way of understanding the issue—one that is consistent with the complexity of the issue being examined. JMU’s new program fails to meet this or any comparable standard.

At a deeper level, placing exclusive emphasis on “connections across disciplines” brings a potential pedagogical dilemma directly into focus. JMU’s five clusters of learning objectives must be taught in a total of 41 to 44 semester credit hours. Given this credit hour constraint, it is impossible to develop the disciplinary building blocks necessary for each student to approach this content in a genuinely interdisciplinary way. Either the student already possesses mastery of disciplinary content sufficient to comprehend the connections, or the connections will need to be made for the student by her instructors. The latter result is worrisome to faculty because it tends to result in a lowering of the average level of rigor in general education courses. This “watering down” phe-
nomenon should be a concern at all schools seeking to broaden the interdisciplinary dimension of their general education curricula. Even programs that have received praise for their design, like Portland State’s University Studies program, have faculty that are legitimately worried about maintaining rigor (Greene, 2000).

What the desirable balance is between disciplinary content and interdisciplinary connections and how it is best achieved are questions deserving explicit attention at any institution considering general education reform. We propose that the GEP at JMU is a prototype of the difficulties that follow in the wake of implementing a program without first achieving consensus on the answers to such questions.

**The Process of General Education Reform**

A new general education program is very likely to encounter some problems. However, we believe that most of the serious problems associated with the new program at JMU stem directly from the process by which the new program was created and implemented. It would seem unnecessary to suggest that serious attention must be given to process issues. Yet, this did not happen at JMU, and ignoring this obvious point undermined the potential for successful reform. Our goal in this section is to suggest some strategies that draw from our experience.

1. **Promote open discussion.** This process goal is at least twice as important as any other and has two distinct components. First, an open and inclusive process needs to exist at all stages of the general education reform process. This is both common sense and the conclusion of research on general education reform. We agree with MASTERA (1999) that the debate needs to begin with the initial stage of recognizing an impetus for change, whether emanating from internal or external sources. If this stage is skipped without discussion, the reform process will have begun in a closed fashion, and this can have a negative effect on the following reform stages. The haste with which JMU terminated its “old” general education program (LSP) and constructed a new one was rationalized by the assertion that the university had to enact changes quickly or risk change being imposed by state government au-
torities (Reynolds, 1998, p.152). Unfortunately, there was neither a public discussion of external factors nor a serious review of the Liberal Studies Program. The point here is that having a few open meetings during the overall process is insufficient; every stage of the process must be open. After the impetus for change is openly discussed, a thorough review of the existing program must be conducted. Widespread faculty involvement in this phase is the best way to identify problems, design reforms to resolve them, and also build support for the overall reform process. Such a review did not occur at JMU, and the legitimacy and credibility of the reform process suffered as a result.

The second point is to recognize that openness is not a commodity and cannot be easily increased at any point in time since it flows from the underlying environment within a college community. If there are extant communication problems between faculty and administrators or unresolved governance issues, the potential for an open discussion about general education reform will be inhibited. At JMU, broader “restructuring” turmoil existed at the time the administration announced the decision to develop a new general education program. Creating an environment for open, effective discussion is a prerequisite for any effort to reform general education, and it must be an ongoing concern.

2. Establish a legitimate revision committee. One logical way to launch a reform is to use existing curriculum committees or an existing general education committee. As we suggest below, a regular review of the general education program ought to be a task of such a committee. Thus a regular review should be the obvious internal source for an impetus to change since its function will be to identify either minor problems, likely resolvable through changes to the existing program, or the need for a major reform of the existing program. If a review recommends a major reform, it is still critical to have university-wide, open discussions. Without a clearly established need for general education reform, those charged with the responsibility for conducting the reform face an up-hill battle.

At JMU, instead of following standing procedures and allowing for periodic review of the existing Liberal Studies Program, the administration appointed an ad hoc committee and gave it a few weeks to complete a review. Such a narrow time frame pre-
cluded the kind of open and careful review of the existing general education curriculum we have already suggested is critical to launching a successful reform process. The committee’s report recommended the creation of a new General Education Committee (GEC) vested with full authority to develop a new general education program. The initial set of appointments to the GEC was very skewed against traditional liberal studies disciplines. Indeed, the first act of a Task Force on Governance appointed by the university’s Board-of-Visitors was crafting an agreement to add elected faculty from liberal studies departments as a means of providing greater balance and credibility to the GEC.

It is well established in the literature that successful reform requires that a revision committee have an appropriate level of faculty representation. This refers both to the compositional balance among faculty, administrators, and support professionals and to the quality of the faculty appointments. For a revision committee to achieve legitimacy it must have faculty appointments that will be viewed as legitimate from the perspective of the faculty as a whole. Legitimacy is most likely if a faculty senate or the entire faculty makes selections. At JMU a very different route was chosen. In what amounts to a weak form of indirect proof, JMU provided a model of what not to do when a process was chosen that bypassed existing curriculum review structures and that featured an appointed, ad hoc committee with inadequate faculty representation.

3. Establish a reform agenda and timetables. A clear plan for the work of committees, a schedule of open meetings, and a set of deadlines for the different reform stages needs to be determined early in the process. All relevant steps that are envisioned, for example, the use and evaluation of pilot courses or the role of faculty development resources, need to be spelled out early and openly. It is also important to structure an agenda so that it starts with broader issues before moving to specific courses because general education reform can change an institution’s identity.

Imagine a continuum along which all colleges and universities in the U.S. are arrayed. Two “Great Books” schools, both named “St. John’s,” probably define one of the extremes. Both schools have only general education requirements and no major-field degree requirements. At the other extreme is Brown University,
has no general education requirement and only majors. A particular institution’s position on this continuum depends mainly upon its tradition, mission, and resources. The “location” chosen is crucial because it not only defines the institution’s identity, but also defines the range of programs open to students. Unfortunately, there is no evidence that anyone associated with JMU ever considered the possibility that general education reform would have an impact upon institutional identity. A careful review of where an institution actually fits along this continuum and a clear decision regarding at least the direction of change would be important parts of a well-planned reform process. It is easy to claim that “external forces demand change,” but hard to imagine how to devise rational means without first specifying the ends being sought.

4. Debate and design the new curriculum. Curriculum substance issues were discussed earlier. JMU’s approach signals the need for a genuinely open process. The GEC was aware of the need to get faculty involved in the curriculum reform process. The committee held a series of open forums and often solicited faculty input. Unfortunately, the open sessions proved largely ceremonial because standard GEC practice was either to ignore serious questions or to acknowledge the concern and promise to deal with it during the next stage of the reform process. Stages came and went, but important questions remained unanswered and direct challenges were never met. These sessions probably did more to undermine than to enhance the credibility of the reform process.

Our experience suggests that each of the reform development stages needs to include a meaningful evaluation period in which consensus-building feedback can occur among faculty, staff, administrators, and the reform committee. This is more than a linkage to our earlier suggestion of open discussion at each stage of the process. The importance of timely and thoughtful responses to questions and concerns is hard to overstate. At JMU, the GEC’s failure to provide such responses undermined the GEC’s credibility and served as a deterrent to faculty participation. There is little incentive for faculty to offer constructive criticism when they perceive that well-founded concerns are consistently ignored or deferred indefinitely by those leading the curriculum development process.

5. Create clear criteria for course approval. This involves two dimensions: standards and mechanisms. Content standards become
more difficult to establish if the curriculum goals seem overly ambitious and/or plausible pedagogical concerns are left unaddressed. Ironically, JMU could have avoided these difficulties had it followed the curriculum approval procedures it devised and had it developed criteria for approval of packages of courses. These procedures, initially announced by the GEC, featured a prominent advise-and-consent role for the Faculty Senate for each component of the new program prior to actual adoption. Furthermore, the GEC acknowledged the need for approval criteria for packages and individual courses before inviting proposals. Regrettably, the announced procedures were not followed (i.e., the Senate was left out of the loop entirely) and the GEC has yet to present approval criteria that are adequate to serve as quality control standards.

Institutions contemplating general education reform can learn two lessons from this example. First, either a credibly established governance committee or a respected (external) mediator needs to be given the pre-assigned role of umpire to resolve situations where agreed upon reform rules are violated. The point is to anticipate disagreement and to plan for resolving it. At JMU, the exclusion of the Faculty Senate from its role and the administration’s decision to ignore the rejection of the GEC proposal by the newly formed Undergraduate Curriculum Council were demoralizing for the faculty who were destined to deliver the instruction in the new program.

The second lesson involves another connection between substance and process. If the curriculum goals of the new program lack coherence, it will be difficult to establish clear criteria for approval of new courses. With weak or nonexistent criteria, a mix of courses can be adopted that have substantial variance in the rigor of their claims to meet general education goals. This result, we have found, requires significant attempts to “fix” curriculum flaws after the curriculum is adopted and placed in operation.

6. Establish a role for assessment. The assessment of general education needs to be as well-planned and as well-managed as the new curriculum, and the planning should begin early in the reform process. One obvious assessment goal would be to test whether the new curriculum produces better performance results on some core set of general education outcomes. A logical strat-
egy for accomplishing this is to compare pre- and post-reform test results, which requires that an assessment pretest be developed and used before the new curriculum is implemented. This example is one strategy that might be pursued. No doubt other strategies are conceivable, but the point is that the role of assessment needs be discussed early in the reform process and in the same open fashion we have argued for above. As published case studies have indicated (e.g. Kloss, 1993), designing general education assessment tests is a challenge. The difficulty of the task is likely to increase if assessment work is disconnected from the reform process.

A lesson suggested by the JMU experience is that assessment will be more difficult to undertake if curriculum goals lack coherence and if criteria for new course approval are weak. Since implementation of the new course mix began at JMU, each year has involved more repair and modification of the content and administration of the program. The result is that the new general education program is a moving target, making meaningful assessment virtually impossible to achieve.

7. Anticipate program changes and concerns and set up information channels. It is unrealistic to expect any general education reform effort to be perfect. We think that our case will help other institutions contemplating general education reform to avoid problems of the scope and magnitude we experienced. However, even with a successful reform effort and well-designed curriculum, longer-run success requires some type of post-implementation monitoring. Staffing, other resource allocation issues, admissions and transfer student policies, and a host of other issues should be anticipated concerns during and after implementation of the new curriculum.

8. Schedule periodic review. The monitoring just mentioned should feed into, but be distinct from, a periodic review of the general education curriculum. The purpose of such a review is to judge whether the new curriculum is accomplishing its educational goals. Ideally, assessment results will be available to inform such judgments. However, periodic review should go further. Departments offering general education courses should periodically defend the connection between their courses and general education and demonstrate that the courses being delivered live up to the
form and content in their proposals for inclusion in the program. This is another reason why well-defined criteria for course approval are needed; they can be used again to see if the implemented courses have been able to accomplish what they had proposed. The review committee’s judgment must be institutionally significant within the broader general education reform process. Thus, as we suggested earlier, this committee should have the role of being the internal impetus for change since ongoing general education reform should be considered the rule rather than the exception.

9. Vote on the proposal for adopting a new general education curriculum. This step is the culmination of a genuinely open process. Colleges vary in the degree in which faculty voting is formalized regarding curriculum matters, but a vote on the final reform proposal is an important step. It is, by nature, inclusive and can help build the commitment and support needed for implementation success. At Portland State, for example, although much of the inspiration and energy behind the development of their University Studies program has been attributed to their president and provost, the new program was not adopted until their Faculty Senate voted to approve it.8

Such a vote did not occur at JMU. The closest thing to it was the vote of the Undergraduate Curriculum Council recommending against adoption of the new General Education Program. The central administration opted to ignore this vote, implement the new program, and withdraw its participation from the UCC; effectively terminating the latter’s existence. Since implementation, the Faculty Senate has surveyed the entire faculty on two separate occasions and found that a majority opposes the new General Education Program.9 Further evidence of the weak faculty support is the recent (3/23/2000) unanimous endorsement by the Faculty Senate of a resolution calling for an external review of the GEP.10

Conclusion

Charting a successful reform path is a goal of any institution embarking on curriculum change. Civian et al (1997, p.658) suggest
that success is more likely if the reform agenda is modest. This line of advice suggests making frequent, small changes. We suspect, however, that most colleges infrequently pursue revision of their general education curriculum. Thus, general education reform is likely to be a major event in the history of an institution. Properly done, general education curriculum reform will successfully meet its challenges if it is a thoughtful, open, democratic and deliberative process that culminates in a program whose content has widespread faculty endorsement.

The literature on curriculum reform is clear: openness and inclusiveness are essential. While there is no sure or easy path to either, the experience at JMU allows us to identify a set of necessary conditions for genuinely effective curriculum reform of general education. Although senior members of the administration may well need to take a leadership role, they must ensure that the approach they adopt is open, that the existing program is reviewed in a fair and thoughtful manner, and that the need for reform is well established by the findings of the review. Once a committee with credibility has been formed, its goals and objectives must be clearly stated and justified. All enunciated genuine concerns must be dealt with substantively and in a timely way.

Finding a working consensus is difficult, at best. However, requiring those who are leading the process to argue clearly for what they decide to do is probably the surest path to building trust and a broad sense of ownership within the university community. Prior to seeking faculty endorsement, the committee should also develop, articulate and explain the rationale for (i) the changes that it deems necessary, (ii) the criteria it means to employ to insure academic quality, (iii) the role of outcomes assessment, and (iv) the system and schedule for periodic review of the new program. Clearly, there is much to be learned from failed models of curriculum reform. Regrettably, JMU’s new program continues to provide such a model.

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Endnotes

1. On the range of general education curriculum possibilities, a good place to start is with Gaff (1983, 1991) and Gaff, Ratcliff, and Associates (1997).

2. JMU’s new program was administratively imposed. Because faculty were not given a clear rationale for the new program, the Reynolds (1998) article may serve that purpose. The article suggests that JMU saw a menu-based approach as inferior, implying the Liberal Studies Program was structurally flawed. There was no such consensus, thus the surprise at the quick push for a new approach. The inferiority claim is not supported in the literature. The research of Jones and Ratcliff (1991) indicates that gains in general education are greater with a distribution requirement than a core curriculum, especially if particular clusters of courses are taken (see also Jones, 1992).

3. This claim is rather misleading. The GEC did solicit the faculty for suggestions for learning “objectives.” No doubt many faculty and some departments sent the GEC lists of possible candidates. But the administration also simply ordered every department head to provide a copy of every course syllabus taught by his/her faculty for every course that was part of the LSP. It seems likely that a significant number of the 140 (of all faculty at JMU) faculty members that Reynolds claims submitted objectives did so without necessarily knowing they had done so.

4. The entire set of learning objectives is available for review as ITEM 5 at the following website we have constructed to support this paper: http://cob.jmu.edu/kohengened.

5. Civian et al (1997, p.659) have the same point on their list of suggestions for good practice. Kanter et al (1997, p.127) conclude “that a curriculum change process that is open and collaborative is the only way to insure that faculty will feel committed to the eventual outcome;” with such a commitment being key to success in the schools they studied.

6. On the importance of legitimacy issues in committee design see Kanter et al (1997, ch.6). Jerry Gaff makes a similar point in arguing that “the specific content of curricula is less important than the process of conducting a review, agreeing on a program of study and its rationale, and endowing it with the authority of the faculty and the administration” (Gaff, 1991, p.82, emphasis in the original).

7. On the specifics of the advise and consent role for the Faculty Senate at JMU, see ITEMS 13 and 14 at our website; the original plan could be a useful model.

8. The Portland State story was told in a group of articles recently published in this Journal. On faculty senate voting at Portland State, see Weikel (1999, p.73).

9. The exact wording of the first referendum was: “The General Education Program proposed for the fall of 1997 is academically superior to the existing Liberal Studies Program.” A majority of the faculty in four of the five colleges disagreed with this assertion, often by substantial majorities. In a more detailed follow-up survey, conducted by the Faculty Senate in cooperation with the newly appointed General Education Council, faculty claimed that they were (i) not opposed in principle to objectives-based learning; but (ii) they could not support the particular sets of learning objectives associated with the new program.

10. The specific resolution was “Whereas many faculty and at least some administrators have serious questions about the academic integrity (rigor, coherence, process, and content) of General Education, and whereas there is a body of evidence that in at least some programs General Education is draining significant resources from the major, the JMU Faculty Senate recommends that General Education undergo a comprehensive external review. Furthermore, the Senate strongly urges that the Steering Committee of the Faculty Senate and the VPAA collaborate in the selection of the external reviewers in order to insure the integrity of the review process and procedures.”
References
Appendix F

Please see next page.
Why are we talking about General Education at Capilano?

2010 – Senate revises Senate Policy 2009-03 requirements for credentials

“All Capilano University students are expected to receive instruction that increases their ability to function as independent learners and responsible citizens. Each Capilano University program of 30 credits or more shall include a core of general education or related instruction at the breadth and depth appropriate for the level of the credential.” (See S2009-03 for specific program guidelines.)

2013 – Capilano University officially receives NWCCU accreditation

NWCCU Standard Two Section: “The general education component of undergraduate programs (if offered) demonstrates an integrated course of study that helps students develop the breadth and depth of intellect to become more effective learners and to prepare them for a productive life of work, citizenship, and personal fulfillment. Baccalaureate degree programs and transfer associate degree programs include a recognizable core of general education that represents an integration of basic knowledge and methodology of the humanities and fine arts, mathematical and natural sciences, and social sciences. Applied undergraduate degree and certificate programs of thirty (30) semester credits or forty-five (45) quarter credits in length contain a recognizable core of related instruction or general education with identified outcomes in the areas of communication, computation, and human relations that align with and support program goals or intended outcomes.”

2014 – New Academic and Strategic Plans adopted

“Our strategic goal is student success: Capilano University is committed first and foremost to student success. It is our defining feature, the standard by which all things will be measured. During the next three years, Capilano will organize its activities to maximize the opportunity for all students to succeed in their educational objectives. This will happen not only in academic areas, but also across the university as a whole.”

“Common experiences: To prepare well-educated and engaged citizens, Capilano University will develop an optional first-year experience and a required interdisciplinary general education core. The Cap Year Experience, described in detail in the academic plan, will be piloted in year one. The interdisciplinary general education curriculum will be built on Capilano’s strategic goals, dedicated to foundational capacities and transferable skills, and constructed to begin operation in year two.”

“Employers do need educated and trained graduates—they also need socially, interpersonally, environmentally aware individuals, with broad-based knowledge and understanding, who are critical and creative thinkers, effective communicators and problem solvers. Our world changes quickly, so we need to be adaptable and equipped, academically, with transferable skills and knowledge. This is the goal of Capilano’s general education: fostering abilities and skills, literacies and understandings, perspectives and positions that cross disciplines and prepare students for meaningful engagement with their world. But our commitment to general education is an integral part of, not separate from, the practical education that draws many students to our university.”

Fall 2015 – Ad Hoc Senate Credential Policy Review Committee struck

This committee’s terms of reference include reviewing general education’s definition, description and incorporation in senate policy.

Spring 2015 – General Education Committee and Cap Year Committees struck

Committees tasked with exploring possibilities, looking at best practices and coming back with recommendations for what General Education and a Cap Year should look like.
Capilano University
Academic Plan
2014 – 2018
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“Capilano is a place where a student really has the chance to discover who they are and what they can become and what they can do—for themselves for the community, for the world.”

COMMENT FROM THE ALUMNI TOWN HALL
Executive Summary

This plan began with a great deal of listening, learning, and consideration; it was crafted collectively and collaboratively, taking into account the ideas, thoughts, suggestions, and dreams of our community. It is a declaration of hope; not a mirror, but a telescope that looks ahead so we can move forward. Because it is a living document, this plan must be made real on a daily basis through hard work and good faith effort.

Indeed, the most important aspect is not any single element, but the collective will of our community to embrace change and participate in growth toward a goal that is different from and perhaps more challenging than any experienced.

**Academic principles** open this plan, articulating that as a teaching-focused university, Capilano will always put student learning first, and as a learning institution we will foster a culture of accountability. We are committed to attracting and retaining students who will complete Capilano credentials; in so doing, we will help them realize their place in a local and global context, and treat them as unique individuals with distinct histories and identities. Upon graduation our students will be leaders and change-makers, aware of and accountable for the environments in which we all live, approaching work and life with a sense of responsibility and a commitment to collaboration. Our graduates will be secure in their experience and expertise, confident that Capilano has prepared them to apply and adapt their talents to a changing world through evidence-informed academic methods and state-of-the-art commercial, industrial, and community practices.

**Academic programming** begins with intentional preparation for success in professional and community life, responsible practices that keep Capilano curriculum current and relevant through ongoing review and improvement, and a commitment to distinctive and successful programs. A Capilano education will be an integrative experience that embraces many fields, emphasizes broad learning, provides relevant practical preparation and diverse intellectual engagement; it will help students be knowledgeable enough for today, and nimble enough for tomorrow. Our programs favour experiential learning and real-world proficiencies, with credentials that are rigorous, current, relevant, valued, and in demand. Capilano students participate in the formation of their professional selves in a transformational context.

**Academic support** refers to addressing Capilano student needs through wellness, educational, and community services. Coordinated efforts support campus recreation, promote awareness of and attention to psychological well-being, and enhance our support of creativity, performance, discussion, and debate. Capilano University will take an integrated approach to improving institutional infrastructure, expand and
consolidate academic services focused on learning success and foundational skills, and invigorate our attention to readiness and career services. Students are full partners in this educational enterprise, so we will focus more attention on advocacy and peer learning. We will promote pedagogical excellence and innovation in our Learning Commons and by re-visioning learning support for students, staff, faculty, and the institution as a whole. Our community will be enhanced through a dedicated focus on service learning, local partnerships, and collaboration with academic institutions throughout the regions we serve.

The plan ends with suggestions for moving forward and appendixes pointing toward strategic planning, possible timelines, and foundational values. Potential directions include new possibilities for student access and preparation, pathways to completion, and the nature of a Capilano University degree. Also included are indications of what it means to be a learning university, and a promise to move beyond what is expected, to what can be imagined; two ideas that are inseparable. Learning universities are dedicated not only to student learning, but also to an ongoing process of review that requires staff, faculty, and administrative areas to learn and grow according to measured outcomes. For these things to happen Capilano University will need to make choices, commit resources, and move beyond what is currently considered to be the status quo. No program will remain untouched, and the next four years will yield a different academic profile than those that came before.

This academic plan serves as a starting point for Capilano University’s strategic plan, which will help guide decision-making and lead to more opportunities. The first appendix delineates some possibilities that might be addressed by a strategic plan, ranging from specific development processes to the creation of new centres and units, each with a speculative target date. The second appendix collects these strategic suggestions and puts them in a four-year time frame. The plan closes with an articulation of the institutional value statements that have informed this plan, and will continue to be discussed and debated over the next four years. All of this is to indicate that this academic plan is only the first in a long line of steps Capilano will be taking to re-imagine itself and its future. As with this document, the process of moving forward will be both collaborative and consultative, leading to the collective transformation of learning, teaching, and academic work at Capilano University.
Academic Planning

As Capilano University approaches its fiftieth anniversary, it is appropriate to reflect on our academic history, take stock of our academic trajectory, and look ahead with our first academic plan. This plan was guided by the Vice President, Academic and Provost, and developed through broad consultation and outreach.

This included a period of input solicitation, a development team of Senate and administration representatives, a rigorous drafting process, multiple public forums, and presentation for approval at the Senate and the Board of Governors. It is based on input gathered from: direct invitation to stakeholder groups including the Alumni Association, Student Union, Faculty Association, and Canadian Office and Professional Employees union; presentation to and solicitation of communication from all Faculties and academic units; grassroots calls for involvement through a university website; and, surveys sent to members of the wider community. It is truly a collective and collaborative document.

As one of fourteen British Columbia (BC) community colleges created between 1965 and 1975, Capilano College was founded in 1968 to serve two primary purposes: to deliver instruction that led to community-specific certificates and diplomas, and to provide lower-level courses that enabled students to transfer smoothly to the larger provincial universities. Over time, Capilano developed its own credential programs, providing preparation for employment and laddering students into other academic opportunities. The college began to carve out an identity in terms of degree offerings and credentials, increasing the local demand for degree completion. The most recent provincial post-secondary re-classification process brought university status in 2008; this came in part from a recognition that the college had been successful in developing programs and curriculum that provided graduates with degrees that would contribute to their long-term success.

In early 2014, there began an iterative drafting process based on materials received, consultation, redrafting, and more consultation. Throughout the entire process, we have kept at the forefront Capilano University’s mission and goals, learning outcomes and core themes, our dedication to student learning and student success as well as our commitment to dialogue and collegiality. Our provincial mandates have also been key to the development of the plan, including our regional obligations and student population targets. Finally, and most significantly, all of the input provided has been taken into account; from the early conversations surrounding university status and preparation for accreditation, to ideas submitted in the fall of 2013, to feedback received in the spring of 2014, it has been the community’s voice that directed the development of this plan and its vision.
Our mission statement states that we are a “teaching-intensive university offering a wide range of programs and services.” We provide our students with academic programming and services necessary to maintain their safety, security, well-being, and success, like all universities, but we are also teaching focused, a distinction bestowed by the province and worn with much pride. For teaching and learning sit at the core of our identity, driving all that we do and all that we are. We also embrace a set of student learning outcomes that support specific knowledge, understanding, and skills developed in individual programs. Student achievement at Capilano University is measured against these outcomes, defined within the context of each program and with different emphases at differing levels of expected competence. They inspire other outcomes within courses and programs.

At Capilano, we also embrace three core themes (opportunity, learning, community) supporting our mission and outcomes, guiding our path. Opportunity means ensuring access to and engagement with an academic environment that inspires and encourages individuals to explore, in new and productive ways, their own sense of self and their place in a wider society, leading to enhanced learning within and beyond the university. Learning, in this context, is about engaging with and contributing to a challenging environment in ways that help all our learners discover new pathways to knowledge and new connections amongst their various communities. Community is about inspiration, connection, and the involvement of all members of the university family, helping them imagine and explore new correlations and new engagements with the public we all serve, enhancing the mutual support and collaboration of our common cause. These are the foundations upon which our principles are built.

**Our Students**

At Capilano University, students come first; they are the population we serve and the reason we exist. In the last forty-plus years, Capilano has helped a wide variety of individuals reach and re-imagine their academic goals. For those students the first principle, and primary driver has always been learning; it is the reason our students come to university. Many come with a dedication to pursue specific university credentials; others seek the right path to success and fulfillment in a variety of courses. Capilano University has always provided clear options and preparation for
students in transition to other academic contexts, but has frequently given these students a reason to come and a reason to stay; students now transfer to as well as from our programs, and we intend to continue this trend.

The Capilano University community is broad and diverse. We exist as a post-secondary institution thanks to the efforts of the North Shore, Howe Sound Corridor, and Sunshine Coast, and our university programs will always serve this traditional catchment area. We acknowledge that our campuses stand on traditional territories of the Squamish, Sechelt, Lil’wat, Tsleil Waututh, and Musqueam Nations and we will continue to work closely with the Nations, building on our long history. We are committed to providing all Aboriginal students with programming and services that support their culture and their university learning. The First Nations Student Centre, Kéxwusm-áyakn, continues to be a hub for learning and sharing of knowledge. Increasingly, our community includes much of the lower mainland, Vancouver Island, British Columbia, and beyond. We see our students as local citizens in a global world who come to Capilano because it is the best choice for their educational goals and economic future. They come from every province and many nations, bringing diverse beliefs and different experiences, varying levels of preparation and ever-changing expectations. They come in part because Capilano University has been and continues to be a community of opportunity, a place to succeed in post-secondary studies, and an institution committed to supporting the goals and aspirations of all our students.

Capilano is committed to educating not just for intellectual and professional outcomes, but for personal and social goals as well. Our approach includes everything from a high quality university education to a high quality university experience, acknowledging that students are unique individuals with distinct hopes and dreams, experiences and attitudes, histories and predispositions. This whole-person education means understanding and addressing the different ways of seeing, learning, knowing, and being found in our student community. It includes facilitating the integration of academic and non-academic material and experience, including the application of learning from one context into another. Above all, it means taking into account the variety of human nature and existence, expressed in aesthetic, cultural, ethnic, geographical, and theological diversity, including the emotional and spiritual components that make up who we are.
Our Graduates

At Capilano we put learning first and expect our students to take learning seriously, to be intentional in their choices and thoughtful in their goals. We view students as complex individuals, and encourage them to experience, recognize, and celebrate the diversity of our community and our world. When we look at our students today we see the leaders and change-makers of tomorrow, and we are dedicated to helping them build the education they want, to provide the directions they choose. For what matters most is not the one, two, four or more years of a Capilano education, but the impact that education has on our students and our society. It is in our graduates that we most accurately see the meaning and value of Capilano University.

This is the premise behind our institutional student learning outcomes, and one of the reasons awareness and local/global consciousness figure so prominently. Our goals also include the proposition that students graduating from Capilano will have achieved some level of mindfulness, a deeper awareness of themselves and their surroundings, a contextualization of the personal within the social and the physical worlds, and an honest attempt to be observant and to judge without passing judgment. Linked to this is a sense of stewardship, a realization that we as individuals are accountable for the care of our physical, intellectual, social, and cultural surroundings, and hold within our hands the ability to shape and determine the future. Capilano graduates understand the integrated nature of their relationships, the ultimate inter-connectedness of their worlds and the worlds of others.

For this reason, Capilano graduates also leave our institution aware of the benefits, commitments, and challenges that come with working and living in a community. They also understand that community is always shared, that relationships require tending, effort, commitment, and openness to others, and that accomplishment comes through collaboration. Capilano University thrives on common effort, and that ethic is central to our graduates’ skill set and professional practice. Whether in academic or co-curricular activities, collaboration is reinforced, supported, and rewarded, resulting in a graduate population well suited to the collective activities of an interdependent and connected society. That connection and collective understanding forms the basis of responsibility. Our graduates know that personal interaction and professional conduct, active awareness and civic
participation, social change and cultural impact, all begin with individual and shared responsibility. They understand and embrace the realization that they are persons, not merely future employees and taxpayers. This is a way of being as well as a way of knowing, both a predisposition and a considered choice. It is also connected to what Capilano University sees as a greater purpose, a commitment to social justice and sustainability that we embrace as an institution.

We see Capilano as a place where graduates learn to be agents of change, variously defined and broadly realized. They are inventors and explorers, entrepreneurs and innovators, makers and pioneers, architects of productive and positive transformation. We might call them advocates or change-makers, developers or revolutionaries, especially when their impact is profound and widespread. But they are also our neighbours, co-workers, colleagues, and friends, especially when the ideas they provide are felt in more personal and grass-roots environments. They are individuals with the skills, knowledge, and capabilities to see differently, think creatively, and act with impact, influence, and insight. At Capilano, our graduates know the value of social capital, embrace the responsibilities of social innovation, and define for a new generation the idea of social engagement.

Our students come with aspirations and dreams, dedication and drive. They leave with experience that is foundational and formative, broad-based and work-related. We strive to graduate students who have read, written, and thought deeply about their chosen field or career within the context of a wider world. Our graduates know what to expect and what to do when they leave Capilano, because they have gained through study and tenacity and sometimes failure, the practical experience that leads to professional expertise. Because they have learned by doing, prepared their minds by getting their hands dirty, our graduates have confidence in their abilities, training, and future success.

Yet what brings all of our graduates’ attributes together and makes them function effectively is an understanding that regardless of their chosen course of study or career path, the one constant of the future will be change. For that reason, our students leave Capilano with the ability to respond creatively, thoughtfully, and knowledgeably to industry shifts, marketplace adjustments, cultural trends, and social pressures. This adaptability comes
in part from our institutional commitment to educating beyond the narrow parameters of an individual discipline or profession. Our students learn beyond the textbook, outside the margins, and as a result are better able to think on their feet, make unexpected connections, and respond to the demands of today and tomorrow. We ask our students to know more than content, think past the test, and strive to embody the definition of a well-rounded citizen, a broadly educated university graduate.

We are confident that our graduates will be successful, because we know they are ready for the work they have chosen, the world in which they will operate. Because perhaps above all else, graduates leave Capilano secure in the applicability of their preparation. Our graduates are some of the best prepared in Canada. Coming to Capilano University means engaging with a professional environment that is current, connected, and carefully orchestrated to meet the needs of today’s classroom, tomorrow’s marketplace. It also means encountering the complex ideas and challenging viewpoints of a changing planet; relevance at Capilano is about information and knowledge, attentiveness and responsiveness, critical perception and practical choice, nimbleness and creativity and persistence. These are the skills, predispositions, and cultivated attitudes of a Capilano graduate.

Our Story

One of Capilano University’s key features continues to be the development of programming in concert with our region, in collaboration with our commercial and industry partners, and above all within the context of the most current and effective academic practices available. These elements, working together throughout the curriculum, through students and faculty fully engaged with external partners, creates an integrative approach to professional education. At Capilano University, we are committed to our students experiencing extraordinary learning through community and opportunity. But such an approach is not easy to orchestrate, let alone achieve. It requires a robust and ongoing relationship between Capilano and the industries, organizations, and public its programming supports. This approach is reinforced through local connections and commitments, linking experience in the field with expertise fostered in the classroom, lab, studio, and rehearsal space. It thrives within a pedagogical environment of risk and innovation, challenge and review, ever changing to keep pace with our thriving community and expanding sphere of opportunity and influence.

What makes this possible is Capilano’s commitment to evidence-informed innovation and integrated practices. Credential courses, pathways, and programs address the needs of students and the expectations of the workplace, determined through analysis of available data and constant connection to industry standards. We are committed to helping students achieve clearly stated outcomes, and utilize a variety of tools and processes to assess learning and determine success. Evidence should be the basis of all curricular decision-making, the source of continuous review and revision, so we strive to integrate observation, investigation, analysis, and improvement into all of our practices.

Capilano provides an education that is applicable to students’ futures, preparing them for growth and success. A culture of accountability is at the heart of our university identity; we are dedicated to evidence-informed decisions and actions, reflection as well as real stocktaking and thoughtful response. Accountability is how we remain relevant in a changing and changeable world, it is the basis for understanding ourselves, determines how we learn, and is central to re-visioning and building what we hope to be. We acknowledge that the best decisions are made with complete information and through shared understanding. But more than a series of numbers and measures, our approach to accountability is a conceptual and practical way to insure responsible appraisal, coordinated decision-making, shared knowledge, and collective awareness. It is the thread that runs throughout our story and allows us to maintain our identity as a university.
Academic Programming

The programming we offer, our courses and credentials, defines us for our stakeholders and audiences, internal and external. Our credential programs offer a high level of intentional preparation, a coherence borne of attention to our student’s needs as they navigate a variety of transitions: secondary to post-secondary education, preparatory coursework to degree preparation, and engaged preparation for professional practice to active participation in the workforce and the community.

Capilano has learned an important lesson from its attention to professional readiness—the best education for any student, regardless of their level of preparation or ultimate academic goals, will always be based in responsible practices subject to ongoing review and revision. The regular assessment process, of student work but also curriculum and teaching practice, keeps programs current, agile, and pertinent.

At Capilano, we are committed to learning for understanding and change, teaching that addresses the needs of the student and the field, a curriculum both rigorous in its expectations and vigorous in its experiential relevance. A special purpose teaching university must provide training and preparation for distinctive professions, and support for terminal credentials in those areas appropriate to our mission and mandate. Capilano’s focus is on the labour force of the future—industries and enterprises that persist, and sustainable professions. In an era of competition and comparison, it is important that we focus primarily on students who are “Capilano Bound” with regard to their educational goals. This means providing programs that are distinctive, celebrated, and successful—unique opportunities and options that distinguish Capilano from other post-secondary institutions.

The Capilano Difference

At Capilano University, we are committed to access, preparation, readiness, and success for all students. Capilano College was a point of entry into the post-secondary system in British Columbia; it prepared many students for university, helped others become ready for the workplace, and provided all that was needed to succeed in a variety of professions. We continue to offer access to high school students, adult learners and everyone in between, but our commitments to post-secondary entrance have merged with our dedication to preparation, completion, and future success, resulting in a renewed and redefined focus on retention and completion.

This shift in expectations and intentions has brought new ways of supporting students through a seamless progression from fundamental to university level studies. Learners want and need to be on the road to a chosen endpoint. When they come to university, students are encouraged to map out a pathway for their studies, including their ultimate goal, and how that will allow them to live the life they desire; then they take courses to be well prepared in the areas and arenas in which they
wish to succeed. We are committed to meeting students where they are and helping them progress to meeting their chosen goals. Articulating these **intentional pathways** to success will be the responsibility of our students, but making them possible is up to us. To this end, Capilano University provides our learners with the specific skills, content and strategies for success based on their own intentionally chosen and designed pathways, which may include further studies, entry to employment, or personal development.

We will accomplish this through pedagogical practices that are demonstrably successful, teaching and learning approaches that lead most effectively to engagement, understanding, and success. These **high impact practices** have been studied and tested, they represent not an exhaustive list of sure-fire strategies but ways that Capilano University has chosen to approach our commitment to students. These include first-year experiences that provide students with an opportunity to share the early stages of their academic journey with a small group of like-minded individuals; this is happening in many programs, but at Capilano we hope to expand this practice and make it an option for all. Likewise, many of our degree programs employ capstone experiences to help students integrate their previous coursework with the expectations they have of work or study or life beyond university. Capilano University will make this practice available for all degree students. Some approaches like a common core and learning communities exist in many of our programs while others, such as collaborative assignments and global learning, are infused across the curriculum. The same can be said for service learning, community based learning, and cooperative learning, which are widely available in degree programs and will ultimately expand to reach all Capilano students regardless of their discipline or profession. What makes all of these high impact practices particularly relevant for Capilano University is that they support the core capacities we hope to cultivate in our students.

**The Capilano Capacities**

Our world has become more complicated than anyone could have dreamed, and students need a plethora of skills and abilities to survive and thrive in an ever-changing environment. For this reason, we expect students to learn broadly, experience widely, explore deeply—to chart their own academic paths, but do so
with attention to the avenues and alleys as well as the boulevards and thoroughfares. While not all courses at Capilano University are truly trans-disciplinary, crossing multiple disciplinary boundaries to create a more complete picture, a more unified understanding, many are; and all our purposeful pathways embrace the integrative nature of contemporary life. Education at Capilano is an integrative and trans-disciplinary experience, from the first course to the final project.

Such a capacity for understanding across disciplines requires commitment to learning within disciplines as well, for something must be known before it can be combined. At Capilano this means merging the general and the practical. Our current political and economic climate has led many to conclude that university education should lead to immediate, successful employment and that career advancement and achievement should be the goal of post-secondary studies. Employers do need educated and trained graduates—they also need socially, interpersonally, environmentally aware individuals, with broad-based knowledge and understanding, who are critical and creative thinkers, effective communicators and problem solvers. Our world changes quickly, so we need to be adaptable and equipped, academically, with transferable skills and knowledge. This is the goal of Capilano's general education: fostering abilities and skills, literacies
and understandings, perspectives and positions that cross disciplines and prepare students for meaningful engagement with their world. But our commitment to general education is in integral part of, not separate from, the practical education that draws many students to our university.

One of Capilano’s strengths has always been our ability to provide students with an academic experience both relevant to one’s chosen life path and recognizable to those with whom that path will be shared. Relevance can be a contested idea, but it is a capacity vital to our students’ success. Our programming focuses on what is current and developing in the field, building on the knowledge that came before but always with an eye to the next trend, the next innovation, and the next job; a Capilano University education will always be relevant to the practices of the past, present, and future. But relevance only has value if it is recognized through the demonstration of skills, aptitudes, and the confidence that comes with understanding. This is why Capilano emphasizes the combination of practical relevance exhibited through recognizable achievements.

The Capilano Practices

In order to thrive as a university, Capilano identifies and builds on its institutional strengths as we acquire and develop new capacities for the future. But through all of the changes, our commitment to academic rigour remains constant. Whether students are attending for a single class or a four-year degree, they will encounter the best knowledge, pedagogy, and practice on offer. For at Capilano University, there is no substitute for deep understanding, no shortcut to mastery, and no workaround in the intellectual pursuit of excellence. This is our first, and our strongest institutional promise—one that is constantly revitalized through evaluation and peer review.

From our outset as a college, we have taken what might be considered an exceptional path—creating and encouraging programming that at the time seemed unconventional but has later proven to be innovative, exemplary, and necessary. To this end, Capilano University focuses on real-world proficiencies in the practice of learning and teaching. Capilano’s forte has always been our understanding of student and community demand, our commitment to practical experience and impact, and above all our ability to address the needs of graduates and the professions to which they aspire.

To perform in the world of work and practice our students first need direct experience of that world within and beyond the university environment. For this reason, Capilano supports and encourages experiential learning in our curriculum, enabling students to combine theoretical knowledge and in-class instruction with practical activities and real-world impact. Experiential learning takes many forms, is found in virtually all of our programs, and represents a cornerstone of our pedagogy and our planning for the future.

Our practices produce both formative and transformative learning experiences for our students and our institution. Formative in the sense of intentional identity development that merges the personal, the social, and the practical. It is a process that builds responsibility and accountability into the actions of the individual. Transformative refers to the changes that occur in students with regard to their beliefs, behaviours, and sense of self. We believe Capilano University is a place where students can actively participate in the creation of their personal and professional selves while engaging in a transformative learning process that places them in a larger context.

Capilano will continue to offer credentials that reflect the rigour, relevance, and applicability of our curriculum. We will demonstrate distinctiveness through the individuality of our credentials and the accomplishments of our graduates. This is especially true of our degree pathways, which incorporate the principles of a Capilano education, both general and field specific, and a commitment to career development in all programs. We are committed to students entering Capilano University on a road to completion and success, and must therefore demonstrate, through consistent metrics and ongoing appraisal, that we offer meaningful credentials that are rigorous, current, relevant, valued, and in demand.
Academic Support

Student success is a collective responsibility, a communal good. The next four years will see a number of changes at Capilano University, but nowhere will that be more evident than in our approach to academic support services and the scaffolding of student success. We recognize all goals, outcomes, principles, and practices require support structures that keep the university, and the student experience, operating on a daily basis.

In terms of academic support, Capilano begins with a whole-person approach to integrated and integrative services that accepts: no single aspect of a student’s experience can be taken in isolation; students come to us with their own special circumstances; we all have lives beyond the boundaries of our campuses; and, education is about more than academic subjects and instruction. Students learn and live best when connected to a greater good, working in the world, and we strive to provide all students with a fruitful and fulfilling community experience that begins on our campuses and expands into the rest of our region. Capilano University will always be a place where students come first, learning is at the centre, and success is a common commitment across the entire institution.

Wellness Services

Campus wellness is vitally important to our future as a university; it is the bedrock for all academic activity, a necessary component of a complete and positive post-secondary experience. Capilano University is committed to a dedicated wellness agenda focusing on the physical, mental, and social health of our community, but as with other programming agendas, support must be viewed holistically as an integral part of our larger and more complex ecosystem, a dedicated feature of our identity. Capilano has the benefit of beautiful natural settings, and students are drawn to our campuses in part because of their proximity to recreational activities, providing an entrée into recreation and physical health. From rock climbing in Squamish, to sea kayaking in Sechelt to hiking, biking, running and riding in North Vancouver, Capilano University has the opportunity to become synonymous with recreation and physical activity. Balance figures prominently in any ongoing commitment to wellness, and Capilano provides the natural venue for promoting healthful lifestyles for students, staff, and faculty. Already there are community opportunities and small-scale offerings such as yoga classes, mountain biking, and the like. The next step is for Capilano to expand coordinated efforts and support additional recreational activities, leading to deeper engagement with campus communities as well as academic success.

Physical health is one feature of engagement and student success, but so too is emotional security and the availability of services supporting students’
psychological and spiritual growth and safety. Post-secondary students are often faced with extraordinary challenges, and in our ever-changing and ever-more-demanding academic context it is vital that there be a place and a process on our campuses to help students manage all they encounter. The counselling and mental health services at Capilano provide a wealth of opportunities, individual and collective, for students in need of support; they are also key to promoting greater awareness of and attention to the importance of psychological well-being. Encouraging healthy minds and healthy bodies includes attending to the spiritual and religious aspects of wellness, and for this reason Capilano is committed to supporting respectful community dialogue and understanding, providing dedicated prayer spaces and other services to students of faith, and promoting a vigorous diversity of belief throughout our university.

As a growing community with varied interests, Capilano University is also a hub of activity for creativity, performance, discussion, and debate. Initiated in part by our academic programming, and cultivated through student, staff, and faculty involvement, Capilano has a deep-seated commitment to cultural engagement and social health, another feature of general wellness. This is made visible through music and theatre performances, public speakers and special events, drumming circles and paper airplane tosses, Sportsplex dances and springtime egg hunts. It is also a feature of student life activities, including formal student governance organizations and informal international student gatherings and excursions. But there is still much more to do. As Capilano University moves toward a clearer vision of its academic future, we must redouble our efforts to promote and foster the social growth of our community on our campuses and around our region.

Educational Services

As we have grown from college to university, our services have not always been able to keep pace, but moving into our second half-century Capilano recognizes that these areas make everything else possible. Robust and responsive educational services help establish Capilano as a full member of the BC university community. At the base of our educational support systems are structural areas that keep us operating on an even keel and provide students with the information and assistance they need. These components of institutional infrastructure...
range from recruitment and admissions to financial assistance and advising to instructional technology and support. Going forward, Capilano University will need to approach all institutional infrastructure areas from an integrated, unified strategic direction, to support students on their path to success.

Equally important is our student affairs area, responsible for academic conduct, intellectual integrity, and the quality of the Capilano student experience. Often unseen and unheralded, student affairs has traditionally been the conduit between the administrative aspects of the university and student life. This is often the point of contact for students whose academic performance has suffered, or who have some significant disconnect between their life and their academic goals. But this is also the home of student activities, the go-to place for staging an event, coordinating student governance, and facilitating campus collaboration. This area serves a STUDENT ADVOCACY role; it is a conduit between students and the university infrastructure, playing a vital role in student and university success.

For some students there would be no success without the areas that help students enter, experience, understand, and move beyond university life. They are the avenues to ACADEMIC SUCCESS AND SUPPORT, and include: access services facilitating successful transition into and within the university; accessibility services for students with physical, psychological, or learning disabilities; and, LEARNING AND FOUNDATION SERVICES. These last support basic learning needs through a variety of activities ranging from courses and workshops to tutorials and drop-in centres. Learning services address coping and self-regulation strategies, university preparation, academic skills development and more. Foundation services refer to more specific foundational skills often based in a disciplinary or trans-disciplinary framework; these include writing and composition support, quantitative literacy and mathematical skills development, citation protocols and appropriate use of scholarly resources, even research methods and procedures. They are available to all students, useful to all students, and necessary for the support of all students attending Capilano University.

Just as necessary, although not always as integrated within the educational service sector, are READINESS AND CAREER SERVICES. These are the areas that help students successfully move to university and beyond. Readiness services address issues of transition, the extent to which our students are indeed job-ready, work-ready, life-ready, next-step-ready. This area supports transition to graduate school, evaluation of work-related skill sets, and life skills ranging from balancing a cheque book to navigating the path to permanent residency. Career services has both an instrumental and an aspirational identity; this is where students come for job listings, interview workshops, potential career paths, and general labour force readiness. These areas operate in tandem, and they are intimately connected with other service areas on our campuses.

Of course, at heart Capilano University is a learner-centred institution, a teaching university, and as such it is vital that we put our students’ learning ahead of all other considerations. We are proud of our learner/teacher relationship, and a closer connection between the learning process and the teaching process can only strengthen this distinctive feature of our academic identity. This can best be accomplished through LEARNING EXCELLENCE AND INNOVATION. But such a focus is fraught with competing goods, complicated negotiations, and the desire to assess, improve, and innovate responsibly. Nevertheless, there are ways learning excellence can be addressed and achieved, and innovation can be nurtured and given a chance to grow.

Central to this growth is the Capilano University Library, which serves as the conduit for knowledge and information in support of meaning making, and the organizational core of our intellectual community. The Library works closely with faculty on the integration of information literacy skills into our curriculum, providing “innovative, holistic options for library instruction.” As we build towards the planned LEARNING COMMONS, the Library will become more integrated with key student academic services, serving as a crossroads for research, creativity, and practice focused on learning scholarship.
In addressing the needs and opportunities of learning excellence, we cannot forget that the student role is changing. Once considered the recipient of knowledge transfer, we know that students are fully involved and complicit in the practices and outcomes of their own education. We see students as full partners in the academic enterprise. For that reason, Capilano University embraces the student as an active and experiential learner, informed and insightful assessor, well-placed and committed peer teacher, and dedicated mentor. Our students are our greatest resources, and full partners in our educational endeavours. We look forward to a deeper and more productive collaboration between students and teachers, academic developers and educational technologists, as we work together to understand and achieve a transformative learning experience.

Community Services

No less important to a teaching-focused, learning-centred university are robust, visible, and forward-looking approaches to community services. This includes a commitment to community based learning and the infrastructure that entails, as well as greater attention to the cultivation and maintenance of partnerships to support student learning and improve prospects for employment and engagement. Such a commitment requires embracing a connection between Capilano University and its academic colleagues, in the K-12 systems and the greater post-secondary world. It also means making Capilano a community destination, a crossroads for ideas and activities, a place and an idea integral to the life and work of the North Shore and Lower Mainland, the metropolitan region, and the entire province.

This commitment is also evident in our approach to service learning. Whether in the form of volunteerism, advocacy, entrepreneurship or everything in between, it is vital to the success of our students and the integrity of our institution that service learning be carefully managed in terms of student safety, learning outcomes, and community sustainability. This is experiential learning at its most active, its most applicable, and it promotes not only a deeper appreciation of academic subject matter, but also a clear connection between knowledge and application. In championing service learning, we must insure that students are achieving desired outcomes,
while organizations are receiving the help they need. It is a symbiotic relationship that benefits both sides of the collaboration.

Likewise, **community partnerships** are central to student success. Capilano University has already developed a robust relationship with many business, community, educational, not-for-profit, and service organizations in the region; whether these involve shared activities or donated resources, sponsorships or capital contributions, short or long term affiliations, reciprocal community enterprise figures prominently in our identity and our future. Capilano forges meaningful connections, and cultivates mutually beneficial partnerships at the course, program, and institutional levels.

Indeed, **primary, secondary, and post-secondary collaboration** has always been an important feature of our identity. Now, as we move into our next half-century, Capilano University has the opportunity to increase its connections to and work with the K-12 sector in BC, Canada, the United States, and beyond. K-16 initiatives have more potential for growth, innovation, and success than many other collaborative endeavours. One opportunity can be found in a coordinated and cooperative portfolio process, whereby students move seamlessly from academic e-portfolios begun in secondary school to similar tools at Capilano University, from curricular and co-curricular uses on our campuses to career and employment applications in the labour market, from social groups to professional networks to alumni systems. But school-university alignment can also occur through shared resource management, teacher-to-teacher collaborations, peer mentorships, parent involvement supports, and much more. Capilano University shares many attributes and aspirations with university and college peers, and has already established long-standing, strong connections through program alignment, articulation, and natural collaboration. As the sector becomes more polarized, Capilano can define more clearly the features that distinguish our educational experience from that of our peers, putting us not in competition but in juxtaposition, and opening the door to collaborative endeavours around the kind of learning, teaching, and engagement that we champion.

Also of note is the fact that we are not one but **three campuses**. As a regional university, we are committed to serving the needs of students from Howe Sound, the Sunshine Coast, and the North Shore. To continue this regional approach to local learning, Capilano looks to a more strategic vision of the multi-campus model that capitalizes on the strengths of each geographic and cultural area, and celebrates our unified educational community. Becoming more intentional about the roles and responsibilities of all campuses, more coordinated and creative in our planning process, is in the best interests of students and our broad base of community supporters.

Distinguishing what makes a Capilano University experience different is an important goal; our growth from college to university was much heralded but not well understood, and as a result there has been a need for self-definition among local and provincial audiences. Differentiation and definition will help Capilano build **social capital**, and increase its already substantial identity as a community destination. Capilano has developed a well-defined network of relationships that range from the international and professional to the local and personal; this is, in part, our social capital, what makes us recognizable to our peers and our community, establishes the value of our contributions. As we approach our next fifty years, now as a university, we find ourselves faced with the need to adjust, augment, and ultimately expand our social capital. This can be accomplished structurally, as has been done by other institutions, by becoming like other universities, or it can be achieved through differentiation by becoming **unlike** other universities. Capilano University has already made its choice; we are not like other universities. Now we must build on our “unlike qualities” to create a definition of ourselves. In doing so, we will make it clear that we have become a destination for ideas, innovation, and resources, as well as students, faculty, and staff, that will yield something different, something better. But first we will have to make clear to our community what it is that we are doing differently, especially for our students.
Moving Forward

Defining a learning university has been part of this academic plan from its beginning almost a year ago, and has continued throughout the process. For Capilano University that means smaller classes taught by dedicated teachers and industry professionals, relevant courses offering experiential learning through engagement with real-world problems, meaningful credentials that lead all of our students into rewarding careers and global citizenship, and student success as a universal goal both during and beyond university.

It also means grounding all credentials in practical, experiential learning, building a framework of transferable skills, making all learning visible via institutional accountability and ongoing program assessment, and keeping learning and improvement at the center of all we do.

As we move toward our goal over the next four years, we will continue to strengthen our core programming and define the learning that is most clearly our own, expanding in some areas and contracting in others. To achieve our new goals we must move beyond the model that stood us in good stead as a college, and create a new approach to learning, teaching, intellectual engagement, and community collaboration.

During the next four years, Capilano University will do this through a number of specific initiatives. We will improve retention and completion for all students, especially those from Aboriginal, international, and at-risk populations. By expanding and enhancing program assessment and institutional accountability practices we will promote ongoing improvement of learning, teaching, and service. Capilano will create an integrated general education experience for all degree students that is interdisciplinary and intentional, drawing on the best that we have to offer and the brightest ideas available from around the world. We will change the campus conversation about learning, service, wellness, and enrolment through consultation, dialogue, experimentation, and structural reorganization. And within the next four years we will review and revise all Capilano credentials to align with university directions and commitments to preparation, pathways, and experiential learning.

For almost fifty years Capilano has done an extraordinary job of meeting students where they are, serving the needs of those who might not otherwise have access to post-secondary education, and providing exemplary support for non-traditional learners. Capilano University is no less committed to this mission, but we realize that a new century and a new identity require a new approach to addressing the needs and abilities of a new kind of learner. It is no longer enough to get students into university; we must dedicate ourselves to helping them move through, intentionally and successfully. To that end Capilano University will offer:
A supportive place where students learn how to succeed in post-secondary education.

This will include a focus on:
› University preparation coursework,
› Coordinated skills assessment and development,
› Dedicated learning communities, and
› Creation of a first year “Cap Year Experience.”

Many students come to Capilano University with a particular program in mind, but for others the university experience is filled with potential and possibilities, as well as trepidation and uncertainty. For these students, and all of those in between, Capilano will provide not just a myriad of opportunities, but also a series of well-defined options that will lead them from the beginning to the end of their university journey. Capilano University will offer for one and all:

A clear path that students can follow to post-secondary success and completion.

This will include many possibilities including:
› First-year and inbound transfer support,
› Aboriginal student transition programming,
› Structured international student pathways,
› Student learning portfolio assistance.

Woven through this plan is the message that Capilano University is dedicated to experiential learning, strong connections with tomorrow’s career opportunities, and practical preparation for life and work and much more. This can be seen in all of our programs but is particularly clear in degree and other credential programs. Moving forward, Capilano University will commit to offering:

Real-world preparation for all students in all credential programs.

This will involve a combination of:
› Broad interdisciplinary coursework in years three and four,
› Experiential learning opportunities in all degree programs,
› Milestone opportunities for self-directed learning,
› Capstone courses for career and life readiness.

We are a teaching university, a learning university. We are dedicated to meaningful educational experiences that have a lasting impact on students, academic programming that provides the preparation necessary to survive and thrive, and pedagogical practices that address the particulars of ever-more-specialized careers operating within an ever-expanding, increasingly-complex, and constantly-changing world. We are the first choice for students seeking extraordinary learning and meaningful opportunities within a supportive and dedicated community. We are Capilano University.
Appendix A – Strategic Directions

As a result of the academic planning process, a number of action items have come to the fore. These represent possible strategic directions the university might take during the next four years. They are not definitive or exhaustive, but they do provide a place to begin thinking about how Capilano University might be different in four years than it is today.

We are committed to fostering and supporting integrative, intentional, and interdisciplinary work in the areas of pedagogy, scholarship, and practice. Capilano University continues to break down barriers between areas of study, fields of research, disciplines and professions. One step in this direction will be a working group dedicated to collaboration and cooperation between academic units across the campuses, making public the good work already underway and promoting still more. This committee on campus collaboration will be organized in Fall 2014, with recommendations presented before Spring 2015.
Given the centrality of learning at Capilano, and our own identification as a teaching and learning centered institution, educational support takes a prominent role in our next steps. While there are many approaches to building capacity in learning and teaching, the most logical would be to establish a coordinating entity, responsible for centralizing services and opportunities, to gather inter-related aspects of academic support and learning theory, best practices in the field, and a professional approach to improvement. More than a teaching and learning centre, this would be a nexus for inquiry, understanding, and improvement. Therefore, Capilano commits to taking the first steps toward a Centre for Integrative Learning by Fall 2014 with full operation by Fall 2018.

Although still in the formative stages, we are committed to providing all Capilano University students with general education learning outcomes that integrate with discipline-related skills so students are prepared for career success, professional practice, active citizenship, and a capacity for life-long learning. We will work to define general education at Capilano, creating opportunities for students to have a meaningful, passionate and reflective engagement with the world and people that surround them. The process begins now, so that all degree students can demonstrate achievement of measured general education outcomes before graduating in Spring 2016 and thereafter.

To promote Aboriginal student learning and success, Capilano has committed resources toward a variety of curricular and co-curricular activities. The university is dedicated to increasing Aboriginal student enrolment and improving graduation rates, expanding collaboration with partners, and raising awareness of indigenous peoples and their histories. We will craft an Aboriginal Student Success Strategy before the end of Fall 2014.
Regardless of a student’s ultimate educational goals, all those who come to Capilano University should have available to them clear and established pathways to success. Part intentional learning strategy and part commitment to success on completion, purposeful pathways provide Capilano students with a roadmap from where they begin to where they want to end. Whether in the form of a guided cohort curriculum or self-designed trajectories for unique career goals, transition routes into university from two-year colleges or transfer options to other universities, work-related credentialing for the short term or multiple possibilities for degree completion, purposeful pathways will become central to all students’ experience at Capilano University before Fall 2016.

Because learning is at our core, and success is our goal for all students, we commit to improving retention and working with all students to help them achieve their academic and career goals. We dedicate ourselves to improving the student experience, making the application-to-graduating process more efficient and transparent, promoting a culture of support and success, and building a system of peer assistance. This includes building a portal for students to access university information and services, an early warning system to identify and assist students at risk, and a mechanism for student-to-student mentoring, tutoring, and support. Review and possible implementation of these and other strategies to promote student success will begin Summer 2014.

As we redouble efforts to understand and improve student learning Capilano will make real our commitment to ongoing accountability through a formal cycle of program review. All credential programs will begin planning and implementation of accountability strategies, extending our responsibility from completion into placement and success after graduation. Accountability strategies will be reviewed Spring 2015, formal program reviews begin Fall 2015.
Promoting a broad-based health-oriented agenda on all our campuses will be a challenge, but through the collaborative efforts of stakeholders on campus and in the community Capilano University could approach wellness as a pervasive perspective that manifests across all our campuses. If wellness is important, then it should be an integral part of all that we do, all that we are, and all that we expect. An important first step would be to galvanize support for and identify achievable milestones for improvement through a Strategic Wellness Plan, collaboratively developed during Fall 2014 and completed by Spring 2015.

International students are a vital part of our community, and it is important that they continue to find in Capilano a welcoming, supportive, engaging, and encouraging environment. In order to maintain our commitment to these students, we must be intentional in our programming across the university community. We will create an International Student Recruitment and Retention Strategy before the end of Fall 2014.

To demonstrate our commitment to practical education and meaningful credentials, all programs will collect and make public compelling data regarding the reputation, rigour, currency, relevance, and value of their curriculum. These data may draw from students, graduates, employers, government, etc. Capilano will collect program results and produce a Credentials Summary Report each year beginning Summer 2015.
It is imperative that we understand our students’ academic backgrounds, levels of achievement, and post-secondary experience, as well as how they plan to use their education to succeed. To determine immediate and long-term needs, and articulate a clearer understanding of our students, Capilano will complete a Strategic Data Plan before Spring 2015.

One of the strongest indicators of success and satisfaction for a university education comes from the opportunity to share early experiences with a wide group of students. While Capilano’s structure and demographics work against a common first year experience, we can create something that is different from other universities in the region: The Cap Year Experience. This would be a year-one curriculum that serves three purposes: provide interested students with a shared first year including a common curriculum and extra-curricular support; showcase what makes Capilano University distinctive in terms of program offerings and educational experiences; and, offer an attractive, purposeful alternative to the “gap year” many students seek before embarking on their chosen academic trajectory. The Cap Year might focus on social action and community engagement, global affairs or study abroad, or be a foundation year of preparatory studies to increase the likelihood of success. There could even be a Cap Year designed to help students transition into Canadian advanced education. It would not be required, would not take the place of general education, but the Cap Year could provide a venue for much of the programming Capilano values. Working together, the Capilano University community will therefore create the first Cap Year Experience to begin as a pilot in Fall 2015.
Given our move toward differentiation based on experiential, real world learning, and our established strengths in the areas of community connection, industry collaboration, and job readiness, there is a need and an appetite for more centralized and coordinated approaches to engagement. To make this an even more prominent feature of Capilano’s identity, providing a common space and focus to our initiatives and dreams, **we commit to establishing a Centre for Community Learning by Fall 2015 with full operation by Fall 2018.**

Just as important will be coordination of our approach to evaluation and expansion of all enrolment services. In order to set realistic local, regional, domestic, and international targets we would need to examine educational services on all campuses to evaluate how best to serve students now and in the future. Beginning immediately, Capilano University commits to creating a unified system for services and support over the next four years. Included in this approach would also be the student affairs functions of our educational services, a potential redesign more closely aligned with student advocacy, and the creation of an Integrated Campuses Strategic Enrolment Plan completed by Spring 2015 with early steps taken for Fall 2015.

Capilano University has a mechanism for annual review of learning and pursues a robust program of assessment, but to better understand and improve learning and to be more in alignment with the attributes, outcomes, and values that constitute a Capilano education, **we commit to revisiting our assessment processes from Summer 2014 onward in order to foster continuous ongoing improvement.**
Appendix B – Anticipated Milestones

**SUMMER:**
- Begin to revisit assessment processes in order to foster continuous ongoing improvement
- Review and initiate institutional strategies to promote student success
- Begin review and development of capstone experiences for all degree students graduating after Fall 2015
- Begin work on Integrated Campuses Strategic Enrolment Plan
- Begin Centre for Integrative Learning development process
- Begin Centre for Community Learning development process
- Begin development of a Capilano approach to general education

**FALL:**
- Aboriginal Student Success Strategy developed
- International Student Recruitment and Retention Strategy developed
- Strategic Data Plan developed
- Strategic Wellness Plan developed
- Committee on campus collaboration organized
- Begin consultation for Capilano University 2015 – 2018 Strategic Plan
- Begin development of the Cap Year Experience pilot
- Development of measurable general education learning outcomes
- Purposeful pathways development
- Development of program accountability strategies

**SPRING:**
- Committee on campus collaboration presents recommendations
- Strategic Wellness Plan completed
- Accountability strategies reviewed
- Begin review of Capilano University 2014 – 2018 Academic Plan
- Formal adoption of Capilano University 2015 – 2018 Strategic Plan
- Begin measurement of general education learning outcomes
- Development of Capilano general education curriculum
- Program Credentials Reports completed

**2014**
- Adoption of the Capilano University 2014 – 2018 Academic Plan

**2015**
- Initial development of Capilano University 2015 – 2018 Strategic Plan

**2016**
- Credentials Summary Report completed
- Apply to the Ministry of Advanced Education for exempt status

**SUMMER:**
- Aboriginal Student Success Strategy developed
- International Student Recruitment and Retention Strategy developed
- Strategic Data Plan developed
- Strategic Wellness Plan developed
- Committee on campus collaboration organized
- Begin consultation for Capilano University 2015 – 2018 Strategic Plan
- Begin development of the Cap Year Experience pilot
- Development of measurable general education learning outcomes
- Purposeful pathways development
- Development of program accountability strategies

**FALL:**
- Pilot the Cap Year Experience
- Capstone experience available to all graduating degree students
- Integrated Campuses Strategic Enrolment Plan completed
- Program accountability strategies reviews
- Implementation of Capilano general education curriculum
- Purposeful pathways pilot
### Anticipated Milestones

#### FALL:

- Measured general education outcomes demonstrable for all degree students
- Purposeful pathways become central to all students' experience
- Capilano University 2018 - 2023 Academic Plan formal consultation begins

#### SUMMER:

- Capilano University 2018 - 2023 Academic Plan process begins
- Application for Association of Universities and Colleges of Canada membership and Tri-Council recognition
- Centre for Community Learning fully operational
- Centre for Integrative Learning fully operational
- Capilano University 50th Anniversary celebration
Appendix C – Guiding Statements

**Mission:** We are a teaching-focused university offering a wide range of programs and services that enable students to succeed in their current studies, in their ongoing education, in their chosen careers, in their lifelong pursuit of knowledge, and in their contribution as responsible citizens in a rapidly changing and diverse global community.

**Vision:** Students are drawn to our dynamic and unique programs, passionate faculty, welcoming staff, and close-knit learning environment; graduates are independent learners, thinkers, and doers actively contributing to their communities.

**Values**

› Diversity, and the individuality of learners;
› A culture of inquiry and evidence-based decision making;
› Academic integrity;
› Open engagement with ideas and respectful engagement with each other;
› Personal accountability for the integrity and success of the University;
› Commitment to our communities, and;
› Transparency and an ethic of fairness.

**Core Themes**

**Opportunity:** This core theme is about ensuring access to opportunities for engagement with an academic environment that inspires and encourages them to explore themselves and their communities in new and productive ways, leading to enhanced learning within and beyond the university.

**Learning:** This core theme is about engaging with and contributing to a challenging environment in ways that help all our learners discover new pathways to knowledge and new connections amongst their various communities.

**Community:** This core theme is about inspiring, connecting and engaging all members of the University community, helping them imagine and explore new connections and new engagements with the public we all serve, enhancing the mutual support and collaboration of our communities.
Institutional Goals

Arising from the Mission statement, the Institutional Goals are broadly defined as the general areas of success that are desired for all students. From the Mission, the Institutional Goals are:

› Student success in ongoing education
› Student success in chosen career
› Student success in lifelong pursuit of knowledge
› Student success in contributing as responsible citizens in a rapidly changing and diverse global community

In support of the specific knowledge, understanding, and skills developed in individual programs, the institution has identified seven broad learning outcomes for all students. These institutional student-learning outcomes are:

› Self-directed learning, awareness, and responsibility
› Up-to-date information gathering and research skills
› Communication skills
› Quantitative reasoning ability
› Group and social interaction skills
› Creative, critical, and analytical thinking skills
› Community/global consciousness and responsibility

Student achievement of these outcomes will be defined within the context of each program. While different programs of study will have a different emphasis on each of these outcomes and differing levels of expected competence, all programs are expected to address every outcome. These general student outcomes, along with the program specific outcomes, are the basis for measuring the success of the institution.
Capilano University’s GUIDING PRINCIPLES

Vision

Students are drawn to our dynamic and unique programs, passionate faculty, welcoming staff, and close-knit learning environment; graduates are independent learners, thinkers, and doers actively contributing to their communities.

Mission

We are a teaching-focused university offering a wide range of programs and services that enable students to succeed in their current studies, in their ongoing education, in their chosen careers, in their lifelong pursuit of knowledge, and in their contribution as responsible citizens in a rapidly changing and diverse global community.

Values

- Diversity, and the individuality of learners
- A culture of inquiry and evidence-based decision making
- Academic integrity
- Open engagement with ideas and respectful engagement with each other
- Personal accountability for the integrity and success of the University
- Commitment to our communities
- Transparency and an ethic of fairness.
Student Learning Outcomes

In support of the specific knowledge, understanding, and skills developed in individual programs, Capilano has identified seven broad learning outcomes for all students. Student achievement of these outcomes is defined within the context of each program. While different programs of study will have differing emphases on each of these outcomes and different levels of expected competencies, all programs address every outcome.

Self-directed learning, awareness, and responsibility
Up-to-date information gathering and research skills
Communication skills
Quantitative reasoning ability
Group and social interaction skills
Creative, critical, and analytical thinking skills
Community/global consciousness and responsibility

Core Themes

1 OPPORTUNITY
Through exploration and inspiration, our learners become empowered, confident and intentional.

2 LEARNING
Through discovery and creativity, our learners are well prepared to apply the knowledge and experience they have acquired.

3 COMMUNITY
Through connection and engagement our learners will make positive contributions that enrich and enhance their communities.

Institutional Goals — Student success in:

Ongoing education
Chosen career
Lifelong pursuit of knowledge
Contributing as responsible citizens in a rapidly changing and diverse global community
Capilano University’s STRATEGIC PLAN 2015 – 2018
Strategic Goal

STUDENT SUCCESS

Capilano University is committed first and foremost to student success. It is our defining feature, the standard by which all things will be measured. During the next three years, Capilano will organize its activities to maximize the opportunity for all students to succeed in their educational objectives. This will happen not only in academic areas, but also across the university as a whole. While students themselves will have the final responsibility in this regard, everything we do as a teaching-centered institution will foster, support, and celebrate our students' success while attending Capilano and beyond.

Strategic DIRECTION

Capilano University’s way forward will provide our learners with an education that helps them become engaged, informed, and committed citizens who are well prepared for success through career-related and professional degree pathways.

We offer our students an education that prepares them to become discerning and committed members of society. Our graduates leave university with more than skills, more than training in a prescribed field of practice; they are well-educated critical thinkers and engaged citizens who contribute to their communities. These kinds of capacities, these ways of thinking and knowing, are in high demand and necessary for committed citizenship.

Business and industry leaders consistently say that how students think and behave determines their success beyond university. Our students have traditionally been recognized as some of the best-prepared members of their professional communities, and many of our credentials are recognized and valued locally, nationally, and internationally. This distinction is one that we embrace and cultivate. To that end, Capilano will focus its resources not on traditional academic credentials, but on career-related and professional degree pathways that provide students with a direct link to the practical world they will experience after graduation.
Strategic PRIORITIES

As we pursue our strategic goal and direction, Capilano University will focus its efforts on three specific priorities representing key areas of renewal for the entire institution: determining program offerings, managing student enrolment, and enhancing learning environments. These priorities are drawn from the academic plan and the strategic planning process; they are informed by contemporary university practices, evidence drawn from across the post-secondary landscape, directives from government, internal data sources, and the knowledge and experience represented by participants in the community consultation process. Our priorities address student success and improvements in determining our program offerings, managing our student enrolment, and enhancing our learning environments.
STUDENT SUCCESS

Determining PROGRAM OFFERINGS

Managing STUDENT ENROLMENT

Enhancing LEARNING ENVIRONMENTS

Program Pathways

Targeted Recruiting

Integrated Academic Support
Experiential Learning

Common Experiences

Aboriginal, Community, & Industry Connections

Coordinated Advising

Retention & Completion

Financial Aid & Marketing

University Wellness

Learning & Teaching Development

Community Engagement
Determining PROGRAM OFFERINGS

Program Pathways

Over the next three years, Capilano University will refine its program offerings to focus on career-related and professional degree pathways. Undergraduate one- and two-year credentials will still be offered, but primarily in areas defined by provincial mandate or as exit points along the path to four-year degrees. In the first year of the strategic plan this will require a redistribution of resources in order to reduce offerings in some areas and plan for increases in others. Post-baccalaureate and masters options will be developed in programs with particularly strong demand and capacity.

Experiential Learning

Practice to mastery has long been a hallmark of Capilano’s approach to pedagogy; central to this is our commitment to experiential learning, described in detail in the academic plan and including both service learning and community based learning. Over the next three years, Capilano will embark upon a program renewal process that ensures experiential learning, especially capstone courses linking academic work to professional practice, is included in all our degree and degree-path programs.
Common Experiences

To prepare well-educated and engaged citizens, Capilano University will develop an optional first-year experience and a required interdisciplinary general education core. The Cap Year Experience, described in detail in the academic plan, will be piloted in year one. The interdisciplinary general education curriculum will be built on Capilano’s strategic goal, dedicated to foundational capacities and transferable skills, and constructed to begin operation in year two.

Aboriginal, Community, & Industry Connections

Capilano’s reputation has been built on our consistently high standards and the reliably well-prepared graduates who leave our programs ready to contribute to their community as workers and citizens. Over the next three years, Capilano University will continue to work collaboratively with indigenous communities, forge new agreements with other post-secondary institutions, and build ongoing relationships with our partners in the K-12 sector. We will also continue to cultivate the already active connections with stakeholders in key community and industry sectors associated with our degree programs. Real world experience, input, advice and collaboration are central to our institutional identity, and shaping our program offerings to provide the best preparation for our students and their success will always involve ongoing dialogue with our local and regional stakeholders.
Targeted Recruiting

Beginning in year one, we will focus our recruitment resources on those students who are looking for and would benefit from the kind of university experience Capilano has to offer. This includes recruiting for the Cap Year Experience, specified career-oriented and professional degree pathways, and programs with a high rate of student success. One important focus will be international recruiting, which will be coordinated to align with successful pathways and areas of high demand. This is a high priority for the first year of the strategic plan.

Coordinated Advising

One of the most important contributions to student success at university is early, ongoing, consistent, and accurate advising. Over the next two years, Capilano will review and where necessary revise approaches to student advising at the entry level, along the pathway to program success, and into the world of work. This will involve a combination of self-directed options for students who are more intentional about their pathways, and both general and program-specific assistance designed to help every student chart a course to completion.
Retention & Completion

Attracting students to Capilano is only the beginning; we also need to help students survive and thrive during their time at university, supporting them as they pursue their educational dreams. To this end we will develop, over the next year, ways to consistently monitor all students’ progress to completion, including mechanisms for identifying those in need of additional assistance before their circumstances become acute. Our ultimate goal, over the next three years, is that all students accepted by Capilano should be able to graduate from Capilano within the timeframe they choose.

Financial Aid & Marketing

Most students who come to Capilano University do so with the help of some form of financial aid. It is vital that we build and grow curriculum that enables students to access resources available at the provincial and national level. Financial support is also a feature of recruitment, retention, completion, and the building of good will within our community. Over the next three years, Capilano will assess the way we offer and award financial aid, with an eye to providing support for students in need and incentives for students to continue. Attracting the right students to the right programs also requires building awareness of our offerings in a variety of local and global markets. Resourcing the marketing of Capilano is an investment in the future that builds confidence in and enhances the value of the institution.
Integrated Academic Support

Because students come to Capilano with various levels of preparation, the first year of the strategic plan will see an integration of the often-disparate support services dedicated to academic success. From university preparation and developmental support to writing improvement and preparation for graduate school, students should have a clear sense of where and how they can access the help they need. Central to this will be a new commitment to peer-to-peer mentoring: students helping students navigate the ways and means of university life on their way to success in and beyond Capilano.

University Wellness

Capilano University is committed to fostering and supporting a thriving and healthy community. Wellness is essential to student success, and should be part of the entire academic enterprise. Over the next three years, Capilano will commit to a wellness agenda that includes consolidating services for physical, social, and psychological support, coordinating activities that enhance student life, and establishing initiatives to address gaps in our institutional safety net including housing, employment, and career services.
Learning & Teaching Development

Capilano University has a well-deserved reputation for excellence in teaching and learning, often stemming from the experience of our instructors and the relevance of our instruction. No teaching-focused university can grow and excel without dedicated support given to the understanding and improvement of learning. To this end, each of the next three years will see resources dedicated to development activities supporting faculty in their roles as instructors, facilitators, mentors, and scholars of learning and teaching.

Community Engagement

One of the most prominent features of a Capilano education has been our commitment to service and community support. We are known as an institution that promotes student activism and provides the foundation for students as change-makers. But community engagement is more than a small group of students working with individual faculty on discrete projects; making meaningful change requires a sustained and coordinated approach to service learning and outreach. To support and promote engagement across the curriculum and the institution as a whole, Capilano University will, over the next two years, establish an office for community connections. This will be a crossroads for service opportunities, a gathering place for students, and a conduit between the needs of the community and the potential of the classroom.
Outcomes

This three-year strategic plan identifies the direction necessary to achieve our goal of student success. It articulates the defining elements and experiences of a Capilano education, establishes priorities for the next three years, and informs the decision-making processes that will chart a successful path forward to excellence, distinctiveness, and sustainability.

Excellence will be demonstrated through measurable indicators of student success, learning outcomes achievement, and experiential learning that is constantly renewed and kept current through pedagogical innovation and review.

Distinctiveness will be demonstrated through accreditation, assessment, and ongoing measures of accountability; through an interdisciplinary focus on transferable skills and preparation for citizenship; and through career-oriented and professional degree pathways that are valued and in demand.

Sustainability will be demonstrated through high levels of stable enrolment and stakeholder satisfaction, efficiency of operations and resource management, and community support that is based on integrity, ecological and social sensitivity, and entrepreneurial spirit.
Accountability

The best decisions are made with complete information and through shared understanding. Drawing on more than numbers and measures, our approach to accountability ensures responsible appraisal and coordinated decision-making. In order to reach our strategic goal, Capilano University must rely on the best evidence available, make the best decisions possible, and put in place the best mechanisms for measuring student success. We already have an annual program assessment process, as well as good information about student success at the course, program, and institutional levels. Over the next three years, these and other data will be made available to the campus community, allowing everyone to see how decisions connect directly to Capilano’s strategic goal.

Strategic Process

The strategic priorities will shape the allocation of energy and resources, whether academic, non-academic, physical or financial. In service to student success, Capilano University will focus on these priorities to build out the full potential of our academic plan. Over the next three years, the strategic plan will be implemented through a process that is based on available institutional and program-level data, rich description and other qualitative measures, ministry and economic projections, progress toward stated objectives, and additional metrics developed internally.
Acknowledgement

Many members of the Capilano University community have spent time and energy in helping to shape this strategic plan. Whether participating in forums or providing individual or collective submissions, many have come forward with thoughtful and creative ideas for addressing some of our challenges. Given the specific nature of many of these suggestions, it is impossible for them all to be reflected in the strategic plan. However each of the submissions forms part of the background for implementation, and will be considered as Capilano University moves forward. Our entire community acknowledges the hard work that has gone into this strategic plan, and appreciates the collegiality and collaboration that has led us to this milestone.
Capilano University
Institutional Accountability Plan and Report
2014/15 Reporting Cycle
Accountability Statement

July 17, 2015

Honourable Andrew Wilkinson, Minister
Ministry of Advanced Education
PO Box 9870 Stn Prov Govt
Victoria BC V8W 9T5

Dear Minister Wilkinson:

We are pleased to submit Capilano University’s Institutional Accountability Plan and Report for 2014/2015 and affirm that, in accordance with Capilano’s governance structure, we are accountable for this report.

This past year Capilano University unveiled its Strategic Plan 2015-2018. As we began implementing the goals and priorities highlighted in both the Academic and Strategic plan, our focus as a university became further defined. We have already seen the benefits of producing the plan as other areas of the university are working on complementary plans such as the Aboriginal Student Success Plan unveiled in March 2015.

We endorse the content of this Institutional Accountability Plan and Report for this reporting cycle. Capilano University continues to welcomes the opportunity to work with the Ministry on our common mandate to provide the highest quality education and student success to the region we serve.

Yours sincerely,

Shelley McDade    Kris Bulcroft
Chair, Board of Governors    President
Institutional Overview

Capilano exists as a post-secondary institution thanks to the efforts of the North Shore, Howe Sound Corridor, and Sunshine Coast, and our university programs will always serve this traditional catchment area. We acknowledge that our campuses stand on traditional territories of the Squamish, Sechelt, Lil’wat, Tsleil Waututh, and Musqueam Nations and we will continue to work closely with the Nations, building on our long history. While we continue to be committed to these regions, provincial projections indicate static growth in the number of students serviced in these areas. Capilano University has always provided clear options and preparation for students in transition to other academic contexts, but has frequently given these students a reason to come and a reason to stay; students now transfer to as well as from our programs, and we intend to continue this trend. Increasingly, our community includes much of the lower mainland, Vancouver Island, British Columbia, and beyond. Our students come from every province and many nations, bringing diverse beliefs

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and different experiences, varying levels of preparation and ever-changing expectations. They come in part because Capilano University has been and continues to be a community of opportunity, a place to succeed in post-secondary studies, and an institution committed to supporting the goals and aspirations of all our students. At Capilano University, students come first; they are the population we serve and the reason we exist. In the last forty-plus years, Capilano has helped a wide variety of individuals reach and re-imagine their academic goals.

**Our Mission**

We are a teaching-focused university offering a wide range of programs and services that enable students to succeed in their current studies, in their ongoing education, in their chosen careers, in their lifelong pursuit of knowledge, and in their contribution as responsible citizens in a rapidly changing and diverse global community.

**Our Vision**

Students are drawn to our dynamic and unique programs, passionate faculty, welcoming staff and close-knit learning environment; graduates are independent learners, thinkers, and doers, actively contributing to their communities.

**Our Values**

- A culture of inquiry and evidence-based decision making
- Academic integrity
- Commitment to our communities
- Diversity and the individuality of learners
- Open engagement with ideas and respectful engagement with each other
- Personal accountability for the integrity and success of the University
- Transparency and an ethic of fairness

**Our Core Themes**

The essential elements contained in our mission and our vision statements are captured in the core themes of *Opportunity, Learning*, and *Community*, which provide a clear pathway to mission fulfillment, a focal point for measurement of key strategic outcomes, and a framework for continuous improvement for all faculties, divisions/schools and departments.
One of our key features continues to be the development of programming in concert with our region, in collaboration with our commercial and industry partners, and above all within the context of the most current and effective academic practices available. These elements, working together throughout the curriculum, through students and faculty fully engaged with external partners, create an integrative approach to professional education. At Capilano University, we are committed to our students experiencing extraordinary learning through community and opportunity. But such an approach is not easy to orchestrate, let alone achieve. It requires a robust and ongoing relationship between Capilano and the industries, organizations, and public its programming supports. This approach is reinforced through local connections and commitments, linking experience in the field with expertise fostered in the classroom, lab, studio, and rehearsal space. It thrives within a pedagogical environment of risk and innovation, challenge and review, ever changing to keep pace with our thriving community and expanding sphere of opportunity and influence.

**Our Student Learning Outcomes**

While our mission and core themes guide the work of Capilano University as a whole, we also embrace a set of key student learning outcomes that support the specific knowledge, understanding, and skills developed in individual programs. These are:

- Communication skills and quantitative reasoning ability;
- Community/global consciousness and responsibility;
- Creative, critical, and analytical thinking skills;
- Group and social interaction skills;
- Self-directed learning, awareness, and responsibility; and
- Up-to-date information gathering and research skills.

Student achievement at Capilano University is measured through these outcomes, defined within the context of each program and with different emphases at differing levels of expected competence. These outcomes provide each student with the employability skills that will help them enter, persist, and progress in the world of work and beyond. (Conference Board of Canada, *Employability Skills 2000+. 2014*)
Planning and Operational Context

Academic Plan

Capilano University’s Academic Plan, approved by Senate and the Board of Governors in June 2014, began with a great deal of listening, learning, and consideration; it was crafted collectively and collaboratively, taking into account the ideas, thoughts, suggestions, and dreams of our community. It is a declaration of hope; not a mirror, but a telescope that looks ahead so Capilano can move forward. Because it is a living document, Capilano is striving to make it real on a daily basis through hard work and good faith. Learning universities are dedicated not only to student learning, but also to an ongoing process of review that requires staff, faculty, and administrative areas to learn and grow according to measured outcomes.

Capilano will always put student learning first, and as a learning institution we will foster a culture of accountability. We are committed to helping students realize their place in a local and global context, and treat them as unique individuals with distinct histories and identities. Upon graduation our students will be leaders and change-makers, aware of and accountable for the environments in which we all live, approaching work and life with a sense of responsibility and a commitment to collaboration. Our graduates will be secure in their experience and expertise, confident that Capilano has prepared them to apply and adapt their talents to a changing world through evidence-informed academic methods and stat-of-the-art commercial, industrial, and community practices.

Capilano University means smaller classes taught by dedicated teachers and industry professionals, relevant courses offering experiential learning through engagement with real-world problems, meaningful credentials that lead all of our students in rewarding careers and global citizenship, and student success as a universal goal both during and beyond university.

For almost fifty years, Capilano has done an extraordinary job of meeting students where they are, serving the needs of those who might not otherwise have access to post-secondary education, and providing exemplary support for non-traditional learners. Capilano
University is no less committed to this mission, but we realize that a new century and a new identity require a new approach to addressing the needs and abilities of a new kind of learner. It is no longer enough to get students into university; we must dedicate ourselves to helping them move through, intentionally and successfully. To that end, Capilano University will offer: a supportive place where students learn how to succeed in post-secondary education; a clear path that students can follow to post-secondary success and completion; and real-world preparation for all students in all credential programs.

**Strategic Plan**

Capilano University is committed first and foremost to student success. It is our defining feature, the standard by which all things will be measured. During the next three years, Capilano will organize its activities to maximize the opportunity for all students to succeed in their educational objectives. This will happen not only in academic areas, but also across the university as a whole. While students themselves will have the final responsibility in this regard, everything we do as a teaching-centered institution will foster, support, and celebrate our students’ success while attending Capilano and beyond.

As we pursue our strategic goal and direction, Capilano University will focus its efforts on three specific priorities representing key areas of renewal for the entire institution: determining program offerings, managing student enrolment, and enhancing learning environments. These priorities are drawn from the academic plan and the strategic planning process; they are informed by contemporary university practices, evidence drawn from across the post-secondary landscape, directives from government, internal data sources, and the knowledge and experience represented by participants in the community consultation process. Our priorities address student success and improvements in determining our program offerings, managing our student enrolment, and enhancing our learning environments.
The strategic priorities will shape the allocation of energy and resources, whether academic, non-academic, physical or financial. In service to student success, Capilano University will focus on these priorities to build out the full potential of our academic plan. Over the next three years, the strategic plan will be implemented through a process that is based on available institutional and program-level data, rich description and other qualitative measures, ministry and economic projections, progress toward stated objectives, and additional metrics developed internally.

**Aboriginal Services Plan**

Programming from funding received as part of Capilano’s Aboriginal Services Plan ranges from preparatory, early childhood education, tourism and hospitality, training including Aboriginal youth ambassadors, business fundamentals amongst others. In the past year, Capilano has offered business management programming for urban-based First Nation professionals and an exciting and rewarding field of Aboriginal language and culture programs in Squamish, Sechelt and Lil’wat communities. These programs are designed to play a key role in strengthening language and culture of these nations and will offer a range of career pathways upon completion.

Capilano University also continues to support Canada’s national Aboriginal Action Plan with its focus on Mutual Respect, Mutual Recognition, and Mutual Responsibility and ‘focusing on programs and initiatives that help us deal with the problems of the past, allows us to move beyond historical grievances, so that together we can deal with the challenges of the present and the opportunities of the future.’

**Aboriginal Student Success Plan**

Capilano has a long history of affiliation with local First Nations communities in determining their educational needs. The Aboriginal Student Success Strategy will provide an opportunity to continue building on the good work that has already been done for Aboriginal learners working with our local First Nations communities. This is an opportunity to affirm, enhance, and further develop support for Aboriginal learners. Capilano recognizes that it is essential to work with a range of partners, including Aboriginal leaders, Aboriginal communities, the provincial government, and the campus community to ensure we are identifying the needs of Aboriginal students and offer programs and support needed for their success.
Our university commits to provide knowledge, skills, and confidence that Aboriginal, Métis, and Inuit students will have to successfully complete their post-secondary education at Capilano and provide the traditional and contemporary knowledge, skills, and attitudes required to be socially contributing, politically active, and economically prosperous citizens of the world. An important factor in Indigenous student success is also a better-informed non-Indigenous campus community: All students at Capilano University will have knowledge and appreciation of contemporary and traditional First Nation, Métis, and Inuit traditions, cultures and perspectives.

Based on student feedback and traditional values, the following goals lay the foundation of future success for Aboriginal students at Cap U. If “it takes a village to raise a child,” it takes a campus to support a student in her educational journey.

1. **Build on relationships** with our First Nations communities.

2. **Increase First Nations student** recruitment and work towards better transition from high school to post-secondary while maintaining access programs (ie. ABE and Business Fundamentals) and pathways leading to degree programs.

3. **Strengthen relationships** with other departments and develop initiatives to support First Nations students and that promote academic programming and research that responds to and anticipates Aboriginal student and community needs.

4. **Continue and augment** the student support system to assist them in achieving success and in turn increase our retention rates.

5. **Increase the number** of First Nations awards/bursaries offered.

6. **Position Capilano University** as a leader in First Nations post-secondary education.

With these six goals in mind, Capilano will rely on the support from the whole campus community to bring about systemic change for Aboriginal learners and look forward to updating this section of the plan next year.
Capilano’s designation as a special purpose teaching university brings with it particular responsibilities and expectations explicitly addressed in our Academic Plan, our Strategic Plan, and this our performance plan. Our priorities remain consistent with the vision, mission and goals of the BC Ministry of Advanced Education, including a balanced budget, provincial job creation and investment, supporting social programs, and improving the lives of British Columbians. We are diligent in our efforts to encourage and scaffold the success of Aboriginal learners, international learners, and domestic learners, and committed first and foremost to student success.

At the vision and mission levels, Capilano University’s commitment to “dynamic programs and close-knit learning environments, for independent learners contributing to communities” is in close alignment with government’s dedication to “a leading-edge post-secondary system for strong communities and bright futures.” Similarly, both Capilano University and the BC Ministry of Advanced Education “champion inclusive communities” that “enable students to succeed in their education, careers, and roles as citizens” in order to “maximize benefits to all British Columbians.”
Capilano University Performance Plan – Alignment of Vision, Mission, and Goals
Based on the 2014/15 – 2016/17 Ministry of Advanced Education Service Plan [02/14]

**Capilano University**
Dynamic programs and close-knit learning environments, for independent learners contributing to communities

**BC Ministry of Advanced Education**
A leading-edge post-secondary system for strong communities & bright futures

**VISION**

**MISSION**
We are a teaching-focused university offering programs that enable students to succeed in their education, careers, and role as citizens
We champion inclusive communities and an integrated post-secondary educational system to maximize benefits to all British Columbians

**GOALS**
Excellence
- Student success, outcomes achievement, & experiential learning kept current through innovation & review.

Distinctiveness
- Accreditation, assessment, & accountability; preparation for citizenship via transferable skills; career-oriented & professional degree paths.

Sustainability
- Stable enrolment & stakeholder satisfaction, management & operational efficiency, ecological & fiscal & social responsibility.

Goal 1 (Students)
- Students are supported to achieve their education, employment and training goals

Goal 2 (System)
- Maintain a quality post-secondary education system that provides BC with a global competitive advantage

Goal 3 (Society)
- An innovative approach to education and training that maximizes return on investment and supports BC’s diverse communities

**FOUNDATION**
A supportive environment and a sense of shared purpose that builds on our strengths and transcends change
Goals

This commitment is reflected in our three institutional goals: excellence, distinctiveness, and sustainability. Excellence is demonstrated through measurable indicators of student success, learning outcomes achievement, and experiential learning that is constantly renewed and kept current through pedagogical innovation and review. Distinctiveness is demonstrated through accreditation, assessment, and ongoing measures of accountability; through an interdisciplinary focus on transferable skills and preparation for citizenship; and through career-oriented and professional degree pathways that are valued and in demand. Sustainability is demonstrated through high levels of stable enrolment and stakeholder satisfaction, efficiency of operations and resource management, and community support that is based on academic integrity, ecological and social sensitivity, and entrepreneurial spirit. These three goals operate at the heart of the Capilano University experience and are well aligned with the Ministry’s goals of supporting students “to achieve their education, employment, and training goals,” maintaining a system than “provides BC with a global competitive advantage,” and supporting BC’s diverse communities through “an innovative approach to education and training that maximizes return on investment.”
Capilano University Performance Plan – Alignment of Goals, Objectives, and Measures
Based on the 2014/15 – 2016/17 Ministry of Advanced Education Service Plan [02/14]
& the Accountability Framework Standards Manual 2014/15 [03/15]

Objectives
Likewise, both Capilano University and the BC Ministry of Advanced Education share a common foundation: “a supportive environment and a sense of shared purpose that builds on our strength and transcends change.” This last, building on strengths and transcending change, is especially true in Capilano University’s four institutional objectives.

- Student success in achievement of learning and employment outcomes
- Student success in professional and career preparation
- Student success in engaged, informed, committed citizenship
- Student success in cultural, ecological, fiscal, and social responsibility

These institutional objectives build on the persistent strengths of the institution, namely a focus on professional preparation leading to employment and a commitment to broadly
applicable and transferable skills development. Additionally, by reaffirming the over-arching strategic goal of student success within and through these strengths, our institutional objectives provide a vehicle for moving beyond the successes of the past to new opportunities for the future. Taken together, these four institutional objectives encompass the system objectives of Access, Capacity, Efficiency, Quality, and Relevance. Individually, each of these institutional objectives operationalizes particular system objectives for the Capilano University community.

CapU Goals: 
Excellence, Distinctiveness, Sustainability

CapU Strategic Goal: 
Student Success

CapU Strategic Direction: 
To provide our learners with an education that helps them become engaged, informed, and committed citizens who are well prepared for success through career-related and professional degree pathways

CapU Objective #1 
Student success in achievement of learning and employment outcomes
System Objectives: Access, Capacity, and Efficiency

CapU Objective #2 
Student success in professional and career preparation
System Objectives: Access, Capacity, Quality, and Relevance

CapU Objective #3 
Student success in engaged, informed, committed citizenship
System Objectives: Access, Capacity, Quality, and Relevance

CapU Objective #4 
Student success in cultural, ecological, fiscal, and social responsibility
System Objectives: Access, Capacity, Efficiency, Quality, and Relevance
Institutional Objective #1:

Student success in achievement of learning and employment outcomes

At Capilano University, we are committed to helping our students become intentional learners, responsible for and working towards their own conception and understanding of success. We are also aware that most students aspire to success in the classroom and beyond, and that employment outcomes operate in concert with, not against, learning outcomes. This is aligned with our institutional goal of excellence, and our mission of enabling success in education, careers, and civic participation. It is also in alignment with the system objectives of Access, Capacity, and Efficiency. Our first institutional objective recognizes that Capilano University is committed to helping students articulate, aspire to, and achieve their learning and employment outcomes, without barriers and with appropriate levels of support (Access). It also serves as a commitment to providing the programming and services necessary to support our learners and their achievement of learning and employment outcomes (Capacity). Finally, by acknowledging the diversity of our constituency and its outcomes, we have likewise affirmed our commitment to providing pathways to success for all students, especially in fields and professions valuable to the province (Efficiency). To this end, Capilano University is engaged in an expansion of student services and support, a revision of enrolment management practices, and a review of developmental education and learning services available to students. As we develop an increasingly data-rich and data-informed learning environment Capilano University, we will be refining our approach to achieving and assessing this outcome through additional internal measures.

Institutional Objective #2:

Student success in professional and career preparation

This objective speaks to one of the core values of Capilano University, namely a practical education that yields concrete outcomes. We are not a trade school narrowly dedicated to the service of an ever-shifting labour market, but we do champion experiential learning, experience-based teaching, and expertise-oriented pedagogies. The combined focus on student success and employment outcomes speaks to our commitment to equitable and affordable education for all residents, supporting academic pathways and strategies that respond to regional need and opportunity (Access). Through an ongoing process of review and revision we strive to respond to changes in the labour needs of the province, the region,
and the shifting economies of the world (Capacity). Key to our students’ success, according to their own accounts and general program demand, is Capilano’s commitment to an excellent and distinctive outcomes-based education, provided to students through innovative pedagogies and innovating faculty who bring to the classroom not only expertise but also experience in their field (Quality). This also underpins the practical nature of our curriculum, which is broad and deep, responsive and visionary, keenly attuned to the economic and social needs of our citizens and our communities (Relevance). Capilano is committed to student success in disciplinary, professional, and career preparation, and to that end we are looking to expand programming in those areas most responsive to the growing economy of British Columbia. But we are also aware that practical preparation is only as good as the foundation on which it sits, and because of this we are committed as an institution to helping students build the transferable skills necessary for their success not just in one job, but in a lifetime of committed and consistent contribution to the well-being of all our fellow citizens. This is why we have embarked on a path toward general education for all degree students, and ultimately all students. This curriculum will not be bound by models from another century, but rather include an interdisciplinary collection of courses and experiences that will stand our students in good stead regardless of their short and long term goals.

Institutional Objective #3: Student success in engaged, informed, committed citizenship

As suggested in the previous objective, at Capilano University we are committed to student success in all aspect of work and life. Regardless of whether a student is coming to Cap for a certificate in Lil’wat Nation Language & Culture, an Engineering Transition diploma, a Bachelor of Motion Picture Arts, or a post-baccalaureate in North American Business Management, our curriculum is designed to promote and encourage not just academic excellence but also a deeper level of connection to community. This focus on citizenship and success is a valuable element for BC residents, regardless of their academic goals, for it places all of our coursework within a local context and opens doors for students who might not
otherwise consider postsecondary education (Access). As the world becomes more interdependent, the need for individual commitment, understanding, and connection increases; Capilano University responds to this with flexible curricular and co-curricular opportunities for students to develop and demonstrate the relationship between their academic pursuits and the neighbourhoods they support (Capacity). This objective is more than an add-on for our students; rather, it is an integral part of the Cap experience, contributing to and defining the practical orientation of our credentials, making up a significant feature of excellence in our programs (Quality). Because these commitments are embedded within the goals and practices of our programs they grow and change with the times, helping to develop in our students not only economic currency but social capital (Relevance). In many ways, our commitment to engaged, informed, and committed citizenship sets us apart from other institutions, and it is an area of exponential growth for tomorrow’s Capilano University.

**Institutional Objective #4:**

**Student success in cultural, ecological, fiscal, and social responsibility**

This final objective is perhaps our most challenging, for individual students and for Capilano University as an institution, but it is also one of the most important. Recent research has highlighted the role that responsibility plays in student success, not just academically but in all aspects of their lives. At Capilano every degree program, and most of our other credentials, include not just a focus on the instrumental aspects of a given field or profession; our programming requires students to take responsibility for their own pathways, and asks them to engage actively in world at large, so as to instil in them a sense of responsibility for others. This focus on responsibility as a key element of student success informs our practice as an institution, contributing to our approach to developmental education as well as other entry points for students, but it also supports individuals who might otherwise be left behind at other larger, less connected universities (Access). By building this objective into our programs, and our commitment to general education, we are constantly evolving to meet the needs of our province’s changing demographics, especially in terms of the growing diversity of our population (Capacity). This benefits our students perhaps most directly in our ability to be flexible in our view of how students enter the university, which directions they take
within the curriculum, and how they give back to their and our various communities (Efficiency). Thanks to the efforts of our individual faculty and program areas, Capilano University is well connected to our key stakeholders and well-positioned to assist students as they develop this capacity for responsibility, not only within their chosen areas of emphasis but also within the wider landscape of the lower mainland, BC, Canada, and the world (Quality). With such a focus on individual student growth and development, local community resources and concerns, regional and international needs and opportunities, our programming is kept current for our students, and as a result they are well prepared for participation as responsible provincial and global citizens (Relevance). In many ways, this objective is the most important way that we support and build toward the system objectives as a whole, for we as a province need students who are culturally, ecologically, fiscally, and socially responsible; they are the ones who will build the future of British Columbia. Beyond the individual student perspective, this objective also speaks to Capilano University’s collective sense of accountability. We are, as an institution, committed to our own sense of responsibility, striving to address the cultural shifts of our region and our nation, the ecological challenges of our place and time, the fiscal realities of a global economy, and above all the social shifts of a growing and thriving province.

**Institutional and System Objectives:**

In presenting our institutional outcomes, Capilano University has also kept the Ministry of Advanced Education Objectives front and centre. We believe that student success in

- Learning and employment outcomes,
- Professional and career preparation,
- Engaged, Informed, Committed Citizenship, and
- Cultural, Ecological, Fiscal, and Social Responsibility

All contribute clearly and effectively to the Ministry Objectives of

- Supporting students to achieve their education, employment, and training goals,
- Maintaining a quality post-secondary education system that provides BC with a global competitive advantage, and
- Fostering an innovative approach to education and training that maximizes return on investment and supports BC’s communities.

Along the way we are continuing to develop new and more detailed performance measures, some of which are mentioned here in support of the system objectives, and some that inform our choices and challenges in different and sometimes surprising ways.
All of this is in support of Capilano University’s growth and development as an institution, our ongoing efforts to redefine what it means to be a learning university in the twenty-first century. The changes are all underway, guided in large part by our recent academic and strategic plans, and thanks to the Ministry and our other supportive stakeholders, Cap has a new and exciting direction that will propel us into the next fifty years of service to the community, the region, the province, and the world.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strategic Objective</th>
<th>Definition</th>
<th>Advanced Ministry of BC Performance Measures</th>
<th>Capilano University Performance Measures</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Capacity            | The BC public post-secondary system has sufficient capacity to meet the evolving needs of the province. | • Student spaces  
• Credentials awarded  
• Sponsored research funding | • CapU Assessment Reports  
• CAPU Degree Enrolment |
| Access              | The BC public post-secondary system provides equitable and affordable access for residents. | • Credentials awarded to Aboriginal students  
• Aboriginal student spaces  
• Transition rate of high school students to public post-secondary education (total, Aboriginal students)  
• Loan repayment as a percent of income  
• Participation rate | • Transition Rate  
• CapU Assessment Rate  
• CapU Geographic Diversity |
| Quality             | The BC public post-secondary system provides quality through enriched educational experiences that meet the learning objectives of students. | • Student satisfaction with education  
• Student assessment of the quality of instruction  
• Student assessment of skill development | • CapU AOR Report  
• CapU Assessment Reports  
• CapU D/W/F Report  
• CapU Graduation Data |
| Relevance           | The BC public post-secondary system is relevant, having the breadth and depth of programming to meet the evolving economic needs of the province. | • Student assessment of the usefulness of knowledge and skills in performing job  
• Unemployment rate | • CapU AOR Report  
• CapU Assessment Reports |
| Efficiency          | The BC public post-secondary system is efficient, providing multiple and flexible student pathways with clear returns on public and individual investments. | • Year to year retention rate  
• Time to completion | • CapU Assessment Reports  
• CapU Seat Utilization  
• CapU Sustainability Report |
Performance Measures

This section reports the 2014/2015 Accountability Framework Performance Measures provided by the Ministry of Advanced Education. Ministry assessments are based on:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assessment</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Exceeded</td>
<td>110% or more of the target</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Achieved</td>
<td>100%-109% of the target</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Substantially Achieved</td>
<td>90%-99% of the target</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not Achieved</td>
<td>Less than 90% of the target</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not Assessed</td>
<td>Survey results with less than 20 respondents or a margin of error of 10% or greater, descriptive measures, and measures without targets</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Aboriginal Student Spaces

Capilano University provides access to Aboriginal students and has consistently achieved internal Aboriginal enrolment targets. During the last year we have continued to focus our efforts on the Costal Corridor Consortium (C3) collaboration with Vancouver Community College, Native Education College, and the Lil’wat Nation, the Métis Nation BC, the Musqueam Nation, the Sechelt Nation, the Squamish Nation, and the Tsleil-Waututh Nation. In the coming year we have dedicated additional resources and personnel in support of Aboriginal student recruitment, support, and outreach, and will continue in our efforts to indigenize our curriculum.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Total Number of Student FTE Aboriginal Students</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Performance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2013/14 Actual</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>458</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Credentials Awarded

Consistent with its previous college designation, Capilano offers a wide variety of credentials, from certifications and diplomas to degrees and post-baccalaureates. The Ministry has specified that these data be limited to the following credential types: Graduate and First Professional, Bachelor, Diploma, Certificate, Developmental. Capilano University is pleased to report its target for these measures was achieved. In the coming year we anticipate an increase in the number of baccalaureates and post-baccalaureates credentials awarded, and
are working toward a greater number of students to advancing from certificates, diplomas, and developmental credentials into degree pathways.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Credentials Awarded</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Performance</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2013/14 fiscal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Actual</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2014/15 Target</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2014/15 fiscal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Actual</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Performance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assessment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2015/16 Target</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2016/17 Target</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2017/18 Target</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1661</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1637</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1702</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Achieved</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TBD</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TBD</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TBD</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Student Satisfaction with Education**

As part of our accreditation review process, we embrace a model of continuous improvement in which we document the annual assessment of student performance on program-level student learning outcomes and use that systematic collection of information in our regular strategic and academic planning and budget allocation processes. The performance measures for this objective are the responses to the BGS and DACSO survey questions about student satisfaction with education, assessment of skill development, and assessment of usefulness of knowledge and skills in job performance. Capilano is pleased to report that we have achieved our targets in these areas, and we will continue in our efforts to accurately assess and consistently improve our students’ success in all of our credential programs.

**Satisfaction with Education - Diploma, Associate Degree, and Certificate Students**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Performance</th>
<th>Targets</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2013/14 Actual</td>
<td>2015/16 Target</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2014/15 Target</td>
<td>2016/17 Target</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2014/15 Actual</td>
<td>2017/18 Target</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Performance</td>
<td>Assessment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>93.9% +/- 1.1%</td>
<td>≥90%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>93.8 +/- 1.2%</td>
<td>Achieved</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>93.8 +/- 1.2%</td>
<td>≥90%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>93.8 +/- 1.2%</td>
<td>≥90%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>93.8 +/- 1.2%</td>
<td>≥90%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>93.8 +/- 1.2%</td>
<td>≥90%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Satisfaction with Education - Baccalaureate Graduates**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Performance</th>
<th>Targets</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2013/14 Actual</td>
<td>2015/16 Target</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2014/15 Target</td>
<td>2016/17 Target</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2014/15 Actual</td>
<td>2017/18 Target</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Performance</td>
<td>Assessment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>97.5% +/- 2.5%</td>
<td>≥90%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>95.8% +/- 3.0%</td>
<td>Achieved</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>95.8% +/- 3.0%</td>
<td>≥90%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>95.8% +/- 3.0%</td>
<td>≥90%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>95.8% +/- 3.0%</td>
<td>≥90%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>95.8% +/- 3.0%</td>
<td>≥90%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Student Assessment of the Quality of Instruction**

We have achieved a high quality of instruction by hiring faculty members who are passionate about both their disciplines and their commitment to excellent teaching. Faculty in all program areas are involved in developing their own strategies for the assessment of course
and program learning outcomes. Reports from those instructors who have implemented their assessment plans indicate that the program learning outcomes assessment is a valuable part of program review and improvement. The performance measures for quality of instruction are the responses to questions on the BGS and DACSO surveys. Capilano University is proud of its reputation as a teaching institution committed to excellence in student learning, and as such we pleased report that we have achieved our performance targets for this measure of students’ assessment of the quality of instruction. As we move forward Capilano anticipates the development of additional measures of instructional quality and student learning, and we look forward to sharing those data in future reports.

| Assessment of Quality of Instruction - Diploma, Associates Degree, and Certificate Students |
|-----------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------|
| **Performance** | **Targets** | 2013/14 | 2014/15 | 2014/15 | 2015/16 | 2016/17 | 2017/18 |
| Actual | Target | Actual | Target | Performance | Assessment | Target | Target | Target |
| 97.2% +/- 0.8% | ≥90% | 96.0% +/- 1.0% | Achieved | ≥90% | ≥90% | ≥90% |

| Assessment of Quality of Instruction - Baccalaureate Graduates |
|-----------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------|
| **Performance** | **Targets** | 2013/14 | 2014/15 | 2014/15 | 2015/16 | 2016/17 | 2017/18 |
| Actual | Target | Actual | Target | Performance | Assessment | Target | Target | Target |
| 96.3% +/- 3.1% | ≥90% | 95.7% +/- 3.1% | Achieved | ≥90% | ≥90% | ≥90% |

**Student Assessment of Skill Development**

As indicated in our institutional outcomes, Capilano University is dedicated to student success in the development of skills that prepare them for work and for life. Indeed, our commitment to practically oriented and outcomes-based instruction has long been one of our most prominent points of distinction. For that reason, and many others, we are continually updating and revising our curriculum to insure students are engaged in the most relevant of activities. The performance measures used are the responses to the assessment of skill development questions on the BGS and DACSO surveys, and they indicate clearly indicate that we have substantially achieved our targets for diploma, associate degree, and certificate students while we have exceeded assessment expectations for baccalaureate graduates. This is consistent with our increased commitment to baccalaureate programming, and serves as a clear indicator of our strengths and our future.
### Assessment of Skill Development - Diploma, Associate Degree, and Certificate Students

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Performance</th>
<th>Targets</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2013/14 Actual</td>
<td>2014/15 Target</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>77.5% +/- 2.0%</td>
<td>≥85%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Assessment of Skill Development - Baccalaureate Graduates

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Performance</th>
<th>Targets</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2013/14 Actual</td>
<td>2014/15 Target</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>87.5% +/- 3.4%</td>
<td>≥85%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Student Assessment of the Usefulness of Knowledge and Skills in Performing Job

One goal of our programs is to prepare graduates to work in local industries, as well as throughout the world. We use advisory committees to help ensure that our programs are preparing students with the knowledge, skills, and attitudes needed to work in their respective fields. In baccalaureate areas such as motion picture arts, tourism, and early childhood education our programs are world-renowned for their practical application, relevance to the current workplace, and quality of preparation. These are the standards to which we are holding all programs, including those that do not lead to a degree, and they figure prominently in our ongoing assessment of student learning outcomes and future success in the workforce. The performance measure used for this objective is the percentage positive response to the DACSO survey question about employment in a training-related job, and it demonstrates that we are achieving or substantially achieving our targets in these areas. Once again, it is the baccalaureate degree graduates who acknowledge the greatest benefit, confirming the validity of our plans for developing more robust pathways from diplomas and certificates into degrees.
Assessment of Usefulness of Knowledge and Skills - Baccalaureate Graduates

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>2013/14 Actual</th>
<th>2014/15 Target</th>
<th>2014/15 Actual</th>
<th>Performance Assessment</th>
<th>2015/16 Target</th>
<th>2016/17 Target</th>
<th>2017/18 Target</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2013/14 Actual</td>
<td>83.8% +/- 1.7%</td>
<td>≥ 90%</td>
<td>90.8% +/- 4.7%</td>
<td>Achieved</td>
<td>&gt; 90%</td>
<td>&gt; 90%</td>
<td>&gt; 90%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Student Spaces (Total, Health, Developmental, and Medical)

Despite the growth in our baccalaureate programs, and the consistently high satisfaction of our students, Capilano University has experienced a drop in total number of student FTE in the last year. Part of this can be explained by the demographic shift in the North Shore, where high school enrolments have likewise dropped. But more significant for us as an institution, when examined closely, these data indicate that the vast majority of this loss has come in the area of Arts and Sciences. This is to be expected, given our transition from college to university status and the subsequent change in our public profile from transfer to degree granting institution. As we reframe our institutional identity, and communicate more widely our commitment to student success and practical preparation, Capilano University anticipates this temporary reduction in transfer-bound students will be offset by a permanent increase in students coming to us for baccalaureate and post-baccalaureate credentials.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Total Number of Student FTE (excluding international)</th>
<th>2013/14 Actual</th>
<th>2014/15 Target</th>
<th>2014/15 Actual</th>
<th>Performance Assessment</th>
<th>2015/16 Target</th>
<th>2016/17 Target</th>
<th>2017/18 Target</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>5209</td>
<td>5449</td>
<td>4789</td>
<td>Not Achieved</td>
<td>5450</td>
<td>5450</td>
<td>TBD</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Contrary to the trend in total enrolment, student FTE in allied health has been substantially achieved. Allied health programs at Capilano University include our Bachelor of Music Therapy, Health Care Assistant certificate, and Rehabilitation Assistant diploma. Numbers for all of these programs remain strong, and in the coming year we anticipate an increase based on a review and revision of our regional commitments to allied health fields.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Total Number of Student FTE in Nursing and Allied Health Programs</th>
<th>2013/14 Actual</th>
<th>2014/15 Target</th>
<th>2014/15 Actual</th>
<th>Performance Assessment</th>
<th>2015/16 Target</th>
<th>2016/17 Target</th>
<th>2017/18 Target</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>147</td>
<td>138</td>
<td>130</td>
<td>Substantially Achieved</td>
<td>TBD</td>
<td>TBD</td>
<td>TBD</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Capilano University offers a wide variety of developmental programs, all of which are housed in the School of Access and Academic Preparation. Although we did not achieve our
target FTE for developmental programs, Capilano continues to be dedicated to providing students with the support they need to succeed at university. These and other data, as well as changes to provincial funding of programs such as Adult Basic Education, have resulted in Capilano University embarking on an institutional review of how we deliver developmental programming and how we best meet the needs of our changing student population.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Total Number of Student FTE in Developmental Programs</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Performance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2013/14 Actual</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>461</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Unemployment Rate**

An overall objective of the university is to contribute to the Lower Mainland/Southwest BC economy. Capilano University believes that all programs contribute to the employability of graduates, and indeed has committed as an institution to the development of transferable skills in all academic areas. We use unemployment rates as the institutional performance measure for this objective, and are happy to report that we have exceeded all targets. As we continue to develop our measures of success, each program area will be defining explicit targets and strategies to address employment within and beyond the particular fields in which our students choose to study. This will help us build a deeper understanding of not only how our students enter the workforce, but what features of a Capilano education are most useful to them as they move from one job to another.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Unemployment Rate - Diploma, Associates Degree, and Certificate Students</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Performance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2013/14 Actual</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.1% +/-2.2%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Unemployment Rate - Baccalaureate Graduates</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Performance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2013/14 Actual</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.0% +/-3.3%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Capilano University Performance Measures

This section reports some of the additional performance measures being used by Capilano University to address our institutional student learning outcomes. These measures are not exhaustive, but are offered as an indication of Capilano’s commitment to accountability and institutional improvement.

Applications-Offers-Registrations (AOR) Report for Fall 2014

In an effort to better understand student demand, program viability, and potential for success in future study, Capilano University is constantly monitoring AOR data at the institutional, Faculty, and program levels. These data will help us plan for areas of growth and assess the viability of existing programming. The following is a sample of institute-level data.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Application, Offer, Registration Rate</th>
<th>Fall 2014</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>7421</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>O</td>
<td>5102</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R</td>
<td>3231</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Assessment Reports

During the last two years Capilano University has embarked on an ambitious project to collect annual assessment data from all academic and non-academic units. The nature of these reports does not lend itself to graphic representation, and we have not been collecting these data for long enough to draw conclusions, but the processes of assessment and the move toward comparable datasets is worth mentioning in this report. All functional units engaged in a multi-step process that yields annual assessments of student learning outcomes achievements. Steps include:

1. Building assessment teams of faculty and staff who are knowledgeable in learning outcomes development and assessment.
2. Developing discrete and assessable goals and/or questions to be addressed in pursuit of improvement.
3. Articulation of program learning outcomes that build on course-level student learning outcomes and are directly supportive of institutional student learning outcomes.
4. Determination of the specific activities, projects, or initiatives that contribute to student success and the achievement of student learning outcomes.
5. Creation of a short and long term assessment timeline.
6. Development of a research strategy by which evidence of student learning can be collected and analyzed.
7. Data collection and analysis, including the development of reliability measures.
8. Application of findings to the revision and improvement of student learning outcomes strategies and learning events.

The results of this process have been encouraging, and the assessment reports have helped Capilano University build towards the culture of accountability and data-informed decision making that has been articulated in our academic and strategic plans. Now that we have achieved full participation, from all academic and non-academic areas, we are building a process that will undoubtedly lead to improvement and innovation.

**D/W/F Report**

One of the best ways to determine how to improve student success is to track and address areas of particular challenge. To this end we are examining trends in grades to determine where students are having the most difficulty (demonstrated by a grade of “D” or “F”), and when students are choosing to withdraw from courses. By looking at these data over time we can devote resources to areas of greatest need and provide avenues of improvement.

**Degree Enrolment**

In an effort to remain current and respond to student demand we are constantly monitoring those areas where we have increasing and decreasing enrolment. These data provide a window on our own programming but also, when viewed over time, a forecast of potential risk and growth opportunities.
Geographic Diversity

As one of the teaching universities responsible for a specific geographic region, we monitor the diversity of our population to determine where best to devote resources for recruiting and publicity. These data are also useful in terms of course planning and scheduling, especially given the increasing pressures of travel to and from the north shore. We are also cognizant of the need for international diversity so as not to rely too heavily on one region or country. In this last aspect Capilano University is very much like other BC universities, seeking to build a truly cosmopolitan community from around the world.
Graduation Data

Once known primarily as a transfer institution, Capilano University has built a reputation for practical, professional credentials with high value in the marketplace. As we expand from
diploma and certificate programs towards a greater number of degrees, Capilano keeps close track of the changing goals and outcomes of our students. These graduation data inform not only the currency of our offerings, but also speak to the processes we use in admissions, registration, and completion.

Student Assessment of Skill Development Breakdown

Although student assessment of skill development is one of the Ministry’s institutional performance measures, at Capilano University we look at finer-grained levels of data in an effort to determine what practices are working best and where greater effort needs to be placed. The table below shows changes in the specific areas of skill development at the institutional level.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Former diploma, certificate, and associate degree students’ assessment of skill development</th>
<th>2013/14 Actual</th>
<th>2014/15 Target</th>
<th>2014/15 Actual</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Skill development (avg. %)</td>
<td>77.5% 2.0% &gt; 85%</td>
<td>75.8% 2.2%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Written communication</td>
<td>71.0% 2.4% &gt; 85%</td>
<td>70.7% 2.5%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Skill Development</td>
<td>2013/14 Actual</td>
<td>2014/15 Target</td>
<td>2014/15 Actual</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---------------------------------------</td>
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<td>---------------</td>
<td>---------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>%     +/-</td>
<td>%     +/-</td>
<td>%     +/-</td>
<td>%     +/-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Skill development (avg. %)</td>
<td>88.0% 5.4%</td>
<td>&gt; 85%</td>
<td>89.3% 4.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Written communication</td>
<td>77.3% 7.2%</td>
<td>&gt; 85%</td>
<td>83.5% 5.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oral communication</td>
<td>90.8% 4.9%</td>
<td>&gt; 85%</td>
<td>88.3% 4.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Group collaboration</td>
<td>94.9% 3.6%</td>
<td>&gt; 85%</td>
<td>93.6% 3.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Critical analysis</td>
<td>88.5% 5.3%</td>
<td>&gt; 85%</td>
<td>91.4% 4.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Problem resolution</td>
<td>85.5% 5.9%</td>
<td>&gt; 85%</td>
<td>88.2% 4.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Learn on your own</td>
<td>91.0% 4.7%</td>
<td>&gt; 85%</td>
<td>93.6% 3.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reading and comprehension</td>
<td>88.2% 5.5%</td>
<td>&gt; 85%</td>
<td>86.8% 5.2%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Student Spaces (International)**

Capilano University has set targets for international students. We have done this for two reasons: 1) internationalizing the curriculum and facilitating domestic students studying alongside international students helps prepare all of our students to work in a diverse, multicultural and multinational environment, and 2) the additional revenue generated from
international student enrolments helps fund programs where domestic tuition is capped at a level that does not cover instructional costs. Our international recruitment efforts are reinforced by additional support systems for students on our campuses, many of which have been expanded and augmented in the current academic year, and many more of which will be developed in coming years. This is a high priority for Capilano University and we are gratified to see increases in international enrolment from an ever-wider range of nations.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Total Number of Student FTE for International Students</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Performance</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>2013/14 Actual</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>620</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Sustainability Reports**

Capilano University is committed to sustainability and the mitigation of our ecological impact on the local environment. To this end we have a robust process of review and reporting that details targets and accomplishments. Some of the areas dealt with in these reports include:

- Campus waste audits.
- Carbon neutral campus initiatives.
- Emissions reduction.
- Environmental awareness and sustainability in the curriculum.
- Paper reduction.
- Student advocacy and activism.
- Sustainable transit initiatives
- Workplace conservation and awareness programming.

One of the most ambitious and successful initiatives has been the CapU Works project which sponsors many of the sustainability activities on campus and brings students, staff, faculty, and administration together with community partners in support of a more sustainable future.

**EarthWorks**

2015
- Waste Audit
- Leadership in the EarthWorks lecture series
- International Bear Day

2016
- Waste Audit
- Continue leadership in the EarthWorks lecture series
- Continue creating and promoting initiatives on campus

2017
- Continue leadership in the EarthWorks lecture series
- Continue to plan and offer leadership and engagement activities
FoodWorks

2015
• Farmer’s Market on campus
• Liaise with Food and Beverage Committee
• Liaise with new Food Services Provider

2016
• Identify opportunities for local affordable food
• Build strong connection with Food Service team
• Plan for a larger scale Farmers Market

2017
• Continue to plan for better provision of sustainable food on campus
• Strengthen the Farmers Market

Garden PatchWorks

2015
• Medicinal Plant Walk
• Seed Exchange event
• Prepare plots for 2015 growing season
• Organize invasive species pulls

2016
• Ode to Spring
• Earth Day Celebration
• Gardening Workshops
• Identify potential for garden expansion elsewhere on campus

2017
• Ode to Spring
• Earth Day Celebration
• Gardening Workshops
• Identify potential for garden expansion elsewhere on campus

PowerWorks

2015
• Get Ur Fleece On (Yr 5)
• Earth Hour
• Building Challenge
• Your Powerful Shot

2016
• Get Ur Fleece On (Yr 6)
• Earth Hour
• National Sweater Day
• Building Challenge
• Earth Day Celebration
• Your Powerful Shot

2017
• Get Ur Fleece On (Yr 7)
• Earth Hour
• National Sweater Day
• Building Challenge
• Earth Day Celebration
• Your Powerful Shot

Embedding Sustainability into Course Curriculum

2015
• REC 245, BADM 218
• IDEA program
• Geography, Biology, EAP, Business, Anthropology and REC in the waste audit

2016
• Recreation 245
• BADM 466, BADM 218
• Inclusion of other departments

2017
• Recreation 245
• BADM 466, BADM 218
• Inclusion of other departments

Campus Waste Audits

2015
• Plan to host our 8th waste audit with a variety of class in the Fall of 2015
• Goal is to reduce waste to 0% by 2020

2016
• Plan to host our 9th waste audit in the Fall of 2016, across the entire campus
• Goal is to reduce waste to 0% by 2020

2017
• Plan to host our 10th waste audit in the Fall of 2017, across the entire campus
• Goal is to reduce waste to 0% by 2020
Ongoing Measures and Metrics

The measures mentioned above are only a small sample of the kinds of data Capilano University has been using to assess impact and promote student success. We are a data-informed university committed to accountability and assessment in support of ongoing innovation and improvement. In future reports, we hope to provide additional information about our efforts, and look forward to working with the Ministry of Advanced Education to achieve the goals towards which we all strive.

Financial Information

For our most recent Audited Financial Statements go to http://www.capilanou.ca/Financial-Reports.html.
Assessment Plan

Program Name:  
Program Evaluation Contact:  

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Program Mission</th>
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</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Program Goals</th>
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</tbody>
</table>
Program Student Learning Outcomes

Students successfully completing this program will:

1.

2.

3.

4.

5.
## Relationship between Institutional Outcomes & program student learning outcomes

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>#</th>
<th>Institutional Outcomes</th>
<th>Associated Program student learning Outcome(s)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Self-directed learning, awareness &amp; responsibility</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Up-to-date information gathering and research skills</td>
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<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Communication skills</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Quantitative reasoning ability</td>
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<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Group and social interaction skills</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Creative, critical and analytical thinking skills</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Community/global consciousness and responsibility</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Program Student Learning Outcomes</td>
<td>Measure(s) used to assess PLO</td>
<td>Direct or Indirect?</td>
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<tr>
<td>----------------------------------</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
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<td>3.</td>
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<td>4.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Action</td>
<td>Date to be completed</td>
<td>Completed by</td>
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</table>
# Program Assessment Long Range Plan

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Academic Year</th>
<th>PLOs to be Assessed</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2013-2014</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>2014-2015</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>2015-2016</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
# Program Changes
*(based on issues identified in last year’s report)*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Issues Identified Last Academic Year</th>
<th>Steps to Be Taken and Anticipated Outcome</th>
<th>How will you test the anticipated outcome?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
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ASSESSMENT REPORT

Assessment is a systematic means for faculty to understand what students are learning in their program of study, an understanding that will provide a firm foundation to guide curricular and pedagogical planning. We are required to demonstrate that every academic program undertakes and completes this process regularly, on an ongoing basis. This report will provide important information as we document this endeavor. Thank you for completing this report. If you have questions, please contact Dianne Ashbourne (604.984.4921 or dianneashbourne@capilanou.ca)

Program Name:
Credential(s):
Evaluation Period:
Program Evaluation Contact(s):
Date of Submission:

Summary of outcomes assessment

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Program Student Learning Outcome (PLO) Assessed this year</th>
<th>Measure(s) used to assess PLO</th>
<th>Number of students assessed</th>
<th>Benchmark achieved</th>
<th>Proposed actions to improve this outcome</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
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</tbody>
</table>
Data collection and analysis

Please describe your data collection process and explain how you analyzed your data.
What were the important findings?

*How did you interpret the results of your data collection and analysis? What did you learn about your program?*
Success of Changes/Improvements

What do this year’s assessment findings tell you about the success of the changes/improvements made as a result of last year’s program assessment findings?

*** This section only needs to be completed if you implemented program improvements based on previous assessment findings. ***
Faculty Engagement

Please briefly comment on the level of faculty engagement there is in all areas of your assessment process. Who collected the data? Who chose the program student learning outcomes? Who analyzed the data? Who came up with recommendations for program changes?

Thoughts on the Assessment Process

What worked well? What needs to be changed? Are there things that should be added? Are your program learning outcomes specific and measurable? Were the assessment tools able to measure your program student learning outcomes? Were your findings meaningful for your program?
Supporting documentation
When you email your report, please attach copies of any materials that illustrate your assessment work. These may include rubrics, exam questions, surveys, memos, minutes, analyses, etc. List materials attached below.

Other Important Information?
Is there anything else you that should be included in this report?
Capilano University Library Assessment Plan
Putting the Pieces Together
By: Tania Alekson

Our Mandate
Capilano University Library provides collections, services and facilities to support learning and teaching at the University. These include:
- Borrowing and accessing information materials
  - print and online
  - in the collection and via interlibrary loan;
  - free and subscription;
- inform an informational instruction
- research help:
  - in person
  - phone
  - chat
- online tutorials (Moodle, YouTube)
- support for faculty research
- study spaces for groups and individual students
- access to computer reservations, printing, copying and scanning
- space for student exhibitions

Library Goals and Strategies 2013-2015

Our Library
- Academic Skills:
  - To promote, support and strengthen campus-wide policies and initiatives on information literacy and student success.

Library Environment
- Create and maintain the Library environment best suited to CapU University.

Assessment
- Practice evidence-based librarianship.

Access
- To provide broadest possible access to the Library that best serves Capilano University.

Library Goals and Strategies 2013-2015

- Strategy: Conduct and compare usage stats to previous years, creation of benchmarks for new resources.
- Strategy: Triangulate; count attendance/classes, student satisfaction survey, learning outcomes test.

Strengths
The Library is already thinking about and ordering various kinds of data. As an acknowledgment of its role in service delivery expectations, both internal and without the professional community, Capilano University library made adjustments in 2012 to include assessment as an official librarian responsibility. In 2013, the role was further clarified by assigning the related areas of assessment, usability and communications into a new User Experience Librarian position.

Challenges
The continuing transition from a college to a university has greatly impacted the Library. It has meant major adjustments to collections and services to meet the needs of upper-level students.

168 of 191
2014 – 2015 Program Assessment Experience
Health Care Assistant Program, Faculty of Education, Health & Human Development
Carol M. Tanner, Coordinator

Introduction
The Health Care Assistant Program prepares students to work under the direction and supervision of a health professional to provide person-centred care aimed at promoting and maintaining the physical, emotional, cognitive, spiritual, and social wellbeing of clients/residents.

The HCA program is designed to provide students with opportunities to develop the knowledge, skills, and attitudes necessary to function effectively as frontline caregivers and respected members of the healthcare team. Upon completion of the program, graduates are prepared to work in any level of continuing care including: home support, adult care/day care, assisted living, and complex care (including special care units).

The two-semester program includes theory courses, a clinical skills lab, and two practicum courses. It is a cohort program with approximately 20 students in each class and is offered in both the North Vancouver and the Sunshine Coast campuses.

Program Student Learning Outcomes
Students will:
1. Provide person-centred care and assistance that recognizes and respects the uniqueness of each individual resident or client.
2. Use an informed problems-solving approach to provide care and assistance that promote the physical, psychological, social, cognitive and spiritual well-being of clients/residents and families.
3. Provide safe, competent, and organized care and assistance for clients/residents experiencing complex physical, cognitive and/or mental health challenges.
4. Communicate clearly, accurately, and sensitively with clients/residents and other members of the healthcare team to contribute to the achievement of goals and effective working relationships.

Their role in a reflective, responsible, accountable and professional manner recognizing and responding to own self-development, learning and health enhancement needs.

Our Students
- Many of our students are new Canadians. Studying to become a Health Care Assistant is often the first career path that leads an immigrant student to reliable employment.
- The mean age of an HCA student is 32. The program offers “return to school” opportunities to mature students, some of whom have been out of formal education for many years.
- Aboriginal students take their knowledge and skills back into their communities to improve access to healthcare in regions where that access may be significantly lacking.
- Some of our students are young high school graduates who are not certain of their career goals and choose to take the HCA while they consider whether or not to engage in further study to pursue nursing or other allied health professions.

Outcomes Assessed in 2014-15
1. PLO 3 Students will provide person-centred care and assistance that recognizes and respects the uniqueness of each individual resident or client.
2. PLO 5 Students will perform the care provider role in a reflective, responsible, accountable and professional manner recognizing and responding to own self-development, learning and health enhancement needs.

Reviewing the Assessment
For the first time we used the Clinical Skills Lab Test as part of Program Assessment. Scenarios were developed that aligned with the PLOs and the results of the “first” test was not to a required extent. We learned that each skill often works more than one PLO and that some student errors are more significant than others. Further work will be done on this tool to improve its usefulness for Program Assessment.

The Clinical Evaluation tool was not useful for Program Assessment in spite of the fact that we had added it as a new category (Exceeds Standard) to the previous “Met or Has Not Met Standard”. Since all students are required to at least “meet the standard” in all learning outcomes to be successful in the course, we were unable to derive objective data. Instructor comments were used as anecdotal data only.

The Final Reflection was helpful but we need to provide a more specific template for the students so that they will tell the required number of stories to demonstrate a particular skill. Sometimes our data was skewed by the test that students did not understand the assignment or that they were not able to demonstrate the outcome.

The response to the Graduate Survey was very low. Although 41 surveys were sent out to the 56 students and the Capilano email addresses, only 7 students responded and 7 of them actually completed the survey. As a result, the data is not statistically reliable. In the future, we will include a prize in the survey to encourage participation.

Next Year?
- We will make the clinical skills scenario more closely linked to the PLOs ensuring that each critical element is assessed as a PLO.
- We will consider an alternative tool for the Clinical Evaluation that is more specific to Program Assessment.
- We will develop a more specific template for the Clinical Reflection that is more specific to Program Assessment.
- We will include a prize for completing the Graduate Survey as an incentive for more participation.
Unit review is a systematic means to understand and improve the way they support the university community. We are required to demonstrate that every service undertakes and completes this process regularly, on an ongoing basis. This report will provide important information as we document this endeavor. Thank you for completing this report.

**Unit Name:**  
**Reporting to:**  
**Evaluation Period:**  
**Assessment Contact(s):**  
**Date of Submission:**

### Summary of outcomes assessment

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Service Outcome</th>
<th>Data collected</th>
<th>Benchmark Achieved?</th>
<th>Proposed actions to improve this outcome</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
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</table>
Service Outcome #1

What were the results of your data analysis?

What were your key findings?

How will your findings be used to improve services?
Service Outcome #2

What were the results of your data analysis?

What were your key findings?

How will your findings be used to improve services?
Service Outcome #3

What were the results of your data analysis?

What were your key findings?

How will your findings be used to improve services?
Who was involved?
Please briefly comment on the level of staff/faculty engagement in all areas of your review process. Who collected the data? Who chose the service outcomes? Who analyzed the data? Who came up with recommendations for changes/improvements?

Thoughts on the Review Process
What worked well? What needs to be changed? Are there things that should be added? Are your service outcomes specific and measurable? Were your findings meaningful?
Report of the Cap Year Experience Committee

June 15th, 2015

Submitted to Richard Gale, VP Academic and Provost

By

Lorraine Argatoff, Faculty of Education, Health and Human Development
Jean Bennett, Faculty of Education, Health and Human Development
Joanne Charley, School of Business and Professional Studies
Karen Mathews, School of Motion Picture Arts – Film Crafts
Cheryl Schreader, Faculty of Arts and Sciences
Lydia Watson, Faculty of Global and Community Studies and Sunshine Coast Campus
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Benefits | First Year Experiences ........................................................................................................................................ 6  
First-Year Students at Capilano University ........................................................................................................... 7  
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Elements of the CYE ............................................................................................................................................. 8  
CYE Program Objectives ....................................................................................................................................... 8  
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CYE Framework ................................................................................................................................................... 10  
CYE Academic Year Sketch ................................................................................................................................... 12  
Possible CYE Program Themes ............................................................................................................................. 13  
CYE Next Steps & Implementation ....................................................................................................................... 13  
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Executive Summary

The purpose of this report is to provide a structural plan for a proposed Cap Year Experience (CYE) to be piloted for the 2017 academic year at Capilano University. The report will also be used as a consultation piece in the development of the pilot.

Over the past three months, an ad hoc committee convened to advise the VP Academic and Provost on the creation and operation of a CYE. Committee members include the Dean of Health and Education, a representative from each of the five faculties, and a student.

The committee members utilized the vast research in the area of post-secondary first-year programs, particularly from the US; consultation with Capilano University’s Institutional Research Department; and their own expertise and experience in their faculty roles to develop a plan to be used for consultation.

Drawing on the Academic and Strategic Plans, the report found five key elements for a CYE at Capilano University:

- a supportive and dynamic cohort environment that fosters student success,
- opportunities for personal and academic growth through experiential and exploratory learning,
- accessible, progressive, uniquely ‘Capilano’ programming,
- engaging, interdisciplinary ‘theme- based’ curriculum, and
- consistent and individualized student support through faculty-to-student and peer mentor- student advising teams.

This report will be presented to the campus community so that students, staff, and faculty can provide consultation and feedback to the committee. It will also be presented to the larger community, including high school teachers and counsellors. Faculty members will then be invited to submit proposals for curriculum design and development for the 2017 pilot year.
Introduction

The scope of this proposal is to provide a rationale and framework for what a first-year experience at Capilano University might look like – the Cap Year Experience (CYE).

“This would be a year-one curriculum that serves three purposes: provide interested students with a shared first year including a common curriculum and extra-curricular support; showcase what makes Capilano University distinctive in terms of program offerings and educational experiences; and, offer an attractive, purposeful alternative to the “gap year” many students seek before embarking on their chosen academic trajectory. The Cap Year might focus on social action and community engagement, global affairs or study abroad, or be a foundation year of preparatory studies to increase the likelihood of success. There could even be a Cap Year designed to help students transition into Canadian advanced education. It would not be required, would not take the place of general education, but the Cap Year could provide a venue for much of the programming Capilano values. “ (Academic Plan, p. 30)

Krause (2006) suggests that “we have now reached the stage where universities must recognize the need for institution-wide approaches to enhancing the first-year experience” (8.8.6). Furthermore, all stakeholders in first-year initiatives should work together to create a more sustainable, institution-wide approach that “transcends academic, administrative, and support areas’ silos” (Kift, 2008, p. 2).

Frameworks | First Year Experiences

External research on first-year experience frameworks describes a wide spectrum of first-year experiences for students, each with its own combination of high-impact practices.

The Gap Year practice is one that is travel and/or community based and is often an experience that is managed by companies separate from the institution.

In an integrated First-Year Experience (FYE), elements such as orientation, common first-year seminars, peer mentoring, common/shared experiences, living-learning environments, and a variety of other options are intended to support new students, both personally and academically, as they transition to university life. The FYE options are integrated into the first year of study or designed to be program specific.

At other institutions, distinct FYE programs offer a separate year of study which includes many of the elements of an integrated FYE, such as orientation, seminars, and mentoring. In addition, students enroll in unique constellations of courses which are designed around a common theme and which allow them to explore their interests and participate in field trips/travel in a supported academic framework.

Kalamazoo College in Michigan, for example, offers a unique FYE program.
Their FYE aims to help students to

- achieve academic success,
- identify and pursue their passions,
- connect with Kalamazoo College and the greater Kalamazoo communities,
- construct complex intercultural understandings, and
- develop a purpose-filled and balanced life.

Their FYE includes the following elements:

- summer common reading,
- wilderness experience,
- orientation,
- first-Year seminars,
- first-Year forums,
- academic advising, and
- peer leaders.

Oregon State University provides the following as part of their FYE for new students:

- welcome week and orientation (START program includes orientation, advising and registration),
- on-campus living and living-learning communities provide better connections to the campus, community and residences have live-in Academic Advisors,
- academic advising, and
- U-Engage courses and course playlists organized by themes.

Faced with issues of declining domestic enrolment, weak retention numbers, questions about financial sustainability, and the need to bolster their reputation as a destination of choice, the York University FYE Working Group has established goals and objectives to guide and advance the creation of the first year experience framework.

**New students at York will develop personal and academic competence, and a sense of purpose.**

York University can achieve this by

- ensuring students are clear about what will be expected of them academically;
- investing in teaching resources for full- and part-time faculty, and teaching assistants;
- investing in accessible learning resources/services;
- providing career and academic advising that encourages reflection and builds a sense of purpose; and
- offering programs that foster practical competence and physical, emotional, and mental well-being.

**New students at York will make meaningful connections with peers, faculty, staff, and York University.**

York University can achieve this by

- delivering effective, well-coordinated orientation programming;
- expanding the recruitment, training, and deployment of peer mentors;
• encouraging awareness and involvement in co-curricular experiences; and
• facilitating strategies for faculty, academic advisors, other staff, and peers to connect with students in and outside the classroom.

Our Cap Year Experience (CYE) could combine elements of both the FYE and the Gap Year and offer an academically rigorous, exploratory and supportive first year.

Benefits | First Year Experiences

First-year experiences differ in design across institutions but all programs include a variety of high-impact practices: “curricular and co-curricular structures that tend to draw upon high-quality pedagogies and practices in pursuit of 21st century learning outcomes; they are teaching and learning practices that have been widely tested and have been shown to be beneficial for college students...[toward] increase rates of retention and student engagement” (Kuh, 2008). The Association of American Colleges and Universities (AAC&U) describes several of these, including first-year seminars, common intellectual experiences, learning communities, writing intensive courses, collaborative writing and assignments, undergraduate research, service and community-based learning, and capstone projects (AAC&U). (http://www.aacu.org/leap/hips)

Many schools offer first-year seminars or other programs that bring small groups of students together with faculty or staff on a regular basis. The highest-quality first-year experiences place a strong emphasis on critical inquiry, frequent writing, information literacy, collaborative learning, and other skills that develop students’ intellectual and practical competencies (AAC&U). The seminar provides a forum for new students to examine their entry to college, and the implications it has for their identity, their time, and their intellectual growth, can be offered in various formats and are taught by varying combinations of faculty, staff and administrators (Bers and Younger, 2014).

The 2006 National Survey on First-Year Seminars is reported on by Tobolowsky (2008). Of the 968 institutions that responded, 821 reported offering a FYE seminar and 196 (24%) were community colleges. There are some differences between seminars at colleges and larger 4-year institutions. For example, community colleges tend to develop the seminar to fill skill and knowledge gaps, while four-year institutions are somewhat more likely to focus on students’ entry into the academic community (Bers and Younger, 2014). In addition, four-year institutions are more likely to require the seminar for all first year students (46%) compared to two-year institutions (21.5%). Pascarella and Terenzini (2005) found that “participation in first-year seminars has statistically significant and substantial positive effects on students’ successful transition to college, and the likelihood of persistence into the second year and as well as on overall academic performance in college on an array of other college experiences known to be related directly or indirectly to bachelor’s degree completion” (p. 403).

Common intellectual experiences generally develop by way of a core curriculum. This can take a variety of forms, such as a set of required common courses or general education program that includes advanced integrative studies and/or required participation in a learning community. The core curriculum is often organized around broad themes—e.g., technology and society, global interdependence—with a variety of curricular and co-curricular options for students (AAC&U).
Learning communities integrate learning across courses and expose students to broader issues and big questions. Often students take courses that are linked and work closely together and with their instructors. Many learning communities explore a common topic and/or common readings through the lenses of different disciplines (AAC&U).

In service- and community-based learning opportunities, students gain experience by working with community partners to complete a project or fulfill an academic goal. Students apply what they are learning in their classes to working in real-world settings and giving back to the community.

Capstone courses and/or projects are culminating experiences that require students to create a project of some sort that integrates and applies what they've learned. The project might be a research paper, a performance, a portfolio of “best work,” or an exhibit of artwork (AAC&U).

First-Year Students at Capilano University

It is important that we align these possible benefits with the unique student body that we have at Capilano University. Institutional Research at Capilano characterized the following trends in our first-year students:

- From 2009/2010 to 2014/2015, both direct and delayed entry enrolments from high school have been declining.
- The majority of our students are direct from high school, and an increasing proportion are first-generation students (first in the family).
- The attrition rates overall for bachelor programs are about 30%, certificate programs about 50%, and diploma programs about 30%.
- Over the past 5 years, about 15.87% of the first-year students who continued to the next year changed their programs.

Rationale for CYE

Based on these findings, the CYE has the potential to

- attract more students directly from high school who would be interested in a dynamic, academically rigorous year in which they could explore their interests;
- attract more students directly from high school who would benefit from the personal and academic support provided by a CYE;
- increase the success and retention of students within programs and at Capilano University overall;
- support and encourage students in exploring multiple academic interests in their first year;
● open up opportunities for students and allow them to discover their interests and possible career paths; and
● attract students who wouldn't otherwise consider Capilano University as a destination University.

Elements of the CYE

The Cap Year has the potential to provide students with

● a purposeful and engaging full-time learning experience over two semesters;
● opportunities for personal and academic growth through experiential and exploratory learning
● progressive, uniquely ‘Capilano’ programming;
● accessible, interdisciplinary theme-based curriculum taught by dynamic teams of instructors;
● a supportive and cohesive cohort environment that facilitates student success;
● consistent and individualized student support through faculty-to-student and peer mentor-student advising teams;
● opportunities to develop the critical thinking, writing, and reading skills essential for post-secondary success;
● transferable university credits (six to twelve) for further post-secondary studies; and
● opportunities for campus and community connection and engagement.

CYE Program Objectives

The CYE program objectives are aligned with the institution’s strategic and operational plans published in 2014:

**Exposure to interdisciplinary curriculum** (pg. 12 of Strategic Plan; pg. 16 of Academic Plan relating to commitment to integrative and trans-disciplinary experience.)

1. **Introduction to foundational capabilities and transferable skills** (pg. 4 of Strategic Plan.)
   Supported by cross faculty resources as well as the library, writing and math centres, advising, counselling and learning specialist services.
   ○ Self-directed learning, awareness, and responsibility; up-to-date information gathering and research skills; communication skills; quantitative reasoning ability; group and social interaction skills; creative, critical and analytical reasoning skills; community/global consciousness and responsiveness.
2. **Participation in experiential learning** (pg. 12 of Strategic Plan) including service and community projects (pg. 16 of Strategic Plan and pg. 21 of Academic Plan). Resources within each faculty could be leveraged to facilitate this learning e.g. links to industry and government partners, local Chambers of Commerce, and not-for-profit entities.

3. **Development of personal and social responsibility** (pg. 9 of Academic Plan in regard to Whole-Person education). Student use of the writing and math centres, advisory, counseling and learning specialist services would be encouraged.
   - Civic knowledge and engagement at local and global levels; ethical reasoning and action; foundations and skills for lifelong learning.


5. **Exploration and demonstration of intercultural understandings** (Aboriginal pg. 12 Strategic Plan and 27 of Academic Plan, international pg. 29 of Academic Plan, socio-economic etc.). Incorporating the Centre for International Experience, Study Abroad, and the Kexwusm-ayakn Student First Nations Centre

6. **Development of stewardship/sustainability** (refer to Academic Plan pgs. 10-11)
   The integration of the institution’s own sustainability initiatives as well as EarthWorks will support this outcome.

In addition to the program objectives listed above, it is intended that the students also experience the following **tangible personal outcomes**:

- the ability to access a clear educational pathway and career goals by identifying, cultivating, and pursuing passions;
- a possession of greater preparatory skills to more effectively transition into a university setting and achieve academic success;
- a connection to our campus and its multiple faculties as well as extended stakeholder groups and communities; and
- the development of curiosity, engagement, and self-motivation to support the ongoing pursuit of a purpose-filled and balanced life.
CYE Student Learning Outcomes

Successful students will be able to

- identify their own values, passions and abilities;
- develop the awareness and skills necessary for personal, academic, and future career success;
- recognize and apply the elements of effective and clear communication;
- develop and apply critical thinking, critical reading, and critical writing skills;
- collaborate, consult, and interact confidently and effectively with others;
- explore diverse perspectives to develop or modify their points of view;
- gain a deeper appreciation for both cultural and environmental interconnectedness of the world;
- increase their understanding of their relationship, both as consumers and citizens, to a number of local and global issues; and
- apply interdisciplinary concepts, theories, and practices as well as critical thinking, imagination, and judgment to an individual portfolio and/or group Capstone project based on the CYE designated theme.

CYE Framework

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Required Components</th>
<th>Description/ideas</th>
<th>Program Objectives</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Theme</strong></td>
<td>Each cohort will have an educational theme which is woven throughout the entire curriculum.</td>
<td>1,2,3,4,5,6</td>
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<tr>
<td>* See next section</td>
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</tbody>
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| **Orientation**     | Provides a week of intensive faculty, staff, peer leaders, and new student involvement  
                        ● Success oriented  
                        ● Gives students sense of place  
                        ● Build relationships  
                        ● Instills the feeling of “I made the right decision”  
                        ● Allows for an outdoor experience and community service project  
                        ● Connects students to First Nations Community  
                        ● Delivered in the final week of August | 1,3,5,6            |
| Seminars | • Intended to help students find and develop a voice through writing, speaking, analytical reading, critical thinking, and discussion  
• 1st year university writing credit  
• Academic success skills  
• Explorations of an idea, topic or event  
• Curriculum based  
• Linked to theme  
• Credit based | 1,2,4 |
|---|---|
| Forums | • Two types: interdisciplinary speakers and advising and success strategies  
• Student participation in university lecture series with internal and external experts who lecture on key topics  
• Alumni presenting on their program experience  
• Non-credit based but assignments in courses will be linked to forum content | 1,4, 5 |
| Advising | • Student Support Success Teams comprised of academic advisors, faculty, peer mentors  
• International student “buddies”  
• Current students serving as field trip co-leaders  
• Possible full time 1st year advisor support | 2,4 |
| Core courses | • Transferable across institutions | 1,2 |
| Theme Based Directed Study | • Interdisciplinary  
• Community Service Learning | 1,2,3,6 |
| Capstone project | • Portfolio creation  
• Capstone Project | 1,2,3,4,5 |

CYE Academic Year Sketch

THEME
ORIENTATION
Week long experiential learning
Building a sense of place and integration of the cohort

SEMINARS
#1  #2  #3
9 credits
Theme based
- writing intensive, reading skills, and critical thinking
e.g.: ENG 100, USSD110, BADM106, WRTG 100, USSD 100, LBST 100

FORUMS
#1 INTERDISCIPLINARY SPEAKERS
- immersion into campus life
- exposure to ideas and events on campus
- attend classes in various faculties
#2 ADVISING SUCCESS STRATEGIES
- in-class instruction and individual consultation

COURSES
9 credits
Student’s choice of playlist based on theme related courses offered throughout the campus (existing courses)

THEME BASED DIRECTED STUDY
#1 INTERDISCIPLINARY / SERVICE LEARNING
3 credits
- experiential learning includes community outreach and theme based excursions

#2 CAPSTONE
3 credits
- portfolio creation and a class Capstone project
Possible CYE Program Themes

- Transformation
- Rise of Asia
- Democracy
- Democracy and Diversity
- Outside/Immigrant Societies
- Migration and Displacement
- Creativity and Culture
- Sustainability
- Food
- Catastrophe and Renewal
- People, Technology, and Society
- Passion
- Diversity and Inclusion
- Heart versus Head
- Ideas and Innovation
- Beauty and Diversity
- Social Progress
- Bias
- Innovation and Awesomeness

CYE Next Steps & Implementation

August 2015

- Consult with campus and external community for feedback
- Deliver presentation forums during August PD

Fall 2015

- Begin program proposal approval process. The CYE committee could put out a call for proposals with the mandatory components and criteria for assessment.
- Proposals due by November 15th, 2015
- Decision on pilot by December 15th, 2015

Spring 2016

- Development of pilot
Fall 2016

- Program and course approvals completed

Spring 2017

- Marketing of the first CYE pilot for fall 2017
- Admissions open

Fall 2017

- Cohort begins academic year with an Orientation at the end of August with faculty and advising team.
- The program continues with two semesters paralleling the Academic Year calendar.
- Pilot evaluation committee implemented.

Challenges

- Where does this program live?
- As the courses may be cross-faculty, how will the approval process work from a departmental level upwards?
- Marketing and advertising - do we have the resources to do this effectively as a “for profit” program?
References


