

Assessment Cycle AC 2019-2020

Louisiana Scholars' College

College: Arts and Sciences

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Northwestern Mission. Northwestern State University is a responsive, student-oriented institution that is committed to the creation, dissemination, and acquisition of knowledge through teaching, research, and service. The University maintains as its highest priority excellence in teaching in graduate and undergraduate programs. Northwestern State University prepares its Students to become productive members of society and promotes economic development and improvements in the quality of life of the citizens in its region.

College of Arts and Sciences' Mission. College of Arts and Sciences' Mission. The College of Arts & Sciences, the largest college at Northwestern State University, is a diverse community of scholars, teachers, and students, working collaboratively to acquire, create, and disseminate knowledge through transformational, high-impact experiential learning practices, research, and service. The College strives to produce graduates who are productive members of society equipped with the capability to promote economic and social development and improve the overall quality of life in the region. The College provides an unequalled undergraduate education in the social and behavioral sciences, English, communication, journalism, media arts, biological and physical sciences, and the creative and performing arts, and at the graduate level in the creative and performing arts, English, TESOL, and Homeland Security. Uniquely, the College houses the Louisiana Scholars' College (the State's designated Honors College), the Louisiana Folklife Center, and the Creole Center, demonstrating its commitment to community service, research, and preservation of Louisiana's precious resources.

Louisiana Scholars' College Mission Statement: The College's mission is to provide a quality, customized undergraduate education firmly grounded in the liberal arts and sciences to a diverse population of well-qualified, highly motivated students by rethinking the traditional liberal arts curriculum and developing innovative approaches to honors education.

Louisiana Scholars' College Purpose: As an academic unit, the Louisiana Scholars' College is responsible for:

- administering, delivering, and enhancing courses for the honors core curriculum (the Common Curriculum), which replaces the University Core for students in the College.
- administering, setting standards, delivering, and enhancing courses for the Minor in Liberal Arts and the individualized Major in Liberal Arts and its honors concentrations: Classical Studies; Fine and Performing Arts; Foreign Languages;

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Humanities and Social Thought; Philosophy, Politics, and Economics; and Scientific Inquiry.

- collaborating with other departments to offer jointly honors versions of 26 traditional majors, each to include the Common Curriculum, a senior thesis, and honors level major courses, as appropriate, in addition to the required courses in each major.
- mentoring students individually in the production of the senior thesis.
- advising all honors students on curricular choices to prepare them for advanced study or employment.

Students completing a concentration in the Major in Liberal Arts use a combination of courses offered in the Scholars' College and approved courses offered in other departments or through study abroad.

Due to the variety of degree options in the College and the flexibility of the Major in Liberal Arts, sample sizes are too small for a meaningful evaluation of Student Learning Outcomes related to specific content imparted in any of these majors. (SLOs related to content in specific joint majors are evaluated in the home departments.) The following assessment evaluates skills-based student learning outcomes common to the Major in Liberal Arts and all of the joint majors administered by the College as demonstrated in courses offered in the College.

Methodology: The assessment process includes:

1. evaluation of components of single assignments in courses required of all students in the College;
2. evaluation of the comprehensive final exam in skills-based courses satisfying options in the Common Curriculum;
3. summative evaluation of the Senior Thesis defense;
4. summative evaluation of the Archival Senior Thesis.

Student Learning Outcomes:

SLO 1. Demonstrate effective oral communication skills.

Through first semester presentation and Thesis Defense.

Measure 1.1. (Direct–Skill/Ability–oral communication)

Students make oral presentations of their term papers in SCRT 181w and the 2000-level co-classes, which are assessed using the AACU *Oral Communication* rubric. The target is for a minimum of 75% of students to earn an average rating of 3 or higher. AC 2018-2019 is the first year we have assessed this class.

Finding: Target not met.

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Analysis: In AC 2018-2019 the target was not met; less than 75% of students in SCRT 181W and the 2000-level co-courses earned an average rating of 3 or higher on the 4-point AACU *Oral Communication* rubric. The assessment covered 34 students. Based on the rubric, 75% or more of students scored a 3 or 4 on the subscales *Organization* (76.5%) and *Central Message* (79.4%). However, overall, only 50.0% averaged a 3 or above over the 5 subscales. The worst performance was on the *Supporting Materials* and *Language* subscales, with only 64.7% earning a 3 or 4 for their presentation.

subscale	SCRT 181W		S***2000		p
	M	SD	M	SD	
Organization	2.50	0.756	3.15	0.732	0.027*
Language	2.25	0.463	3.00	0.693	0.001
Delivery	2.38	0.518	3.08	0.796	0.005
Support	2.13	0.835	3.04	0.871	0.010*
Central Message	2.25	0.463	3.35	0.562	< .001

*not significant (1-tailed t-test)

In AC 2018-2019, students enrolled in the 2000 level course ($N = 26$) performed significantly better than those enrolled in SCRT 181W ($N = 8$) on three of the five subscales (one-tailed independent samples *t*-test with the Bonferroni correction, i.e., $p < .01$).

Based on the analysis of the 2018-2019 results, the faculty made the following changes to drive the cycle of improvement. A presentation rubric identifying 18 components of the oral presentation with examples of different levels of performance was distributed via Moodle. In addition, each instructor gave an example presentation to their class.

As a result of these changes, in 2019-2020 the target was for a minimum of 75% of students in SCRT 181W and the 2000-level co-courses to earn an average rating of 3 or higher on the 4-point AACU *Oral Communication* rubric. The assessment covered 38 students. Based on the rubric, 75% or more of students scored a 3 or 4 on all subscales: *Organization* (84.2%), *Language* (78.9%), *Delivery* (76.3%), *Supporting Materials* (86.8%), and *Central Message* (84.2%). However, overall, only 71.1% averaged a 3 or above over the 5 subscales, indicating that the lower scores were clustered within a few individuals rather than spread throughout the class. This did not differ significantly from the 2018-2019 proportion meeting the target (Chi² test of Independence, $p = .067$).

subscale	SCRT 181W		S***2000		p
	M	SD	M	SD	
Organization	3.30	0.949	3.34	0.667	0.453*
Language	3.10	0.876	3.21	0.738	0.359*
Delivery	2.85	1.132	3.05	0.671	0.301*
Support	3.15	1.001	3.38	0.675	0.261*
Central Message	3.20	1.033	3.41	0.708	0.281*

*not significant (1-tailed t-test)

In AC 2019-2020, students enrolled in SCRT 181W ($N = 10$) performed comparably to those enrolled in the 2000 level course ($N = 28$) on all of the subscales (one-tailed independent samples *t*-test with Bonferroni correction, i.e., $p < .01$). The changes appear to have improved the

performance of the less experienced students across all subscales.

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Decision: In 2019-2020 the target was met. Based on the analysis of these results in AC 2020-2021, to further improve presentations the faculty will continue the steps taken last year. In addition, a video on creating effective Powerpoint slideshows (TED talk: “How to Avoid Death by Powerpoint”) will be distributed to the classes on Moodle. This change is specifically targeted at improving the student’s delivery of oral presentations.

As students move through the curriculum, this assessment will be paired with the Thesis Defense assessment to determine growth in oral communication skills.

Measure 1.2. (Direct–Skill/Ability–oral communication)

Students present oral defenses of their theses, which are assessed using the summative rubric for the department, modified in Spring 2017. The target is for a minimum of 75% of students enrolled in the second semester of thesis to progress to the point where they can defend their work and earn a rating of “Very Good” or higher.

Finding: Target not met.

Analysis: In AC 2018-19 the target was met. All students are rated for the summative quality of their thesis defenses: *unsatisfactory, satisfactory, good, very good, excellent, or superlative*. Each rating is based on specific levels of performance, with examples given in a departmental rubric. Each defense is rated by the first and second readers as well as the Director of the College. Fifteen members of the AC 2018-2019 cohort (83%) earned a rating of *Very Good* or higher, averaged over the three raters. One student did not complete the written document or defend it, and thus was rated *Unsatisfactory*. One student received two *Good* ratings and a *Satisfactory*; a second received two *Good* ratings and a *Very Good*. This proportion was not significantly different from AC 2017-2018.

Based on analysis of the AC 2018-2019 data, and in an effort to continuously improve student learning and to ensure that students are completing the thesis defense with adequate preparation on the mechanics of oral presentations, in AC 2019-2020 thesis directors were required to offer to critique a run-through of the student’s presentation prior to the defense. This was intended to provide students with feedback on whether their presentations meet expectations while still maintaining the oral examination nature of the defense itself. These run-throughs were intended to allow faculty to determine whether additional instruction is needed in the future, and if so, what content needs to be reinforced.

As a result of these changes, in AC 2019-2020 the target was a minimum of 75% of students enrolled in the second semester of thesis to progress to the point where they can defend their work and earn a rating of “Very Good” or higher. Of the 21 students completing their theses in the spring semester, 18 (86%) scored 3.0 or higher for their defenses. However, an unusually large number of students (6) did not complete their projects. This reduced the proportion of students earning an “Very Good” or higher to 18 of 27 (66.7%). Unfortunately, the university’s closure for Covid-19 came in the crucial

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period just before thesis defenses began and some students found it difficult to manage the transition. In addition, students had to adjust to making presentations at a distance without formal instruction or practice.

Decision:

In AC 2019-2020 the target was a minimum of 75% of students enrolled in the second semester of thesis to progress to the point where they can defend their work and earn a rating of "Very Good" or higher. Based on the analysis of the 2019-2020 results, the faculty will provide further support by adding workshops on distance presentations in SLSC 4000 (Thesis Research Methods) in addition to individual coaching on presentation skills prior to the defense in AC 2020-2021. Special attention will also be given to students struggling to meet thesis deadlines in the spring semester.

These changes will improve the student's ability to complete work at a professional level in a timely manner and to communicate that work effectively to a generally educated audience.

SLO 2. Demonstrate effective written communication skills.

Through first semester term paper and Archival Thesis Submission

Measure 2.1 (Direct–Skill/Ability–written communication)

Students write 4,000 word term papers in SCRT 181w and the 2000-level co-courses, which are assessed using the AACU *Written Communication* rubric. The target is for a minimum of 75% of students to earn an average rating of 3 or higher.

Finding: Target not met.

Analysis: In AC 2018-2019 the target was not met. Based on a 4-point rubric, only 42.4% of students averaged a 3 or above over the 5 subscales. The best performance was on the *Context of and Purpose for Writing* subscale, where 21 of 33 students (63.6%) scored a 3 or 4. The worst performance was on the *Genre and Disciplinary Conventions* subscale, with only 48.5% earning a 3 or 4. Since the skillful use of textual evidence is essential to writing a scholarly research paper, this represents a serious deficiency in writing skills.

Based on the analysis of the AC 2018-2019 results, the faculty made the following changes in AC 2019-2020 to drive the cycle of improvement. Instructors met privately with each SCRT 181W student after the initial topic/introduction assignment for paper 1 to discuss means to improve the introductory passages of their papers and after the completed first assignment were corrected and returned, to discuss individual weaknesses in grammar, syntax, and mechanics. Instructors kept written notes from

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these meetings to document improvement or failure to improve on these points in subsequent assignments.

As a result of these changes, the target for AC 2019-2020 was for 75% of students to score 3 or higher on each individual subscale and on the average of the five subscales. The best performance was again on the *Context of and Purpose for Writing* subscale, where 32 of 39 students (82.1%) scored a 3 or 4. Students also met the target on the *Sources and Evidence* subscale (76.9% scored 3 or higher), an improvement over last year. The lowest scores on an individual subscale occurred on *Control of Syntax and Mechanics*, where only 26 of 39 students (66.7%) scored 3 or higher. The weakest area from last year, *Genre and Disciplinary Conventions*, improved significantly from 48.5% to 71.8% (Chi² Test of Independence, $p = .043$). Overall, 22 of 39 students (56.4%) had an average score of 3 or more across the 5 subscales, indicating that the lower scores were clustered in students with more than one weakness. These course changes had a direct impact on the student's ability to write in a style appropriate for their discipline.

Decision: In AC 2019-2020 the target was for 75% of students to score 3 or higher on each individual subscale and on the average of the five subscales. Based on the analysis of the AC 2019-2020 results, the faculty will widen their focus and add a compilation of the most common syntax and usage errors in the previous and current course to guide workshop discussion and exercises. These changes will improve the student's ability to write more effectively for an audience in their discipline.

Measure 2.2 (Direct–Skill/Ability–written communication)

Students will submit the archival copies of their written theses which will also be assessed using an established rubric. The target is for a minimum of 70% of students to earn a rating of "Excellent" or higher.

Finding: Target not met.

Analysis: In AC 2018-2019 the target was not met. Fewer than 70% of students earned a rating of "Excellent" or higher on the archival thesis; only 10 of 18 (55.6%) met this standard. (Fifteen of 18 (83.3%) ranked "Very Good" or better, which was not significantly different from AC 2017-2018.)

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Rating of Archival Copy 2019-2020			
1 st Reader	2nd Reader		
Superlative	Superlative	Very Good	Superlative
Superlative	Superlative	Very Good	Excellent
Superlative	Excellent	Very Good	Excellent
Excellent	Superlative	Excellent	Good
Excellent	Excellent	Very Good	Very Good
Excellent	Excellent	Very Good	Very Good
Excellent	Excellent	Very Good	Very Good
Excellent	Excellent	Good	Good
Excellent	Excellent	Good	Good
Excellent	Excellent	Good	Satisfactory
Excellent			

Based on the analysis of AC 2018-2019 results the faculty made the following changes in AC 2019-2020. In addition to stressing time management and meeting deadlines in the thesis methods course, submission deadlines were moved earlier in the semester for spring 2020.

As a result of these changes, in AC 2019-2020 the target remained for a minimum of 70% of students to earn a summative rating of "Excellent" or higher on

the archival thesis; 12 of 21 completed theses (57.1%) reached this standard, essentially the same as last year. Results may have been affected by the university's closure for Covid-19, which came in the crucial period just before thesis defenses began, making collaboration with the thesis director, second reader, other faculty, and other student researchers more difficult. In addition, in order to maintain flexibility in helping students meet graduation requirements, the new deadlines were not strictly enforced. Nevertheless, students did improve in their ability to work independently.

Decision: In AC 2019-2020 the target was for 70% of graduating seniors to earn a summative rating of at least "Excellent" on their thesis projects. Unfortunately, our planned course changes were interrupted by moving instruction to online-only delivery. Based on the analysis of the AC 2019-2020 results, the faculty will introduce more incremental time deadlines for the AC 2020-2021 cohort to drive the cycle of improvement. Time management problems are already being addressed with this cohort. In addition to stressing time management and meeting deadlines in the thesis methods course, submission deadlines will be moved earlier in the semester for spring 2021.

SLO 3. Question, analyze, evaluate, and reconcile conflicting perspectives.

Course Map: Tied to course syllabus below.

SCTT 1820: Texts and Traditions II: The Shaping of Western Thought

Measure: 3.1. (Direct – knowledge)

The final exam in *Texts and Traditions II: The Shaping of Western Thought* (SCTT 1820) includes an essay relating the perspectives of one or more major figures from the course to modern perspectives. The target is that 75% of students will earn an average of a B or better on this final exam essay.

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Finding: Target met.

Analysis: In AC 2018-2019 the target was met. The assessment was based solely on the grade on the essay question directly related to “different perspectives.” Only two instructors reported data on the performance of their students on the targeted passage in the final exam. All students met the benchmark. With the exception of two students who stopped attending and thus failed the course, the remaining 25 students earned a course grade of “A.”

Based on the analysis of the AC 2018-2019 results, the uniformity of scores on this measure made it difficult to identify direction for improvement. However, instruction was modified for AC 2019-2020 to guide students towards making this type of comparison by the end of the semester and discussion sessions were linked more strongly to the theme of the course. The faculty chose to repeat the assessment with a similar essay question.

As a result of these changes, in AC 2019-2020 the target was that 75% of students will earn an average of a B or better on this final exam essay; 30 of 30 students (100%) met this standard, with 53% rating 10/10, 27% rating 9/10, and 20% rating 8/10.

Decision: In AC 2019-2020 the target was that 75% of students will earn an average of a B or better on this final exam essay. Based on the analysis of the 2019-2020 results, the faculty will have students define one concept—e.g., duty, virtue or justice—fundamental to the work of three major figures active in the Classical world from the time of Sumer to the collapse of the Roman Empire. Throughout the indicated courses, students will read and discuss the work of these figures, studying the importance of these concepts to their societies’ understanding of what it means to be “good.” The faculty will change the assessment essay to comparing and contrasting both the ancient and the contemporary U.S. perspectives on the concept, explaining how we have maintained, modified or rejected the earlier perspectives. The essay will be evaluated via a four-point rubric with multiple items to better delineate the aspects of the desired essay content that are the strongest and weakest. The target is to have 80% of students average at least a 3 on the rubric total.

SLO 4. Demonstrate quantitative and problem-solving skills.

Course Map: Tied to course syllabi below.

Applied Calculus 1 (SMAT 2000) and Applied Statistics (SSTA 3810-01N)

Measure 4.1. (Direct – skill/ability)

In the core mathematics course Applied Statistics (SSTA 3810-01N), 75% of students will earn a B or better on a comprehensive assessment of their knowledge and skills. The course final is a comprehensive evaluation of basic descriptive statistics,

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fundamental hypothesis testing, and advanced topics; analyses are completed in Excel. Students choose and perform the appropriate analyses and interpret their results in the context of the problems.

Finding: Target met.

Analysis: In AC 2018-2019, the target was met; 79% earned a B or better on the final. Because the scores were so high on the AC 2017-2018 final, the AC 2018-2019 final was reconfigured to include one additional problem on an advanced topic, reducing the points available for elementary topics and possibly lowering the scores somewhat.

SSTA 3810 Final Exam 2019-2020		
score	freq	%
< 140	1	6%
140-149	1	6%
150-159	0	0%
160-169	5	31%
170-179	3	19%
180-189	2	13%
190-200	4	25%
total	16	

Based on the analysis of AC 2018-2019 results, the faculty added 2 WebAssign homework assignments and expanded existing assignments to cover more basic topics to further improve student performance. In addition, problems on the final assessment were designed to be more difficult by making the correct technique or the final conclusion less obvious.

As a result of these changes, in AC 2019-2020 the target remained for 75% of students to earn a score of 80% or better on the comprehensive final exam; 14 of 16 students (87.5%) scored 80% or better on the final. The two students who performed below the standard

failed to master two statistical tests and were unable to complete those problems. In general, these changes resulted in a stronger performance on fundamental concepts, making it more likely that students will be able to apply these techniques correctly in future projects.

Decision: In AC 2019-2020 the target was for 75% of students to earn a score of 80% or better on the comprehensive final exam. Based on the analysis of the AC 2019-2020 results, the faculty will implement the following changes in AC 2020-2021 to drive the cycle of improvement. Updated applied statistical examples from a variety of field represented in the Scholars' College will be designed to further emphasize subtle distinctions between techniques and improve performance on routine calculations. In addition, video Powerpoint presentations will be developed to support students on problematic techniques or Excel functions that they may find difficult to master based on a one-time lecture. These changes will improve the student's sophistication in dealing with novel hypothesis testing scenarios.

Measure 4.2. (Direct – skill/ability)

In the core mathematics courses Applied Calculus 1 (SMAT 2000) and Applied Calculus 2 (SMAT 2010), 75% of students will earn a B or better on a comprehensive assessment of their knowledge and skills.

Finding: Target not met (SMAT 2000)/Target met (SMAT 2010).

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Analysis: In AC 2018-2019 the target was not met in SMAT 2000 and SMAT 2010 was not assessed due to low enrollment. The LSC quantitative core changes, as well as SMAT 2010, were approved at the Spring 2018 CRC meeting and appeared in the 2018-19 General Catalog. Freshman science students were advised to take the Applied Calculus sequence beginning in Fall 2018. Fall 2018 was the first time more than four students had enrolled in SMAT 2000.

In AC 2018-2019, the target was for 75% of students in SMAT 2000 to earn a B or better on the comprehensive final. Eight of 17 students completing the course (47.1%) scored 80% or higher on the comprehensive final exam. This was comparable to the performance in SMAT 1820 in AC 2017-2018. Of the nine students who did not meet the target, seven (78%) failed to submit one or more homework assignments and six (67%) did not submit one or more sample exams. Two students failed to submit three of the four sample exams. Students with the five lowest exam scores had four or more unexcused absences. Only 3 students enrolled in SMAT 2010, so the course was not assessed in 2018-2019.

Based on the analysis of 2018-2019 results, the faculty made the following changes in AC 2019-2020. An additional four Webassign homework sets were added to SMAT 2000, for a total of 20. Due dates were set for the evening following a class so students could ask questions about specific problems if they were having difficulties; since this limited the time students had available to complete the assignment after asking questions, it was more likely that at least some individuals came to class having attempted the problems. Previous exams were used as sample exams.

As a result of these changes, in 2019-2020 the target was for 75% of students in SMAT 2000 to earn a B or better on the comprehensive final. Six of 15 (40%) met this standard, a result comparable to 2018-2019. However, only 2 of 15 (13%) scored below 150, compared to 8 of 17 (47%) in 2018-2019, a significant improvement (Chi² Test of Independence, $p = .040$). Based on the improved performance of students outside the A/B range, the course changes had a direct impact on the student's ability to retain and distinguish between various concepts by the end of the course, resulting in better problem-solving.

In AC 2019-2020, 8 of 9 SMAT 2010 students scored above 80% on the final; the remaining student scored 79.5%. This course was affected by the transition to online instruction Spring 2010. Anecdotally, students expressed a preference for face-to-face interactive lecture presentation and took advantage of recordings of the class sessions to review concepts they had difficulty with.

Decision: In AC 2019-2020 the target was for 75% of students in SMAT 2000 and SMAT 2010 to earn a B or better on the comprehensive final. Based on the analysis of the 2019-2020 results, the faculty will implement the following changes in 2020-2021 to drive the cycle of improvement. In both courses, brief video Powerpoints will be developed to cover problematic topics where students may need more than a single

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lecture to retain the material. The goal is to produce at least four per course. In SMAT 2010, additional supplemental materials will be produced covering topics not available in the textbook. These changes will improve the student's ability to apply concepts correctly in novel situations, making the course more effective and pushing the cycle of improvement forward.

SLO 5. Identify connections within and between the sciences, mathematics, humanities, and the arts.

Course Map: Tied to course syllabus below.

SCTT 2820 – Texts and Traditions IV
SLSC 4000 – Thesis Research Methods

Measure 5.1. (Direct – Knowledge)

In SCTT 2820 (Texts and Traditions IV), students will make connections within and between the sciences, mathematics, humanities, and the arts in a summative essay assignment, using works from throughout all four courses in the Texts and Traditions sequence (required of all students). The target is that 75% of students will earn an average score of 3.0 or better, using the AACU Values rubric for *Inquiry and Analysis*.

Finding: Target not met.

Analysis: In AC 2018-2019 the target was not met. Examining each rubric item individually, between 40% and 50% of students earned at least a 3. The worst performance was on *Topic Selection*, with 45% of students earning a score of 1 (*Identifies a topic that is far too general and wide-ranging as to be manageable and doable*). The highest average score occurred on *Conclusions*, where four students earned a 4 (*States a conclusion that is a logical extrapolation from the inquiry findings*) and six earned a score of 3 (*States a conclusion focused solely on the inquiry findings. The conclusion arises specifically from and responds specifically to the inquiry findings.*)

Based on the analysis of 2018-2019 results, the faculty made the following changes in AC 2019-2020. Greater emphasis was placed on student presentations with the aim of promoting critical thinking and communication skills. More stress was placed for example on the location, analysis, and effective juxtaposition of appropriate secondary sources.

As a result of these changes, in 2019-2020 the target was for 75% of students to earn an average score of 3.0 or better, using the AACU Values rubric for *Inquiry and Analysis*. Examining each rubric item individually, at least 60% earned a 3 or better on all six items. The best performance was on *Limitations and Implications*, with 28% scoring a 4 and 52% scoring a 3. Students also met the target on the rubric item *Design Process* (76% scored 3 or above). The worst performance was on *Existing Knowledge, Research, or Views*, with 36% earning a 4 and 24% earning a 3.

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Decision: Although SLO 5 is emphasized in almost every lecture in the Texts and Traditions sequence, students may need additional guidance on how to make these connections for themselves. Clearer instructions will be given in writing for the final essay in terms of specific expectations for an A level performance, to help students more clearly articulate their research questions and produce works of appropriate (and typically, narrower) scope.

Measure 5.2. (Direct – Knowledge)

Through the final presentation and proposal, students will be assessed on their ability to formulate connections as stated in the SLO.

75% of students will earn an average of a B or better on the presentation and final proposal.

Finding: Target met.

Analysis: In AC 2018-2019, the target was not met; only 13 of 28 students (46.4%) earned an average of a B or better on the proposal (18 points) and presentation (5 points); 2 did not submit a final proposal.

SLSC 4000/SBUS 4000 Presentation and Proposal		
score	#	freq.
< 50%	3	10.7%
50-59%	1	3.6%
60-69%	1	3.6%
70-79%	10	35.7%
80-89%	9	32.1%
90-100%	4	14.3%
total	28	

Based on the analysis of 2018-2019 results, the faculty made the following changes in AC 2019-2020. Greater emphasis was placed on interdisciplinary components of the thesis and the importance of placing the research in context. Although a reflection component was planned for the end of the term, this was interrupted due to moving the course online.

As a result of these changes, in 2019-2020 the target was for 75% of students to earn an average of 80% or better on the final proposal and presentation. Two students failed to submit any work. Of the remaining 17 students, 14 (82%) earned an average of a B or better on the proposal (18 points) and presentation (5 points).

Decision: Measure 5.2 is too broad. In AC 2020-21, a reflection component on the interconnectedness of scholarship across the disciplines will be added to SLSC/SBUS 4000 to further drive improvement in student learning. and provide a better measure of this SLO. The QEP emphasizes the importance of reflection for enhancing both the recognition of learning and depth of learning by students in experiential projects. This reflection will be assessed using the AACU Values rubric for *Inquiry and Analysis*, which will allow us to look for improvement between the sophomore (SCTT 2820) and junior years.

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Comprehensive summary of key evidence of improvement based on analysis of results:

1. For SLO1 and SLO2, the performance of first year students with less writing and presentation experience (SCRT 181W) increased to the same level as those entering the College with credit for ENGL 1020.
2. For SLO1 and SLO2, the performance of seniors on their thesis defense and archival documents improved for those completing their projects.
3. For SLO3, the performance of students on the essay assessment improved, although the current measure is not able to distinguish areas of relative weakness and targets for improvement.
4. For SLO 4, in SMAT 2000, students performing outside the target range (A/B) improved their scores significantly compared to AC 2018-2019. The first assessment of SMAT 2010 met the target.
5. For SLO5, in SCTT 2820 students improved in all components of inquiry and analysis, although they did not meet the target. In SLSC 4000/SBUS 4000, students improved in making connections in their thesis proposals, both written and oral.
6. The targets were met for SLO3, one measure of SLO1, one measure of SLO4, and one measure of SLO5. To help us improve, targets were adjusted to be more aspirational or measures were adjusted to be more inclusive or more focused for AC 2019-2020. All but SLO3 now has two measures and data is being collected to allow for longitudinal analysis.

Curricular and instructional changes in AC 2019-2020

- Individual writing instruction was conducted in each section of SCRT 181W. Increased uniformity in feedback and intervention in SCRT 181W was also implemented.
- Thesis students were given additional coaching on their presentations (which were given at a distance, via conferencing technology).
- The new configuration of SCTT 1810 and 1820 was taught for the second time and adjustments made. In particular, discussion sessions were linked more strongly to the course themes.
- Based on faculty and student feedback, SOR 1010 (Orientation) was reinstated as a stand-alone course in fall 2019.

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- The new configuration of SCTT 2810 and 2820 was taught for the first time in AC 2019-2020. An emphasis was placed on critical thinking, communication skills, and the appropriate use of secondary sources.
- In the quantitative courses (SSTA 3810, SMAT 2000, and SMAT 2010), additional courseware-based homework assignments were added to provide students with more practice problems at more regular intervals. The timing of assignment submission was altered to provide more time for questions.
- New content on research planning, time management, and asynchronous presentation was added to SLSC/SBUS 4000.

Plan of action moving forward

- Emphasis on oral communication will be increased in SCRT 181W/S*** 2000.
- Emphasis on virtual presentations will be added to SLSC 4000/SBUS 4000.
- Special attention will be given to thesis students struggling to meet deadlines in the spring semester.
- Writing instruction in SCRT 181W/S*** 2000 will include more emphasis on syntax and usage errors common to the subject matter of the course.
- In SCTT 1820, students will define one concept to focus on when reading and discussing the works of three major figures and connect these concepts to the associated societies' understanding of what it means to be "good."
- In SSTA 3810, SMAT 2000, and SMAT 2010, brief Powerpoint videos will be produced covering difficult topics. In addition, in SSTA 3810, additional homework problems leading to better understanding of subtle distinctions in problem types will be developed.
- A reflection component will be added to SLSC 4000/SBUS 4000.
- Courses taught for the first time (or to a larger audience for the first time) will be revised for AC 2020-2021.
- Continued refinements to the QEP assessments and courses will affect SLO 1, 2, and 5.
- Pairing of data from first year courses to senior courses will be possible in AC 2020-2021.