**Capstone Programs Annual Report**

**FY 2016-2017**

The following are reflections on the goals established last year for the Capstone Program:

**Goal 1: Continue expanding the Capstone Program’s direct contact with students across disciplines.**

One of our challenges for the year was to reach out again to advisors, faculty and students to support existing or develop new capstone courses and projects. To this end, we completed an inventory of current required capstone courses and projects across campus. This inventory is available on our website at the following link: <http://capstone.ugs.utah.edu/undergraduate-capstone-programs/current_capstone_initiatives_new.php> In order to expand our reach we met with department chairs and in some cases their designees in hopes of developing new relationships with underserved colleges and departments.

One notable conversation about expanding our program was held with Cathleen Zick and Lynne Shaffer. After the launch of our Capstone Internship program in 2015, they recognized an increased need to expand paid internship opportunities for students in CSBS. As one of the underserved colleges in delivering capstone experiences to their students we agreed to explore new funding opportunities to support paid internships for their students, especially majors in Sociology, Psychology, Gender Studies, Anthropology and Geography. We are still awaiting a response from the R. Harold Burton Foundation on our proposal to expand funding for capstone internships.

Our effort to develop outreach tools via our website has been marginally successful. It appears from meetings with students and faculty that students are first hearing about capstone opportunities such as the Ivory Homes Initiative from their instructors and only then are accessing our website. We have updated the website and application forms in response to student comments. It appears that as a first line of contact, experience with instructors will remain the most effective form of outreach.

This year we created a high-quality video highlighting the work of three capstone students. This video resides on our website and was featured as the lead video on the U’s marketing website for two weeks. Importantly, the video was provided to all instructors conducting freshman orientation sessions this spring. Our expectation was that this well-produced and inspiring video would help set students sights on one day engaging in a capstone project whether required by their department or not.

This year saw a nearly threefold increase in students receiving funding from the Ivory Homes Capstone Initiative Fund. In 2015-2016, 39 students received funds from that program, and this year we had **95 students receiving support from the IHCIF**. A complete inventory of the year’s recipients, including their instructors, departments and other relevant information is attached herewith.

Students we worked with during this fiscal year have self-identified as having majors within the following departments:

* Psychology
* Biology
* Nursing
* Material Science Engineering
* Civil Engineering
* Biomedical Engineering
* Mechanical Engineering
* Urban Ecology
* Business
* Sociology
* Modern Dance
* Health Promotion and Education
* Exercise Science
* Anthropology
* Kinesiology
* Film and Media Arts
* Political Science
* Speech and Hearing
* Environmental and Sustainability Studies
* English

**Goal 2: Develop assessment tools for capstone projects**

Working with Mark St. Andre we have developed the following assessment plan.

***Goal of Capstone Programs:***

Help the University of Utah fulfill its pledge to students to provide them with, among other things, deeply engaged learning experiences. This is done by developing and promoting capstone projects (see definition below) in collaboration with university and community partners.

***Description*:**

Capstone courses and projects that integrate coursework, knowledge, skills, and experiential learning for the purpose of enabling students to demonstrate their synthesis of knowledge in real-world applications.

***Program Objectives***

1. Provide students with or connect them to opportunities to apply their accumulated learning to a meaningful capstone project.
2. Provide students with the tools and opportunities to assess their capstone experiences in order to understand how they could improve upon their project.
3. Help students position themselves for emerging opportunities in their fields.

**Evidence to Inform the Program Objectives**

Objective 1 is accomplished by securing program funding from donors to support student capstone projects when needed, and working with departments at the University of Utah to develop new or promote already existing capstone courses, experiences, and projects. Examples of those can be found here: http://capstone.ugs.utah.edu/current-projects/index.php

Objective 2 is accomplished through projects funded by community donors when needed. A required part of these projects is the development of a video summary of the work that was done, and reflection on what could have been done to improve it.

Objective 3 is examined by following up with students after they graduate to ask them how have them reflect on working in a field related to the capstone project or how their deeply engaged capstone experience has may have otherwise informed their sense of competency.

**Assessment Report**

A report summarizing the findings generated by the evidence listed above will be submitted each year to the Associate Vice President of Academic Affairs and Undergraduate Studies. This report will include a reflection on how well the objectives were met and what might be adjusted about the programs in order to get us closer to meeting our goal.

**Goal 3:** **Create a roadmap to develop Capstone courses for *all* undergraduate departments.**

Though Portland State University has developed a capstone program that requires a capstone course for all departments and undergraduate majors, we have decided that this is outside the scope of our Capstone Program. After looking at PSU’s model to identify ways we might adapt their institutional philosophy and methodology in undergraduate studies at the U, this goal was removed from our plan for 2016-2017.

**Goal 4:** **Create an annual Capstone Initiative Prize or Prizes**

This goal was not implemented in 2016-2017.

**Goal 5: Implement an annual Capstone Fair**

An exciting new element in our program this year is the establishment of our virtual capstone fair. A clear series of instructions was developed to assist students in creating their videos, including access to free software to aid them in creating and editing their videos. Motivated through an understanding that one of the currencies of our time are short YouTube videos, we have opted for these rather than creating poster sessions that have a half-life of a few hours. Our virtual capstone fair resides both on our website and as a YouTube channel. Our intern is still uploading videos from this year, but the channel can be seen here: <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCP0nY_dYajW6574gr4alVmA>

**Goal 6: Increase the number of collaborative capstone projects**

Collaborative capstone projects have only developed organically this year. While our website portal provides an avenue for students to develop these projects, we have not been effective in cultivating them. The collaborations we have seen this year were among engineering students and Block U students from Arts and Advocacy and Medical Humanities.

**Goals for FY 2017-2018**

After three years of start-up for the Capstone Program we can see strengths and weaknesses. Based upon our experience the following goals are in place for the coming year:

**Goal 1: Expand outreach**

Lessons learned over the past three year indicate the a multi-pronged approach to market capstone programs is vital. While we will continue reaching out to advisors and instructors, we need to plant the seeds of the *Be Radicle* much earlier. To that end we will be working more closely with the Freshman Orientation program to deliver inspiring examples of deeply engaged capstone experiences during orientation sessions. With the fine video created this past year as a tool, we will get it in front of incoming and current students early and often. Amy Bergerson and Kathryn Coquemont are prepared to join in this effort. A measure of success will be an increase in applications for IHCIF support over the previous year. Another measure will be assisting in the development of additional *required* capstone courses/projects within majors not yet noted in our inventory.

**Goal 2: Cultivate opportunities for collaborative, interdisciplinary capstone courses**

Listening to students and faculty requests for interdisciplinary courses challenges the Capstone Program to respond creatively. For example, we have an opportunity to create a pilot course with Dr. Cheryl Wright and her colleagues in a course that identifies intergenerational challenges of people on the autism spectrum and finds ways to assist the individuals, their families and the community in managing these complex dynamics. Challenges include employment, housing, financial independence, educational opportunities and discrimination, etc. Whether we move forward on this opportunity is still uncertain, but it exemplifies the kind of interdisciplinarity we’re seeking. While there has been a portal on our Capstone website for the past three years inviting collaborative capstone experiences, we have not been successful in reeling one in.

**Goal 3: Expand funding opportunities for Capstone Internships**

Demand for paid Capstone Internships has increased while funding for these internships has decreased. Our 2-1 matching requirement has been met with little resistance by both the public sector and the NGO community, opening the door for increased student opportunities. In the event that we don’t receive additional support from the Burton Foundation we will need to work quickly to identify a new source of funding. If possible, we may be able to divert a portion of new or unused IHCIF support for these internships with approval of the Ivory family.