

COMMON CURRICULUM ASSESSMENT ANNUAL REPORT 2015-2016

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I. COMMON CURRICULUM LEARNING OUTCOMES

Through the Common Curriculum, Union students will develop the breadth of knowledge and flexibility of mind needed to participate in meaningful conversations relevant to particular disciplines, the Academy, local society, or the global community. They will do so by achieving these learning outcomes across the breadth of Liberal Arts represented in the Common Curriculum requirements:

- A. **Communicate Critical and Analytical Thinking.** *Students will examine, evaluate, and apply problem-solving techniques to evidence, data, objects, artefacts, arguments, and theories according to the diverse analytical traditions of the Liberal Arts; students will communicate clearly and correctly the results of such analysis.* **Explanation:** this learning outcome emphasizes the need to learn and practice critical thinking in the breadth of disciplines and analytical traditions in the Liberal Arts. Instructors assess student learning in this outcome by evaluating a representative sample of assignments for the effective communication of the results of the student's critical inquiry.
- B. **Make Connections or Original Contributions.** *Through their writings, theories, problems, designs, objects of art, and other projects students will make connections or original contributions to questions and concerns relevant to a particular discipline, the Academy, local society, or the global community.* **Explanation:** this learning outcome emphasizes the importance of deliberately using students' coursework to engage issues, debates, schools of thought, and the like relevant to particular disciplines as well as the Academy, local society, or the global community. Instructors assess student learning in this outcome by evaluating a representative sample of assignments for such connections.
- C. **Reflect on Their Learning.** *Students will demonstrate the ability to link their experiences in the Common Curriculum with their intellectual development as lifelong learners.* **Explanation:** this learning outcome may be viewed as asking the students to draw together the practical, intrinsic, and idealistic value of the Liberal Arts as they relate to being a life-long learner and, perhaps, asking those big questions. The Gen Ed Board assesses learning outcome C indirectly through a student reflective essay and student interview; instructors provide direct assessment of this learning outcome **if** it is observed in their classes.

ADDITIONAL FYP/FYP-H LEARNING OUTCOMES for Learning Outcome A

First-Year Preceptorial (FYP) and Honors Preceptorial (FYP-H) have more specific learning outcomes under Learning Outcome A, as follows:

A1. DISCUSS IDEAS: critically and respectfully engages in dialogue with others about ideas in texts as well as those expressed in class.

A2. READ TEXTS CRITICALLY: shows an understanding of/ability to evaluate complex and sophisticated ideas from multiple and diverse perspectives.

A3. DEVELOP EFFECTIVE ARGUMENTS:

A3a. Supports a focused thesis, including analysis of evidence to support conclusions.

A3b. Organizes information logically and clearly in essays that guide readers through the text

A3c. Expresses ideas clearly and appropriately, with few, if any, grammar, usage, and spelling errors

A3d. Integrates evidence into one's own argument (e.g., uses quotations appropriately, correct citation, etc.).

A4. INCORPORATE REVISION into the writing process as a means of improving critical thinking and the expression of ideas.

ADDITIONAL SRS/SCH-150 LEARNING OUTCOMES for Learning Outcome A

The Sophomore Research Seminar (SRS) and Scholars Research Seminar (SCH-150) have more specific learning outcomes under Learning Outcome A, as follows:

A1. DEVELOP A RESEARCH TOPIC: Formulate a clear, focused research question or thesis appropriate to the topic of inquiry.

A2. FIND EVIDENCE: Identify and locate evidence appropriate for examining a research question or thesis.

A3. EVALUATE EVIDENCE: Critically and ethically analyze evidence obtained for examination of a research question or thesis.

A4. DEVELOP AN EVIDENCE-BASED ARGUMENT: Develop and organize a logical argument grounded in the analysis of evidence that supports or refutes a research question or thesis.

A5. PRESENT RESEARCH FINDINGS: Present a logical analytical argument supported by evidence in an appropriate written form without errors of grammar, usage, and spelling.

A6. PRACTICE PROFESSIONAL STANDARDS OF CITATION: Incorporate and cite evidence in a manner that meets the professional standards of the discipline most appropriate for the topic of inquiry.

II. COMMON CURRICULUM ASSESSMENT 2015-2016

The primary goals of Common Curriculum assessment are to 1) support reflective teaching and faculty development, 2) encourage pedagogical and curricular innovation, 3) promote transfer of best practice in the Common Curriculum to instruction in other courses, 4) provide a systematic foundation for the on-going evaluation of specific program requirements with a view to improvement, even replacement. We also use this process to review and amend Common Curriculum assessment itself. Our progress on those goals has been partial and incomplete to date because of the lag time in collecting completed assessment portfolios from an entire academic class. This year, we finally will have assembled a complete assessment of an academic class, the class of 2017. The potential to realize these goals and others will significantly increase from 2017 forward.

General Profile of Samples by Academic Concentration. The class of 2017 sample was made up of students from across the campus. For the class of 2018, the Gen Ed Board decided to create a sample of just students who entered as declared majors in Center 2, Sciences and Engineering. For the class of 2019, the Gen Ed board decided to create a sample of just students who entered as declared majors in Center 1, Arts and Humanities and Social Sciences. We hope with these focussed samples to evaluate and compare the experiences of students in the Common Curriculum from respective centers, to look for ‘divides’ between C.P. Snow’s ‘two cultures’ as well as commonalities and shared experiences. For the class of 2020, we will return to a general sample of students across the campus.

Faculty Response Rate to IAR Requests. We continue to seek improvements in the response rate from faculty, the percentage of faculty who receive an assessment request that actually submit and IAR; *see Table CC1.*

2013-2014 (pilot year)	34%
2014-2015	51%
2015-2016	45%

We improved our notification system to faculty, though we still lose track of the occasional student who changes her/his course schedule after the first week of term or drops a course. We also now send department chairs/assessment coordinators an email with the assessment assignments for their colleagues. Many faculty (rightly) view assessment as another ‘unfunded mandate’ imposed on them. The Common Curriculum assessment suffers from this association. We have worked hard to make the process ‘cost-effective’ and useful, but it still represents a genuine demand on faculty time. We hope, as more information comes in from the CC assessment, to improve how we close the loop through ‘faculty development’ initiatives and demonstrate how the findings lead to program improvements. We have probably reached a point when senior administrative support (including the Director of Assessment) is needed.

Timely Completion of Requirements. We found, overall, students in the all three samples made good progress toward completion of the program in the first year. *See Table CC2.*

Number of CC courses completed	Class of 2017 (General)	Class of 2018 (Center 2)	Class of 2019 (Center 1)
1	0	0	0
2	3.8%	0	0
3	7.7%	0	15%
4	11.5%	14%	11%
5	26.9%	19%	30%
6	26.9%	43%	26%
7	19.2%	19%	11%
8	3.8%	5%	4%
9	0	0	3%

Students made good progress across all requirements except for the completion of SCLB and SET by students in the 2017 and 2019 samples; the long-standing problem of inadequate seats/sections for non-science majors effectively shuts out all but science and engineering students or center 1 seniors in available courses. Table CC3 reveals the extent of the problem. For the 2017 sample (students across all programs), completion of SCLB was 42% and SET 54%. For the 2019 sample (center 1 programs), just 26% completed SCLB and 33% SET. Compare with the significantly higher percentages of students completing SCLB and SET in the 2018 sample (center 2 programs). There is no doubt we are failing center 1 students by denying two-thirds or more of them the opportunity engage these subjects in their first two years.

Common Curriculum Requirement	Class of 2017 (General)	Class of 2018 (Center 2)	Class of 2019 (Center 1)
FYP/FYP-H	100%	100%	100%
SRS/SCH-150	15% (SCH-150)	14% (SCH-150)	19% (SCH-150)
Literature (HUL)	62%	57%	37%
Arts and Humanities (HUM)	58%	38%	78%
Social Sciences (SOCS)	77%	62%	78%
Quantitative and Mathematical Reasoning (QMR)	50%	86%	52%
Natural Sciences with Lab (SCLB)	42%	67%	26%
Science, Engineering, Technology (SET)	54%	86%	33%
Languages and Cultures (Course 1/2)	NA	45%	74%
Languages and Cultures (Course 2/2)	NA	23%	44%
LCC – Students on Languages Track ¹	38%	22%	28%
LCC – Students on Cultures Track	46%	23%	46%
LCC – Students on Study Abroad Track	0	0	0

¹ Total percentage of students on Languages Track and Cultures Tracks should equal percentage of LCC Course 1/2.

STEM Students and Breadth in the Common Curriculum. As DofGE, I discussed findings in the Mechanical Engineering ABET accreditation report with Brad Bruno in Mechanical Engineering. ABET faulted ME in its review of Performance Criterion 4 under SO (h) concerning the broad education necessary to understand the impact of engineering solutions in a global, economic, environmental, and social context: 25.8% of students surveyed in the senior exit survey were either neutral or disagreed that ‘The General Education Curriculum at Union was effective in providing me with a broad education.’ I brought together assessment information relevant to this concern and sent it to Mechanical Engineering in 18 February 2016. I reproduce here the final section of that letter:

A check-box mentality toward the CC seems to be prevalent among both faculty and students in the Center. Each term I track the progress of individual students in the assessment samples. Occasionally, I find that students are making poor progress on completing the CC and I give their advisers a heads up. The responses indicate two issues. Advisers do not understand the program requirements let alone its broader purpose; they either give their students poor advice or the wrong advice. For example, students who reach their senior year with problems completing the Languages and Cultures (LCC) requirement – a requirement that should encourage a breadth of view – frequently do so for failure to understand the pathways through it; they not infrequently ask for outright exemptions from it. Given the many LCC courses and options available, not all of these situations, even most of them, can be down to the problems of completing a highly structured program.

Second, I have been told by advisers of students making poor progress on requirements to be completed outside Center 2 that they’ll get around to it, that they’re not as important as the rest of the courses to be taken, or the like.

Additionally, I recently reviewed two department-specific CC advising worksheets that raised troubling issues. First, both used a CC worksheet that was four years out of date, lacking both a brief description of the goals of the requirements and better information about the diverse range of courses to choose from for certain requirements. Second, as many CC requirements as possible that could be completed with courses in students’ majors had already been pre-populated into the boxes/fields, including, in one case, 4 of the 5 required WAC courses. There was no cause to think that students couldn’t or wouldn’t complete the WAC requirement while simultaneously also completing five required CC courses in Literature, Arts and Humanities, Social Sciences, and Languages and Cultures. Pre-populated boxes are no doubt helpful for checking off the requirements, but it implicitly and explicitly steers the students away from anything but the bare minimum of WACs in courses outside the major. WAC courses tend to be more intensive experiences that would encourage greater retention of material than, say, passive learning-oriented or lecture-based courses. Overall, the balance was heavily skewed in favour of helping students check the boxes rather than explore the CC as an education in the breadth of the liberal arts or new experiences.

Finally, while a systematic review is required, it appears from the assessment samples that many Center 2 students, including those in Division 4, tend to complete their non-Center 2 CC requirements in a limited number of courses (typically at the 100-level) or are steered into certain ones by their advisers. These courses, like introductory Psychology, Economics, or English courses, tend to be technical in orientation and/or concerned with establishing basic disciplinary concepts that may overlap with what students already know of those subjects from secondary education. A 200-level History course about Brazil or an MLT course for HUL credit that examines modern East Asian literature might well stretch student imaginations and perspectives a good deal further in a more intense manner than 100-level introductory courses; neither example here carries a pre-requisite.

Tables CC4a and CC4b address this final point and were compiled for this assessment report.

Table CC4a. Number of courses completed among departments for selected CC requirements after two years for the Class of 2018 (Center 2)

Requirement	HUL	HUM	SOCS	Languages and Cultures	
Department				LCC 1	LCC 2
Classics	1	2			1
English	15	2			1
Modern Languages	2	4		6	7
Music					
Philosophy		3			
Religious Studies		1			
Visual Arts		1		1	
Anthropology				4	1
Economics			2		
Gender, Sexuality & Women's Studies (GSW)					
History			2	3	
Political Science			3		
Psychology			7		
Sociology			3		1
Total Courses	18	13	17	14	11
Students in Sample	22	22	22	22	22

Table CC4b. Number of courses completed among departments for selected CC requirements after one year for the Class of 2019 (Center 1)

Requirement	HUL	HUM	SOCS	Languages and Cultures	
Department				LCC 1	LCC 2
Classics		1		5	2
English	9				
Modern Languages	1	3		7	6
Music		1			
Philosophy		7			
Religious Studies		2			1
Visual Arts		8			
Anthropology			1	6	2
Economics			6		
Gender, Sexuality & Women's Studies (GSW)			2		
History			3	1	1
Political Science			4		
Psychology			2		
Sociology			4		
Total Courses	10	22	22	19	12
Students in Sample	27	27	27	27	27

There may be some basis to further explore advising and course planning that encourage the concentration of STEM students in basic introductory courses. Twelve of the fifteen 2018 students who completed their HUL with an introductory English course did so in their first year: 55% of students in the sample completed the HUL requirement in the first year in this way. By contrast, the nine 2019 students who completed their HUL requirement similarly represented only one-third of the sample; many more of those students chose to forgo completing HUL with an introductory English course in the first year and may well seek out other HUL options in their second and third years, perhaps in Classics (enrolments in whose courses are not well-represented in the 2018 sample) or Modern Languages. Those 2019 students also enrolled in more Philosophy and Visual Arts courses than their 2018 counterparts. They also distributed themselves across the social sciences more broadly; over-representation in Economics no doubt reflects broader national trends nation-wide in favour of lucrative business training. Only two of twenty-two students in the 2019 sample who completed their SOCS did so with PSY 100. Seven of the seventeen students in the 2018 sample who completed their SOCS did so with PSY 100. Especially given the recent increase in STEM rhetoric from the Board of Trustees and senior administration, we would do well to encourage all students to seek out more diverse intellectual experiences and global perspectives in their CC courses and avoid a check-box mentality; this might be particularly valuable or important for Center 2 (STEM) students.

Student Proficiencies in Learning Outcomes. We have aggregate proficiency data for all three learning outcomes now that the process has been underway for two years. *See Table CC5.*

Table CC5. Proficiency Levels across Learning Outcomes A, B, C (% of students at the assigned proficiency level in individual assessment reports (IARs))						
	Learning Outcome A Critical and Analytical Thinking		Learning Outcome B Making Connections		Learning Outcome C Reflective Learning	
Proficiency Level / Sample Year	2017 (General)	2018 (Center 2)	2017 (General)	2018 (Center 2)	2017 (General)	2018 (Center 2)
Exceptional	5.1%	4.7%	10.2%	6.3%	8.5%	7.8%
Mastery	28.8%	32.9%	20.3%	28.0%	15.3%	12.5%
Proficient	44.1%	26.6%	30.5%	31.3%	18.6%	25.0%
Developmental	20.3%	32.8%	13.6%	21.9%	6.7%	15.6%
Insufficient	1.7%	3.1%	0	10.9%	1.7%	0
NA/NO/ND	0	0	25.4%	1.6%	49.2%	39.1%
Proficiency Level / Sample Year	2019 (Center 1)	2020	2019 (Center 1)	2020	2019 (Center 1)	2020
Exceptional	14.3%		15.9%		11.1%	
Mastery	31.7%		28.6%		17.6%	
Proficient	33.4%		19.0%		6.3%	
Developmental	20.6%		12.7%		6.3%	
Insufficient	0		0		0	
NA/NO/ND	0		23.8%		58.7%	

NA/NO/ND = Not Applicable / Not Observed / No Data

The Gen Ed Board will use the completed 2017 assessment portfolios and those in subsequent years to explore in more depth the following observations:

- 1) **Learning Outcome A:** much greater percentage of students at the exceptional level in the 2019 sample; greater percentage of students in 2018 sample characterized as developmental.
- 2) **Learning Outcome B:** percentage of not applicable/not observed/no data response from the 2017 and 2019 samples compared to 2018. We particularly want to improve the coverage of this learning outcome as it directly addresses linking student learning in CC courses to broader social and global issues/questions/challenges – a vital step for helping the CC assist the college in achieving its strategic goals for global learning and action.

Student Reflective Response for the Class of 2017. Seniors in the assessment sample will complete the Student Reflective Response and attend a pre-graduation group interview with the Gen Ed Board. This is our primary basis to assess learning outcome C. The SRR mock-up follows:

STUDENT REFLECTIVE RESPONSE – MOCK-UP Class of 2017

THE COMMON CURRICULUM...

First-Year/Honors Preceptorial engages you in the exploration of ideas and diverse perspectives through critical reading, thinking, and writing.

Sophomore/Scholars Research Seminar ensures you have an early hands-on experience thinking and working as an academic researcher devoted to a term-length project.

Arts and Humanities enables you to find yourself and your voice in creative expression and the exploration of works of the imagination.

Literature expands the moral imagination needed to understand yourself and your fellow human beings through literary analysis, interpretation, and reflection.

Social Sciences confront you with the complexity and challenges of our world by analyzing the societies we create.

Natural Sciences (with Lab) changes the way you think about the natural world when you understand the scientific method and put it to work.

Science, Engineering, and Technology introduces you to Union's unique commitment to teaching Science and Engineering as Liberal Arts and examining their impact on our humanity.

Quantitative and Mathematical Reasoning equips you with unique insights and skills necessary to solve complex problems.

Language and Culture Courses empower you as a citizen of a global community to contribute across cultural boundaries and shape our shared future.

OUR BIG PICTURE GOALS...

The Common Curriculum aims to challenge your intellect, open your mind to new perspectives and ways of thinking, teach academic skills, and prepare you to engage life beyond Union:

- The diverse subjects and disciplines examined in the Common Curriculum help you appreciate **the breadth and complexity of human knowledge** for its own sake.
- The Common Curriculum **trains your mind to be flexible and adaptable** by engaging ideas and subjects beyond just your major or a focus on job/career-preparation.
- Common Curriculum courses **teach practical skills** in critical thinking, the construction of evidence-based analyses and arguments, and the ability to communicate effectively in writing and in person.
- The Liberal Arts explored in the Common Curriculum encourage you to **ask big questions about humanity, about life, ethics, and meaning.**

YOUR EXPERIENCES AND IDEAS...

Thinking about the last three years at Union, how have your experiences in the Common Curriculum made a positive impact on your learning?

If you could ADD one thing that would make general education at Union College truly unique and meaningful, what would that be?

Closing the Loop.

The primary goals of Common Curriculum assessment are:

- A. to support reflective teaching and faculty development
- B. to encourage pedagogical and curricular innovation
- C. to promote transfer of best practice in the Common Curriculum to instruction in other courses
- D. to provide a systematic foundation for the on-going evaluation of specific program requirements with a view to improvement, even replacement.

The Gen Ed Board continues to focus overwhelmingly on goals one through three. In 2017-2018, with the first completed set of student portfolios in hand and students' own input, the Gen Ed Board will also more directly address goal four. We see the focus on real classrooms, teaching, and student learning as the essential value of assessment for the program. This is how we close the loop with assessment:

- 1) The questions on the IAR are designed so that faculty scrutinize the pedagogical foundation of assignments with learning outcomes directly in mind. We see evidence that faculty are doing so in the narrative portion of the IARs and, since 2014, in new course proposals, where faculty are expected to explain how their courses will address CC learning outcomes.
- 2) Faculty currently have direct access to Common Curriculum assessment at three points: a) enrolment in the Nexus course *Teaching the Common Curriculum* explained below; b) the program website that contains all the relevant assessment documents and annual reports; c) the college assessment website.
- 3) Each faculty member is enrolled in *Teaching the Common Curriculum* as a primary support. The folder for Common Curriculum Assessment includes a) practical information, b) pedagogical guides for teaching and evaluating learning outcome A, c) samples of IARs organized by CC requirements, and d) sample IARs designed highlight great teaching in the CC. This folder assists faculty in completing the IAR and in studying teaching and learning in colleagues' classes. We would like the course will evolve to include a dedicated resource folder for each of CC requirement; it currently includes materials for the SRS/SCH-150 faculty workshops, syllabi, and assignments. The initiative for creating these resources currently comes from the DofGE and Gen Ed Board, but much more faculty input will be encouraged.
- 4) The Gen Ed Board will work with the Committee on Teaching (COT), Director of Faculty Development, and other relevant parties to create more targeted instructional workshops.
- 5) The annual assessment report should be a tool for departments and programs to align their courses to the CC learning outcomes and evaluate their success in doing so. We will also follow-up directly with chairs and directors whose departments and programs seem most affected by our annual assessment and recommendations.
- 6) The annual assessment report provides guidance for the Gen Ed Board in the course approval process. More simply put, it gives the board a basis from which to look for strengths and weaknesses in courses proposed for Common Curriculum credit based on best practice and areas of concern. The board now gives faculty better, more specific guidance on revision and resubmission of courses, supported by the resources available in TCC.
- 7) In 2015-2016, the Gen Ed Board completed a comprehensive review of courses carrying CC designations and used assessment data to guide its work.

III. SOPHOMORE/SCHOLARS RESEARCH SEMINAR ASSESSMENT 2015-2016

Instructors complete the SRS/SCH-150 individual assessment report for each student at the end of the term; the assessment is based on the final research project. Instructors submit the anonymous assessments to the DGE; the process of anonymous assessment and reporting protects student and faculty confidentiality and constitutes a binding condition of SRS/SCH-150 assessment. One SRS/SCH-150 workshop in the spring term of the academic year processes the assessment results. SRS/SCH-150 faculty in the workshop develop suggestions for program improvements based on any issues that may emerge from reviewing the assessments. The DGE incorporates suggestions (if any) into appropriate on-going and new SRS faculty development or broader program improvements. The SRS/SCH-150 assessment form can be found at <http://www.union.edu/offices/gen-ed/program-administration/assessment/>

The most recent SRS/SCH-150 assessment results can be found in tables CC6a-d below.

Table CC6a. Aggregate SRS Assessment Results Fall 2015 (% of all students)

Proficiency Level	Exceeds Expectations	Meets Expectations	Below Expectations
Learning Outcome			
Develop a Research Topic	23	74	3
Find Evidence	23	65	13
Evaluate Evidence	13	81	6
Develop and Evidence-based Argument	23	55	19
Present Research Findings	35	55	10
Practice Professional Standards of Citation	13	77	10

Table CC6b. Aggregate SRS Assessment Results Winter 2016 (% of all students)

Proficiency Level	EXC	MST	PRF	DEV	INSF
EXC =Exceptional / MST = Mastery / PRF = Proficient / DEV = Developmental / INSF = Insufficient					
Learning Outcome					
A1. Develop a Research Topic	8	38	46	6	1
A2. Find Evidence	11	37	41	9	2
A3. Evaluate Evidence	11	37	41	9	2
A4. Develop and Evidence-based Argument	13	34	32	19	3
A5. Present Research Findings	7	32	42	15	4
A6. Practice Professional Standards of Citation	3	34	38	19	6
B. Connections or Contributions	10	22	18	3	0
C. Reflective Learning	10	18	16	1	0

Table CC6c. Aggregate SRS Assessment Results Spring 2016 (% of all students)					
Proficiency Level EXC =Exceptional / MST = Mastery / PRF = Proficient / DEV = Developmental / INSF = Insufficient	EXC	MST	PRF	DEV	INSF
Learning Outcome					
A1. Develop a Research Topic	3	41	35	18	3
A2. Find Evidence	3	43	32	19	3
A3. Evaluate Evidence	6	36	32	23	3
A4. Develop and Evidence-based Argument	6	32	33	29	0
A5. Present Research Findings	8	30	33	22	7
A6. Practice Professional Standards of Citation	7	39	35	15	3
B. Connections or Contributions	6	49	23	10	0
C. Reflective Learning	5	43	23	9	1

Table CC6d. Aggregate SCH-150 Assessment Results 2015-2016 (% of all students)					
Proficiency Level EXC =Exceptional / MST = Mastery / PRF = Proficient / DEV = Developmental / INSF = Insufficient	EXC	MST	PRF	DEV	INSF
Learning Outcome					
A1. Develop a Research Topic	18	27	36	18	0
A2. Find Evidence	18	9	55	18	0
A3. Evaluate Evidence	18	18	45	18	0
A4. Develop and Evidence-based Argument	18	9	55	18	0
A5. Present Research Findings	18	27	55	0	0
A6. Practice Professional Standards of Citation	9	27	55	9	0
B. Connections or Contributions	18	18	55	9	0
C. Reflective Learning	18	9	55	18	0

SRS/SCH workshops along with oversight and individual initiatives by the DofGE and General Education Board are the chief vehicles for closing the loop on SRS assessment. Topics and content are designed by the DofGE and SRS/SCH-150 faculty to help improve pedagogical practices and reflect on the broader purposes and effectiveness of the program. SRS/SCH-150 workshops each term are geared toward the same general themes: faculty development issues for new instructors (Fall); examples of pedagogical and instructional best practice or innovation (Winter); assessment and broader program issues (Spring). These workshops typically occasion broad-ranging discussions and the issues and questions raised and addressed between 2011 and 2015 are the following; upcoming workshops devoted to these questions are noted.

- 1) How do we teach research to undergraduates in just ten weeks? (Fall 2015, 2016)
- 2) How do we set program-wide standards for evaluating SRS/SCH-150 research projects? (Fall 2015)
- 3) What are the pedagogical and research benefits of incorporating poster sessions into SRS/SCH-150? (Fall 2015)
- 4) Why do students working below expectations struggle with finding and evaluating evidence and producing a strong evidence-based project? (Winter 2016 and Fall 2016)

- 5) How can you use a single, very short assignment (micro-assignment) to teach a lot of critical thinking, research skills, and writing techniques? (Winter 2016, 2017)
- 6) Is an SRS/SCH-150 an SRS/SCH-150 without a 12 to 18 page term paper as the final 'product'? (Spring 2016)
- 7) Are SRS/SCH-150s scheduled in the optimum time slot(s) for effective teaching and learning? (Spring 2016)

Based on these workshops, the Gen Ed Board, DGE, and faculty have worked to close the loop with these initiatives:

- 1) Improve the SRS/SCH-150 folder in TCC as a site devoted to faculty development and teaching strategies for the course.
- 2) Develop and share among SRS/SCH-150 faculty exercises that focus on the critical and ethical evaluation of evidence and its effective incorporation within an argument.
- 3) Develop and share among SRS/SCH-150 faculty exercises that focus on the effective incorporation of evidence within an argument.
- 4) Improve deliberateness with which links between pedagogical strategies and learning goals are communicated to students in syllabi, assignments, and in overall instruction.
- 5) Consider more specific and descriptive proficiency categories for the assessment instrument; this will be addressed in the integration of SRS/SCH-150 assessment with the new Common Curriculum assessment process.
- 6) In 2015-2016, the Gen Ed Board reviewed and approved all new and existing SCH-150 courses. A common proposal form was developed for SRS/SCH-150. The Gen Ed Board did not recruit or select instructors for SCH-150, which is handled by the Director of the Scholars Program and Dean of Academic Departments and Programs.
- 7) Finally, in 2016-2017, the DofGE and Gen Ed Board will examine the desirability and feasibility of moving SRS to the first year and making direct linkages between it and FYP as part of a 'one-two punch' in the first year experience of Union students. The Honours SRS (SCH-150) is currently taught in the first year and we will look at the feasibility of making that the norm for all Union first-year students in a phased transition.

IV. INTEGRATED COMMON CURRICULUM ASSESSMENT

The Gen Ed Board and DofGE have worked with ITS and/or the Dean of Studies office to fully integrate SRS/SCH-150 and FYP/FYP-H into one Common Curriculum assessment process as follows:

- 1) We piloted the integrated online assessment of FPR/FPR-H and SRS/SCH-150 in Union College Webapps in Winter and Spring terms 2016. Faculty had the option to use the existing paper assessment. The process will be fully online beginning with Fall 2016. We held several demonstration workshops for faculty and received helpful feedback both at the workshops and from faculty who used the online assessment. Project management at ITS delayed this project by more than a year; it was repeatedly moved from an active status to make way for projects accorded a higher priority or rushed to the front of the queue. The delays and postponement also meant that the same ground had to be covered and re-covered with ITS.
- 2) The online assessment brings us much closer to integrating SRS/SCH-150 and FPR/FPR-H assessment within the now-established Common Curriculum assessment. The new assessment has substituted the respective FPR/FPR-H and SRS/SCH-150 assessment rubrics for learning outcome A in the broader CC assessment. FPR/FPR-H and SRS/SCH-150 instructors will also complete the same summative assessment of learning outcomes B and C to better integrate FPR/FPR-H and SRS/SCH-150 within our programmatic goals. For example, the standard CC proficiency levels have replaced proficiency categories in the current FPR/FPR-H and SRS/SCH-150 rubrics.
- 3) Dean Mark Wunderlich, Joseph Johnson (Director of Writing Services), and I share responsibility for FPR/FPR-H faculty development as well as joint workshops for FPR/FPR-H and SRS/SCH-150 faculty. In summer 2016 Joe Johnson and I began work on developing an integrated set of FPR/SRS learning outcomes to better align the goals for both courses and create staged instruction in critical/analytical thinking and evidence- and research-based writing. At least one of the workshops in 2016-2017 will be devoted to this project.
- 4) Our midterm report to Middle States committed us to eventually moving FPR/FPR-H assessment and faculty development for FPR/FPR-H (workshops) entirely under the DofGE. The Gen Ed Board reaffirmed a commitment to integrated assessment in May 2015. It would make sense to hire the next DofGE (for 2017-2018) with a view to taking this on and completing the final transfer of responsibility before/when the next Dean of Studies is hired.

Please note that the Dean of Studies will submit FYP/FYP-H Assessment Data/Report separate from this report.