

Office of General Education

End of Year Report

2017-18



THE UNIVERSITY OF UTAH

Undergraduate Studies

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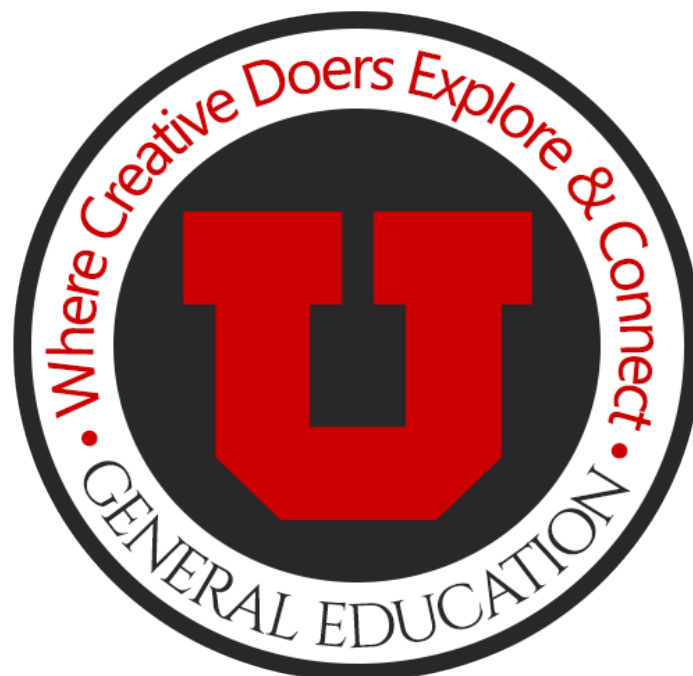
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INTRODUCTION

The Offices of General Education and Learning Outcome Assessment conduct work that touches every single student and faculty member at the University of Utah. Each of our 27,000 students completes General Education and Bachelor Degree Requirement courses that are overseen by the Office of General Education. Each faculty member helps to develop and assess learning outcomes and that work is facilitated by the Office of Learning Outcome Assessment. Students who participate in an integrated pathway through General Education, the BlockU Program, are supported by the Office of General Education. Going forward, the Office of Learning Outcome Assessment will help to implement the Learning Framework as an assessment tool for the whole of the undergraduate experience.

Senior Associate Vice President for Academic Affairs and Dean of Undergraduate Studies has challenged the Office of Undergraduate Studies to aim for an exceptional student experience in each of our areas. ***We believe that exceptional movement through General Education includes inspiring teachers, learning that is integrated and engaged, and projects that have a purposeful impact.*** The journey through General Education results in students who are critical and creative problem solvers and compassionate communicators who thrive in a world full of difference and change. We are attempting to move toward providing exceptional experiences for all students enrolled in general education courses in the way that these courses are reviewed and renewed and in the goals that we have set for the coming year.

Through the General Education Curriculum Committee, the Undergraduate Council, the Office of Learning Outcome Assessment, the BlockU Program, the Learning Framework, and the Learning Portfolio Initiative these offices contribute to two of the University's big goals and three of the elements of the Utah Pledge.



PROMOTE STUDENT SUCCESS TO TRANSFORM LIVES

The Office of Undergraduate Studies encapsulates its commitment to student success in the **Utah Pledge**. The Pledge sets forth the expectation that every student will 1) have access to a **learning community**, 2) be **surrounded by the support** of peer mentors, advisors and student success advocates, 3) have access to financial guidance and 4) participate in **deeply engaged learning experiences**.



Students participating in the 2018 BlockU Symposium at the Sterling Sill Center, where students have the opportunity to present their capstone projects to BlockU faculty, supporting staff, university advisors, as well as other BlockU students and their parents.

BLOCKU PROGRAM

In many ways the BlockU Program provides the **paradigmatic example of an exceptional student experience in General Education**.

The BlockU Program contributes to the growing menu of **learning community courses available to students**. Like other learning community opportunities available, students in the BlockU program experience the wrap around support of **peer mentors, advisors, librarians and student success advocates**. Each BlockU program culminates in a real world project that allows students to build a foundation for integrative and applied learning. This deeply engaged learning experience, structured into their first year of college, communicates our full commitment to the Utah Pledge. This year we recruited more students into the program, retained them at a moderate level, are beginning to be able to provide data related to graduation rates and have begun to develop sustainable community partnerships in our deeply engaged learning experiences.

BLOCKU ACCOMPLISHMENTS FOR 2017-18:

- **This year 143 students enrolled in a BlockU Program** (up from 139 in 2016-17) The BlockU has yearly reported enrollment growth and now, our fifth year in existence, we began the year at 81% capacity.
- However, we retained only 96 students from fall to spring for a 34% retention rate. This retention rate is disappointing to be sure and arriving at data based explanations is very difficult. Reporting an overall retention rate is also a little deceiving. Three of the BlockU programs had a higher than 75% retention rate, one of those had an 80% retention rate. However, two of our programs had a 46% retention rate. We are hiring a new teacher for one of these programs and we are fairly certain, based on reports from students and the Peer Advisor, that this will address the problem. Historically, this program has had a 70% or higher retention rate. Addressing the other program with the 46% retention rate is less straightforward. Reports from students, faculty in the program and the SSA associated with the program lead us to believe that this dip in retention is attributed to two factors, 1) an unusually high number of highly reticent students enrolled in the course and the high levels of expected participation were too much for them and 2) departmental advisors strongly suggested that they exit the program and enter the major directly. Historically, this program has consistently been our strongest in terms of both enrollment and retention. One of our goals is to work more closely with advisors to make sure that accurate information about the BlockU program is widely shared.
- In our fifth year of existence we can begin to report on graduation rates. BlockU four-year graduation rates continue to be high; 66% of the students in our second cohort have applied for graduation. If they are all cleared we would be able to claim a 66% four-year graduation rate.
- We are also now able to track the pace at which BlockU students declare a major. 35.3% of our students declare at the end of the first year. 66.6% declare at the end of the second year and 94.1% have declared by the end of the third.
- During 2017-18 we launched two new BlockU programs: The DaVinci BlockU was developed in a partnership with the Center for Science and Math Education and the Work, Wellness and the Great Outdoors BlockU was developed in partnership with the College of Health. Of note, undergraduate students in the College of Health were central in designing this BlockU program.
- We **ran a fully integrated early college BlockU Program** working with Alta High School. Thirty-six students began and completed the program during a 9-week intensive experience in the summer of 2017. As of this writing, all but one of those 36 students plan to enroll for the second year of the program. Applications are now being submitted for a new cohort of students who will participate in their first cohort this summer.
- Projects from two of our BlockU programs have developed **sustainable partnerships** with a local senior center, Primary Children's and Bryant Middle School.
- **The 2018 BlockU Symposium** included 21 projects completed by 1st year students. Some of the projects featured included an installation on Mental Illness in the Salt Lake City Library, an app created to help businesses transition to using recycled and environmentally friendly resources.

INNOVATIONS THAT WERE LESS THAN SUCCESSFUL AND OUR PLANS FOR MODIFICATION INCLUDE THE FOLLOWING:

- Using financial and personnel resources from UOnline we developed a fully online Global Citizenship BlockU. To build this BlockU we transformed a set of existing GE courses into an online delivery modality following the best practices set up by TLT and CTLE. These courses are enrolling well. We also transformed the two-semester BlockU learning community course into an online delivery modality and this course is not enrolling as well. We adjusted the curriculum of the two-semester experience so that there was no curricular assumption that a student in the first semester would also enroll in the second semester. The fall course enrolled 6 students and 9 in the spring. We were able to run the course at no cost to us it was included in the instructor's course load for the College of Humanities.
- Current communication and marketing practices do not allow us to identify and directly contact students who intend to complete most or all of their degree online. Until we are able to contact those students, we are unsure of how to make the two-semester learning community course viable. All the other courses developed or enhanced for this program will remain available to students and so it remains possible for a student to complete most of their GE courses in excellent online courses.



BlockU students at the 2017-18 BlockU Symposium sharing their projects to guests.

LEARNING COMMUNITY PROGRAM

LEARNING OUTCOME ASSESSMENT: BLOCKU

The Learning Community Portfolio team identified the following three program learning outcomes for learning community courses:

1. Students will build connections among ideas and concepts across a range of courses.
2. Students will build connections among their academic, personal and professional lives.
3. Students will develop connections with communities on and off campus.

METHODS OF ASSESSMENT

Students who completed both semesters of the BlockU program were sent a survey developed through CampusLabs. This year was our second year to run this survey. The survey was emailed to students the week of finals and students were sent a follow-up reminder a week later. Only 23 out of 94 students responded

making our numerical data almost meaningless; qualitative comments are much more enlightening.

RESULTS

1. 20 out of 23 students agreed that the BlockU Program helped them develop connections among ideas and concepts across a range of courses.

Sample comments include the following:

“Attachment theory was covered in my Communication course, BlockU, and Psychology.”

“I learned how the scientific method wasn’t a linear process, but in reality it was a non-linear complicated process, but in reality it was a non-linear more complicated process than what we learn in high school and Jr. high. This helped me better understand how to preform experiments in Chemistry labs as well as doing case studies and other assignments in Biology 1210.”

“I learned that you can’t properly help a community by going in and immediately trying to fix things. You have to listen to them and see how they’ve done things. The goal is that the change is manageable and sustained. If it can’t be sustained once you leave, it’s not a good change. Listening is incredibly important.”

2. 20 out of 23 students agreed that the BlockU Program helped them develop connections among their academic, personal and professional lives.

Sample comments include the following:

“In the Block U class that I was a part of, we discussed individual identity a lot and how we can express ourselves differently. My group personally talked about culture and it was so interesting to see how the middle school kids took the idea of culture and helped us to create their whole project around it”

“This class has taught me a lot about communicating to the people around you, whether it be in a group or classroom setting or in a community setting. We have to be able to express ourselves to each other and the community formally and proficiently in order to get the right message across. This connects to my goal to become a biochemist in the future, where I have to communicate effectively not only with the community when expressing my results of an experiment, but also with other scientists so that they are better able to follow my experiments and results.”

“I’m working with someone in the pediatrics clinic at Primary Children’s Hospital to hopefully get involved in research regarding doctors’ and medical staffs opinions of child mistreatment when parents refuse to give life-saving cancer treatments.”

3. 20 out of 23 students agreed that the BlockU Program helped them develop connections with communities on and off campus.

Sample comments include the following:

“In my Block U program I was a part of a Bee project and we connected with the community through bee boxes and posters explaining native bees, which were posted around campus, connecting to people on campus. We also took some bee boxes to our houses to collect data, which for me also got attention from the people who live around me, which also allowed me to be not only connected to the people on campus, but also the community around me.”

“I was able to get involved with Bryant Middle School. I was able to learn about the many backgrounds of the students there. It was a community I wasn’t that familiar with before my BlockU experience. I know more about that side of Salt Lake City now.”

“The close knit class that we became was by far the most meaningful thing to come out of this class. I have 16 new friends that I can always go to for support, and we did some pretty neat things together and I think that is very special. Also, the connections and the various people around the University and the community were incredible and I never would have been able to meet so many of the people that I met if I hadn’t taken this class. This class was by far one of the best classes that I have taken, and I will cherish everything I learned during my time in the Block U program.”

These comments from students are very promising in two ways.

First, they are detailed and directly responsive to the prompts. This suggests that our students are, indeed, making the connects that we hope for. In last year’s analysis, it seemed that students were unable to discern between connections within themselves and connections with communities on and off campus. The BlockU faculty discussed these findings and made concerted efforts to highlight moments when students were reflecting on how the experience might have changed them as individuals and when they were reflecting on their experiences working with others.

Second, with 23 responses we had a slightly better response rate. Last year only 10 students completed the survey. We had a better system of reminding students to complete the survey and will continue to improve on this system in the coming year.

WE HAVE IDENTIFIED THE FOLLOWING GOALS FOR 2018-19:

- Develop a BlockU with the Office for Equity and Diversity. This year we have been in conversations about a BlockU experience for a subset of Diversity Scholar students.
- Develop an RFP process so that colleges can be encouraged to develop BlockU programs that might help them attract majors or that can serve as part of their GE footprint for the common good of the university.
- Establish more sustained relationships with advisors across campus to ensure better knowledge of the BlockU program and to attain information for how to improve the program. We have begun this work by regularly attending UAC and presenting at the College Coordinators meetings.
- Work with the BlockU faculty to strengthen and share retention strategies across all BlockU programs.

ENSURE LONG-TERM VIABILITY OF THE UNIVERSITY

One of the ways in which the University can ensure its long-term viability is to attend to the quality of the learning experiences and learning outcomes in which students are engaged. The Office of Undergraduate Studies, in partnership with colleges and departments, ensures that students will be immersed in high quality learning experiences that will allow them to graduate with a **broad and deep base of knowledge**. The Offices of General Education and Learning Outcome Assessment are concerned primarily with this commitment. We activate this concern by making sure that students have access to high quality general education (GE) and bachelor degree requirement (BA) courses. We validate this commitment through rigorous learning outcome assessment.

GENERAL EDUCATION CURRICULUM COMMITTEE

Data from OBIA asserts that increasing the number of GE and BA courses attempted in the first year of college can positively affect student success metrics by as much as 20%, after controlling for several other variables known to affect student success. Clearly, these courses and the experiences that students have in them are vital to our mission. The General Education Curriculum Committee (GECC) and the Undergraduate Council make decisions that affect the degree to which students have access to **high quality learning experiences in GE and BA courses**. These two bodies oversee the quality of the curriculum and the programs through which students earn their degrees.

Over the last five years the GECC has strengthened its commitment to making sure that courses that carry General Education or Bachelor Degree Requirement designations are of the highest quality and taught by faculty who are committed to student success. These commitments are activated in the criteria used to review courses and in our discussions of those reviews. These review conversations have helped us instill in faculty the need to make instruction in courses engaging, relevant and integrated. Where we see evidence that faculty are struggling to meet these expectations, we recommend consultation with the Center for Teaching & Learning Excellence.

- This fall the **GECC reviewed 22 new designation applications**. Sixteen of those applications were advanced to the Undergraduate Council for review and vote. Six applications were returned to the faculty member for revisions.
- This fall the **GECC reviewed 56 five-year renewal application**. Seventeen of those applications were re-approved. Twenty-one applications were returned to faculty for revisions.
- This year we have pressed forward on our goal of reducing the number of courses that carry GE or BA designations. This task was important for at least three reasons. First, as data from Complete College America testifies, providing students with too many choices actually inhibits their progress toward degree. With almost 1000 courses that carry either a GE or a BA designation (or both, or three), we have set up a system where it is too easy for students to make poor choices that inhibit their progress toward degree. Second, by policy each course that carries a designation must be reviewed for retention every five years. Attempting to conduct meaningful quality

assurance on about 200 courses each year is not a feasible expectation to place on faculty. Third, by policy we are required to conduct learning outcome assessment on the GE and BA program every two years and, again, attempting to conduct meaningful learning outcome assessment for getting almost 1000 courses is not a realistic project.

Toward that end, for the last two years we have engaged in regular data based conversations with college level curriculum committees. In these conversations we have stressed the importance of making sure we knew which courses were providing students with excellent GE experiences, which courses were helping students make good progress to completion, and which courses were serving as gateways to the majors. Based on these conversations, and in partnership with the colleges, **we were able to reduce the size of our GE catalogue by 300 courses.**

We will continue with this effort. **In the fall we will launch a new process for seeking renewal of GE and BA designations.** We will provide departments with data about GE usage and ask that they reflect on the relative merit of continuing the designation. Where use data does not appear to support retaining the designation we will ask departments to describe their plans for making the course(s) more accessible and relevant to students.

The Office of General Education has identified the following goals for 2018-19 each of these will **help us navigate toward an exceptional experience** for all students enrolled in GE or BA courses, not only those who are enrolled in BlockU programs:

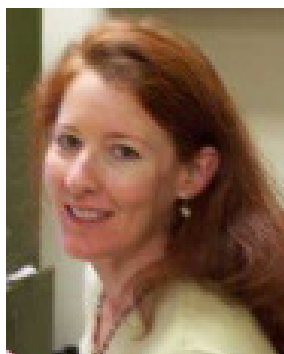
- Work with the E3 initiative to develop strong empirical data about the current experiences that students are having in their GE and BA courses.
- Improve the narrative that we share about GE. Working with a group of faculty we are updating and refining the GE mission statement so that it is more in alignment with the Learning Framework. Working with colleagues in the Academic Advising Center we are revising the message that first year students hear about GE shifting from a message about a list of requirements to a message about what they should expect to achieve in GE and BA courses.
- Parallel with an improved message about the GE Experience, we are working to develop clear and well known pathways for moving through the GE and BA requirements.
- Develop enhanced large lecture GE courses. ***This is perhaps are most significant project related to ensuring an exceptional experience for all students in GE or BA courses.*** Working with two associate deans (Sciences and Social & Behavioral Sciences), we will develop two state of the art large lecture courses. Our model for these courses is Harvard's Justice course <http://justiceharvard.org/themoralsideofmurder/> and Berkley's Big Ideas course <http://bigideascourses.berkeley.edu>.

These courses will provide insight into how an area like the Social Sciences approaches issues like food

inequality and the environment or immigration or artificial intelligence. The courses would foreground faculty research in a way that is compelling to undergraduate students. We will be developing these courses in conjunction with TLT to assure a strong online component and with CTLE to include pedagogical training for graduate students who would run discussion sections.

In the area of professional development to support GE/BA faculty we share the following accomplishments:

- **Two faculty members received General Education Teaching Awards.** These awards will be recognized at an event co-sponsored with the Center for Teaching & Learning Excellence.



EXCELLENCE IN GENERAL EDUCATION: ANNE YEAGLE

Anne Yeagle is an Associate Professor (Lecturer) in the Department of Economics where she has been teaching two important General Education courses, Micro and Macro Economics since 1996. She also teaches Labor Economics regularly, a course that carries a QI designation. Her letters of recommendation describe a teacher who is constantly learning about and refining her approach to teaching and one with whom students feel confident and inspired. One of her letter writers summarized her case in the following way: "Anne Yeagle is an outstanding teacher who makes our program in labor economics strong and vibrant. I have been at the University since 1978. I have overseen our offerings in labor economics both at the 3000 and 5000 level since the early 1990s. ...I can attest that Anne is one of the strongest teachers that has taught in our Department over the last 40 years...She is an asset of great value to our Department and to the teaching mission of the College and University.



INNOVATION IN GENERAL EDUCATION: CHRISTINE TOTH

Christine (Christie) Toth is an Assistant Professor in the Department of Writing and Rhetoric Studies. She joined the University of Utah faculty in 2014 and has had a strong impact on two fundamental General Education courses, WRTG 1010 and 2010. She also teaches courses that meet the HF designation, e.g., Writing as a Social Practice and developed the innovative course and infrastructure, Write4U. Write4U is more than a course, it is a program of support that prepares students to write at the University of Utah while also producing and publishing research about learning to write. A group of students co-authored a letter of support for Professor Toth and in it they write, "Dr. Toth always views her students as whole beings who have previously lived experiences that have value within the classroom. She continuously tries to learn from her students, while ensuring that we learn as well. She realizes the value of student-centered approaches in pedagogy and utilized them to aide in knowledge-making. Her continual use of innovation in general education does not go unnoticed by her students."

UNDERGRADUATE COUNCIL

The Undergraduate Council makes the first level of decisions pertaining to all new or discontinued majors, minors, certificates, emphases, centers/institutes/schools, and changes to names of programs/ departments.

While there are still two meetings remaining on our calendar, thus far the Council approved 1 new certificate, 3 new majors, 4 new minors, 12 new emphasis areas, 1 new center, 2 name program or department name changes and 15 new courses to carry GE/BA designations.

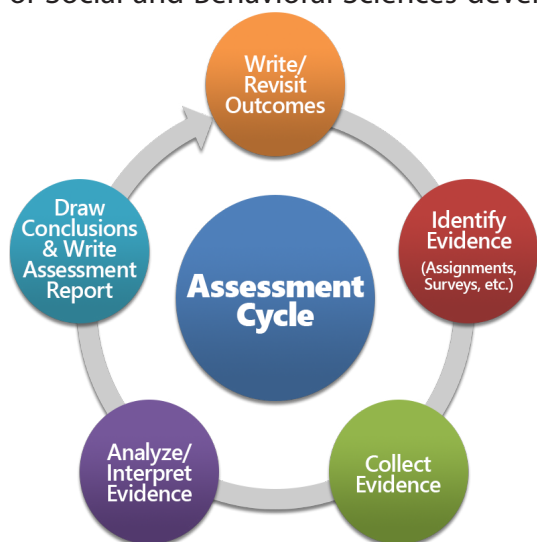
The Undergraduate Council also awards the University Professor and the McMurrin Professor. This year we have selected Professor Sarah Projansky to serve as the 2018-2020 University Professor. Professor Projansky will develop a course, a speaker series and an interest group that will explore the topic of celebrity through a critical lens.

The goal of the McMurrin Professorship is to host an event(s) that places academic focus on a topic of interest to undergraduate students. This year we redesigned the McMurrin Professorship so that on alternating years a group of students can submit proposals. This redesign was discussed at three different Council meetings and an RFP was widely distributed among student groups. Out of a pool of 9 strong proposals one was selected unanimously. A group of students from the Department of Communication submitted a proposal for designing a series of events entitled, "Dialoging Across Differences" will hold the 2018-19 McMurrin Professorship.

LEARNING OUTCOME ASSESSMENT

Beginning in July of 2015 this Office began to work with colleges and departments to develop and assess program level learning outcomes.

This year the Office of Learning Outcome Assessment has continued to help colleges and departments develop and assess program learning outcomes. The past three years were focused on helping the College of Social and Behavioral Sciences develop and assess program level learning outcomes in each department. At this point all 7 departments have written assessment plans, 5 departments have submitted learning outcome assessment reports and 2 departments are collecting assessment data this year.



During the 2017-18 academic year we began intensive work with the Colleges of Humanities and Sciences. We have met several times with the College of Humanities Curriculum Committee and several more times with Associate Dean Stuart Culver. He is taking the lead on guiding each department toward submitting written assessment plans and, eventually assessment reports. Similarly, Associate Dean Janis Louie is taking the lead in the College of Science. All assessment plans

and reports submitted to our office are posted on the learning outcomes website.

<http://ugs.utah.edu/learning-outcomes-assessment/index.php>

Last fall we ran a learning outcome assessment workshop which was designed to highlight several different approaches to program learning outcome assessment. Colleagues from Writing and Rhetoric Studies, Math, Chemistry and Psychology presented their learning outcome assessment practices and, where possible, results. Representatives from departments preparing for their graduate reviews over the next two years (2018-19 and 2019-20) were invited to this workshop. Twenty-three people attended this workshop.

We also ran two focus groups for faculty who selected either “Quantitative Literacy” or “Intercultural Knowledge and Competence” as targeted learning outcomes in their GE or BA designated courses. These focus groups were redesigned to help us better understand how faculty viewed and used the rubrics associated with those learning outcomes. Our preliminary assessment data had indicated that there may not be a good fit between the types of assignments that faculty were using and the criteria included on those rubrics. Approximately 25 people attended each of the focus groups, and while we are still analyzing these data we are convinced that we will be making some modifications to the rubrics that we have been using.

One theme that has emerged from our conversations with faculty is that the process of collecting, organizing and storing student artifacts of student work for assessment is time-consuming. We are committed to providing a technological solution to this issue. Working with Teaching and Learning Technologies (TLT), we are developing two tools. The first will allow faculty to attach assignments stored in Canvas to learning outcomes stored in Quali. The TLT team began work on this tool (the “Learning Outcomes Associator”) in the Summer of 2018 and they believe they will have a simple version available in the fall for us to test with a couple of programs. Once this is done, a second tool will be built to allow assessment teams to search for and retrieve assignments that meet outcomes in order to assess them. Using feedback and input from faculty, we worked with designers from Quali throughout the fall to build a prototype for the second application. We will begin developing a functional version of that tool with TLT once they are done building the Associator.

THE OFFICE OF LEARNING OUTCOME ASSESSMENT HAS IDENTIFIED THE FOLLOWING GOALS FOR 2018-19:

- Continue with the Colleges of Humanities and Sciences to get their program learning outcome assessment plans developed and assessment processes underway.
- Pilot test the Quali learning outcome assessment tool with three departments.
- Help the University complete its NWCCU Mid-Cycle Accreditation report and visit.

LEARNING FRAMEWORK

PROGRAM OVERVIEW

The University of Utah wants every undergraduate student to obtain a well-rounded educational experience during their time at our school. This means that we want students to be part of a Learning Community where they form positive and enriching relationships and connections are made with their interest areas. By developing autonomy and self-direction, we believe that students will experience a Transformation. We expect students to develop Broad Knowledge through General Education and Deep Knowledge and Skills within their majors and deeply engaged learning experiences. We also want students to make an Impact where personal interest, motivation, and application are demonstrated. These four categories are organized into a Learning Framework which is a way of articulating, describing, assessing, and demonstrating what the University of Utah wants undergraduate students to experience.

The University of Utah Learning Framework:

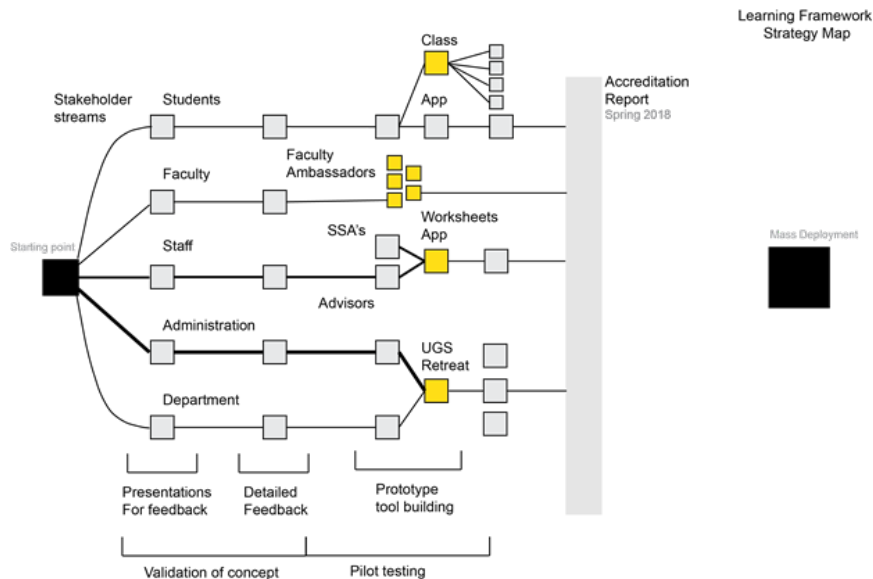
- Describes the broad experiences that the University of Utah thinks students should have to benefit the most from their time in their time with us.
- Communicates to students about the experiences and opportunities that are available in each of the areas of the framework so they can benefit the most from their U journey, while also allowing students to retain their uniqueness
- It invites students to describe the learning that they developed from the experiences
- It provides a structure to conduct a broad assessment across these different dimensions for all undergraduate students
- It allows administration, programs, and other providers to have a common way to look at curriculum and opportunities, discuss them, and structure them while allowing for programs to retain their uniqueness
- It provides a framework for programs to describe the learning outcomes expected
- Finally, it allows each of these groups to communicate to each other and out to the broader community using a common language and understanding of the broad goals of the University of Utah.

ACTIVITIES

During the 2017-2018 academic year, the team comprised of Mark St. Andre, Ann Darling, and Robyn Moreno have met regularly and have had many accomplishments in the promotion and implementation of the learning framework. These are listed below and represented graphically in the implementation path diagram.

Students

The team partnered with Stephen Goldsmith and his large design ecologies course to prototype the concept of a pre and post survey assessing the importance and demonstration of the learning objectives described in the learning framework. Also, the team piloted a learning portfolio linked to the learning framework where students placed artifacts that were representative of the concepts of knowledge and skills, community, impact, and transformation. Also, the team researched what students would like in a frame-



work tool and the language that should be used. Several iterations of prototypical tools were developed with student feedback. The team has explored working with the team in new student orientation on how to introduce the concepts and categories in the Learning Framework to students during orientation.

Faculty

The team initiated a program called the Learning Framework Faculty Ambassadors. This program enlisted five faculty representatives from a diverse set of departments to investigate and employ strategies to embed the learning framework in curricula, course and departmental learning objectives, and program advising. The Ambassadors will be summarizing their specific work in a report that will be completed in April 2018. The Ambassadors that worked with the team this year were: Beth Krensky (College of Fine Arts), Bill Johnson (Department of Geology & Geophysics), Joy Pierce (Department of Writing and Rhetoric), Rebecca Utz (Health Society and Policy Program), Debra Mascaro (Department of Mechanical Engineering), Rob MacLeod (Bioengineering Program). The team would like to have another set of diverse faculty as Learning Framework Ambassadors during the 2018-2019 academic year.

Staff

The team worked with Advisors from the University to develop some specific advising tools that could be used during advising appointments to help students think about their mission and goals at the University. Also, these tools framed experiences at the University in the four categories of the Learning Framework.

Administration/Department

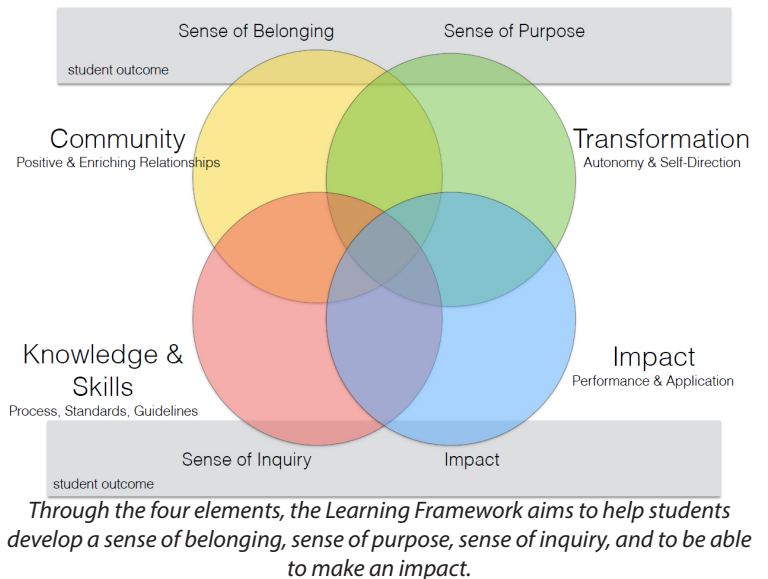
The Learning Framework was piloted during the 2017 Undergraduate Studies Retreat. During the retreat, we lead faculty and staff in some exercises that explored mapping of existing learning outcomes and goals to the framework and obtained input on the importance of the four categories in their areas.

Technology Streams

The team has been consulting with Cory Stokes on how to leverage existing technology or proposed technology to obtain data related to the Learning Framework and how to leverage existing metrics that are already collected.

GOALS

During the 2018-2019 academic year, the team will continue to develop the concepts and integrate the Learning Framework into practice so that we can begin to start collecting valuable data across these four dimensions. We will integrate the framework into the Exceptional Student Experience as way to tie with upcoming University wide efforts. We will explore conduct another series of pilots of pre and post evaluation through orientation and graduation. We will work with another group of Learning Framework Ambassadors to help drive the Framework into departments. Also, we will continue to work with Cory Stokes and the UIT on how to leverage existing technology to disseminate and gather information.



We were granted funds to support 5 Learning Framework Ambassadors during the 1017-18 year. Below is a summary of those projects.

LEARNING FRAMEWORK AMBASSADOR

Goal: To utilize the learning framework to structure, map and/or describe departmental goals, outcomes and/or curricula.

Expectations: The learning framework ambassador will work with the learning framework committee, and other ambassadors, to generate examples to show how the learning framework can be utilized. These examples will articulate and organizes specific college/department values in relation to broader identified University values and outcomes. This should result in a report, presentation or some tangible evidence of application.

Specifics: Learning framework ambassadors are expected to attend a two-hour orientation meeting in October. The ambassadors willll meet once a month with the committee to go over issues, progress and observations.

Time frame: The ambassadors will work with the committee during the 2017-2018 academic year with examples of application to be completed by April 2018.

Compensation: Each learning framework ambassador will receive a stipend of \$5,000.

LEARNING PORTFOLIO

The Learning Portfolio Project is a campus-wide initiative created to promote the use of ePortfolios by students, instructors, departments and programs at the University of Utah. The goal of the Learning Portfolio Project is to encourage thoughtful use of ePortfolios in all areas of the institution by infusing knowledge about the benefits of using ePortfolios as a teaching and learning tool and providing access to and support for ePortfolio technology.

Providing students the opportunity to create ePortfolios encourages a rich and connected learning experience during their time at the University of Utah. In recent years, the use of ePortfolios in higher education has been recognized as a high impact practice because of the metacognitive processes with which an ePortfolio creator engages as they reflect on their experiences and curate artifacts to describe those experiences for a specific audience. In addition to the benefits ePortfolios offer students, they are a flexible teaching and learning tool that instructors, departments and programs can utilize to document student progress and integrate specified outcomes. They provide a productive context in which to encourage active reflection, critical thinking and meaning making. Integrated learning is made visible to instructors and students through the use of ePortfolios, as the process of creating an ePortfolio provides a window into the learning that happens between and alongside classrooms.

Technology plays an important role in the implementation of ePortfolios and is a key component of the Learning Portfolio Project. Providing centralized and supported ePortfolio platforms for users on campus is necessary to adequately infuse ePortfolio use in all areas of the institution. In order to be appropriate for a large and diverse body of users like those at the University of Utah, ePortfolio technology must be flexible, reliable and provide a well-defined set of features. In addition, providing adequate support for ePortfolio technology to students and faculty on campus is critical to the success of the project.

1. 2017-18 PILOT PROJECT

The overarching goal of the 2017-18 Pilot Project was to revive the ePortfolio initiative at the University of Utah. To accomplish this, the Pilot Project had three main goals. The first was to evaluate and make necessary adjustments to the current ePortfolio platform, Pathbrite. The second goal was to convene and work with instructors and students in a pilot group to gain an understanding of the needs of ePortfolio users on campus and test their experience using Pathbrite. The final goal was to develop a long term plan for the Learning Portfolio Initiative.

GOAL 1 - EPORTFOLIO TECHNOLOGY

During the initial Pathbrite launch, users experienced several issues related to Canvas integration, single sign on and adequate technological support. As such, the first goal of the Pilot Project was to better understand these issues and work with the TLT and Pathbrite teams to develop solutions and best practices for moving forward. In January 2018, after working with these teams for several months, single sign on was fully integrated with the University's system. This was an important step because it allowed

the University to connect all Pathbrite accounts on campus while also providing users simple access to the Pathbrite tool using their University credentials. Pathbrite also honored our request to remove the grading function from the platform in order to alleviate some of the issues with the Pathbrite/ Canvas integration. This was an important adjustment because instructors were finding it difficult to connect assignments and grades from Pathbrite to Canvas. In addition, we worked with Pathbrite to identify a more reliable and robust support system which involved removing the problematic Zen Desk ticket system and integrating the University with the Cengage ticket system. After initial testing, the Cengage system seems responsive and capable of handling Pathbrite related tickets and requests.

Although these changes were helpful, after several months of working with the pilot group and talking with other prospective users on campus, it became apparent that these changes alone were not sufficient. The major difficulty in integrating the Learning Portfolio Project at the University of Utah relates to the broad and diverse range of ePortfolio users, as well as the various contexts and spaces for ePortfolio adoption on campus. In short, at a large public institution, where ePortfolio use is not required, it is impossible to implement a one size fits all ePortfolio technology as the use of ePortfolios will be approached in many different ways across campus. Therefore, ePortfolio technology must be flexible, adaptable and allow users to engage with ePortfolios in ways that fit their needs.



BlockU students celebrating their achievements at the 2017-18 BlockU Symposium.

GOAL 2 - PILOT GROUP

In Fall 2017, we convened a small group of willing participants to help us test the changes we made to Pathbrite and to track instructors and students in the group in to develop a better understanding of their experiences with Pathbrite and the use of ePortfolios generally. In order to collect and examine a broad range of experiences, the pilot group included individual courses, large programs and students at different points in their college careers (for example, freshman in Leap 1500, seniors in the Heath Society and Policy Capstone course and masters students in the Master of Arts Teaching Program). The pilot group included 14 instructors and 215 students from the following courses and programs:



BlockU Professor Kelly McIntyre, Arts Leadership & Culture.

- Heath, Society and Policy Capstone Course
- Bennion Center Community Engaged Scholars Program
- Design Ecologies Course
- Leap 1500, sections 2, 3 and 4
- Master of Art Teaching Program
- Art Education Course

Throughout the year we worked closely with the students and instructors in this group. This work included meeting with instructors to identify the ways in which using ePortfolios could support and enhance student learning, as well as assisting them in designing curriculum, assignments and ePortfolio templates. We conducted training sessions with instructors and students to onboard them to the Pathbrite platform and worked with classes, small groups and individuals to support ePortfolio curation and troubleshoot issues.

In all, our close attention to the Pilot Group assisted in creating a good experience for the instructors and students this year. The feedback we received (see section 2 below) was overwhelmingly positive and all the instructors in the pilot group intend to continue using ePortfolios in their courses and programs as they noted the use of ePortfolios was beneficial to their students and their teaching goals.

Although the experience for those in our pilot group was overwhelmingly positive, we realized early on that the learning curve for instructors in implementing Pathbrite was too steep, particularly for an institution of our size and diverse nature. Instructors in the pilot required personal, one-on-one assistance in setting up and using Pathbrite as the process of accessing and applying tools in Pathbrite proved to be cumbersome and not particularly intuitive. Even with close assistance, instructors had difficulty navigating the Pathbrite platform and understanding the options Pathbrite offered. Most of them required several training sessions and did not feel comfortable introducing their students to the technology without our support. In short, the positive experience the pilot group reported had too much to do with the attention and assistance they were provided as participants in the group.

Providing support for ePortfolio users is at the heart of Learning Portfolio Project but as the initiative grows it is not reasonable or sustainable to provide personal, one-on-one assistance to every

instructor and every course using Pathbrite (or other ePortfolio platforms). Our work with the pilot group uncovered the need to request additional changes to the Pathbrite platform to make it more intuitive, user friendly and accessible. It also highlighted the need to provide a robust set of supportive materials that will assist instructors and students in using ePortfolios when in-person support is not available.

GOAL 3 - LONG TERM PLAN

Our work with Pathbrite and the pilot group over the 2017-18 academic year was extremely useful in developing a plan for the Learning Portfolio Project in the 2018-19 year and beyond. The plan for moving forward begins with additional changes to the Pathbrite technology which will be implemented over the summer of 2018, continues with a larger pilot group beginning fall 2018 and finishes with fine-tuning the goals of the initiative at the University.

1. **Changes to Pathbrite.** Our findings related to the difficulty of using the Pathbrite technology from the perspective of the instructor, outlined several conversations with the Pathbrite team. Ultimately, we decided that the best way forward was to disconnect Pathbrite from Canvas and make the necessary adjustments to use it as a separate tool, in the way many other technologies are used on our campus, for example, the My Media tool. This way, an instructor can activate the tool in Canvas and use it in whatever capacity best suits the course curriculum. This change should assist in eliminating the need for complex technical training and decrease an instructor's workload in implementing Pathbrite. In addition, the Pathbrite tool can easily be used outside of Canvas by individual students or other groups on campus, for example, Career Services. This change is in the production queue at Cengage and is scheduled to be complete in mid-July.

2. **Support Materials.** After the Pathbrite changes are implemented in July, we will begin the process of creating a robust network of support for ePortfolio use on campus. This support will largely be housed on the Learning Portfolio web page as most of the feedback in our pilot group suggested students and instructors want to be able to find resources at will and on their own time. The Learning Portfolio web page will include: instruction manuals, instructional videos, demonstrations and tutorials, clear processes for on-boarding new programs and faculty, curriculum resources, portfolio galleries, related campus resources, connections to additional forms of support and more. The development of these materials will also support the TLT Help Desk team in training staff and handling questions that come by phone and email. Our goal is to have the materials and web page complete by the end of 2018. When the web-based resources have been published, our focus will turn to developing additional forms of support such as ePortfolio workshops, lab hours and other trainings for students and instructors.

3. **2018-19 Pilot Group.** After the introduction of the changes to Pathbrite this summer, we plan to test these changes with a larger pilot group. This pilot group will include all the members of the 2017-18 group and add several other courses and programs. We would like to at least double the size of the group as a larger group will help us better understand and develop resources for a larger population of ePortfolio users on Campus. In addition, we want to enlist the support of the participants in becoming ePortfolio ambassadors as we grow the ePortfolio initiative in the coming years.

4. **Additional Technology.** As noted earlier, on a large campus such as the University of Utah, it is impossible to implement a one size fits all ePortfolio technology and although we believe the changes being made to Pathbrite will greatly improve users' experience, there is still a need to offer a technology that supports users with different needs. Lack of options in layout, background and color is one of the chief complaints we received about the Pathbrite platform. We think that Adobe ePortfolio may be a good option because it allows for more creativity in creation and diversity in the final portfolio. In addition, Adobe ePortfolio is already included in the University's Adobe contract. During the 2018-19 year, we plan to test Adobe ePortfolio and potentially plan a pilot test group in Spring or Fall 2019. We believe that offering and supporting two ePortfolio platforms, with different sets of features will promote broader use of ePortfolios on campus.

5. **Future Focus.** The overarching goal of the Learning Portfolio Project is to create an ePortfolio culture on campus. We want every student to have the opportunity to create an ePortfolio during their time at the University as we believe it will add to an exceptional educational experience. Once the foundation (technology, support, etc) of the Project is in place, our mission is to continue to grow interest in ePortfolio use and support new users. Therefore the overarching goal of the 2018-19 year will be to develop a strong support system for ePortfolios on campus so that we feel confident moving forward and promoting ePortfolio use more broadly.

2. 2017-18 PILOT GROUP FEEDBACK

Most of the feedback we received this year came during training sessions with students and instructors. The close nature of our involvement with the participants in the pilot group allowed us to take note of their positive and negative experiences throughout the year, many of which are included in the report above. At the end of the year, we sent a Google survey to the group to collect some additional details about their experience. Because we had an awareness of their experience this year, we focused the survey around questions related to their preferences in support and technology features in order to provide a guiding framework for our focus on developing a foundation of support materials and adding an ePortfolio platform in the 2018-19 year. The survey was sent to all students and instructors in the pilot and we receive 32 survey responses.

QUANTITATIVE FEEDBACK:

The following is a summary of the quantitative feedback collected on the survey:

- *How do you prefer to learn a new technology?* 100% of respondents indicated when learning a new technology, they prefer online help, specifically in the form of instructional videos and instructions with pictures. 50% indicated they preferred an in-class presentation or a workshop.
- *Which ePortfolio resources would you like the University to provide?* 75% of respondents indicated they would like the University to provide design support in the form of a database of ePortfolio examples. 85% of respondents indicated they would like support in the form of connection to

relevant resources (i.e. one button studio, video editing support, etc)

- *What do you like most about the Pathbrite ePortfolio platform?* 100% of respondents indicated they liked the ability to create multiple portfolios and the continued access after graduation. About 50% highlighted ease of use and simple design options.
- *What options would you like the Pathbrite ePortfolio platform to include?* 60% of respondents indicated they would like more layout, color scheme and background options.
- 100% of respondents indicated they intend to create additional ePortfolios in Pathbrite.
- 100% of respondents indicated they intend to share the portfolio they created this year with another audience, for example a potential employer or friends and family.

QUALITATIVE FEEDBACK:

The end of the survey was left open for general feedback about their experience with ePortfolios and Pathbrite:

Student Responses

"I truly feel like I will be using [ePortfolios] throughout my career as a student."

"It would be nice if [Pathbrite] provided a few more layout and color scheme options, maybe the background customizable, things like that."

"If I could change anything about Pathbrite I would make it have more design options and be more user friendly."

Instructor Responses

"I thought the portfolios [my students] created were fantastic. Students liked the reflective nature of the assignments we asked them to include in the portfolio and only faced the technical challenges with Pathbrite that you helped us with throughout the term."

"The students have been talking about [ePortfolios] and are quite excited. I am looking forward to making the e-portfolio through Pathbrite a required part of the degree."

