Department of Arts, Languages, & Philosophy Report of Student Learning Outcomes and Assessment in the Bachelor of Arts in Multidisciplinary Studies (BA MS) Program

1. Department/Program Mission:

The mission of the Department of Arts, Languages, and Philosophy is to provide students with skills essential to becoming well-balanced, self-aware individuals capable of effectively communicating in today’s global society. We work closely with students to educate the whole person, focusing especially on developing appreciation of and communication through the arts, languages, media studies, and philosophy.

The Bachelor of Arts in Multidisciplinary Studies received final approval in late 2012 and began recruiting the following year. The program is administered by a program advisor under the auspices of the Department of Arts, Languages, and Philosophy.

2. Student Learning Outcomes (SLO)

In addition to the general requirements for the B.A. at S&T, students work with a Multidisciplinary Studies Advisor and other faculty to blend two (21 and 24 hours each) or three (15 hours each) focus areas into a unique program proposal tailored to the student’s individual interests, preferences, and experience. Because each individual program is different, traditional statistical measures of assessment are a bit problematic; however, the following procedure is in place.

a. Campus-Wide Student Learning Outcomes:

As approved by the Board of Curators, S&T assessment practices for this program include the same general education outcomes as for other S&T degrees. These are assessed through the student’s progress completing the general education curriculum and specifically by the student’s degree committee as part of the final Capstone oral exam. The SLOs include:

1. an ability to communicate effectively both orally and in writing;
2. an ability to think critically and analyze effectively;
3. an ability to apply disciplinary knowledge and skills in solving critical problems;
4. an ability to function in diverse learning and working environments;
5. an understanding of professional and ethical responsibilities;
6. an awareness of national and global contemporary issues; and
7. a recognition of the need for, and an ability to engage in life-long learning.

b. Additional Program Specific Student Learning Outcomes

Major field and general departmental outcomes are assessed through the student’s degree committee evaluations and the capstone project. Specific outcomes for each student in the program, specifically authorized by the Board of Curators, are:

1. successful completion of the required courses;

2. Successful completion of the multidisciplinary capstone project;

3. Successful completion of the “Report for Post-Grad Plans” for the Career Opportunities Center.

3. Methods/Instruments and Administration

a. Interdisciplinary committees for each student. In addition to traditional rating of each of the above outcomes, faculty committee members from each individual degree program within which the student is working are asked to address the quality of the individual degree proposal and to evaluate how well the particular student has fulfilled the intent of the proposal in an open-ended response. Concerns that may arise as the program grows can thus be identified and addressed.

Because Bachelor of Arts in Multidisciplinary Studies degree programs are chosen by the student in consultation with the program advisor and faculty committee members, each program, and each faculty committee, is unique and may comprise courses and faculty from any department on campus. The results are closely monitored by the program advisor and department chair to identify any weaknesses or trends that should be addressed by the participating faculty.

b. Capstone course. The Bachelor of Arts in Multidisciplinary Studies capstone course requires the student to design and execute a research project that demonstrates his/her ability to integrate and synthesize material from each focus area consonant with the initial degree proposal. The project is designed with the participation and advice of all faculty committee members as well as the program advisor.

The student’s capstone course culminates in a presentation to his or her interdisciplinary faculty committee as well as a final written report. The student’s performance and overall achievements are rated by each faculty member on the committee in terms of the seven learning outcomes as outlined in section 2a. See appendix for sample assessment.

In lieu of the capstone course, students completing the B.A. in Multidisciplinary Studies as part of their degree program for Teacher Education and Certification complete student teaching.
c. **Exit interview.** A final exit interview of each BA MS graduate is conducted by the ALP department chair, with the exception of the teacher education students, whose program is monitored under the Teacher Education and Certification Department. The exit interview survey and interview questions are included in the appendix.

4. **Continuous Improvement Changes**

Since the program’s official approval in 2012, 18 students have graduated with a B.A. in Multidisciplinary Studies, as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Term</th>
<th>Count</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>SP2014</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SP2015</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SP2016</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FS2016</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SP2017</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SS2017</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FS2017</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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One unexpected outcome of this program has been its usefulness to the Teacher Education and Certification Program. The creation of the Multidisciplinary Studies program has allowed us to create a degree with an elementary education emphasis that is unique to the state of Missouri because of its STEM focus. Our students graduate with certification in Project Lead the Way and LAUNCH. The table above shows the program’s growth over the last several years. Within several semesters, we expect to be regularly graduating 10-12 students a year in the education option of this degree program. Because the Multidisciplinary Studies degree is not an elementary education degree, it also provides our education students flexibility if they decide later on that they want to change career paths.

The Department of Arts, Languages, & Philosophy is currently strategically planning to increase the number of students graduating in this degree program (in addition to the students specializing in education). The plan includes 1) increasing awareness of the degree among advisors across campus and 2) encouraging students who are pursuing minors within ALP to consider combining several minors and pursuing further courses within those minors to create the focus areas required for the Multidisciplinary Studies degree. ALP offers sixteen minors, but only two majors. Thus, students who are interested in developing greater depth and breadth of knowledge in the minor areas they are pursuing could do so. This would be particularly useful, for example, for students who would like to study multiple foreign languages, since we do not have any modern languages degrees. It would also be useful for students who are interested in multiple areas within the performing arts, such as theatre and music. There are many possibilities we plan to explore.
APPENDIX

ALP 4397: Multidisciplinary Studies Capstone Course
Syllabus FA 2017

Instructor information:
Dr. Audra Merfeld-Langston
audram@mst.edu / 341-4997 / G-4 HSS Building
Office hours: Monday, Wednesday, and Friday 8:15-9:15, and by appointment.

Course Information: In order to complete your Bachelor of Arts in Multidisciplinary Studies, you must enroll in ALP 4397 during your final semester of study. The course is offered as a Special Problems class supervised by your BA MS advisor. Individual meetings will be arranged throughout the semester.

Course Expectations:
You are to plan, execute, and report on a semester-long research project in which you demonstrate that you have successfully achieved the purposes you stated in your degree proposal, allowing for and acknowledging whatever changes may have occurred as you proceeded through your course of study. You are expected to put as much effort into this project as you would into any 4000-level 3-credit course at S&T and to present your results in a written report in the format of a term paper as well as an oral presentation.

Experiential Component: Although this is not always the case, the Capstone Project is often used to meet the campus experiential learning requirement. This means the project should usually be a “real world” activity that involves sustained application of what you have learned in your program. Students should discuss the experiential component with their advisors. The final written report must include a minimum of 2-3 pages of reflection on what you learned during the experience.

Procedures:
1. Planning and Project Approval: By the end of the 4th week of the semester, you should have a written plan of action firmly in mind and approved by your Advisor and, as appropriate, by your program committee. The plan should employ the research methods you have learned in your program of study and apply them to a well-defined problem appropriate to your degree proposal.
2. Execution: the next six to eight weeks of the semester should be taken up with the execution of your research. During this time, you are encouraged to coordinate closely with your advisor and faculty as appropriate, particularly when the time comes to evaluate and summarize your research.
3. Evaluation, Summary, Preparation of Final Product should take place during the final 6-8 weeks of the semester.
4. Presentation: There is no fixed format for the final product although format is often dictated by the nature of your research and purpose. All students will be expected to present their final product(s) to a meeting of the faculty committee and the advisor who will assess the work and determine your final grade in the course. The scheduling of this presentation is the
student's responsibility. Because faculty have busy schedules, you are cautioned to do this well in advance of the semester’s end. Presentations are usually made during finals week.

NOTE: This course is a senior-level independent study activity. Although your advisor and faculty committee are available as requested, students are expected to demonstrate the responsibility, initiative, and time-management necessary to accomplish the project with minimal supervision.
Capstone Course for Multidisciplinary Studies Faculty Committee Assessment

Student: __________________________ Date of Oral: ____________________

Specific Degree Title (from proposal)__________________________________________

Focus Areas: __________________________________________________________________
______________________________________________________________________________

As a member of a Multidisciplinary Degree Program Committee, you are asked to complete the following short assessment of this student’s achievement in his/her individual degree program.

1. Please rate this student on each of the following S&T Student Learning Outcomes:

   a. Ability to communicate effectively both orally and in writing:
      Poor          Average          Above Average          Exceptional

   b. Ability to think critically and analyze effectively:
      Poor          Average          Above Average          Exceptional

   c. Ability to apply disciplinary knowledge and skills in solving critical problems:
      Poor          Average          Above Average          Exceptional

   d. Ability to function in diverse learning and working environments:
      Poor          Average          Above Average          Exceptional

   e. Understanding of professional and ethical responsibilities:
      Poor          Average          Above Average          Exceptional

   f. Awareness of national and global contemporary issues:
      Poor          Average          Above Average          Exceptional

   g. Recognition of the need for, and an ability to engage in life-long learning:
      Poor          Average          Above Average          Exceptional

   (Continued on back)
2. Please rate this student’s capstone project as a demonstration of his/her achievement of the aim(s) described in his/her degree proposal.

   Poor       Average      Above Average    Exceptional

Please explain your rating:
Department of Arts, Languages, & Philosophy Exit Survey for Graduating Seniors

This survey is anonymous.

Part A. Please circle which degree program you are completing:

Multidisciplinary Studies                Philosophy

Part B. Using the scale below, please indicate to what extent you agree with the following statements as they relate to your experience in your degree program in the Department of Arts, Languages, & Philosophy.

5=strongly agree
4=agree
3=neutral
2=disagree
1=strongly disagree

1. The selection of courses required to complete this program was adequate.
2. The overall quality of the faculty was good.
3. Faculty expressed an interest in me.
4. My advisor kept me informed about and helped me complete the requirements for my degree.
5. My advisor informed me of experiential learning opportunities outside of class.
6. The program improved my critical thinking skills.
7. The program required me to practice and improve my research skills.
8. The program required me to practice and improve my oral presentation skills.
9. The program required me to learn to use various resources.
10. The program improved my ability to interpret various types of media (such as text or film).
11. The Department of Arts, Languages, & Philosophy met my needs as a student in this program.
12. I would recommend this program to a friend.
Oral Interview Questions

1. What did you most enjoy about this program?

2. What did you least enjoy about this program?

3. What was your favorite course? / What are your thoughts on the capstone course?

4. Your least favorite course?

5. What about this program did you think was most helpful or beneficial in your education?

6. What changes would you make to the curriculum/courses, if you could make a change?

7. What are your thoughts regarding the faculty in the program?

8. What kinds of experiential learning did you participate in that related to your program of study? What kinds of experiential learning opportunities would you have liked to participate in?

9. What are your post-graduation plans?