**Summary of the Capstone Assessment Project**

In 2006, the CAS faculty adopted a revised General Education curriculum that required students in the College to undertake a Gen Ed “Capstone Seminar.” The capstone was intended to provide students with an opportunity to connect and integrate the skills, knowledge, values, and capacities acquired through earlier General Education curriculum coursework. The course was to act as a transition from the foundational liberal arts curriculum into the students’ chosen major. By the time students undertook the capstone, either late in the sophomore year or early in the junior year, they were expected to already have a solid grounding in the core competencies (reading, written, oral, quantitative) which they would then synthesize in their Capstone work, in particular their final project.

In Spring 2010, CAS-CAP developed a pilot rubric to assess the Capstone Seminars, in particular whether these courses were succeeding in meeting the goals envisioned. Instructors were asked whether each student’s final project evidenced her competency in reading comprehension, written communication, and quantitative reasoning. Final projects were also assessed for whether they evidenced the students’ ability to integrate the skills, knowledge and understanding of values and belief all gained in earlier Gen Ed courses, and whether they evidenced “broad and intellectual inquiry”. Grades on the final project and in the course were also included.

In subsequent semesters, a similar rubric was used but was revised to include an assessment of whether the final project evidenced the student’s oral communication skills. In addition, following concerns expressed by the instructors in the pilot assessment in Spring 2010, subsequent assessments included information about each student’s success in her foundational classes as well as the number of credits completed prior to enrollment in the Capstone course.

The following courses were included in this assessment project:

Spring 2010 (pilot). INT250: Writing for Social Change, INT306: ???, COM388: Gender and Communication

Spring 2011. PSYC365: Human Sexuality, HUM381: Victorian Studies

Fall 2011: PSYC365: Human Sexuality (two sections), INT334: Latinos and Urban Space in the US, FNAR317: Contemporary Art

Fall 2012: PSYC365: Human Sexuality, HUM381: Victorian Studies

Results for all three courses included in the pilot assessment in Spring 2010 are presented in Figure 1.

Figures 2-5 presents the results of subsequent assessments of each course, with multiple semesters and sections where applicable. Additional information provided by instructors includes suggested that most students were not taking the course at the intended time and that many were seniors. In addition, not all students had completed the foundational courses, or had performed very poorly in them. Some instructors noted that students did not seem academically prepared for the level of work intended in a Capstone class. Instructors also noted that there was a disconnect between the students’ performances on the final project and the overall course grade, observing that students seemed to struggle to apply the skills taught in the foundational courses to the lengthy seminar paper required in Capstone courses.

**Figure 1: Pilot Assessment of Capstone Seminars Spring 2010**

**Figure 2: Assessment FNAR317: Contemporary Art**

**Figure 3: Assessment HUMR381: Victorian Studies**

**Figure 4: Assessment INT334: Latinos and Urban Space in the US**

**Figure 5: Assessment PSYC365: Human Sexuality**