
**Annual Assessment Report
Academic Year 2018-2019
Liberal Studies Program**

Executive Summary

Artifacts from the P4 and P6 categories were scored by multidisciplinary teams of university faculty during a two-day workshop in June 2019. Their scoring efforts focused on measuring achievement against four Liberal Studies student learning outcomes, to include:

- *Means of Expression*
- *Awareness of Self*
- *Awareness of Cultural Diversity*
- *Awareness of Impact*

Results are detailed within this report, but as a general overview,

- Student work reached the LS Program’s goal of 70% of artifacts either meeting or exceeding expectations in **two out of 14 rubric categories**.
- Student work in **three other rubric categories** came within one percentage point of meeting the LS Program’s desired goal for achievement.
- Student artifacts in **nine rubric categories** were more than one percentage point away from meeting the LS Program’s desired goal 70% goal.

Additionally, in their qualitative comments, faculty assessors in both the P4 and P6 categories emphasized the need for:

- closer alignment between assignments and outcomes/rubrics
- access to detailed assignment guidelines
- in certain cases, a reconsideration of the chosen course outcome alignment
- enhanced communication regarding required Liberal Studies language on each syllabus

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1. Rationale for Assessment

WCU's Liberal Studies Program engages in an on-going assessment of student learning within its curriculum. This curriculum consists of approximately 220 courses, and its size means that it touches almost every student experience and almost every department at the university. For that reason, it is important evaluate the extent to which the Program speaks to its intended content and objectives.

Additionally, the accreditation process requires program assessment, as SACS-COC comprehensive standard 8.2.b states that for general education competencies, the university must “identify expected outcomes, assess the extent to which it achieves these outcomes, and provide evidence of seeking improvement.” (SACS-COC, Resource Manual for the Principles of Accreditation, 2018, p. 70). In that spirit, this assessment report provides data regarding the extent to which WCU students are demonstrating the university’s general education student learning outcomes in the P4 (Humanities) and P6 (World Cultures) categories.

The Liberal Studies Committee (LSC), in Fall 2018, set a baseline goal of achievement that 70% of all student artifacts should attain a score of either “meets” or “exceeds” expectations against the relevant rubric.

2. Background on Assessment Approach

The Liberal Studies Committee (LSC) adopted revised student learning outcomes in February 2018, and this report details the university’s first effort to assess student artifacts against four of the newer outcomes.

This particular assessment year represents somewhat of a transitional period between assessment cycles. The current assessment cycle began in 2014 and was supposed to end in spring 2017. For a variety of reasons outlined in previous assessment reports, the Liberal Studies Program fell behind schedule during that time. Thus, to complete its obligations under the 2014 cycle, which emphasized evaluation of each curriculum category within the program (C1, C2, P3, etc.), the LS Program was required to focus on the P4 and P6 categories this year, while at the same time, devising a way to evaluate for the first time the new LS student learning outcomes. As a result, this document highlights the student learning outcomes as the primary unit of measurement, but reports the results based upon curriculum category (either P4 or P6).

Next year’s report will adhere to the new assessment cycle, where curriculum category will be deemphasized, and instead, the eight LS student learning outcomes will stand as the primary unit of evaluation.

The fact that the program’s assessment was in a transitional phase over the past year meant that some choices were necessary when deciding which of the newer outcomes would be evaluated within the older

model of P4/P6 category assessment. To make that decision, the Liberal Studies Assessment Director consulted the program’s curriculum map and found that the majority of courses within the P4 and P6 categories aligned with four particular learning outcomes – specifically **Means of Expression, Awareness of Self, Awareness of Cultural Diversity (formerly Awareness of Others), and Awareness of Impact.**

For reference, the table below details the text of the four outcomes covered within this report. A full list of outcomes is located on the Liberal Studies Assessment webpage, which can be found at the following URL:

<https://www.wcu.edu/learn/academic-enrichment/liberal-studies-program/assessment.aspx>

Means of Expression	Students will craft written and/or oral communication demonstrating organization, clarity, logic, and skill for various audiences.
Awareness of Self	Students will recognize behaviors and define choices that affect their lifelong well-being.
Awareness of Cultural Diversity	Students will examine critically various cultures through historical and contemporary contexts at the local, national, and/or global levels.
Awareness of Impact	Students will evaluate the impact of their own and others’ actions on the human and/or natural worlds.

3. Assessment Methodology and Timeline

In November 2018, the Liberal Studies Assessment Director emailed the P4 and P6 Spring 2019 faculty to let them know their course would be included within the next assessment period. That same email contained a copy of the LS rubric for the relevant outcome being measured, and faculty members were informed that the rubric would be utilized in assessment of student work (artifacts). That email then asked each faculty member to consider thoughtfully how they might design an assignment for their Spring 2019 course that would align appropriately with the applicable rubric.

This same group of instructors was sent a second email in January 2019 that included specific guidelines for electronic artifact submission (artifacts were to be submitted and stored on the H-Drive), and they were notified about the artifact due date -- 5:00 pm on Friday, May 3. As part of this same request, instructors were asked to submit a copy of their course syllabus, instructions for the assignment, and an optional note to the assessors explaining how the assignment met the relevant outcome. The LS Assessment Director sent another reminder email regarding the due date in early April 2019 and then later followed up with all individuals who had not submitted their materials by the May 3 deadline, as well as their department heads.

On June 4-5, 2019, fourteen faculty volunteers, representing a variety of departments and programs throughout the university, attended a workshop for the purpose of scoring all P4 and P6 artifacts. Each faculty assessor received \$400.00 for their time and effort. At the workshop, faculty were divided into

seven teams of two, and each team was given approximately 150 artifacts to score, with the artifacts divided between the P4 and P6 categories, as well as divided between each of the four outcomes (Means of Expression, Awareness of Self, Awareness of Cultural Diversity, and Awareness of Impact).

The type of artifacts varied widely and included student-generated PowerPoints, research papers (both short and long in length), multiple choice exams, reflection papers, short written responses to targeted questions, and Blackboard discussion posts. To address issues of inter-rater reliability, faculty pairs worked together to arrive at a common scoring decision for each artifact, and all scores were entered into a customized Blackboard gradebook (created specifically for this purpose). After scoring each set of artifacts from a particular course, the team then answered a series of questions related to both the artifacts for that course and the course syllabus (see appendix for a copy of survey questions).

At the start of the assessment period, 57 instructors were asked to submit artifacts (and this number included both P4 and P6 instructors). In the end, 11 instructors did not submit artifacts for a variety of reasons, to include taking medical leave mid-semester, a lack of awareness that their course was included in assessment, and failing to collect student artifacts during the course of the semester. Two instructors could not be reached regarding their lack of artifact submission, despite multiple attempts to contact them.

Ultimately, a total of **43 instructors, 81 course sections, and 56 distinct assignments** are included within this P4 and P6 assessment for a total of **350 P4 artifacts** and **644 P6 artifacts** (distributed among the four outcomes being measured).

It is worth noting that different instructors of the same course never utilized a common assignment between sections. This meant that each section's artifacts had to be scored separately in order to measure how well a particular assignment and its associated student work aligned with the rubric in question.

Quantitative assessment results are outlined in the following sections of this report. The results are divided by outcome, and then further divided by P4 or P6 curriculum category.

4. Quantitative Data

A) MEANS OF EXPRESSION

Results for P4 (Humanities)

A total of 108 P4 artifacts were scored for *Means of Expression*, representing a random sample of the total artifacts received. These artifacts were submitted by instructors of the following courses:

LAW 201 – Individual Rights (five sections, three instructors)

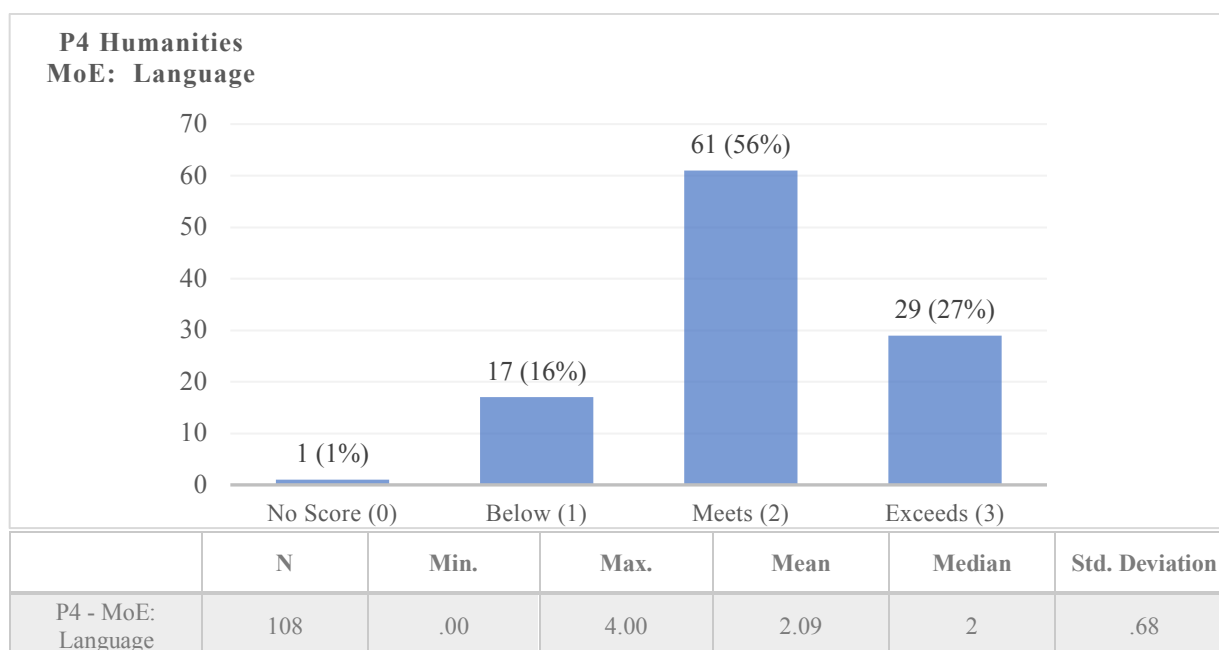
PAR 146 – Western Religious Traditions (three sections, three instructors)

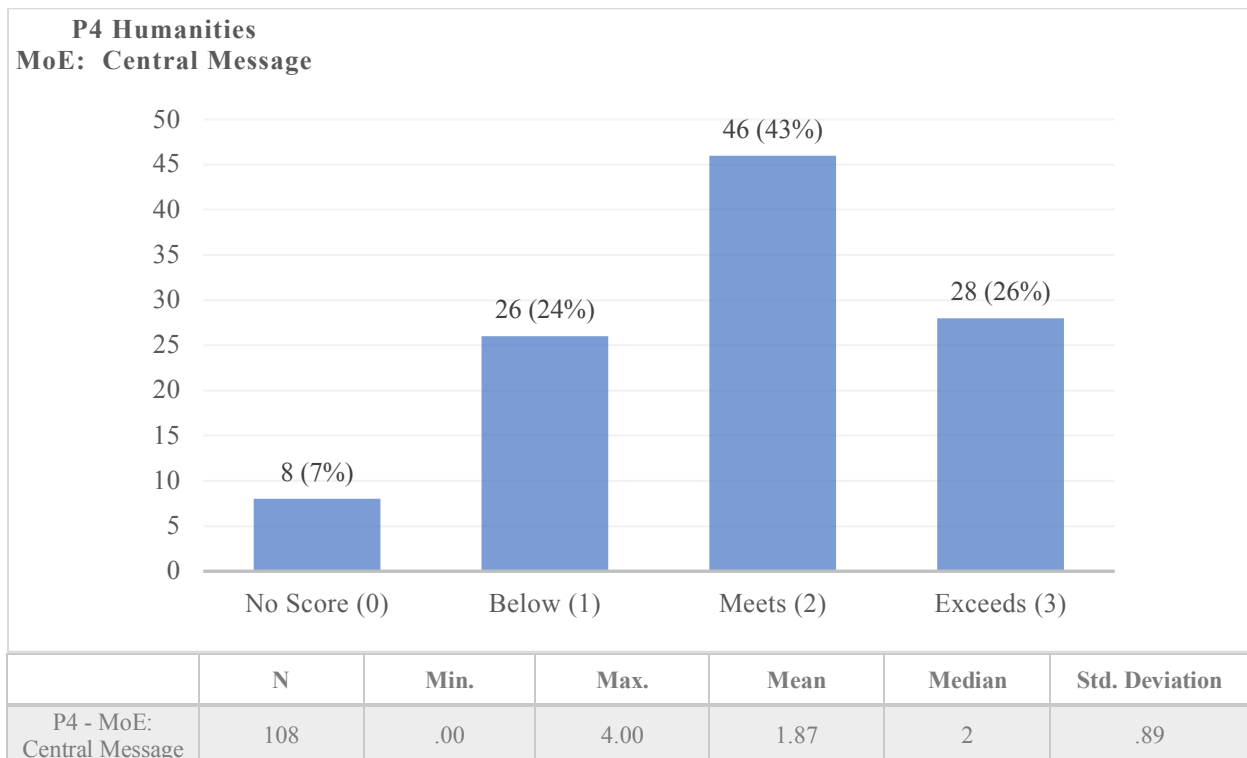
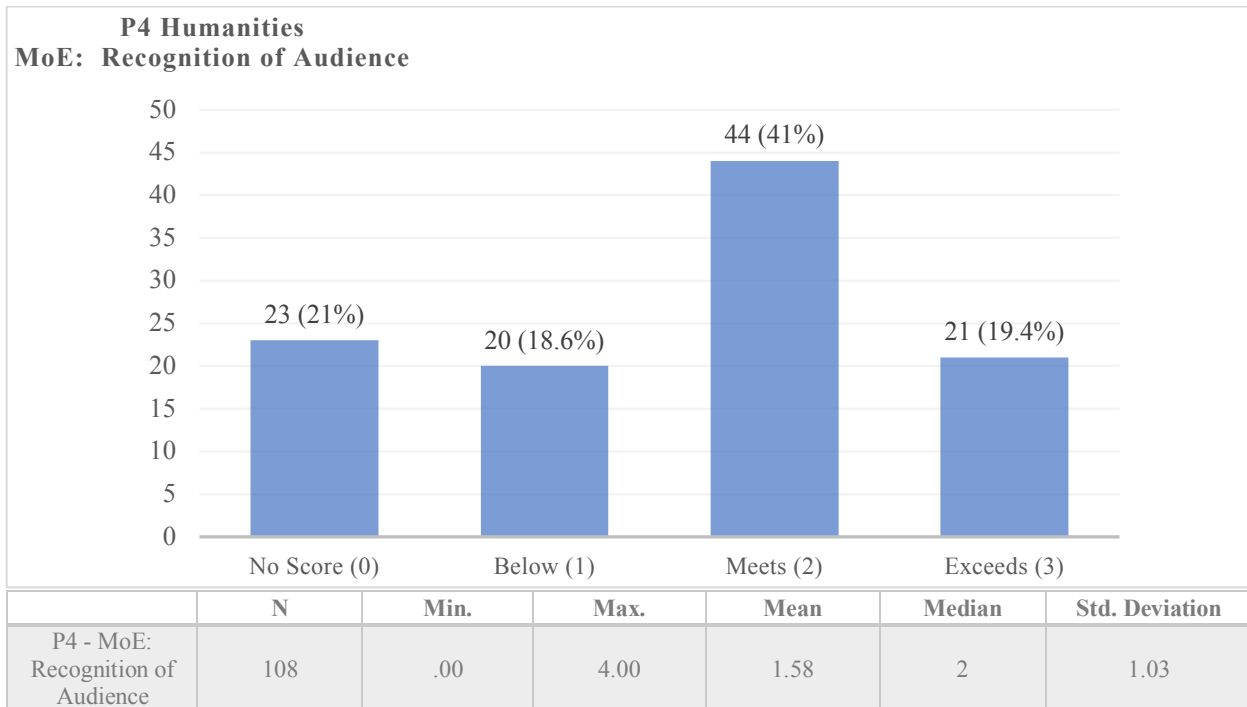
PAR 306 – Early Modern Philosophy: Copernicus-Kant (one section)

All artifacts aligned with this outcome were scored against the rubric on the next page. This rubric measures three aspects of the Means of Expression learning outcome – **use of language, recognition of audience, and strength of central message**. Thus, all scores are divided into those three components.

Means of Expression				
<i>Students will craft written and/or oral communication demonstrating organization, clarity, logic, and recognition of various audiences.</i>				
	No Score (0)	Below Expectations (1)	Meets Expectations (2)	Exceeds Expectations (3)
Language	Artifact does not align with the rubric and/or artifact cannot be scored.	Language used impedes meaning due to errors in usage and convention.	Demonstrates command of language, syntax, and convention that conveys meaning with few errors.	Language use is meaningful and skillful. Demonstrates command of and fluency with the appropriate register, syntax, and convention.
Recognition of Audience	Artifact does not align with the rubric and/or artifact cannot be scored.	Reflects minimal attention to audience, context, and appropriate form.	Crafts communication that demonstrates a recognition of audience, context, and form. (Demonstrates at least 2 of the 3)	Crafts communication that is responsive and informed by audience, context, and form.
Central Message	Artifact does not align with the rubric and/or artifact cannot be scored.	Central message is not clearly articulated and must be deduced.	Central message is clear and consistent with supporting material.	Central message is compelling, convincing, professionally communicated, and strongly supported.

The tables below contain the P4/Means of Expression (MoE) scoring results and related descriptive statistics.





Results for P6 (World Cultures)

A total of 55 P6 artifacts were scored for *Means of Expression*, representing a random sample of the total artifacts received. These artifacts were submitted by instructors of the following courses:

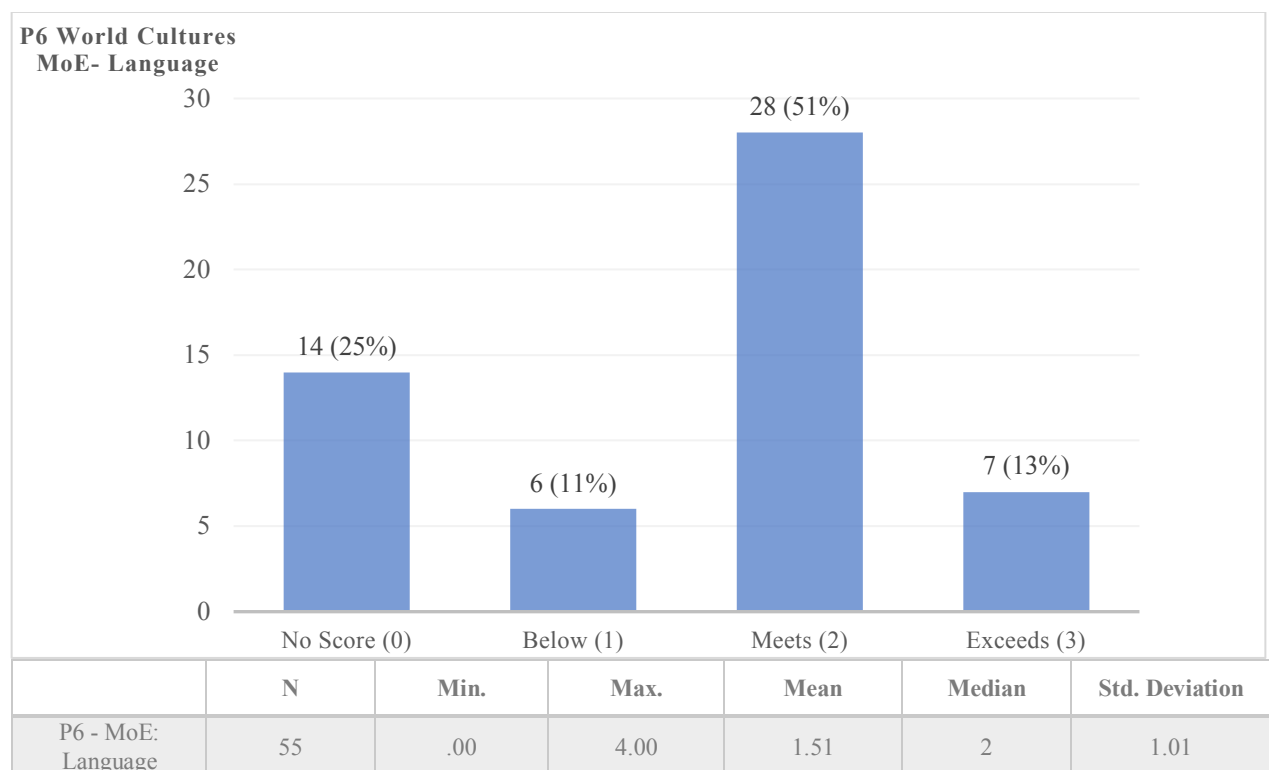
GER 101 – Beginning German I (one section)

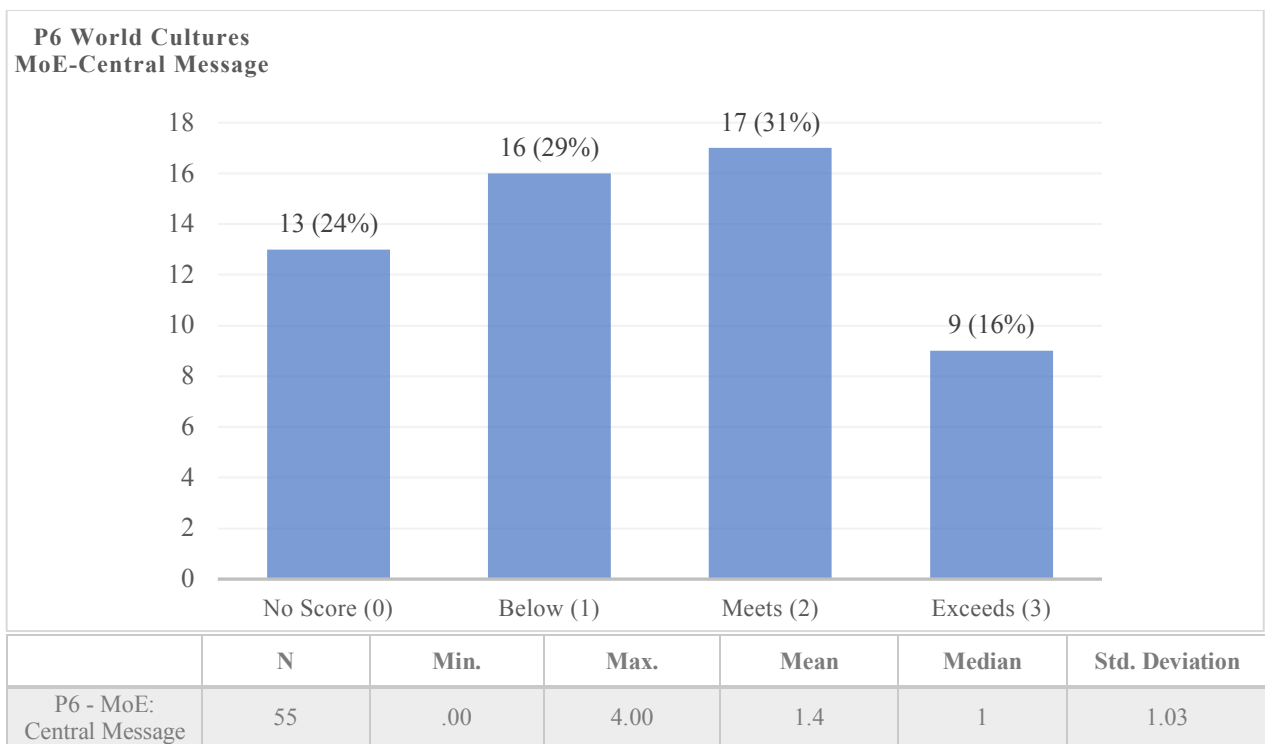
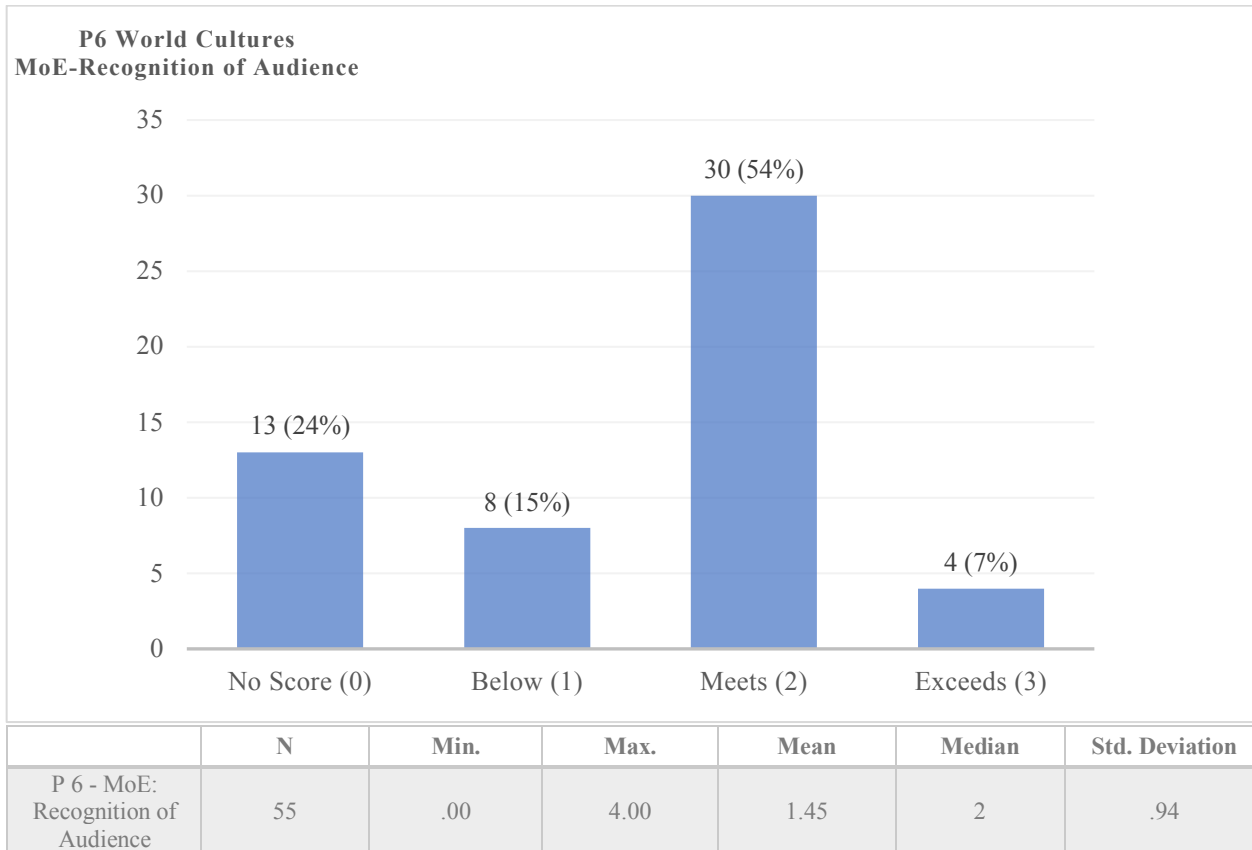
GER 102 – Beginning German II (one section)

PAR 353 – Religion in Film (one section)

SPAN 101 – Spanish and the Spanish-Speaking World (three sections, one instructor)

The following tables contain the P6/Means of Expression (MoE) scoring results and related descriptive statistics.





Summary:

P4/Means of Expression

- Under the **Language** rubric, 83% of artifacts either “met” or “exceeded” expectations.
- Under the **Recognition of Audience** rubric, 60% of artifacts either “met” or “exceeded” expectations.
- Under the **Central Message** rubric, 69% of artifacts either “met” or “exceeded” expectations.

P6/Means of Expression

- Under the **Language** rubric, 64% of artifacts either “met” or “exceeded” expectations.
- Under the **Recognition of Audience** rubric, 61% of artifacts either “met” or “exceeded” expectations.
- Under the **Central Message** rubric, 47% of artifacts either “met” or “exceeded” expectations.

The data suggest that instructors are often effectively encouraging students to be intentional about the language they use when communicating with others (especially for those courses within the P4 category), but that there is room for improvement in terms of emphasizing a central message and communicating in a way that is appropriate to a particular audience. In their qualitative comments, assessors noted that assignments in this category did not usually identify the intended audience, and with such a revision, the assignments aligned with this outcome should prove stronger in the future.

B) AWARENESS OF SELF

Results for P4 (Humanities)

A total of 75 P4 artifacts were scored for *Awareness of Self*, representing a random sample of the total artifacts received. These artifacts were submitted by instructors of the following courses:

PAR 101 – Western Philosophical Traditions (three sections, two instructors)

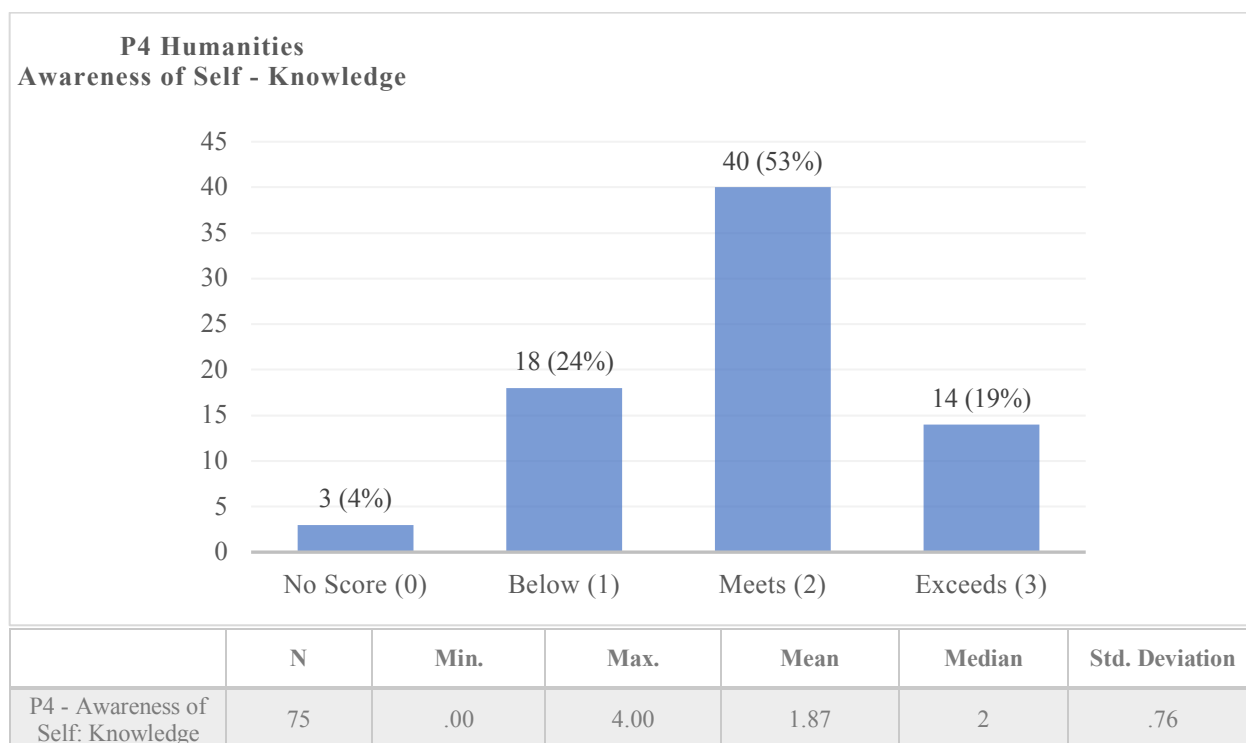
PAR 102 – Western Moral Traditions (one section)

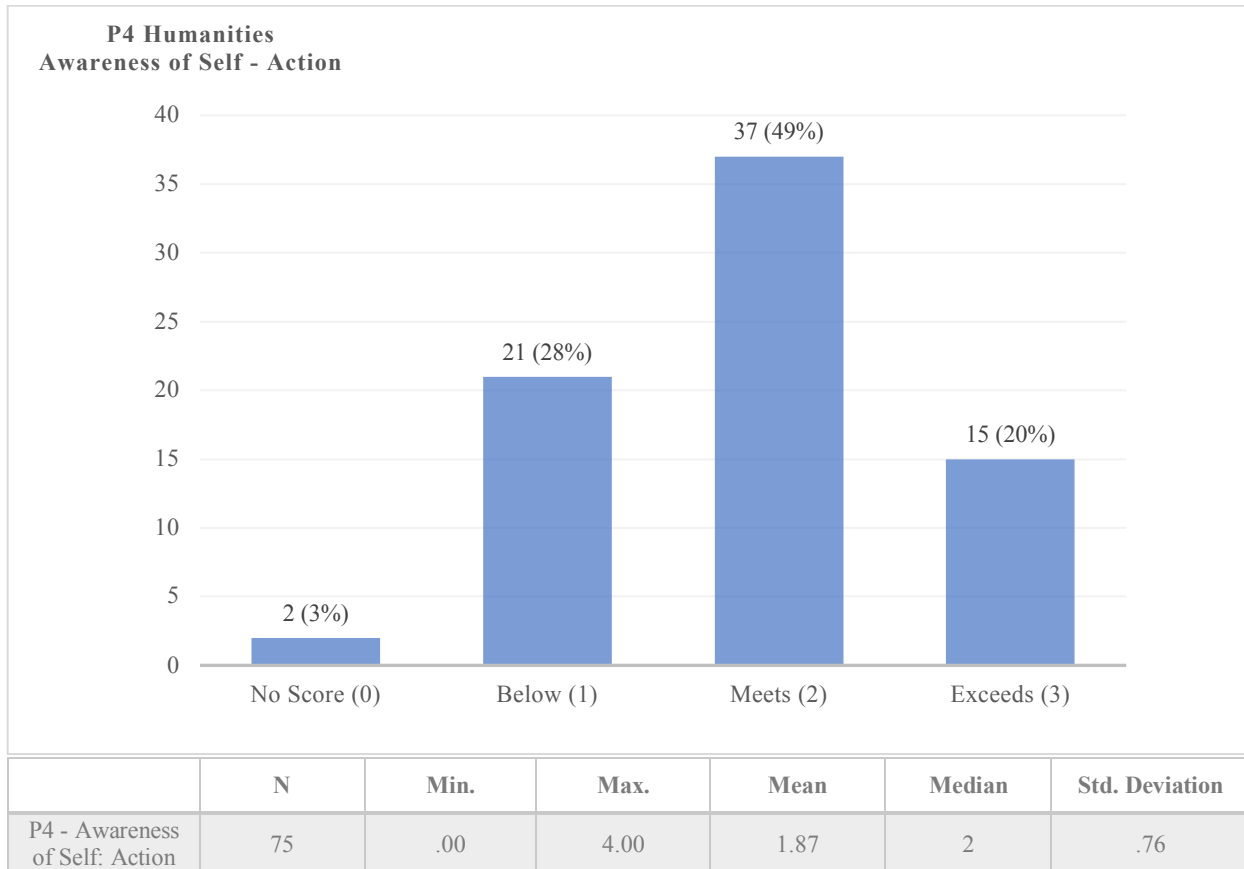
PAR 201 – Philosophy of Love & Sex (one section)

All artifacts aligned with this outcome were scored against the rubric on the next page. This rubric measures two aspects of the *Awareness of Self* learning outcome – **knowledge of one’s own behavior** and **taking action to pursue knowledge beyond the classroom**. The scores for this section are divided into those two components.

Rubric for SLO #6: Awareness of Self				
<i>Students will recognize behaviors and define choices that affect their lifelong well-being.</i>				
	No Score (0)	Below Expectations (1)	Meets Expectations (2)	Exceeds Expectations (3)
Knowledge	Artifact does not align with the rubric and/or artifact cannot be scored.	Does not identify behaviors that contribute to lifelong well-being.	Identifies the connection between knowledge, choice, and overall well-being.	Examines thoughtfully how learning might lead to changes in personal behavior.
Action/Resources	Artifact does not align with the rubric and/or artifact cannot be scored.	Unable to articulate the link between behavioral choices and resulting consequences.	Acknowledges a repertoire of choices that affect and impact well-being.	Pursues beyond the classroom knowledge and experiences that affect lifelong well-being.

The tables below contain the P4 scoring results and related descriptive statistics.





Results for P6 (World Cultures)

A total of 71 P6 artifacts were scored for *Awareness of Self*, representing a random sample of the total artifacts received. These artifacts were submitted by instructors of the following courses:

PAR 354 – Religion, Suffering, and Moral Imagination (one section)

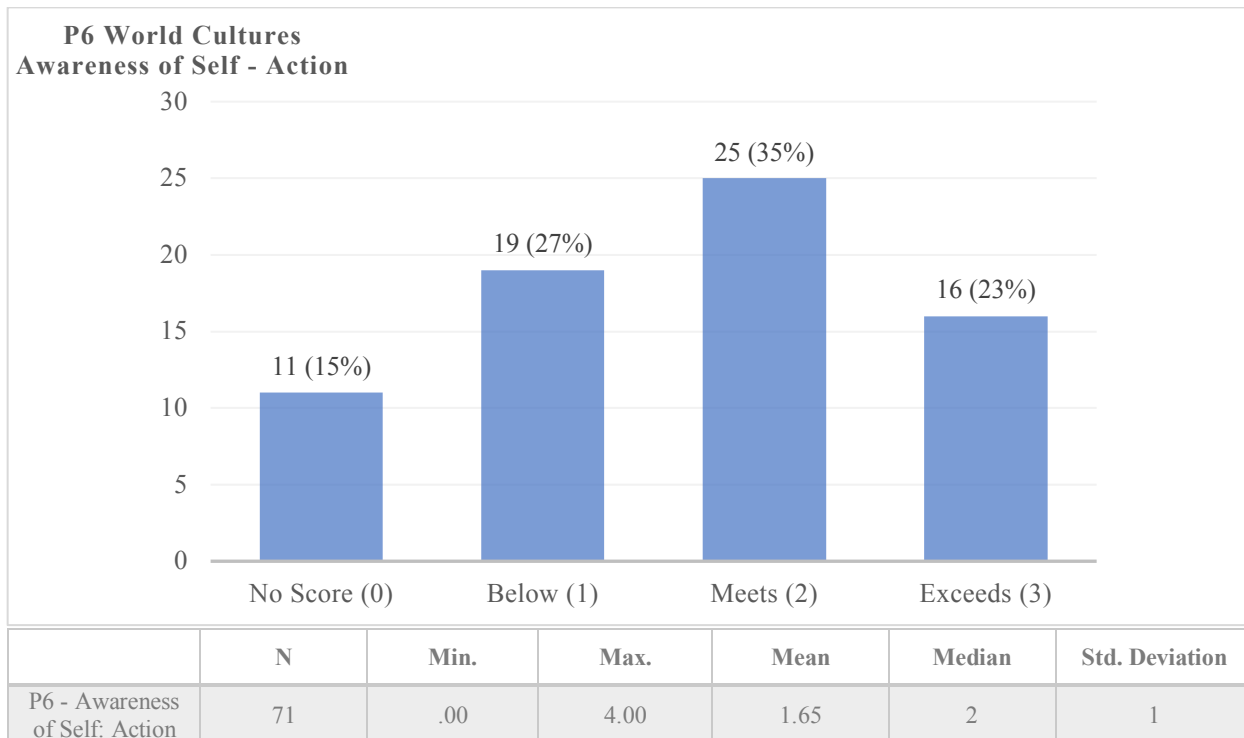
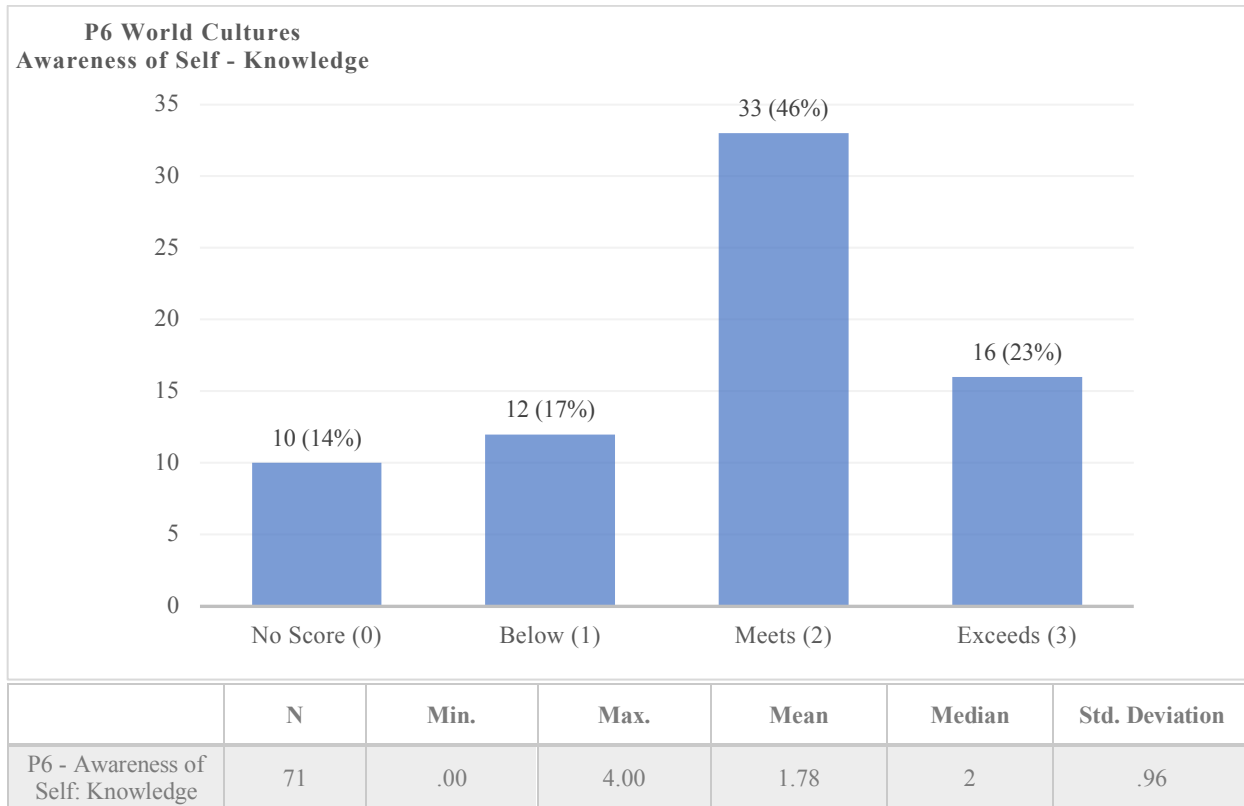
PAR 323 – Mysticism (one section)

HSCC 205 – Women’s Health (two sections, one instructor)

JPN 101 – Beginning Japanese I (one section)

JPN 102 – Beginning Japanese II (two sections, two instructors)

The tables below contain the P6/Awareness of Self scoring results and related descriptive statistics.



Summary:

P4/Awareness of Self

- Under the **Knowledge** rubric, 72% of artifacts either “met” or “exceeded” expectations.
- Under the **Action** rubric, 69% of artifacts either “met” or “exceeded” expectations.

P6/Awareness of Self

- Under the **Knowledge** rubric, 69% of artifacts either “met” or “exceeded” expectations.
- Under the **Action** rubric, 58% of artifacts either “met” or “exceeded” expectations.

The data indicate that, in most instances, student work for the *Awareness of Self* outcome is meeting, or very close to meeting, the LSC’s 70% benchmark goal. In their qualitative comments, assessors consistently mentioned that assignments for this outcome often did not include material relating to the Action component of the rubric, and this is an obvious area of improvement for the future.

C) AWARENESS OF CULTURAL DIVERSITY

Results for P4 (Humanities)

A total of 84 P4 artifacts were scored for *Awareness of Cultural Diversity*, representing a random sample of the total artifacts received. These artifacts were submitted by instructors of the following courses:

ECON 344 – Ethics of Capitalism (one section)

ENGL 209 – Past Times: Literature and History (two sections, one instructor)

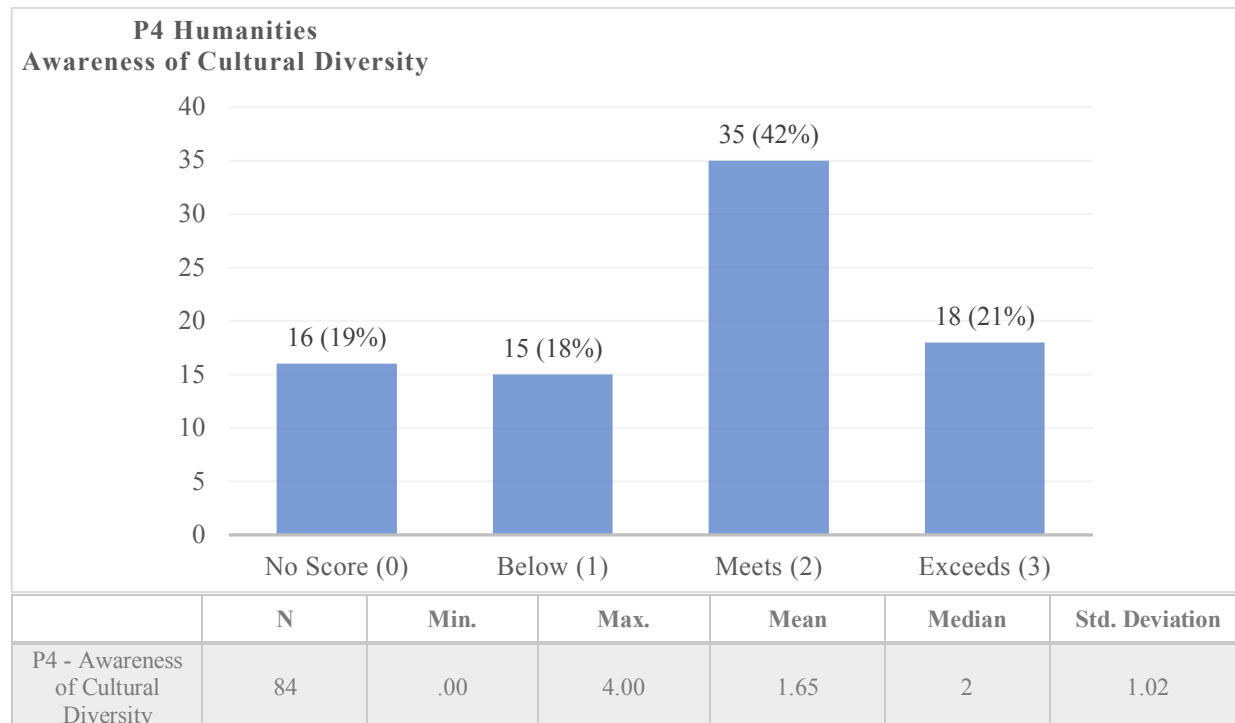
ENGL 367 – Appalachian Literature (one section)

HIST 281 – Transformation in European Religious History (two sections, one instructor)

All artifacts aligned with this outcome were scored against the rubric below.

Rubric for SLO #7: Awareness of Cultural Diversity				
<i>Students will examine critically various cultures in historical and contemporary contexts at the local, national, and/or global levels.</i>				
	No Score (0)	Below Expectations (1)	Meets Expectations (2)	Exceeds Expectations (3)
Examination of cultures and cultural contexts	Artifact does not align with the rubric and/or artifact cannot be scored.	Exhibits surface or partial understanding of the complexity of elements important to culture(s) studied in relation to their history, values, politics, communication styles, economy, aesthetics or beliefs and practices. Describes the experiences of others through only one cultural perspective.	Exhibits adequate understanding of the complexity of elements important to culture(s) studied in relation to their history, values, politics, communication styles, economy, aesthetics or beliefs and practices. Shows awareness of more than one cultural perspective.	Exhibits sophisticated understanding of the complexity of elements important to culture(s) studied in relation to their history, values, politics, communication styles, economy, aesthetics or beliefs and practices. Explains and shows awareness of more than one cultural perspective.

The following table contains the P4/Awareness of Cultural Diversity scoring results and related descriptive statistics.

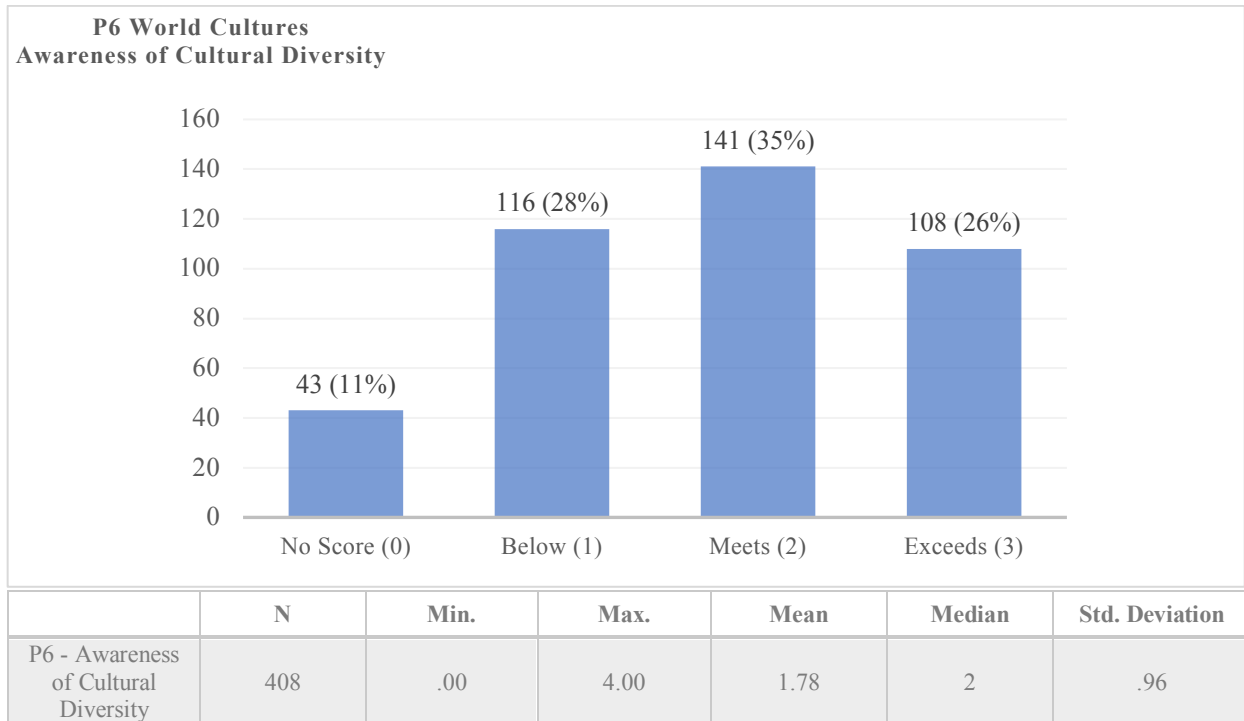


Results for P6 (World Cultures)

A total of 408 P6 artifacts were scored for *Awareness of Cultural Diversity*, representing a random sample of the total artifacts received. These artifacts were submitted by instructors of the following courses:

- ANTH 120 – Comparative Cultural Systems (eight sections, five instructors)**
- COMM 415 – Intercultural Communication (one section)**
- ENGL 363 – Globalization & Global Literature (one section)**
- ENVH 210 – Global Disparities in Public Health (one section)**
- FREN 102 – French & the Francophone World (three sections, one instructor)**
- GEOG 103 – Cultural Geography (two sections, one instructor)**
- GEOG 440 – Regional Geography (one section)**
- JPN 101 – Beginning Japanese I (one section)**
- JPN 102 – Beginning Japanese II (two sections, two instructors)**
- MUS 303 – The World of Music (two sections, one instructor)**
- PAR 260 – Women & Religion (one section)**
- PAR 356 – Buddhism (one section)**
- PAR 367 – Native American Religions (one section)**
- SPAN 102 – Spanish & the Spanish Speaking World II (two sections, two instructors)**
- ND 310 – Food, Nutrition, & Culture (four sections, three instructors)**
- CM 365 – Construction & Culture (two sections, one instructor)**

The table below contains the P6/Awareness of Cultural Diversity scoring results and related descriptive statistics.



Summary:

P4/Awareness of Cultural Diversity

- Under this rubric, 63% of artifacts either “met” or “exceeded” expectations.

P6/Awareness of Cultural Diversity

- Under this rubric, 61% of artifacts either “met” or “exceeded” expectations.

The data suggest that, in both the P4 and P6 categories, instructors should be more intentional in trying to align their assignments to emphasize the skills within the *Awareness of Cultural Diversity* rubric. This recommendation is supported by the fact that 11% of the artifacts were scored as “zero,” meaning the scorers could not see any apparent assignment alignment with the rubric for this outcome.

D) AWARENESS OF IMPACT

Results for P4 (Humanities)

A total of 83 P4 artifacts were scored for *Awareness of Impact*, representing a random sample of the total artifacts received. These artifacts were submitted by instructors of the following courses:

ENGL 206 – Literature of Place (three sections, two instructors)

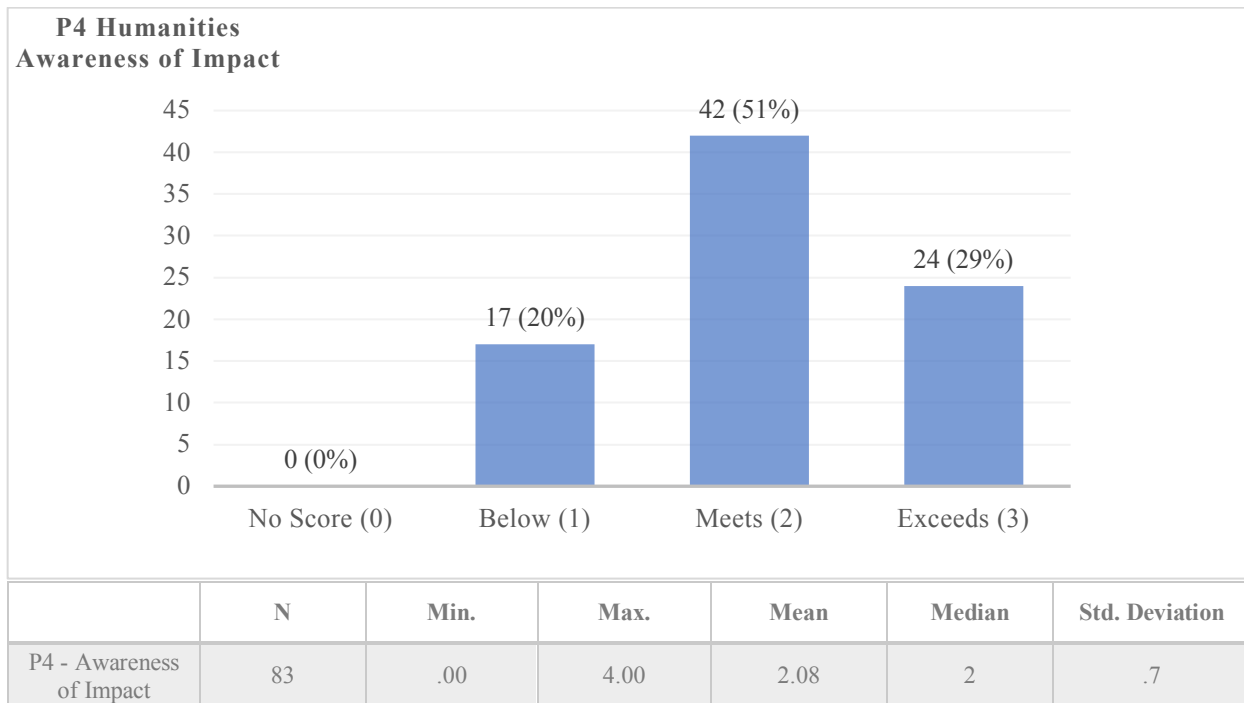
PAR 333 – Environmental Ethics (one section)

SM 340 – Sport Ethics (one section)

All artifacts aligned with this outcome were scored against the rubric below.

Rubric for SLO #8: Awareness of Impact				
<i>Students will evaluate the impact of their own and others' actions on the human and/or natural worlds.</i>				
	No Score (0)	Below Expectations (1)	Meets Expectations (2)	Exceeds Expectations (3)
Assess Impact	Artifact does not align with the rubric and/or artifact cannot be scored.	Explains the impact of one's own actions or the actions of others from only one perspective, or the artifact does not address impact at all.	Explains the impact of one's own actions or the actions of others from more than one perspective (perspectives could include ethical, civic, social, environmental, etc.).	Explains the impact of one's own actions or the actions of others from more than one perspective (perspectives could include ethical, civic, social, environmental, etc.). Identifies a range of actions to create change in a particular area.

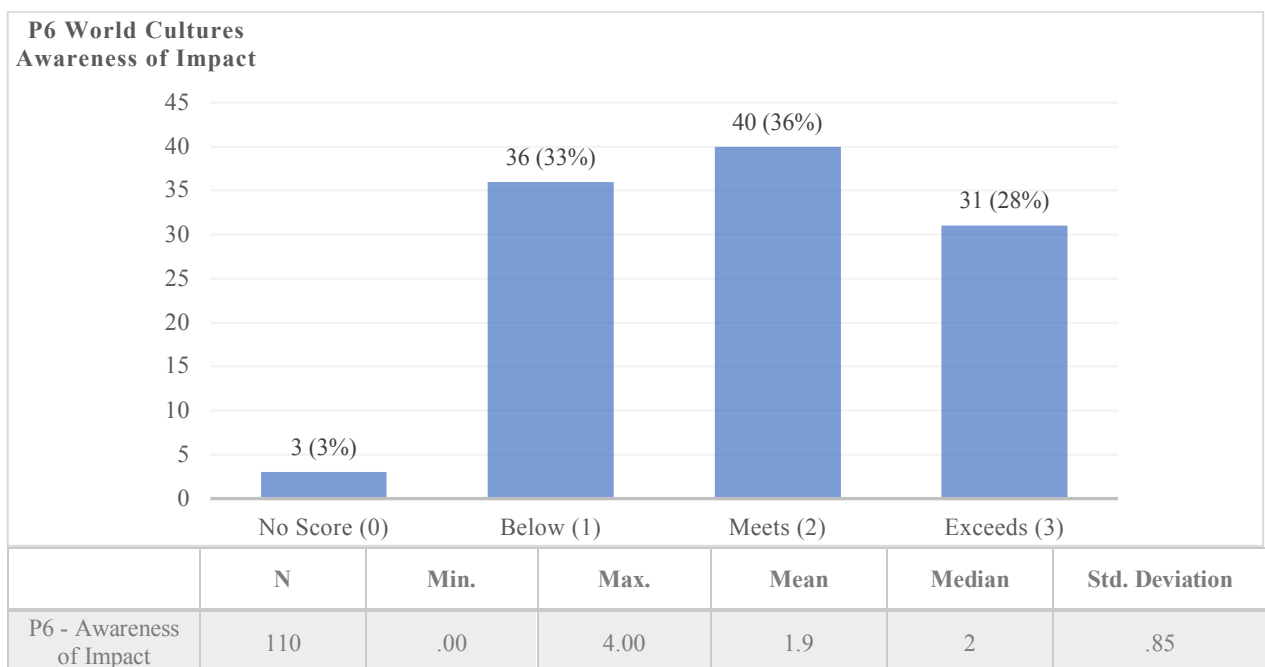
The table on the next page contains the P4/Awareness of Impact scoring results and related descriptive statistics.



Results for P6 (World Cultures)

A total of 110 P6 artifacts were scored for *Awareness of Impact*, representing a random sample of the total artifacts received. These artifacts were submitted by instructors of the following courses, and the results appear in the table below:

PSC 169 – Global Issues (10 sections, five instructors)



Summary:

P4/Awareness of Impact

- Under the rubric, 80% of artifacts either “met” or “exceeded” expectations.

P6/Awareness of Impact

- Under the rubric, 64% of artifacts either “met” or “exceeded” expectations.

The data indicate that the courses within the P4 category are effective at aligning their assignments so that they emphasize *Awareness of Impact*, as operationalized by the LS student learning outcomes. The P6 category, in contrast, scores lower in this respect. For the P6 courses, the assessors noted consistently that assignment instructions did not always emphasize multiple perspectives, as called for by the rubric.

5. Review of Course Syllabi

Instructors from the reviewed P4 courses were asked to submit a syllabus as part of the assessment process, and **14 out of 17 instructors did so**.

Instructors from the reviewed P6 courses were asked to submit a syllabus as part of the assessment process, and **19 out of 26 instructors did so**.

Based upon the Liberal Studies syllabus template guidelines (accessible through both the Liberal Studies and Coulter Faculty Commons websites), the faculty assessors expected that each syllabus would:

- 1) include a statement that this was either a P4 or P6 Liberal Studies course
- 2) list only the LS outcomes to which that course aligned
- 3) include a statement that student work may be collected for LS assessment.

The syllabus assessment results appear below:

	P4 Description		Relevant Liberal Studies Outcomes		Language that student work may be assessed by LS Program.	
	Present	Absent	Present	Absent	Present	Absent
P4 Syllabi	10	7	7	10	5	12

	P6 Description		Relevant Liberal Studies Outcomes		Language that student work may be assessed by LS Program.	
	Present	Absent	Present	Absent	Present	Absent
P6 Syllabi	16	10	13	13	3	23

The results suggest that the Liberal Studies Program needs to continue its instructor outreach to further disseminate the LS syllabus template language, and this applies to all three LS syllabus components.

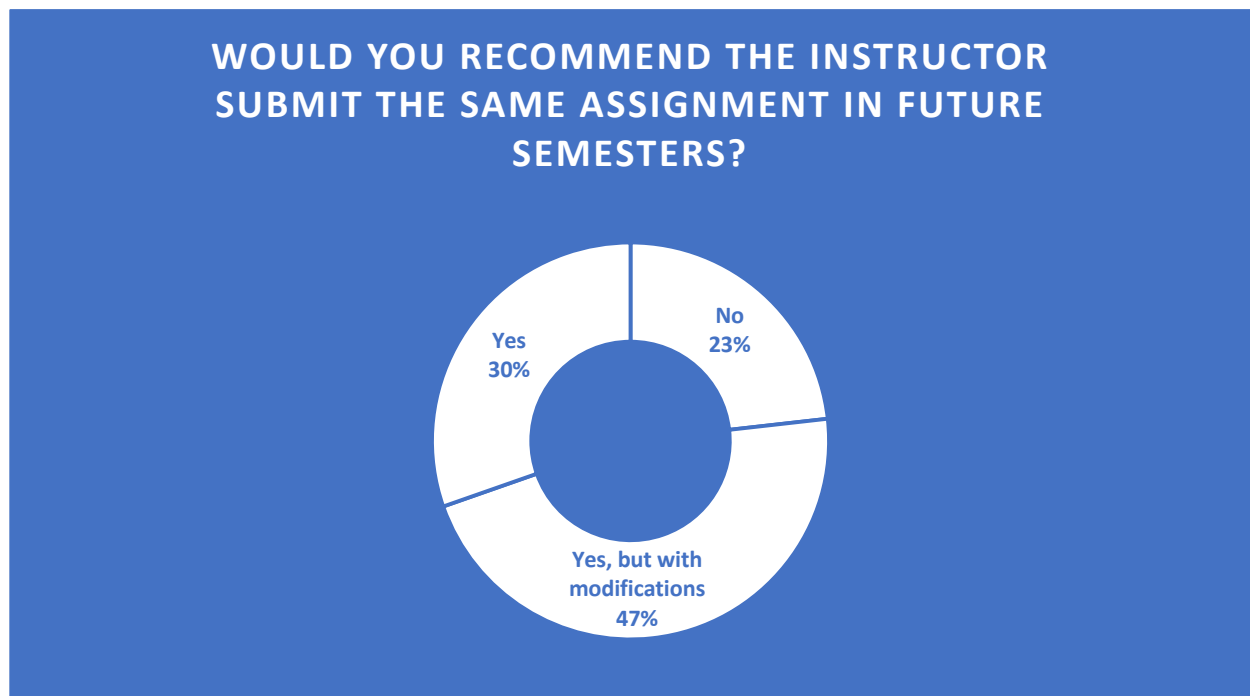
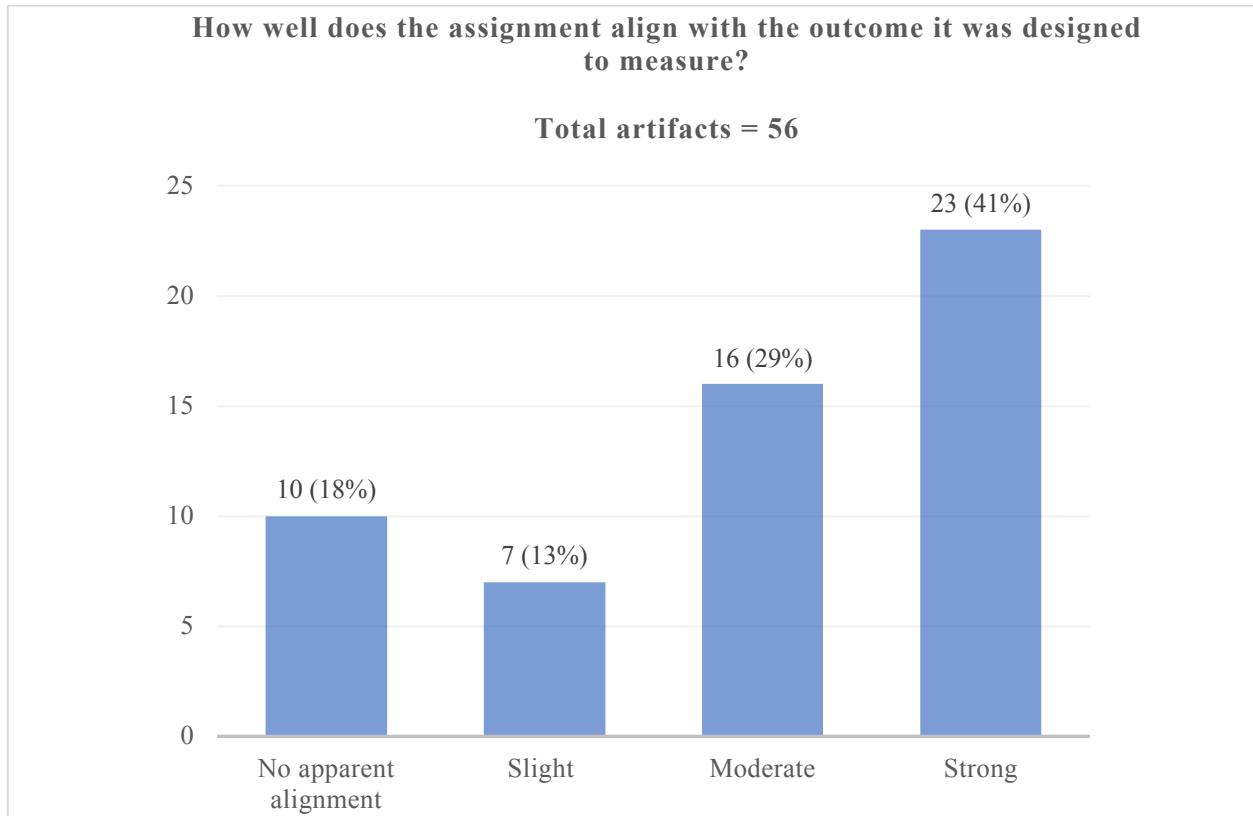
6. Qualitative/Formative Feedback

After scoring each course's student artifacts and syllabus, assessors were asked a series of questions relating to the assignment's alignment with its relevant LS learning outcome. A summary of those questions appears in the box below (full survey appears in Appendix 1):

- Did the instructor provide the assignment guidelines?
- How strongly did the assignment align with the outcome it was designed to measure?
- Please provide detailed feedback on the assignment design as it relates to the relevant student learning outcome.
- Would you recommend the instructor submit the same assignment for assessment in future semesters of the course?
- Would this assignment provide a strong exemplar for other faculty members looking for guidance in their own artifact design?
- Do you have any other comments or suggestions relating to the scoring, syllabus, or general assessment of this particular group of artifacts?

In the interest of providing helpful feedback and encouraging continuous improvement within the LS curriculum, the Liberal Studies Assessment Director will provide each individual instructor with the formative feedback for their specific course. Department heads will also receive a summary of the aggregate quantitative feedback for the courses within their discipline (see Appendix 2 and 3 for sample feedback).

To highlight some of the findings from the assessor comments, the tables on the next page summarize two aspects of the data – 1) the strength of the assignment's alignment, and 2) whether that instructor should use the same assessment assignment in future iterations of the course.



Additionally, the following recommendations appeared consistently throughout both the P4 and P6 qualitative assessments.

- First, faculty assessors indicated that, while 41% of the assignments demonstrated a strong alignment with the rubric, the majority of assignments should be revised to achieve a more robust connection with the outcome being measured. Assessors offered several suggestions to individual faculty members on ways they might strengthen the alignment of their assignments, and the LS Assessment Director will send each instructor a summary of those comments.
- Second, 40% of instructors did not include the assignment instructions with their artifacts (even though asked to do so). The lack of instructions hampered the ability of assessors to fully evaluate the assignment's alignment. Assessors felt they couldn't provide an accurate opinion without seeing exactly what students were asked to produce within the assignment parameters.
- Third, in several cases, assessors suggested that departments may want to reconsider the LS outcome chosen for their course, as there are other LS outcomes/rubrics that seem to provide a stronger connection with the course assignments and syllabus.
- Fourth, several faculty scorers recommended amending the *Awareness of Cultural Diversity* rubric so that it would have two components – knowledge and multiple perspectives. In its current state, it requires both of those aspects, but they are aggregated into one category, rather than separately assessed. Scorers noted that by disaggregating them, the LS Program may be better able to identify ways in which assignments can be improved to see more successful results for this outcome.

7. Summary and Recommendations

This section of the report summarizes the assessment data in the three areas suggested by the current Liberal Studies Assessment Plan – a) how strongly does student work demonstrate the learning goals within the LS Program, b) are there changes that should be made to the assessment process itself?, and c) what actions should the LS Program take in the future to strengthen learning within its curriculum?

A. To what extent are WCU students demonstrating the university's Liberal Studies learning outcomes?

As this is the first time this particular set of Liberal Studies learning outcomes has been measured, no prior data exists for comparison purposes. With that caveat, student performance measured against *Means of Expression*, *Awareness of Self*, and *Awareness of Impact* did, on several occasions, surpass or come within one percentage point of meeting the LS Program's 70% baseline goal for achievement.

For example, **within the P4 data**,

- Student work scored above or very near the 70% goal on both the Language and Central Meaning components of the *Means of Expression* outcome.
- Student work was similarly strong for the *Awareness of Self* outcome, as artifacts relating to both outcome components scored above or within one percentage point of the 70% threshold.
- Furthermore, student work demonstrated robust alignment with the *Awareness of Impact* outcome, as 80% of artifacts met or exceeded expectations.

Within the P6 data,

- At 69% meets or exceeds, student work on the Knowledge component of *Awareness of Self* came within one percentage point of meeting the LS Program's 70% baseline goal.

There is, of course, room for improvement on each of the outcomes. Most notably, the data suggest that:

- A number of assignments aligned with the *Awareness of Cultural Diversity* outcome require revision, as the artifact scores within both the P4 and P6 courses did not come close to meeting the 70% baseline achievement goal. This was especially surprising for the P6 category, given its emphasis on world cultures.
- Student work did not effectively demonstrate the Recognition of Audience component within the *Means of Expression* outcome in either the P4 or P6 categories. As their qualitative comments indicated, faculty assessors felt that the majority of assignment instructions for this outcome did not make clear to students that they should frame their communication for a particular audience.
- Within P6 courses, the Central Message component of the *Means of Expression* outcome proved to be a particular weakness (at only 47% of artifacts meeting or exceeding expectations). In their qualitative comments, assessors consistently noted the need for these assignments to more strongly align with the contents of the rubric **OR** for instructors/departments to choose alignment with a different outcome altogether.

Overall, the findings of this report indicate that the Liberal Studies Program must continue to work in tandem with instructors and departments to refine the artifact design process in the hopes of improving future assessment efforts.

B. What are the strengths and weaknesses of the assessment process itself?

Feedback from both the Liberal Studies Assessment Director and from the fourteen summer faculty assessors denote that the LS assessment process has become more efficient over the past two years, due to recent revisions in assessment implementation.

The table on the next page summarizes the strengths of the current assessment process, as well as highlighting areas for improvement.

Strengths
<p>81% of instructors submitted LS artifacts this year, as compared with 72% in AY 2017-2018. This improvement is likely due to enhanced communication with both instructors and department heads. It has certainly helped to have one point of contact (the LS Assessment Director) as the go-to person for questions and concerns.</p>
<p>Every single artifact received this year was of good quality – meaning that it was in an accessible electronic format and could be easily interpreted by our faculty scorers. This is a marked departure from AY 2017-2018, when ~30% of artifacts submitted were illegible documents or corrupted digital files.</p>
<p>Unanimously, faculty assessors expressed satisfaction with the compensation, timing, and workload for the summer scoring workshop. This format seems to be working well and represents a significant improvement over the older format of asking faculty to score artifacts during the school year.</p>
Room for Improvement
<p>Even though the program saw an increased number of submissions this year, 19% of instructors still did not submit artifacts; thus, communication outreach and accountability for artifact submission remain challenges of the LS assessment process.</p>
<p>Technology, specifically as it relates to artifact storage and scoring, remains an ever-present challenge. The June 2019 scoring workshop experienced several technical issues, and in an effort not to repeat those in future years, the LS assessment process will stop using Blackboard as a rubric scoring mechanism.</p> <p>At this point in time, though, it is unclear whether Xitracs, the new university compliance software, will be an effective scoring substitute. All of this is to say that the LS Assessment Director must continue to be flexible and adaptable in trying to find alternate means of scoring and storing artifacts.</p>

C. What recommendations do the data suggest for strengthening the Liberal Studies Program?

1. **The Liberal Studies Program must improve faculty outreach as it relates to strengthening the relationship between assignment design and a particular outcome/rubric.** If the LS Program wants to improve its assessment results over time, it is clear that strengthening the alignment between student artifacts and the LS learning outcomes is of paramount importance. In their qualitative comments, the faculty assessors mentioned this issue consistently – many times artifacts received a lower score or no score at all because the alignment between the assignment and the rubric was weak or not apparent.

2. **Maintaining strong communication with adjunct and contingent faculty is crucial to the success of the LS assessment process.** Certainly, this recommendation relates to the previous suggestion – like all faculty, adjunct instructors must be kept informed regarding the need to align their assignments with the relevant learning outcome. Their part-time status, however, presents additional challenges in communication, and the LS Program needs to be sensitive to that reality. Forty-seven percent of the instructors included within this assessment are part-time faculty, and in working with them, the LS Assessment Director learned that part-time faculty often do not have email access until right before academic year begins, which limits their access to LS information and their time to prepare a relevant and aligned assignment. During this assessment period, it also became apparent that the majority of part-time faculty did not have access to the H Drive; thus, they faced an obstacle in submitting their artifacts. The LS Program needs to find additional effective means of reaching part-time instructors. Their work is critically important to the program, and they deserve to be recognized and included fully in the assessment process.

3. **The Liberal Studies Program should continue its efforts to enhance communication with departments regarding Liberal Studies-related language in syllabi.** This same recommendation appeared in last year's assessment report, and the data indicate that more work remains on this front.


4. **The LS Program should consider creating a multi-tiered rubric for the *Awareness of Cultural Diversity* outcome that disaggregates the Knowledge and Multiple Perspectives components.** Faculty assessors expressed their opinion that separating the two parts of the rubric would allow the LS Program to determine which component is contributing to the lower scores on this particular outcome.


5. **Assessment-related technology concerns must remain a priority.** As stated earlier in the report, it is unclear whether Xitrac will prove to be a viable platform for the summer scoring workshop. Additionally, it became apparent over the past year that the H Drive is not an acceptable means of submitting artifacts since adjunct instructors (who teach many classes with Liberal Studies) very often do not have access to that drive.

6. **The LS Program should continue its efforts to communicate with faculty and department heads about the importance of artifact submission and accountability.** This year was certainly more effective than last in terms of the percentage of instructors submitting quality artifacts by the deadline. With that said, though, 19% of instructors still did not submit their required artifacts. In each of those cases, the relevant department head was notified and most were very responsive in trying to expedite the process. However, there was not much a department head could do if the instructor had not asked their students to submit an LS assignment during the course of the semester.


APPENDIX 1: P4 and P6 Assessor Survey

Q1 Please enter the artifact number.





Q2 Which team do you represent?



Team 1

Team 2

Team 3


Team 4

Team 5

Team 6


Team 7

Q3 Does the instructor's syllabus include:




	Yes	No	N/A - No syllabus available
The LS category for the course (P4 or P6)?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Only the relevant LS student learning outcomes?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
A statement that student work may be collected for assessment?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>


Q4 Is there any additional feedback you'd like to provide regarding the instructor's syllabus?





Q5 Did the instructor provide the assignment guidelines?

 Yes
 No


Q6 How well did the assignment demonstrate its chosen learning outcome? In other words, how strongly did the assignment align with the outcome it was designed to measure?

 Strong alignment
 Moderate alignment
 Slight alignment
 No apparent alignment


Q7 Please provide detailed feedback on the assignment design as it relates to the relevant student learning outcome (including both compliments and suggestions, as necessary).



Q8 Would you recommend the instructor submit for LS assessment the same assignment in future semesters of this course?

 Yes
 Yes, but with modifications to the assignment.
 No

Q9 Would this assignment provide a strong exemplar for other faculty members looking for guidance in their own artifact design?

 Yes
 No

Q10 Do you have any other comments or suggestions relating to the scoring, syllabus, or general assessment of this particular group of student artifacts?

APPENDIX 2: Sample Feedback sent to Department Head

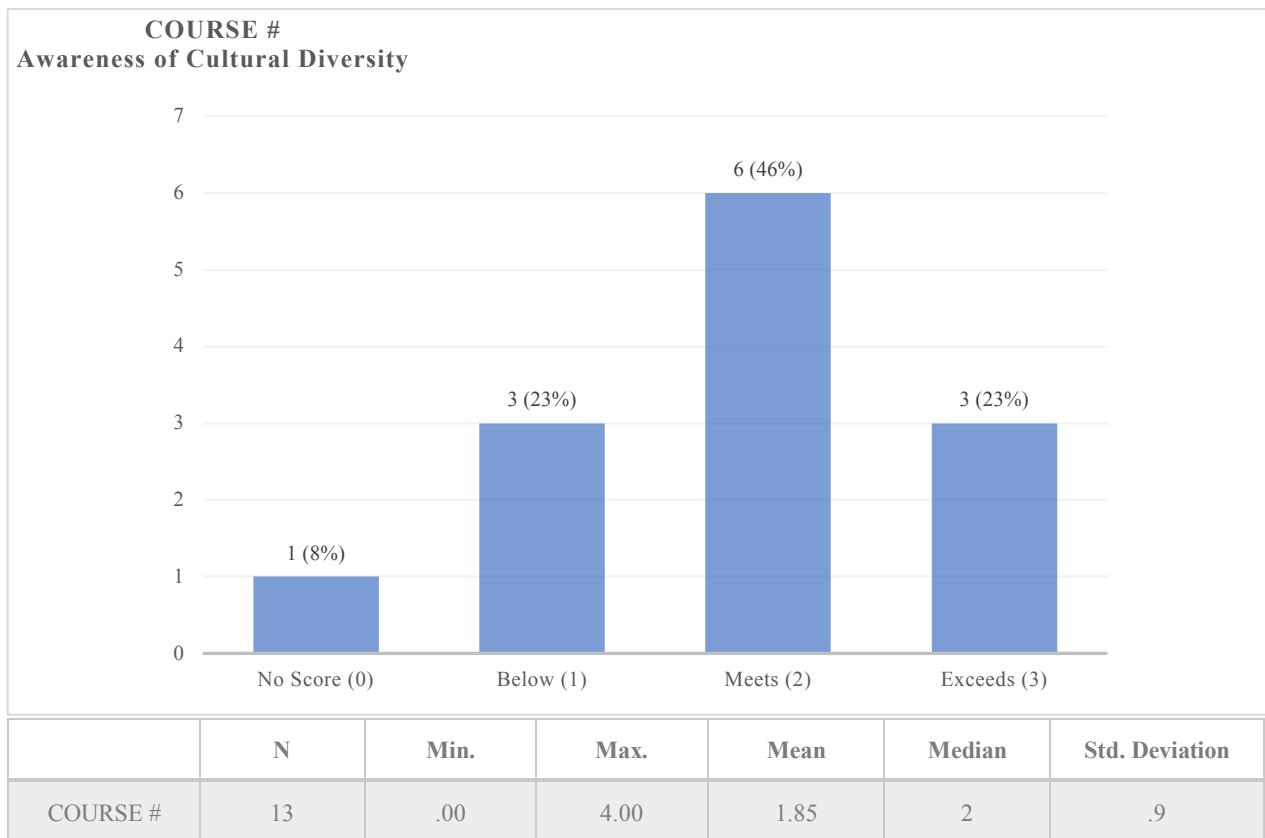
Name of Department

The Liberal Studies Program’s goal for each learning outcome is that at least 70% of artifacts “meet” or “exceed” expectations.

The assessment results for COURSE # and its relationship to the *Awareness of Cultural Diversity* learning outcome appear below. These scores are aggregated, so if one course had multiple sections, the scores for all sections have been combined.

Awareness of Cultural Diversity

COURSE # – COURSE NAME



69% of COURSE # artifacts scored as either “meets” or “exceeds” expectations.

APPENDIX 3: Sample Feedback sent to Individual Instructor

INSTRUCTOR NAME COURSE # <i>Awareness of Impact</i>	
Please offer feedback on the Liberal Studies language on syllabus.	<p>You've got almost all the language you need here, which is perfect. Just add that the assignment might be collected for assessment, and you're good to go.</p> <p>For reference, a template of this syllabus language is available on the LS assessment web page.</p>
Did the instructor provide the assignment guidelines?	Yes
How well did the assignment align with the outcome it was designed to measure?	Moderate alignment
Would you recommend the instructor submit the same assignment for LS assessment in future semesters of the course?	Yes, but with modifications to the assignment.
Please provide detailed feedback on the assignment design as it relates the relevant student learning outcome.	<p>Students rarely made a connection between the impact of THEIR actions and the product, but did a great job at describing the impact of the product globally. An additional sentence in the instructions could help students understand their impact. For example: "Describe the global effects of your action [in purchasing the product]."</p>