



WAYNE STATE UNIVERSITY



# PROGRAM ASSESSMENT GRANTS

2022 Project Reports

# Introduction

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To promote best practices in program-level assessment of student learning outcomes and student services programs' goals, in 2018 the Office of the Provost established the WSU Program Assessment Grant Program. The annual call for proposals invites Wayne State University faculty and staff to submit proposals to improve their academic or student services program's assessment efforts. The grant funds are available to assist in the piloting, creation, or significant revision of assessment instruments or processes, or to obtain professional development in program assessment. In this report you'll find descriptions of the 2022 grant projects.

Proposals are reviewed by a committee of faculty and staff volunteers who are experienced assessment practitioners from across campus. At least two reviewers independently evaluate each proposal using a [rubric](#), and then reviewers meet to discuss and rank them. Priority is given to proposals with multiple participants that introduce innovative or experimental approaches to direct assessment or improved practices in student learning outcomes assessment at the program level, especially those that might serve as models for other programs.

Six projects were funded in 2022; each project's goals, activities, and impact are summarized in this report. Some highlights among the projects' efforts to improve their programs' assessment practices include:

- aligning assessments to a revised curriculum
- revising a key assessment instrument and its implementation process
- improving students' writing skills based on faculty and student input
- creating an assessment process for a new program
- centralizing and visualizing multiple program data sources on a dashboard to improve access and data-informed decisions with a particular focus on diversity and equity issues.
- developing a common, online assessment tool that works across specializations within a single major and reduces the assessment workload

For more information about the grant program, please see the [WSU Program Assessment Grants](#) page.

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## Analysis of MPH Program Competencies - Preparation for CEPH Reaccreditation

**Recipients:** Rachel Mahas, Elissa Firestone, and Juliann Binienda (Department of Family Medicine and Public Health Sciences)

**Description of project goals:** The Master of Public Health (MPH) program's curriculum underwent significant revisions in mid-2021. During this revision, we matched program courses to the Council on Education for Public Health (CEPH)'s 22 foundational competencies and 10 concentration competencies. The revisions were approved by CEPH and internal committees, but following implementation of the revised curriculum, CEPH made changes to their accreditation criteria guidelines. This project seeks to ensure that our revised MPH curriculum and associated competencies are still effectively assessed in accordance with the new [CEPH guidelines](#).

This assessment project occurs ahead of our MPH program's CEPH reaccreditation, scheduled for December 2024. In the past, institutions have failed to meet CEPH's self-study expectations due to their inability to measure certain competencies. With this assessment project, we aimed to ensure that our program can effectively measure all competencies and begin our path towards successful reaccreditation.

### Project activities:

1. From September-December 2022, the Program Evaluation Committee (PEC) met to determine program assessment concerns for reaccreditation through the self-study template.
2. In January 2023, the MPH Program Director, Dr. Rachel Mahas, met with the Curriculum Committee (CC) Chair, Dr. Juliann Binienda, to aggregate assessment concerns discussed in committee meetings.
3. Also in January 2023, Program Director Dr. Rachal Mahas scheduled a half-day consultation with consultants from the Council on Education for Public Health (CEPH).



4. The assessment team hired a part-time student assistant (MPH student Nora Akcasu) to help prepare for our expert consultation with CEPH.

5. In February 2023, our student assistant completed the assessment grant midterm report under the guidance of the MPH Program Manager and Program Director.

6. Also in February 2023, our student assistant conducted a search and review of all competency assessment software systems compatible with Canvas LMS. The results of this review were aggregated and software systems were compared for their cost and ability to meet the program's competency assessment needs.

7. In early April 2023, the assessment team sent the CEPH consultants an initial draft of the MPH program's self-study document and electronic resource file (ERF) for review.

8. On April 18, 2023, the assessment team and participants from the PEC and CC hosted a half-day virtual visit with the Deputy Director of CEPH, Molly Mulvanity, and Senior Accreditation Specialist at CEPH, Emily Albers. Approximately 12 MPH faculty attended the consultation. From 9:00-10:15 AM, the CEPH representatives gave a presentation to MPH faculty introducing the reaccreditation process. The CEPH representatives also responded to faculty questions regarding courses and competency assessment practices that are important to CEPH reviewers. From 10:30 AM-12:00 PM, the CEPH representatives reviewed the drafts of the self-study documents with the MPH Program Director, the MPH Program Manager, and committee chairs. This feedback helped the assessment team identify key areas for improvement in the self-study document. The accreditation experts provided insight into how to appropriately format tables and charts, narratively summarize data and tables, and effectively demonstrate attainment of various competencies. These suggestions helped proactively align our self-study document and ERF with CEPH guidelines.

9. In April-May 2023, the MPH Program Director discussed the accreditation expert's recommendations at MPH faculty meetings.





10. In June 2023, the assessment team wrote the final grant report and developed a presentation to disseminate assessment grant activities to the Wayne State community.

11. Results of the assessment grant will guide MPH Program leadership as we continue our journey to reaccreditation.

**How the grant funds were used:** Our funds were used to;

1. Fund the CEPH half-day consultation for expert reaccreditation advice.
2. Hire a part-time student assistant who helped prepare and organize our self-study.
3. Support professional development.

**Program-level impact:** This project allowed us to get a head start on ensuring a successful reaccreditation process in 2024. By consulting with CEPH accreditation experts, we received valuable feedback on how to strengthen our assessment practices as well as demonstrate the program's adherence to new CEPH criteria. We explored several opportunities for improvement, including refining assessment measures, strengthening community engagement and workforce development, and defining interprofessional collaboration. While we identified these items in the context of meeting accreditation criteria, they also represent opportunities for broader program growth and improvement.

**Individual impact:** Through the help of this project, our student assistant engaged in professional development by attending the Association for Prevention Teaching and Research conference in March 2023. There, she learned from experienced public health professionals around the country about developing and accessing inclusive learning environments and health equity curricula.

**Recognition/Appreciation:** We would like to extend our appreciation to the consultants from the program's accreditation body for their help in completing this project:

- Deputy Director of CEPH, Molly Mulvanity, MPH, CEA
- Senior Accreditation Specialist at CEPH, Emily Albers, MPH, CPH



## Calibrating the Sociology Assessment Exam to Program Learning Outcomes

**Recipients:** David Merolla, Zachary Brewster, R. Khari Brown, and Nirmal Acharya (Sociology)

**Description of project goals:** Starting in AY20-21, the sociology department changed our assessment approach from a qualitative assessment of papers written in the Sociology Capstone (SOC 4996) class to an objective multiple-choice exam that students take in the Sociology Capstone class. This change was made to better align our assessment method with our learning outcomes and curriculum map. Further, the new method has proven to provide more insight into the breadth of what students know when they complete a BA in sociology compared to a review of the capstone papers.

The goal of our project was to improve the exam to better align it with our learning outcomes and curriculum map. Specifically, we wanted the assessment instrument to be better calibrated to both difficulty level and what instructors teach in courses across the sociology curriculum. Some questions on the exam were very difficult and somewhat ambiguous. Moreover, we wanted to develop a question bank for each learning outcome so that questions can be alternated and every student does not get the same questions each semester. Finally, we wanted a standardized system for the instructor of Sociology Capstone to efficiently administer the exam and get the exam results for the assessment process.

### **Project activities:**

1. Completed review of extant assessment exam.
2. Existing questions from the assessment exam were sent to faculty teaching courses aligned to each learning outcome for review. Faculty were encouraged to edit, remove, or add questions based on the learning outcomes of the courses that they teach.



3. Revised the assessment exam based on faculty feedback and incorporated specific feedback from faculty teaching courses for each learning outcome.
4. Reviewed new assessment exam for the appropriate level of difficulty.

**How the grant funds were used:** Due to HR issues, our project was delayed significantly as we had a problem hiring the graduate student we originally had in mind for the project. We used \$2,250 to hire a graduate student in the summer of 2023 who coordinated the project and collected the information from faculty.

**Program-level impact:** The exercise of reviewing the assessment exam and the opportunity to provide feedback and add new questions increased faculty awareness and ownership of our undergraduate assessment program. This aspect of the project was particularly important because the undergraduate assessment activities had primarily been the purview of the undergraduate director, department chair, and the two faculty who teach the Sociology Capstone course. This project set the stage for continued improvement to our assessment and making assessment seem like a team effort among the sociology faculty.

**Individual impact:** After we get the results of our new assessment exam for a few semesters. David Merolla, Zachary Brewster, and Khari Brown plan to present a summary of the project and the outcomes at the 2025 North Central Sociological Association, either as an individual presentation or a workshop.

**Recognition/Appreciation:** Thanks to Cathy Barrette and the reviewers of the 2022 Assessment Grants. We appreciate their support and service!





## “Guiding” Undergraduate Students to Improve Academic Writing in the Department of Criminology & Criminal Justice

**Recipients:** Danika Hickling and Jim Geistman (Department of Criminology & Criminal Justice)

**Description of project goals:** The goal of this project is to improve undergraduate writing in the Department of Criminology & Criminal Justice by creating a guidebook that faculty can distribute to students in all courses.

Ideally, these guidebooks that target both faculty and students will not only create a more uniform process for assigning and completing written assignments, but it will also expose students to proper academic writing in all criminal justice courses that can help them in their careers, graduate school, and law school.

The grant recipients were members of the Assessment Committee for the Department of Criminology and Criminal Justice since 2020. As a part of the committee, the members reviewed undergraduate written work and asked instructors for feedback regarding undergraduate written work. Given the written work analysis and the instructor feedback, it was determined that there was a need for a department-wide initiative to improve undergraduate writing. Since the committee analyzed written work and asked for instructor feedback, the goal of the assessment grant was to receive student feedback regarding writing in the undergraduate program, and tailor an undergraduate writing guide based on both instructor and student feedback.

**Project activities:** Four focus groups were conducted with undergraduate students in the Department of Criminology & Criminal Justice. Questions focused on what instructors can do to help students complete writing assignments, having students reflect on past assignments and what has helped them, on their own skills and what they need to improve on, as well as what they already have a good grasp of, if any other courses have helped them improve their writing, and favorite and least favorite writing assignments. Responses were analyzed and the guidebook was created based on both faculty and student feedback regarding writing.



Results of the focus groups indicated students wanted more consistency across courses in writing assignments, rubrics, instructions, and grading. Students noted that they preferred smaller writing assignments, or big writing assignments that were broken up throughout the semester. Students mentioned that a variety of writing resources (videos, guides, examples) were important in learning how to properly use APA citations. Students emphasized the importance of having a clear rubric and clear expectations so they could achieve the grade they wanted. Students require feedback throughout the semester on their writing and prefer this over one big written project at the end where there is no opportunity to turn in a draft or receive feedback. Students also mentioned that examples were key, and that having multiple courses require similar assignments in regard to APA requirements was important. Students gave mixed feedback on the Writing Center and their exposure to APA in previous English courses.

Given this feedback, we created a guidebook with a variety of writing resources and examples and created rubrics. The resources within the guidebook include an overview of typical writing assignments that they will see in their courses; rubrics; and information on how to write an introduction and conclusion, summarize, paraphrase, quote, find research articles, and use in-text citations. The rubrics align with the two most common writing assignments in our department: discussion boards and papers. Criteria in the rubrics include components focused on content (e.g., introduction, hypothesis/purpose, analysis, integration of research, conclusion) and form (e.g., writing effectiveness, APA formatting).

**How the grant funds were used:** We used the grant funds to provide gift cards, food, and drinks to the focus group participants.

**Program-level impact:** Once completed, the guidebook was distributed to both full-time and part-time faculty. At both faculty meetings, Jim and Danika presented the guidebook and its importance to students as well as a summary of student feedback. All faculty were encouraged to post the guidebook to their courses by Jim and Danika, as well as the Department Chair, Brad Smith.



Faculty will also be asked to post the guidebook at the beginning of Winter 2024 semester as well, and every subsequent semester. We will be posting the guidebook to our Criminology & Criminal Justice website.

As a result of our project, we expect that future Assessment Committee members will move on to assessing and improving Graduate academic writing using the instruments we develop through this grant. By developing our guidebooks, future Assessment Committee members can use a uniform assessment to determine if undergraduate academic writing has improved since 2020.

**Individual impact:** This project has impacted us personally because it has forced us to analyze our own tactics when teaching writing to our undergraduate students. We have reflected on the resources, guidance, and instructions we present to our classes, and have made changes. Professionally, we were able to network more with both full-time and part-time faculty to disseminate the writing guidebook and also explain the need for tools to improve undergraduate writing. We were able to network with students and hear their perspectives on how they learn to write and what they can do as students and what we can do as instructors to assist them in developing their writing. We were able to develop professionally by creating a plan to attack a universally-agreed upon problem and produce a tool to (hopefully) assist in solving this problem.

**Recognition/Appreciation:** We would like to specifically thank the undergraduate Criminology & Criminal Justice students who participated in the focus groups, full- and part-time faculty, and our department chair, Brad Smith who have all been supportive in our endeavor. We also would like to thank Dr. Barrette for always being available to answer questions and assist us in this process.



## Measuring Student Belonging, Engagement, and Community in FIGs

**Recipients:** Kelly Dormer (Undergraduate Affairs), Amy Cooper (Learning Community Program), and Casey Borden

**Description of project goals:** The intent of this assessment grant project is to measure First-year Interest Group (FIG) students' level of engagement, belonging, and membership in the campus community. FIGs are small cohorts of students who take anywhere from 2-4 courses in a block schedule together and are grouped together by a shared academic interest. Fall 2022 was the first time that FIGs were offered at WSU, so measuring how students received the program, how they engaged, and how they felt throughout the semester was critical to having a qualitative understanding of the program and how it can improve for future years.

The goals of the WSU FIG program are to:

1. Simplify the registration process for first-year students through block scheduling.
2. Connect first-year students with peers who share similar academic interests.
3. Engage students with faculty and staff in their academic home or area of academic interest from their first semester on campus.
4. Intentionally offer opportunities for students to increase their level of engagement through both participation at WSU events and through interactions with and encouragement from FIG peer mentors and faculty.
5. Offer students a small community experience within a large university with the goal of building a strong sense of belonging.



**Project activities:** Three student surveys were created and distributed via email (at one week, mid semester and end of semester) to have a better understanding of who the FIG students are, how they are liking their experience so far, and to create space for questions or suggestions. FIGs had 405 students enrolled in at least part of their FIG block schedule at the time of each survey distribution.

The first-week survey contained nine questions, including two open-ended questions that focused on students' current sense of belonging, their interest in getting involved on campus, and if they know who their peer mentor is.

The mid-semester survey contained 13 questions, including three open-ended questions that focused on students' level of engagement, if students had utilized campus support resources, and ranking their current level of stress.

The end-of-semester survey contained 15 questions, including five open-ended questions focused on students' level of engagement, how well students felt about the FIG advisor and peer mentor, if they would recommend FIGs to future students, and their registration status for the following semester. Survey responses dropped considerably on the end-of-semester survey, likely due to timing of distribution. The survey was sent out the week of final exams, and despite multiple reminders, it is assumed that students were focused elsewhere or done for the term and not interested in completing the survey.

Results by question are presented in several tables:



Have you interacted with any of your classmates in your FIG yet?

Time of year	Number of participants	Yes	Not yet	Not sure
First week	97	77%	12%	10%
Mid semester	91	64%	32%	4%
End of semester	42	57%	34%	9%

What is your current sense of belonging at WSU? 100 is a very strong sense of belonging.

Time of year	Number of participants	"Yes" average
First week	97	67.3%
Mid semester	91	66.5%
End of semester	42	70.6%

Do you know who your FIG peer mentor is?

Time of year	Number of participants	Yes	No
First week	97	37%	63%
Mid semester	91	74%	26%
End of semester	42	63.4%	





**Would you recommend future students enroll in a FIG?**

Time of year	Number of participants	Yes	No	Maybe
End of semester	42	71%	6%	23%

**Do you plan to stay connected with any classmates from your FIG?**

Time of year	Number of participants	Yes	No	Not intentionally but would be nice to see familiar faces in the future
End of semester	42	57%	8.5%	34.5%

**Student feedback comments (beginning of semester):**

- Due to the FIG, I was able to make friends in my classes! I'm so glad I signed up for it 😊
- I think FIG made me my first semester a lot easier to control and handle. I didn't feel lost with my schedule and appreciated the blocks.
- I like that I have fellow classmates majoring in the same field that I am and how they have already become friends
- I like the FIG schedule, however, I don't really know what it is.
- I love that it was a quick and easy way to pick my classes and that it has given me the opportunity to create connections with others that share my interests.
- I love my schedule A LOT. It is suuuper easy especially in regards to getting around as a commuter student.
- I like it so far. I don't have any big complaints.
- My first semester block schedule is wonderful and less stressful.
- I really like the layout and how all my classes are scheduled



### Student feedback comments (mid semester):

- Make a “mandatory” fig activity. Then more people will go and it will get it started. If the first one is mandatory more people are likely to continue going after when it’s optional.
- I really liked this and I was hoping there would be a FIG for the winter semester but that's okay.
- I just really like fig and think it’s a good idea and like that I get to know the people and make friends from it!
- If I were in less stress and had less social anxiety, I would utilize more of the awesome FIG benefits. Overall, I appreciate all of your offers for help and the services provided seem exceptionally helpful.
- Going into this program, I had the understanding that it would allow me to explore what major I would be interested in pursuing in the fine arts department, but when talking to someone not involved any exploratory track or the fine arts department at all, I found that a couple of our classes were the same ones. I also believe that if I wasn't in the exploratory track that my classes would be pretty much the same as they are now, I have always wanted to go into design as my career so regardless, I would have enrolled in them anyway since they are the introductory ones that you have to take. I talked to someone in my honors classes, which is separate from the FIG and I found that 2 out of 5 things that she was enrolled in I was too. (Oral Communications and Learning with the Brain in Mind) I am not living on campus, however, I think for the people that are- this is a really good program since there are several of the same people in most of my classes. It would allow for making friends easier. (If I'm totally honest, this seemed to be the only difference in the exploratory track than the regular route)
- Some more events for the FIG group would be nice to just talk and get together with each other.



### Student feedback comments (end of semester):

- More online classes for commuters
- I feel that the FIG was advertised to me as something else. I thought that the main focus was to figure out what your major would end up being but it was mostly just having some of the same people in your classes. Many of the classes that I had were the same as someone not in a FIG. Personally, to be completely honest, I feel as if it is easier to be in classes with all different people so if I knew this was the sole aspect I may not have chosen to be in it. Though, I think it could be really beneficial to people living on campus or people who enjoy having the same people in many classes.
- My fall semester block schedule was perfect and it helped me meet a lot of friends.
- I liked the schedule it helped me get used to the college thing
- I think the opportunities are there, there just might need to be a bit more promotion or encouragement to take them.
- I think FIG – the course– was more focused college opportunities, services, and healthy habits; and not necessarily connecting students. It gave the impression that it would be more focused on connecting students with others than the college itself. Not that the information wasn't useful – but with that expectation, there was a bit of disappointment. I think there could be more assignments on students engaging with the campus or college life rather than just learning about Wayne State. Such as tasking students to spend one hour at a place other than the dorm room to study and then write a reflection on it. Though I'm not too sure how much control or what requirements there are to holding a class so I would understand if something's weren't able to come to fruition.
- I think this program has potential to be an amazing experience for first-years but it's not quite there yet. I think there could be more creative and fun assignments that focus on students actively exploring campus and services Wayne State has to offer (such as a scavenger hunt to find where all of these services even are on campus) and could still teach students.
- Make a mandatory fig event at the beginning of the semester. It will really help students to find friends and feel more secure earlier in the semester.



In addition, the FIG students had a confidential drop box linked in every correspondence that allowed them to ask questions or communicate concerns so the FIG staff could reach out to them for support. Over the course of the semester, this box received 48 inquiries that we were able to support students with.

We also held a FIG student game night on December 6, 2022, the last full day of classes, and over 60 students participated. Most students showed up with a classmate from their FIG and shared with staff how they have connected with their classmates. We viewed a 15% turnout rate for an optional activity held in the evening prior to the start of final exams, to demonstrate a desire by our students to continue to engage with one another.

Based off the survey feedback, engagement with the confidential drop box, participation in Game Night, and anecdotal feedback from FYS 1010 instructors teaching FIG sections, we believe that FIG students were engaged and connected. Students demonstrated a connection to their FIG peers and classmates by attending events with them and responding to the surveys affirmatively regarding interactions outside of the classroom. FIG students also provided a number of ideas and suggestions on the final survey for how to enhance the program, reflecting on their own experience and indicating that even more engagement would have appealed to them.

**How the grant funds were used:** Assessment grant funds were used to pay for a student assistant, who helped with existing LC assessment process review, survey development and revision, and overall project support.

**Program-level impact:** This was our first assessment of a new program (FIGS launched in Fall 2022). Having the Assessment Grant afforded us the support to begin assessment planning and development for the new FIG program, and to get that assessment plan in place at the beginning of the new FIG program. We intend to continue to refine our assessment plan and continue to improve our data collection and review.



Total number of students in FIG in fall 2022: 405

Completion rate for surveys

At one week N=97

Mid semester N=91

End of semester N=42

The assessment of the students throughout the semester provided useful insight, examples of which are shared in section 4 of this report, into the students in the program which allowed us to shift some of our programming, improve communication with students directly, and adjust how we supported FIG coordinators. Additionally, the overall positive feedback regarding the schedules and connecting with classmates validated the program's belief that students desired closer connections with their peers from the moment they arrive to campus. Anecdotally, faculty reached out to also comment that they saw great engagement amongst students in their FIG sections and found that the comfort students had with one another bolstered the classroom experience overall. The end of semester feedback was particularly helpful in reimagining the activities and support, when students want that offered most, and how to improve marketing and communications. For 2023, we have already begun to use the same surveys as 2022 to continue to assess our FIG student participants.

**Individual impact:** Creating an assessment plan for a new program can be daunting; the grant writing process was straightforward, and having support from Cathy Barrette to answer questions and provide guidance was a huge help. Writing an assessment plan for a brand new initiative was also really helpful in refining our goals and thinking through what we wanted to learn about our students and our program from the very beginning. It could have been easy to make an assessment an after-thought, so doing this now improved our programming right away.

**Recognition/Appreciation:** Thanks to Cathy Barrette for the continued support, thoughtful suggestions, and helpful reminders.



## Master of Library and Information Science: Assessment Synthesis Data Tool

**Recipients:** Kim Schroeder, Thomas Walker, and Patti Eatman-Talik (School of Information Sciences)

**Description of project goals:** The School of Information Science (SIS) collects assessment information in at least seven ways. There are practicum assessments, student surveys, graduate assessments, etc. Having tools that help track the input of all students is critical to educational success. Creating one dashboard for all of the collected data would help to analyze input and to make better decisions on curriculum and services.

The school has been very proactive over the last twelve years to work to diversify its student base but we were lacking the data to understand what is helpful and what needs more work. In creating an assessment dashboard, we can better examine the limited data that we were collecting from each survey and create additional questions to improve our understanding of how best to serve traditionally marginalized communities. This will help us to attain our goal of a more welcoming environment for everyone.

**Project activities:** In order for SIS to have a better understanding of its student base and develop its survey tools around information currently not being gathered, the following steps were conducted.

1. Analysis of seven different surveys collected by SIS
  - This included mapping out all the surveys for the data collected and evaluation of overlaps and gaps.
2. Data prioritized for representation into charts
  - Due to the volume of data collected from all of the surveys, the charts for the dashboard were prioritized. Content of higher importance like student and employer satisfaction with SIS and demographic breakdowns were cited as most important. The graphic representation of this data made it much more digestible.



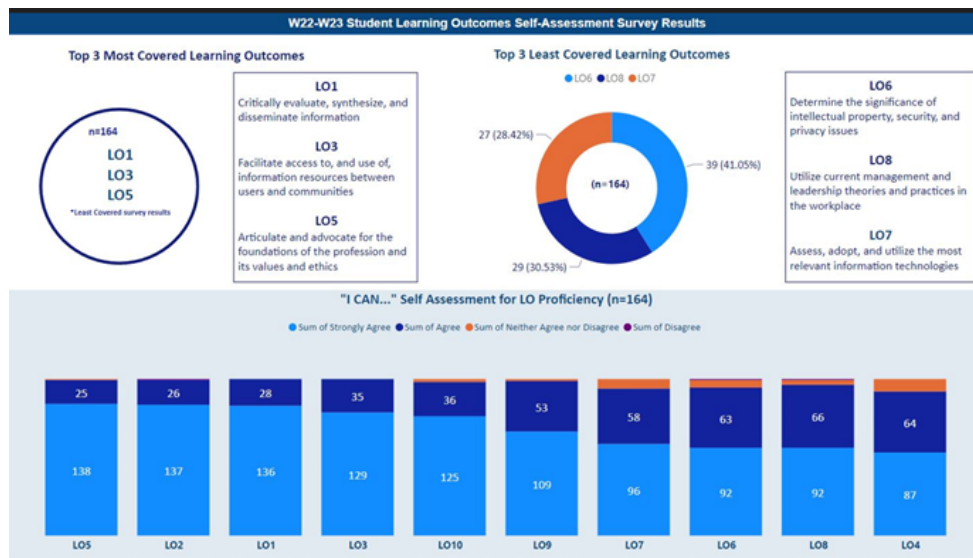
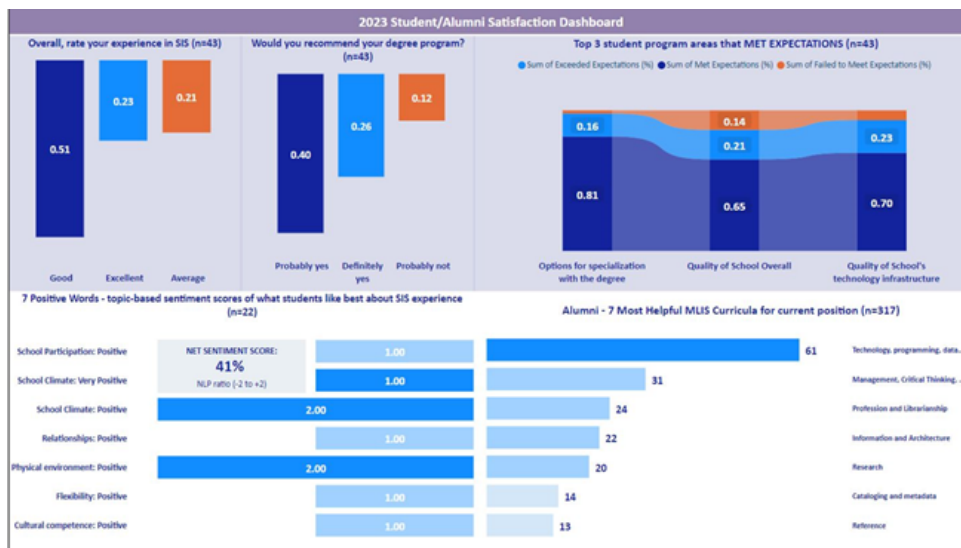


### 3. Normalization of data

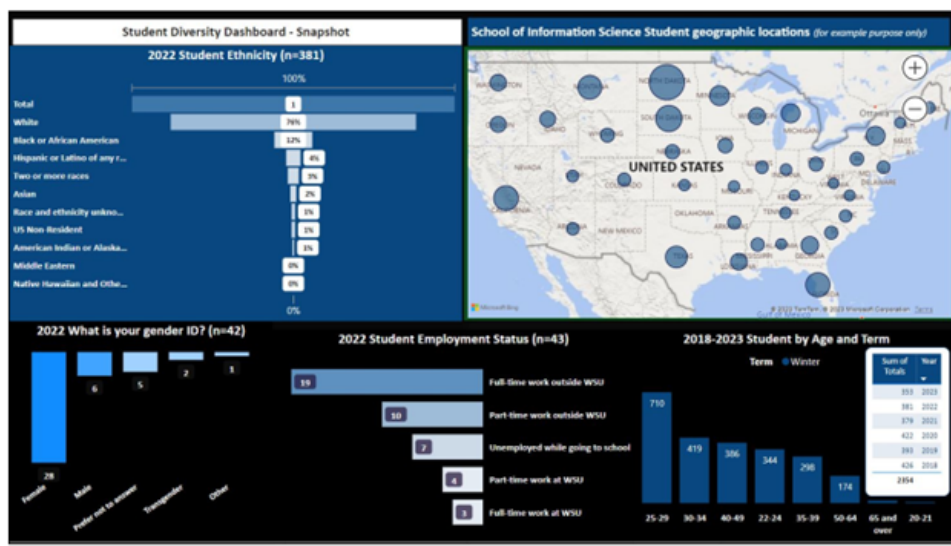
- The employer, alumni, and student surveys had many open-ended questions. These were categorized in order to better look at trends in the answers and incorporate them into charts.

### 4. Creation of a SIS dashboard (all prioritized data)

- The dashboard was initially created in Tableau and converted to Power BI. The dashboard comprises dozens of charts. Two examples are:



5. Creation of an SIS diversity dashboard (SIS-collected data and WSU institutional data)
  - A second, more refined dashboard was then created to incorporate data from both SIS and WSU to reflect the demographic data of SIS' students.
  - A snapshot example of the charts:



6. Mock-up of additional diversity questions for SIS to collect
  - After the extensive work with the SIS-collected data, recommendations were made to SIS for further inclusion of questions to better assess the views of marginalized student groups and assure SIS addresses adequate support to all student communities.

**How the grant funds were used:** As proposed in the application, the funds were entirely used for the Graduate Assistant. She normalized the data, created the charts, designed the Tableau dashboard, and recorded a final presentation.



**Program-level impact:** This new ability for data analysis has evolved our current student, alumni, and employer surveys. New questions are being proposed to the entire faculty and a report of recommendations to improve the data captured has been written.

The importance of this project was to assess SIS-collected data. This has been achieved and better positions SIS not only to gather more helpful information but to take action on the data that is gathered. In creating charts, it focused the team on assessing gaps in the information that we are collecting. It also was a wonderful visual implementation that made the data more usable. This tool will help us to better use the data and restructure it.

**Individual impact:** For myself, it brought together assessment concerns I have had about the separate buckets of survey data. It also allowed me to get much deeper into the data, to evaluate the data gaps and redundancies.

For my graduate student, she normalized the data, created the charts, designed the Tableau dashboard, and recorded a final presentation. This raised her skill level in information visualization and gap analysis.

**Recognition/Appreciation:** Dr. Tim Bowman, who connected me with Patti Eastman-Talik, the student assistant. He also answered some of our initial questions about Tableau. Patti Eastman-Talik, the graduate student assistant, has been a creative problem-solver, a hard worker, and her strong assessment background was a perfect match!



## Development of Online Jury Assessment Platform for Applied Music Instruction

**Recipient:** James Fusik (Department of Music)

**Description of project goals:** The project's goals were to create a unified pool of data from which to assess the performances of Music's applied students while solving the problem of fragmentation and specialization among students within a degree program. Students in the music program are divided into different groups by instrument or voice type, and also stylistically as jazz or traditional classical music, and then are assessed at jury performances at the end of each semester. In past practice, juries have given one overall grade from which it is impossible to tell, for example, if a deficient component of the grade is technical preparation, lack of utilizing musical expression in performance, or a perception issue such as keeping correct rhythm or tuning. By creating an online survey that all applied instructors can complete and populating the results into one pool, it is possible to measure the general effectiveness of instruction relating to broad aspects of musicianship that are required of all students across all musical areas. The survey was comprised of questions directly assessing three broad pillars of musical performance and measuring its effectiveness, which are required in Learning Outcome 1 of the Bachelor of Music and Bachelor of Arts degrees. Whereas we had no numerical data from juries to assess program-wide success or struggle, now we are able to generate this based on a rubric.

A secondary goal was to involve part-time faculty, who are overwhelmingly the instructors for applied lessons, but do it in a way that is not a time burden. The surveys are clear, consisting only of three questions per student. By providing the rubrics and expectations at the beginning of the term it serves as a reminder and can only help focus instruction throughout the semester of lessons. The survey is broad enough that the same questions can be answered for a classical piano student as a jazz bass player or a vocalist.



**Project activities:** James Fusik created the applied instruction survey using Wayne State's Qualtrics software. The survey consisted of three questions, derived from the language of Program Learning Outcome 1 – Musical Performance and Expression: Develop proficiency with and accuracy of musical elements, control of his or her instrument with musical intent, and the ability to be expressive. The three questions given to all applied (private lesson) faculty were:

1. Overview – The student performance is an accurate execution of the score/composition. Tempo, rhythm, and ensemble are both together and unlabored and within the audience's expectations of the piece.
2. Technical – Instrument-specific control and facility is demonstrated. Supporting evidence includes accurate attack and release, diction, a well-supported tone, and technical fluency. Scale/exercise preparation can influence the response.
3. Expressive – Expressive devices are clearly planned, utilized, and executed. Examples from the performance can include dynamic and/or coloristic contrast, control of harmonic or melodic tension/release, and rubato/timing. More senior students should be rated on a higher level of expression.

The responses were on a 5-point scale: 1-Strongly Disagree, 2-Disagree, 3-Neither agree or disagree, 4-Agree, 5-Strongly Agree. The music department had not had an effective way of assessing performance in a way that translated into numerical data/statistics, so there was no participation target initially, only that the repeated surveys showed a steadiness or growth in participation. It was sent out to all applied music faculty in September of 2022 to form a baseline of results, and again in December of 2022 to show growth throughout the semester. It was used again in the Winter 2023 term, but only at the end of the term in April, as the results of December 2022 could be inferred as a baseline for the second semester of the academic year, rather than tediously needing another response from all the applied faculty. The three surveys got 44, 50, and 24 responses, respectively.



The decline can be attributed to fatigue of applied faculty at the end of the semester, and it is important for the music department to better advertise/remind faculty of the process and need of assessment documentation. Approximately 100 students across all areas take applied lessons, so near 50% completion was strong, with less statistical strength in the second semester due to lower numbers.

Each survey netted approximately 50 responses, with a general trend towards increasing competency and demonstration of the learning outcome over the course of the semester. The results of the survey showed a decline in the mean score over the course of the first semester for all questions, with a rebound at the end of winter term. (See Table 1.)

**Table 1. Year 1 Baseline Results**

	<b>Question 1: Overview</b>	<b>Question 2. Technical</b>	<b>Question 3: Expressive</b>
September 2022	2.37	2.52	2.55
December 2022	1.74	2.04	2.02
April 2023	2.08	2.55	2.13

The results were included in the Music Department’s annual reporting to the Office of Assessment under Learning Outcome 1.

**How the grant funds were used:** The funding was used to supplement salary, allowing me to dedicate the necessary work hours to implement the new assessment survey, administer it, and follow up with part time music faculty to ensure they were aware of the project, completing it for each of their students, and informed on its goals to aid departmental assessment.





**Program-level impact:** The assessment practices of the music program have changed significantly as they relate to applied instruction. Previously all of the assessment was not connected, with voice and instrumental areas, jazz and classical, all independently assessing, with few ways of tying together the shared, broad learning that is occurring across the degree programs. Part-time applied instructors can often feel disconnected from full-time faculty or other departmental programs and initiatives, so the project of having them use the assessment survey provides the opportunity to feel like they are contributing to the shared betterment of instruction, while not taxing them with unreasonable, unpaid time demands.

**Individual impact:** The personal impact the grant project had on me was one of personal and professional growth in that it focused my service work. While I had been an assessment committee member in previous years, the project was my first solo project in the area of assessment, and I was heartened by the support of my faculty colleagues, the Office of Assessment, and its director, Cathy Barrette. Through having myself as the sole person completing the process, I became proficient with Qualtrics and the use of this tool to aid the generation of useful data to inform conclusions about applied instruction from an assessment angle. I hope I have had a positive impact in team-building across applied performance faculty, and am heartened by the creation of a new data source relating to applied study.

**Recognition/Appreciation:** I would like to recognize my music department colleague Dr. Jeremy Peters for recommending the grant process to me and also helping me choose the best form of delivery for the survey to applied faculty. I also appreciated all of the guidance of Dr. Cathy Barrette for her clear, focused answering to any questions I had throughout the process of application, completion, and reporting of the project.

