Ad-Hoc Report

Response to Recommendations One, Two and Three of the Spring 2017 Year Seven Peer Evaluation Report

Prepared for
The Northwest Commission on
Colleges and Universities

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WHITMAN COLLEGE

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Introduction

As a result of the Year Seven comprehensive evaluation and site visit, Whitman College received four recommendations in the Year Seven Peer-Evaluation Report. The recommendations had to do with establishing objective indicators of achievement, establishing mechanisms of campus-wide data collection to systematically evaluate achievement of the indicators based on the collected data, and then to use those data for evidence-based planning. In short, the recommendations clearly stated that the College needs to do a better job of assessment of its programs. Finally, the College needs to conscientiously communicate its assessment-related findings to its stakeholders. In their entirety, the four recommendations are replicated below:

1. The Evaluation Committee acknowledges Whitman College has established objective indicators of achievement for each of its Core Themes; however, the objectives do not adequately express the quality and nuances of the College's achievements and therefore cannot effectively aid the institution in planning. The committee recommends that Whitman College establish objective indicators of achievement that can more meaningfully inform Core Theme planning through the collection of appropriately defined data that are analyzed and used to evaluate accomplishment of Core Theme objectives. (Standard 3.B.3)

2. The Evaluation Committee recommends that the College develop a more comprehensive and consistent system for collection and analysis of quantitative and/or qualitative data, as appropriate to its indicators of achievement, at multiple points in each program's curriculum and the general education program. (Standard 4.A1)

3. The Evaluation Committee recommends that Whitman College engage in regular, systematic, participatory and evidence-based assessment of its accomplishments. (Standard 5.A.1)

4. The Evaluation Committee recommends that the institution analyze and better use its data in an integrated and intentional way to clearly demonstrate how well the College is achieving its Mission and Core Themes and ensure that the information is clearly communicated to all pertinent stakeholders, including those involved in Strategic Planning and resource allocation, institutional capacity, assessment and campus initiatives. (Standard 5.B.2)

The Year Seven Peer-Evaluation Report required that Whitman respond to the first three recommendations in this Ad Hoc report, and accordingly, they will be the deserved focus here. The fourth recommendation, as instructed in the report, will be addressed in an addendum to the 2020 Mid-Cycle Report, but it will receive brief mention in this report as well, since all the recommendations are related.

The pace of responding to the recommendations over the past year has been brisk. This is a clear demonstration that the College acknowledges the serious nature of the recommendations, that it is working determinedly and rapidly to address them, and that the College is committed to implementing its new procedures as soon as possible. The rapid response is not an insignificant

detail, given Whitman's commitment to shared governance and the sometimes slow pace of change associated with broad campus involvement. At an institution that has not traditionally been particularly welcoming toward the assessment process in any case, the new administration deserves a great deal of credit for galvanizing the effort on Whitman's campus. Moreover, the College is working to develop a culture on campus that values and utilizes the information that assessment provides.

The first step in responding to the recommendations was to significantly strengthen the Assessment Committee. The Assessment Committee now has two President's Cabinet-level members. These members are critical because 1) they provide a direct line of communication between the committee and the Cabinet, and via the Cabinet, the Board of Trustees; 2) they lend a level of enforcement to the decisions of the committee that did not exist before. The Assessment Committee was further strengthened by having the elected faculty members of the committee be the elected Chairs of the academic divisions. These members provide a level of clout with the faculty that was not present in previous iterations of the committee, and they also provide a more direct line of communication between the committee and the faculty in their respective academic divisions. Finally, this reconfiguration of the Assessment Committee served as an indication to the entire campus that assessment of campus programs is a critical matter with high stakes attached to doing it properly.

The Assessment Committee has been the body appropriately tasked with attending to the recommendations handed down in the Year Seven Peer-Evaluation Report, and the responses to the recommendations are, in large part, a result of the committee's work. The membership of the committee is as follows:

<u>Assessment Committee</u>
Provost and Dean of the Faculty
Chief Information Officer
Associate Dean for Academic Affairs (Accreditation Liaison Officer – chairs the committee)
Director of Institutional Research
Associate Dean of Students
Director of Enterprise Technology
Chair of Division I (Social Sciences)
Chair of Division II (Fine Arts and Humanities)
Chair of Division III (Sciences and Mathematics)

Recommendations

1. *The Evaluation Committee acknowledges Whitman College has established objective indicators of achievement for each of its Core Themes; however, the objectives do not adequately express the quality and nuances of the College's achievements and therefore cannot effectively aid the institution in planning. The committee recommends that Whitman College establish objective indicators of achievement that can more meaningfully inform Core Theme planning through the collection of appropriately defined data that are analyzed and used to evaluate accomplishment of Core Theme objectives. (Standard 3.B.3)*

As stated in Whitman's Year One Self-Evaluation, but bearing repetition here, is the fact that Whitman College underwent an intense year of strategic planning in 2016-2017. In addition to establishing strategic priorities, the College, with broad campus input and as part of the overall planning effort, revised its mission and core themes. These were passed by the Board of Trustees in February, 2018. Accordingly, the Assessment Committee established core theme objectives that intentionally aligned with the core themes, which in turn are intentionally aligned with the mission. Whitman College has never before put such conscientious effort into alignment of the mission, core themes, and core theme objectives. As a natural consequence, the development of objective indicators was also much more deliberate, and since the Assessment Committee had worked diligently on establishing means to gather meaningful assessment data for its programs, the indicators are now much more suggestive of the actual achievement of core theme objectives than previously used indicators. Whitman's new core themes, core theme objectives, and indicators can be found in Appendix A.

2. *The Evaluation Committee recommends that the College develop a more comprehensive and consistent system for collection and analysis of quantitative and/or qualitative data, as appropriate to its indicators of achievement, at multiple points in each program's curriculum and the general education program. (Standard 4.A1)*

Student Learning Outcomes. The Assessment Committee generated a list of student learning outcomes for Whitman's general education programs (General Studies, at Whitman). This exercise resulted in a set of student learning outcomes for Whitman's first year common course (Encounters) and a set of student learning outcomes for each of Whitman's six Distribution Requirements (Cultural Pluralism, Fine Arts, Humanities, Quantitative Analysis, Social Sciences, and Sciences). The learning outcomes for the General Studies programs were sent to each of the respective academic divisions, as well as the General Studies Committee, for review and feedback, after which they were modified accordingly. Finally, the new General Studies student learning outcomes were taken to the whole faculty for a vote, and they were passed on December 6, 2017. They are presented in Appendix B.

General Studies: Distribution Requirements. An online reporting tool was created for relating the degree of achievement of the Distribution Requirement student learning outcomes for individual courses. Every instructor who teaches a course that fulfills one or more Distribution Requirements must assess one learning outcome per Distribution Requirement per course. This campus-wide assessment of student learning will begin with the spring 2018 semester. The reporting tool will be available as a Qualtrics survey. The instrument (in draft form) can be

accessed here: https://whitmancollege.co1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_0p3KxKQPoSUhfnv.
Instructors are able to develop their own assessment instruments so that they may incorporate assessment that is appropriate for their courses. For faculty who felt they needed assistance with assessment methods, two assessment workshops were held in February, 2018. These were conducted by the Accreditation Liaison Officer. The ALO also offered to meet with departments and individual faculty on a one-on-one, consultative basis, upon request. All assessment surveys for spring 2018 are due June 1, 2018.

General Studies: Encounters. The systematic assessment of the Encounters component of Whitman's General Studies program also began in spring 2018. The Assessment Committee tasked the Encounters faculty with assessing the Encounters student learning outcome concerning close reading: "Students will be able to: demonstrate the skill of close reading of important texts from a range of cultures." As of this writing, the mechanism for assessment is being discussed, designed, and integrated into planning for the course. The Encounters faculty will plan a regular rotation (or cycle) of assessment of the Encounters student learning outcomes for future years. The report on the results of the close reading assessment for spring 2018 is due June 1.

Academic Departments and Programs: All departments and programs with courses of major study were asked to evaluate their student learning outcomes and to update and/or revise them if necessary. All departments and programs are expected to assess at least one student learning outcome in the spring of 2018 (and every year thereafter). Specifically for 2018, departments and programs were asked to assess a learning outcome that could be measured via the Senior Assessment in the Major (SAM). Procedures for assessment "at multiple points in each program's curriculum" are still being determined, but they may include such strategies as gateway course assessment, assessment at the point of declaration of major, and others. The outcome to be assessed in 2018 will be determined by each department or program. In addition to the assessment, each academic department and program has been asked to submit a written report (to be submitted annually hereafter) detailing, analyzing, and summarizing their assessment activities for the current year and to outline their assessment plans for following years. A reporting tool was developed by the Assessment Committee for academic department/program assessment reporting and planning. It can be accessed here: https://whitmancollege.co1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_6JAGxnVecNxdrzT. All department and program assessments, as well as annual reports, are due June 1, 2018.

Writing. For the first time, in fall 2017, all students in Whitman's entering class were assessed for writing skills. A rubric was developed by a group of Whitman faculty dedicated to the art of writing. The rubric was used to score essays written by all members of the entering class in response to a common prompt. The 60 students with the lowest scores were required to take Composition 170, Language and Writing, during their first semester. The notion behind the assessment was that, while Encounters (the first year common course) is a writing-intensive course, it is also a reading-intensive course that emphasizes close reading, analysis, and discussion. Writing is an important component of Encounters, but the extent to which actual writing *instruction* occurs in that course has never been clearly defined and varies among instructors. Thus, some students were coming into Encounters with relatively poor writing skills and were not showing the improvement one would hope for. By identifying students who would

particularly benefit from writing instruction at the very beginning of their college career, the fall 2017 assessment was an effort to provide an element of equalization among the fall 2017 entering class with respect to writing skills.

As a follow-up to the initial writing assessment, a second writing assessment (procedurally identical to the first) was conducted at the end of the semester. All students who had been placed in Comp 170 were re-tested, as were several sections of Encounters students (who had taken Encounters but had not been placed in Comp 170). The results were enlightening. The good news was that all students had collectively improved in their writing skills. The even better news was that students who had taken Comp 170 had improved by a greater margin (4.5 points) than those who had only taken Encounters (1.6 points). The Encounters-only students were still better writers overall, but the students who had taken Comp 170 were (by preliminary evidence) catching up.

Finally, with regard to planning based on data, the benefits of Comp 170 to our students in terms of writing improvement are apparent. The College has decided to increase the number of Comp 170 sections from six in 2017-2018 to eight in 2018-2019 in order to capture more students who may benefit from the Comp 170 course. The procedures, scoring rubric, first and second prompts, and analysis of data are presented in Appendix C. Writing per se is not currently an explicit component of the General Studies program at Whitman College (i.e. there is no writing course or competency requirement for graduation). That said, sophisticated writing is included in many of the student learning outcomes for the various Distribution Requirement areas, and it is also emphasized in the student learning outcomes of many of the major courses of study, so it will be interesting to see how writing is incorporated into the curricular renovations that are happening as a result of strategic planning.

3. *The Evaluation Committee recommends that Whitman College engage in regular, systematic, participatory and evidence-based assessment of its accomplishments. (Standard 5.A.1)*

The Assessment Committee has established a system for regular, systematic, participatory, and evidence-based assessment of its accomplishments. Largely, the committee's efforts have been focused on the core academic areas, and the procedures that have been established have been described in the response to Recommendation 2. The procedures ensure that assessment, and participation in it, is campus-wide. Regularization has been built into the process, since planning for assessment in future years is part of the reporting system. The committee has ensured that all aspects of the curriculum (general education curricula, major program curricula, and writing) are included. As now structured, the assessment of the academic programs is inclusively participatory. This is a substantial and fairly sudden change from previous years and will require an equivalently substantial change in the culture of the campus. The Assessment Committee, while convinced of the value of this new focus on assessment, expects that not all will proceed perfectly smoothly in the initial year or two. Nonetheless, as data accumulate over several semesters, the Assessment Committee anticipates the information will be highly useful in planning, particularly as curricular revision and strategic planning efforts proceed. Assessment reports will be submitted to the Office of Institutional Research and the data and results will be analyzed by the Assessment Committee as a first step in the relay of information. From there, results will be disseminated to relevant personnel (e.g. department chairs, program directors, the

committee of writing faculty, the faculty teaching Encounters, etc.). An overall summary report of assessment will be presented to the entire faculty by the Provost and Dean of the Faculty.

In addition, co-curricular areas (especially those that are intimately entwined with the curriculum) have been a part of the Assessment Committee's discussions. For example, the Off-Campus Studies office has developed student learning outcomes and an assessment tool for its Crossroads courses. Crossroads courses are short-term, faculty-led courses that provide high-impact learning experiences that would not be possible on campus. The mission and goals of the Crossroads program, as well as a post-Crossroads-experience evaluation tool, are currently in draft form and await final editing before they are put into use during summer 2018. The department of Sports Studies, Recreation and Athletics (SSRA) has been tasked with developing student learning outcomes and assessment protocols appropriate to its athletic programs, an area that has not been adequately accounted for in past assessment efforts. The assessment of other offices and areas on campus, such as the Student Engagement Center, Penrose Library, and Student Affairs, have well-established assessment plans that are regular, participatory, and used for data-driven planning.

4. *The Evaluation Committee recommends that the institution analyze and better use its data in an integrated and intentional way to clearly demonstrate how well the College is achieving its Mission and Core Themes and ensure that the information is clearly communicated to all pertinent stakeholders, including those involved in Strategic Planning and resource allocation, institutional capacity, assessment and campus initiatives. (Standard 5.B.2)*

This recommendation technically doesn't have to be addressed until the Mid-Cycle Report, but since some progress has been made in this area, a brief discussion is appropriate. The data from the first-year writing assessment was highly informative and has already been used to plan added sections of the Comp 170 course for 2018-2019. The results of the first-year writing assessment were shared at a fall 2017 faculty meeting. Since broad, regularized, participatory assessment is in its early stages at Whitman, communication has been an important component of the work of the Assessment Committee. Student learning outcome development for the General Studies programs involved a process of broad outreach and participation, with feedback sought at the division and General Studies Committee levels, before final approval by the faculty as a whole. The Provost and Dean of the Faculty has addressed the entire faculty on two separate occasions during the fall 2017 semester regarding assessment efforts. The Provost and Dean of the Faculty regularly holds meetings with department chairs and program directors, and the procedures for regular assessment have been the topic of several meetings. The Provost and Dean of the Faculty periodically apprises the President and the Cabinet of assessment efforts and has communicated with the Board of Trustees about the recommendations from the last peer evaluation and the need for improved assessment mechanisms. The Trustees themselves are in the process of establishing self-assessment procedures, as they are establishing metrics with which to measure the success of the work of their policy committees. The Accreditation Liaison Officer has held two workshops for faculty about assessment methods and reporting procedures and has met with individuals and departments by request. There are plans to hold a workshop on meaningful assessment through the Center for Teaching and Learning next fall (2018). In addition, the Provost and Dean of the Faculty will report at least annually to the faculty once Whitman has begun collecting campus-wide annual data (with the first batch to be collected in June, 2018).

Concluding Statement

Whitman College has made an incredible amount of progress toward establishing procedures for regular, systematic and participatory assessment on campus, and it has done so in a short period of time. In particular, for the General Studies components of the curriculum (Encounters and the Distribution Requirements), data-based assessment mechanisms are now in place where there were none before. Moreover, the assessments are based on newly approved student learning outcomes that are now official and thus measureable.

The major courses of study associated with academic departments and programs did have assessment mechanisms in place, but with no formal recording or reporting required, the data and accomplishments were difficult to articulate with authority. The departments and programs have reexamined their student learning outcomes so that they are up to date and accurately reflect the goals of their curricula.

Formalized, campus-wide assessment is new to Whitman (in fact, spring 2018 will be the first collection of assessment data from the academic programs), so it will no doubt take a few semesters before the system runs seamlessly and becomes a normal part of campus culture. Nonetheless, Whitman looks forward to the opportunity to use the forthcoming data in order to assess achievement of student learning outcomes in the overall context of core theme objective achievement, and ultimately, mission fulfillment.

Strategies for implementing the various priorities of strategic planning are now being formulated by various working groups on the Whitman campus. Among the priorities is a directive to "innovate the curriculum." With this in mind, the recommendations handed down in the wake of Whitman's Year Seven Peer-Evaluation were timely. It is hoped that the first rounds of assessment data, although preliminary, might provide information that will help guide curricular innovations.

It is an expectation that some, if not quite a bit, of the work that has happened in the past year in response to the recommendations will need to be redone as the work of strategic curriculum innovation commences. This includes, but is not limited to, re-evaluating the recently adopted General Studies student learning outcomes, as well as their assessment mechanisms. It has not been lost on the College that re-envisioning the general education curriculum presents a fresh opportunity to develop student learning outcomes simultaneously with the curriculum, rather than retrofitting student learning goals to fit the existing curriculum. Nevertheless, the recommendations presented an opportunity to initiate the practice of regular assessment on Whitman's campus, and that has been invaluable, since it is the beginning of a habit that will serve Whitman's curriculum well into the future.

Appendix A – Core Themes, Objectives and Indicators

Core Theme I: An accessible, diverse, and inclusive community

Objective 1. _Students of all socioeconomic backgrounds are able to attend Whitman for their education_		
Indicator	Rationale	Benchmark
a. Equitable access to a Whitman education (reduce financial barriers to attend Whitman).	Decreasing the gap between financial aid and demonstrated need will decrease the financial burden on families.	Strive to reduce gapping from current levels.
b. Enrollment of underrepresented students.	Increasing the number of underrepresented students would increase the diversity of the student body.	Prioritize financial support with the goal of increasing numbers of underrepresented students compared to current levels.
Objective 2. _The College will enroll and retain a student body that is diverse across demographic categories._		
Indicator	Rationale	Benchmark
a. Number of domestic students of color, number of international students, and number of socio-economically diverse students.	Domestic students of color, international students, and socio-economically diverse students increase the overall diversity of the student body.	Implement admissions strategies that increase the number of all students of color and diverse groups compared to current levels.
b. Retention and graduation rates of students of color, international students, and socio-economically diverse students.	In order to maintain a diverse and equitable campus, the retention and graduation rates for all students should be comparable.	Strive for retention and graduation rates for diverse students that are at least equal to those of Caucasian students. Implement programs that encourage retention of diverse students.
Objective 3. _Students are able to participate fully in all programs of the College._		
Indicator	Rationale	Benchmark

a.Student travel for academic research and conferences	Conference and research travel are important high-impact educational experiences for all students.	Fund requests by students to travel for the purposes of academic conferences and research presentations.
b. Equity in student access to key academic experiences.	The Special Activities Fund (for course fees, lab materials, art supplies, music lessons, etc.) helps provide equal access to key academic experiences.	Fund requests by students who are determined to have need.
c. Equitable access for all students to participate in curricular and co-curricular activities (reduce financial barriers to participation).	Participation in all curricular co-curricular activities is an important part of campus life and contributes to a strong campus community.	Provide funding for students who need assistance in order to allow them to fully participate in curricular and co-curricular activities.
d. Provide information, preparation, and mentorship to assist students with participation.	Full participation in all aspects of the life of the College should not be hindered because of lack of information or cultural capital.	Train faculty and staff to be familiar with campus programs and to mentor students by providing information, advice, and help.

Objective 4. *The College will create and maintain programs that nurture students' sense of belonging within the College community.*

Indicator	Rationale	Benchmark
a.Residence Life programming	Residence life programming is designed to assist students with succeeding academically, developing personally, and building community.	Maintain active residence life programming to build community among first-year students and offer new programming for the new sophomore residence hall.
b. Robust pre-orientation programming	Pre-orientation programs are an initial place to develop friendships and cohorts, and to establish connections to both place and peers.	Maintain robust pre-orientation trips (Scrambles and SCORE). Provide Summer Fly-In Program for 60 or more incoming students (currently 50 students/summer).

c. Support for difference and inclusivity	Spaces for meaningful conversations and interactions encourage input from divergent perspectives, enhance intercultural and international awareness, and model respect for all in the Whitman community.	Grow the number of students who participate in Glover Alston Center programs. Implement and maintain a viable bias reporting and response program. Sustain FGWC mentor program participation. Provide continued support for Power & Privilege Symposium.
d. Encounters program	A common intellectual experience helps build community among the first-year class.	Maintain a common first-year intellectual experience. Offer faculty development programs that support inclusive pedagogy.
e. Foster a sense of belonging among all people on campus	In order to thrive in a college (or any) environment, the individuals that inhabit that environment must feel as though they belong. No person should ever feel as though they are out of place on campus.	Offer training to faculty and staff to assist with creating a sense of belonging among individuals with whom they interact. Offer programming that fosters a sense of belonging. Support affinity groups for underrepresented students. Provide procedures for dealing with instances of bias and intolerance.

Core Theme II: A rigorous liberal arts education

Objective 1. *Students will engage in rigorous and respectful inquiry to facilitate the free exchange of ideas amidst diverse and conflicting viewpoints.*		
Indicator	Rationale	Benchmark
a.Off-campus studies participation	Understanding of a culture or region other than one's own is an essential part of a liberal arts education and is key to developing future leaders in an increasingly interdependent global society.	Maintain or exceed the current levels of robust participation in OCS programs (aspire to reach 50% participation in OCS programs).
b. Out of classroom programming that facilitates rigorous and respectful inquiry	Dialogue about issues of diversity and inclusion helps the campus move toward a more inclusive climate, fulfilling a commitment to create a culture of diversity, equity and inclusion on the Whitman campus.	Enable, support, and encourage participation in and continuation of programs such as the Power & Privilege Symposium and the Continuing the Conversation series

c. Support coursework and pedagogy that facilitates rigorous and respectful inquiry	Classrooms can provide a safe, respectful, intellectual space within which to engage with ideas of difference.	Achieve learning outcomes of the Cultural Pluralism distribution requirement

Objective 2. *Students will engage with complexity and succeed in environments of experimentation, exploration, and uncertainty.*

Indicator	Rationale	Benchmark
a. Student/faculty research	Research with faculty is a high-impact practice where students can engage with complex ideas and real research questions.	Increase funding for, and the number of students doing, research with faculty.
b. Community-based learning opportunities	Internships allow students to explore real-world career fields, develop skills, and expand their professional network. The Community Fellows Program allows students to engage in complex issues in southeastern Washington while receiving professional mentoring, targeted career development guidance, and exposure to local organizations.	Fund students who apply for a Whitman Internship Grant. Administer exit surveys of student Community Fellows and internship recipients: meet or exceed 80% "yes" to their experience influencing their career goals and 80% "yes" to establishing network contacts.
c. Senior capstone experiences	Capstone projects provide opportunities for students to explore ideas, take risks, integrate topics from within and outside of their major, tackle complex issues, and grapple with uncertain outcomes.	Achieve major program student learning outcomes affiliated with senior assessment in the major.

Objective 3. *Students will complete a major that provides depth in an area of academic inquiry.*

Indicator	Rationale	Benchmark
a. Academic department and	A rigorous liberal arts education involves delving into a specific area	Achieve at least 75% of all academic department and

program student learning outcomes	of academic inquiry such that depth of understanding is acquired.	program student learning outcomes.
b.Academic department and program senior assessment in the major	A rigorous liberal arts education culminates in the ability to think creatively and critically, drawing on depth of knowledge acquired over years of concentrated study.	Aspire for 100% of graduates to meet or exceed student learning outcome benchmarks for senior assessment in the major

Objective 4. *Students will engage in a curriculum that provides breadth across the liberal arts.*

Indicator	Rationale	Benchmark
a.Distribution Requirement student learning outcomes	Exposure to a broad range of subjects and the ability to develop an inquiring mind and a lifelong love of learning is essential to a rigorous liberal arts education.	Meet or exceed 75% achievement of benchmarks for distribution requirements campus-wide
b. Encounters student learning outcomes	A common introduction to the liberal arts and the academic construction of knowledge provides students with an academic base for their future years at the College.	Meet or exceed 75% achievement of student learning outcome benchmarks for Encounters.

Objective 5. *Students will be supported in their academic pursuits.*

Indicator	Rationale	Benchmark
a. Academic Resource Center	A hub of support is essential in order to provide all Whitman students with the tools necessary for empowerment and success in their academic experiences.	Increase the number of first-year students who meet with their Student Academic Advisors (SA's). Increase the number of students who attend mid-semester grade report meetings. Increase the number of students who attend academic coaching meetings.
b. Peer Tutoring	One-on-one or small group tutoring provides a focused environment for study, assistance with coursework, and feedback on assignments.	Increase the number of students who take advantage of peer tutoring through the ARC or department tutoring programs.

c. Center for Writing and Speaking (COWS)	COWS provides space where students can go for instruction, help, and feed-back on their writing assignments.	Increase the number of students who take advantage of COWS services.
d. Academic advising	Pre-major and major advising provides resources and support for students as they navigate their college career.	Recognize the value of excellence in academic advising by including advising with other considerations when determining merit.

Objective 6. Students will communicate effectively via oral, written, and visual forms.

Indicator	Rationale	Benchmark
a. Oral communication	The ability to communicate effectively in an oral capacity is a necessary skill in order to convey meaning accurately and work well with others.	Achieve senior oral exam learning outcomes, and general education, department, and program oral communication learning outcomes.
b. Written communication	The ability to communicate effectively in writing requires creativity, imagination, patience and effort to arrive at the finished product. It is an essential component of a rigorous liberal arts education.	Achieve general education, department, and program written communication learning outcomes.
c. Visual communication	The ability to communicate visually and/or in a performative manner provides an outlet for artistry and passionate creativity.	Maintain opportunities for student musical and theatrical performances, art exhibitions, etc. Achieve general education, department, and program visual communication learning outcomes.

Core Theme III: Support for life and learning beyond the classroom

Objective 1. Students will have opportunities to engage in co-curricular activities that lead to intellectual and personal growth and development of leadership skills.

Indicator	Rationale	Benchmark

a. ASWC government and clubs; Student Activities office	Participation in co-curricular activities enables students to discover new interests, meet new people, develop leadership skills, and enhance their educational experiences at the College.	Maintain vigorous student programming and policies enabling students to develop new clubs as interest dictates. Provide opportunities for students to grow into leadership positions.
b. The Residence Life experience; Residence Life and Academic Resource Center opportunities for student growth and leadership	Residence Life helps students develop a sense of belonging in the larger college community and maximizes students' potential for individual development. Resident Advisors and Student Academic Advisors assist students living in on-campus housing with transition to college by providing programming to assist with adaptation to college life, coursework, and academic challenges.	Continue self-reflection and assessments for all RA's and SA's, for personal growth and to guide future programming and training. Quality of Life and Learning Survey (QLLS) Civic Engagement module: meet or exceed 90% agree/strongly agree (disagree/strongly disagree on reverse coded items) on at least 4 of the 7 items; QLLS Inter- and Intrapersonal Competence module: meet or exceed 85% agree/strongly agree (disagree/strongly disagree on reverse coded items) on at least 6 of the 10 items.
c. Affinity groups	Affinity groups enhance the student experience by allowing students to pursue common interests with a cohort.	Enable, promote, and encourage affinity groups.
d. Participation and leadership opportunities in athletic and outdoor activities	Athletic and recreational activities at all levels (Intramural, Club Sports, Varsity Athletics, Outdoor Program), support physical and mental health, personal growth, a sense of belonging, and leadership opportunities.	Administer evaluations for these programs. Participants will indicate satisfaction with their experiences, as well as with their acquisition of leadership skills.
e. Participation and leadership opportunities across campus; leadership recognition	Whitman provides many opportunities for students to participate in activities and to take on leadership roles. Whitman shows that it values and rewards outstanding leadership by providing	Sustain and support key offices and policies on campus, e.g. Office of Grants and Fellowships, Student Engagement Center, Student Programs and Activities, Greek

	resources for leadership training and mentoring, and by nominating and selecting exemplary student leaders for leadership awards.	Life, Religious and Spiritual Life. Maintain student membership on key College governance committees. Maintain leadership award/recognition practices.

Objective 2. *Students will be able to synthesize classroom and out-of-classroom learning by making connections to communities beyond Whitman and by participating in pre-professional activities.*

Indicator	Rationale	Benchmark
a.Student Engagement Center programs	The SEC provides opportunities for students to learn, work, and volunteer off-campus. Connections to the broader community help shape and refine the classroom experience and impact future career goals.	Administer surveys for SEC programs, which will indicate student satisfaction with the programs regarding connection to students' in-class learning and influence on their career goals.
b. Off-campus studies programs	Students who study off campus bring ideas from their Whitman courses into their off-campus courses and vice-versa; they learn from local communities and cultures that shape and expand their world view.	Administer end-of-program surveys from off-campus programs, which will indicate student satisfaction with programs and degree to which programs had a significant impact on students' world view.
c. Experiential learning programs	Experiential learning is a high-impact practice that influences students' lives in significant ways.	Maintain programs such as Semester in the West and Whitman in China. Expand student-faculty opportunities through Crossroads program.
d. Community-based research and learning in the curriculum	Linking coursework to community is a high-impact learning opportunity for students that develops their sense of place in the local area.	Increase faculty and student participation in community-based education; funds provided by the College's Mellon grant.
e. Collaboration with community partners	Partnering in research and education with local institutions of higher learning and local indigenous tribes strengthens Whitman's links to the community and models power of place.	Build on and expand cooperative initiatives with organizations such as Walla Walla University, Walla Walla Community College, and the Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation.

f. Research with faculty and conference participation	The creation of knowledge with faculty mentors and presenting results to a broad audience is a fundamental way to put learning into practice and prepares students for professional life.	Maintain funding for research opportunities with faculty, funds for travel to off-campus conferences, and maintain the Whitman Undergraduate Conference.
g. Alumni networks	Engaging with alumni develops important mentor/mentee relationships, professional connections, and a wide support system.	Build on current alumni-student connection mechanisms, such as Whitman Hubs and Whitman Connect. Grow participation and positive results of the Whitties Helping Whitties and Finding Your Future programs.
h. Pre-professional advising	Pre-professional advising assists students in navigating their career paths, giving them advice about courses, application processes, graduate schools, etc.	Maintain pre-professional advising programs and affiliated faculty (e.g. health professions, education, law, etc.).
i. On-campus employment opportunities	On-campus employment gives students real-world work experience and helps them finance their college experience, tackle financial responsibility, and gain time management skills.	Strive to provide opportunities for all students who seek employment. Continue policy of giving priority to students who are eligible for federal or state Work Study funds.

Appendix B – General Studies Student Learning Outcomes
(Passed by faculty on 12/6/17)

Encounters – Learning Outcomes
    Students will be able to:
- Demonstrate the skill of close reading of important texts from a range of cultures.
- Critically analyze texts with an increasing level of sophistication.
- Develop a writing process that includes an understanding of the recursive nature of writing.
- Write thesis-driven, evidence-supported essays.
- Present ideas orally in a coherent, cohesive and persuasive manner.

Distribution Requirements – Learning Outcomes
1. Cultural Pluralism – Learning Outcomes
    Students will be able to do one or more of the following:
- Engage with ideas and people that expand one's cultural perspectives.
- Articulate how different cultural backgrounds affect interactions or relationships with others.
- Articulate complex relationships arising from the intersection of various aspects of culture, such as language, gender, history, values, politics, religious practices, and unequal distributions of power and resources.
- Navigate differences by drawing on relevant cultural frames of reference and adapting perspectives accordingly.
- Apply different methodological and theoretical approaches to interpret cultural difference.

2. Fine Arts – Learning Outcomes
    Students will be able to do one or more of the following:
- Solve problems in creative ways
- Recognize the techniques used in at least one art form
- Understand different theoretical approaches to artistic production
- Develop their ability to express themselves artistically
- Critically analyze their own and others' artistic work.

3. Humanities – Learning Outcomes
    Students will be able to do one or more of the following:
- Read texts, be they literary, philosophical, artistic, religious, or material in nature, with precision and generosity
- Analyze and interpret texts with precision, assessing their form and content both on the texts' own terms and through critical lenses informed by other texts
- Understand how language, genre, cultural and historical context can shape a text and our interpretation of it
- Effectively communicate, through written and spoken words, insights drawn from the works they are reading and interpreting
- Recognize and appreciate the aesthetic, moral, and linguistic dimensions of complex problems

4. Quantitative Analysis – Learning Outcomes
    Students will be able to do one or more of the following:
- Perform computations associated with a model and make conclusions based on the results
- Represent, communicate, and analyze ideas and data using symbols, graphs, or tables
- Analyze and interpret data using statistical methods

5. <u>Sciences – Learning Outcomes</u>
   Students will be able to do one or more of the following:
   - Demonstrate familiarity with one or more scientific methods of inquiry
   - Articulate fundamental theories in a science using precise terminology of the field
   - Formulate a hypothesis, given a problem or questions, and design a valid experiment to test it.
   - Collect, interpret, and analyze scientific data
   - Apply the principles of scientific inquiry to civic and personal issues.

6. <u>Social Sciences - Learning Outcomes</u>
   Students will be able to do one or more of the following:
   - Compare and contrast social institutions, structures, and processes across a range of historical periods, cultures, and societies around the globe.
   - Analyze complex behavior and relationships within and across individuals and social contexts.
   - Demonstrate familiarity with social science methods in the context of explaining or predicting individual and collective behavior and decision-making.
   - Apply social science principles to personal, social, and/or organizational issues.

Appendix C – Incoming Class Writing Assessment, 2017-2018

Procedures for Writing Assessment

August 31, 2017

Dana Burgess

Instructors Raschko, Rother, Stoberock, Terry, and coordinators Burgess and McDermott met Tuesday and Wednesday mornings before the 8/24, Thursday, assessment. We shared related prior experience, read, discussed, and evaluated writing samples. We discussed response to student writing, using reading to build writing, and incorporating writing instruction into syllabi. These topics sought to help the various sections share goals, procedures and values. In our final hour, we turned to discussion of the assessment itself. This collective preparation time, both for the course and for the assessment, is crucial.

We administered the assessment in five locations: Brattain (Rother), Chism (Burgess), Olin Aud. (McDermott), Maxey Aud. (Raschko), and Maxey 109/Lab (Terry). The last of these, overseen by Antonia Keithahn, was for those students who needed accommodations for disabilities. As students handed in their writing, they tore off the upper name section, and we got the sheet with a WID only. Now we needed to copy everything; that didn't go so well, but we got it done. Next time we need more clerical help for the copying. We copied so we could read in pairs, with two of us working through the same stack, and three stacks among us six readers (Stoberock joined for the reading). Before we started, we did a norming session by selecting six essays and all of us reading and scoring all six essays. We put our scoring on the chalkboard and discussed the essays we'd read and the scorings we'd made. We worked with our rubric to clarify categories and scores. Then we began the full reading around 7 pm. The reading worked pretty smoothly. Antonia Keithahn helped us early in the evening, and Juli Dunn helped us later. Having help from these two was crucial; I failed to arrange adequate clerical support until the last minute, and, very late in the process, I asked both of them to help. In the future, we need to plan on plenty of clerical support for the reading itself; there's lots of paper.

The crucial moment came at 9 pm. We were all getting tired and we all realized that we weren't getting through these stacks as quickly as we'd hoped. Lydia and I left the room to talk and agreed that we'd propose a simplified scoring system using our existing rubric. The group discussed this possibility, but the clinching argument pointed to the labor we had already exerted and to the utility of a more carefully scored dataset. We returned to our reading, committed to the process we'd originally planned, and determined to execute it. So, in our moment of crisis, we discussed options and quickly reached a wise resolution.

As we were reading, Antonia and Juli were bringing the two scores together. We made one big pile of those which both readers agreed were strong. We made another pile for those with a wide discrepancy between the two readers. We made a third pile for those both readers scored low. We had third readers read all of the third pile. Anomalies were pulled out, and we had about 30 students. We turned to the wide discrepancy pile, first selecting those trending toward the low side for both scores. We had a third reader read these, and the results brought us up to around 60,

so we stopped. We had anticipated filling 45 seats, but all our reading, and our observations of the scores, told us that there were many more than fifteen who needed to be in Composition 170. Juli noted that 62 seats were available for registration, so we chose to get to 62. I sent a list to the Registrar with the first 45 WIDs and a second list bringing the total to 62.

The Registrar sent an e-mail to each selected student and to the student's advisor. Students were registered into Composition 170, but were not assigned to a specific section. Thus students could build a schedule before adding a section of the course. Enrollment bulged a bit during the arena registration, with fears that we might have to have 17 in a section. As I write, a week later, all sections hover very close to 15; the Registrar and the cheerful, graceful instructors of Composition helped make this part surprisingly smooth. We had relatively few students express anger at their placement; less than five objecting e-mails were sent to me, and parents only waded in once.

As for the accuracy of our placements, we have little evidence for that. On the basis of what we read and evaluated, I believe that we assigned no entering student into Comp 170 who didn't need to work on her or his writing. I also believe that there were many students whom we did not assign to Comp 170 who may need it more urgently than some whom we did assign to the course. We've certainly done no harm with any of these placements, but maybe we did some harm by failing to place. We later learned that we'd placed 19 international students into Comp 170; that's about a third of those placed, and it's about half of our entering international students.

The worst thing that happened at Registration was realizing how many entering students wanted to take Comp 170 but were prevented by our assignment of those seats. Guessing at this number may be entertaining but is unlikely to be accurate. In light of that uncertainty, I think we need two additional fall sections, one for those who just want to take the course, and one to house some of the additional students we think need to take the course.

The faculty and staff worked generously and cheerfully together! Coordinator/Readers, Lydia, Dana, Instructor/Readers, Mary, Adeline, Johanna, Jenna, Student Services staff, Juli, Antonia, nameless and nearly numberless SAs, The Registrar's Office, especially Stacey, and lots of other folks.

Please write for 20 minutes in response to the following. Feel free to use scratch paper, which will not be collected, to generate or outline ideas. We professors evaluating these writing samples are looking for a single clear and unified argument supported by evidence from the text. Please use no resources other than what you find on this sheet.

From *A Not Entirely Benign Procedure* by Perri Klass
The general pressure in medical school is to push yourself ahead into professionalism, to start feeling at home in the hospital, in the operating room, to make medical jargon your native tongue – it's all part of becoming efficient, knowledgeable, competent. You want to leave behind that green, terrified medical student who stood awkwardly on the edge of the action, terrified of revealing limitless ignorance, terrified of killing a patient. You want to identify with the people ahead of you, the ones who know what they're doing. And instead, I have found it necessary to retain some of the greenness, so I could explain the hospital to people for whom it was not familiar turf.

Within this passage, what does it mean to be "green"? Do you agree or disagree with the author's claim that "greenness" can be beneficial? Make sure you include evidence from this passage to support your position.

Prompt 2 (given to first-year students after a semester of either Comp 170 + Encounters, or Encounters only)
Please write for 20 minutes in response to the following. Feel free to use scratch paper, which will not be collected, to generate or outline ideas. We professors evaluating these writing samples are looking for a single clear and unified argument supported by evidence from the text. Please use no resources other than what you find on this sheet.

From "Two Languages in Mind, but Just One in the Heart" by Louise Erdrich
This desire to deepen my alternate language, Ojibwe, puts me in an odd relationship to my first love, English. It is, after all, the language stuffed into my mother's ancestors' mouths. English is the reason she didn't speak her native language and the reason I can barely limp along in mine. English is an all-devouring language that has moved across North America like the fabulous plagues of locusts that darkened the sky and devoured even the handles of rakes and hoes. Yet the omnivorous nature of a colonial language is a writer's gift. Raised in the English language, I partake of a mongrel feast.

Explain this author's relationship to the English language. Make sure you include evidence from this passage to support your position.

Fall 2017 Writing Evaluation

Neal Christopherson, Director of Institutional Research

December, 2017

First-Year students starting at Whitman in fall 2017 were required to participate in a writing evaluation during orientation. After giving students 20 minutes to respond to a prompt, writing samples were scored on a 5-point scale (scored 0-4) across six dimensions: focus and thesis, support and development, structure and organization, awareness of audience and sense of voice, sentence clarity, and knowledge of conventions. Each writing sample was scored by two faculty members. The lowest score given was 3 points, the highest was a perfect score of 24. Combining the scores given to each student, the lowest average across two readers was 6.5, the highest average was 24.

Students with lower scores were required to take Composition-170: Language and Writing, a new course designed to introduce students to analytical writing. From the writing evaluation, 64 students were placed into Comp-170, and an additional seven first-year students not placed into the course also enrolled. Those placed into Comp-170 had an average score on the writing assessment of 9.8, those not placed had an average score of 16.2.

Using a different prompt, at the end of the semester all students in Comp-170 repeated the exercise from the beginning of the semester. In addition, Encounters professors were invited to administer the writing exercise in class, or have students come to a location during finals week to take it during the final exam period for Encounters. A total of 248 students participated in the December evaluation: 60 who were enrolled in Comp-170 and 188 who were not. Those who were not enrolled in Comp-170 came from 18 different Encounters sections[1].

Results of the December writing evaluation show the Comp-170 students improved, on average, more than the students who did not take Comp-170. Results are shown in Table 1.

Table 1: August and December Writing Evaluation Results

	Took Comp-170	Did not Take Comp-170
N of Students	60	188
August Average Score	10.3	16.1
December Average Score	14.8	17.8
Average Difference	4.5	1.6
Score declined	13%	28%
Score Changed +0-3 pts	22%	38%
Score Changed > +3 pts	65%	34%

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[1] As many Encounters professors teach writing, it was important to control for the effect of the students' Encounters instruction. Having students from so many sections ensured that we had enough variation in the writing instruction of those who did not take Comp-170 to adequately control for the effects of the writing instruction of individual Encounters professors.

Both those who took Comp-170 and those who did not significantly improved their scores on the writing evaluation[2]. However, Comp-170 students[3] improved, on average, 4.5 points, from 10.3 in August to 14.8 in December. Those who did not take Comp-170 improved, on average, 1.6 points, from 16.1 in August to 17.8 in December. The difference in improvement between the two groups is statistically significant[4]. Finally, it is worth noting that only 13% of those who took Comp-170 saw a decline in their score between August and December, while 65% saw their score increase by over 3 points. Among those who did not take Comp-170, 28% saw scored decline, while 34% increased over 3 points.

While overall writing sample scores improved for both groups, we can conclude that those who took Comp-170 improved significantly more than those who did not.

Sub-Scores for Comp-170 Students

On average, students who took Comp-170 improved on each sub-area of the writing evaluation. Results are below.

Table 2: Sub-Scores for Comp-170 students

	August	December	Improvement
Focus and Thesis	1.49	2.53	1.04
Support and Development	1.37	2.53	1.16
Structure and Organization	1.54	2.38	0.84
Awareness of Audience and Sense of Voice	1.78	2.51	0.73
Sentence Clarity	1.98	2.41	0.43
Knowledge of Conventions	2.14	2.50	0.36

Interestingly, students scored about the same on each sub-area in December. Where they improved the most or least appears to be, at least partially, a function of how they did in August. The worst sub-area (on average) in August was Support and Development, and this area then showed the most improvement in the December scoring. The best sub-area (on average) in August was Knowledge of Conventions, and this area showed the least improvement in the December scoring.

On average, Comp-170 students improved significantly more than those who did not take 170 on each sub-area.

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[2] Paired-sample t-tests, $p<.001$ for both groups.

[3] Not all students placed in Comp-170 completed the semester in Comp-170. In addition, some December writing samples were not included in the results for a handful of reasons: 1) we did not make accommodations for students with disabilities, 2) the student ID number provided by the student was missing or did not match an actual student ID number, or 3) the writing sample was not given a score on one of the measures.

[4] Independent samples t-test, $p<.001$.