

Assessment of Student Learning Plan (ASLP): Russell Scholars Program

2017-18 Academic Year

University of Southern Maine

A. College, Department, Date

College Academic Affairs
Department Russell Scholars Program (RSP)
Date May 29, 2018

B. Contact Person for the Assessment Plan

Name and title Lisa Hibl, Interim Director

C. Degree Program

The Russell Scholars Program is neither a major nor a department. It is a non-degree granting academic learning community that offers a selection of Core Curriculum courses and electives.*

*Note: Program outcomes and program assessment will likely be undergoing substantial change in the coming year.

D. Assessment of Student Learning: Program Assessment

Step 1: Identify the Student Learning Outcomes (SLO's)

- a. Do you have your student learning outcomes published on your department's website? No
 - i. If yes, please indicate the url: _____
 - ii. If no, please list 3-5 of the most important student learning outcomes for your program. **What will students know by the end of your program?**

* Program learning outcomes will be drafted this next year and submitted in the subsequent academic year, 2018-2019.

- b. Please identify **which of your student learning outcome(s) were assessed this past academic year**. (One or more of the outcomes and corresponding assessment plans could come from your department's CORE Course Blueprint(s).

*Please see above note.

- c. Do you have a **matrix or curriculum map** showing when your student learning outcomes are assessed and in which courses? No
- i. If yes, do you have this map published on your website? Please indicate url or attach a copy of the curriculum map.

Step 2: Assessment Methods Selected and Implemented

- a. Identify which direct measures (other than course grades), that were used to determine whether students achieved the stated learning outcomes for the degree.

Though not directly related to student outcomes, we engaged in several assessment methods this academic year that are helping us to do program planning. These included a focus group of seniors, a focus group of first-year students, an informal survey at an "all hands" program meeting this spring, and mid-term course evaluations.

- b. Briefly describe when you implemented the assessment activity, and if a scoring rubric was used to evaluate the expected level of student achievement. (This information may be shown on your curriculum map).

The senior focus group met in the middle of the fall semester for a long conversation providing qualitative feedback on the four-year experience of being Russell Scholars at USM. We recorded the conversation, typed a transcript, and evaluated the results of repeated/corroborated points and suggestions.

The first-year focus group was convened in the spring semester and given questions roughly once a month; we received feedback through our work study student who managed the group. Here, too, we were able to note corroboration

of points and suggestions, specifically from the point of view of students who had completed one semester and were looking to maximize their experience in the Russell Scholars program as upcoming second year students.

The informal survey given at the “all hands” program meeting was evaluated for specific suggestions about the one-credit RSP Lab and for self-reported data on retention in the program and at USM.

Midterm course evaluations asked students to respond to questions about their learning in the EYE and College Writing courses and about their study habits. We used some of this information to initiate a conversation with students in the bi-monthly Lab about academic preparation and success at college. We also used some information as course planning feedback.

Step 3: Using the Assessment results to Improve Student Learning

- a. *Briefly describe your unit’s process of reviewing the program assessment results (i.e. annual process by faculty committee, etc).*

Lisa Hibl and Elizabeth Dodge reviewed the feedback from the senior focus group soon after the transcript was available. Lisa Hibl received regular reports from the work study student on the first-year focus group feedback. The work study student tallied the results of our “all hands” program survey. Finally, both sets of co-instructional teams reviewed the midterm course evaluations together (Elizabeth Dodge and Timothy Wooten, Lisa Hibl and Nathan Hamilton).

- b. *What specific changes have been or will be made to improve student learning, as a result of using the program assessment results?*

We learned from the senior focus group to emphasize the physical location of the residence hall (now Hastings) as the primary home of the Russell Scholars. This home is important in many dimensions, and thus we will be implementing several events to take place in the new home of Hastings in the coming year. We also learned how important faculty contact is to students; we will make sure that office hours are generous and clearly posted as well as allowing time for informal communications, especially with the new students. We learned what should be obvious: the students are our best source of information. We will continue with future focus groups at different stages of their university careers and keep in touch with them as they move more fully into their major department courses of study.

From the first-year focus group's feedback we have gathered a narrowed list of course suggestions to build the Core Curriculum offerings in RSP. We took their advice to grow our social media presence, beginning with a private FB page; next we will look to LinkedIn as a logical social media platform congruent to our goals of supporting students as they complete college and begin to enter the workforce.

The survey results will be implemented with curriculum planning and course development, as well as with re-thinking of the structure of programming in the RSP Lab. Also we will place more emphasis and marketing around our social events programming each semester (ex. fall apple picking; spring Boston trip).

Midterm course evaluation feedback has contributed to the increased opportunities for more conferences between students or student groups and faculty members concerning course work and academic projects. We will inject the EYE with more active learning opportunities and try out the team-based learning approach in appropriate portions of the semester.

c. *Date of most recent program review/self-study?*

6/5/18 – for the purposes of this report

E.Course Assessment Activities: *Is your program able to report any assessment-related activities at the Course-Level... (i.e. created grading rubrics to use in required courses, examined student progress in entry-level courses, developed a new course, etc)? Please briefly explain any assessment projects.*

We can report two specific agendas for course assessment activities for 2018-2019.

Rubrics: RSP 100 College Writing and RSP 103/EYE Culture, Community, Environment will use grading rubrics for particular assignments/group projects. Also, RSP 103/EYE will implement a rubric for student groups to report on the experience of working with group members.

Curriculum Development: We have added a new Ethical Inquiry core course, RSP 325 Into the Wild: Environmental Thinking 1960-present, for fall 2018; we have added a cross-listed Science Exploration core course, RSP 204/Geo-Anthro 204 Gulf of Maine, for spring 2019. We will

continue to depend on student feedback as we revisit the RSP 299 Cultural Interpretation offering in spring 2019.

F. Community Engagement Activities in your departmental curriculum:

a. Does your department have a student learning outcome that is related to any community engagement activities? If so, please state the outcome.

Again: formal program outcomes will be drafted and submitted in the 2018-2019 academic year. However, here I would like to note that community engagement is an expectation in the RSP Community Lab (110, 210, 310, 410) and that 30 hours of service learning are required of each student in the Capstone course (RSP 402). Students also have the opportunity to be a Mentor to a student at Gorham Middle School, a one-on-one experience, either as a volunteer or for credit, at any time during their University career.

b. Please indicate if any of the community engagement activities listed below are included in your program’s curriculum, by noting which activities are required or optional for students in your major.

<u>Community Engagement Activity</u>	<u>Required/Optional</u>
Student Research (related to a community-based problem)	Required
Independent Study (community-related project)	Optional
Capstone Course (community-related project)	Required
Service-Learning (course-based)	Required
Study Abroad, or an International Program	Optional
Interdisciplinary Collaborative Project (community related)	Optional
Student Leadership Activities (related to a team project)	Optional
Students/Faculty Community Leadership (Peer Mentors, conference presentations)	Optional

c. Please list any courses (i.e. EDU 400) that have a community engagement activity in your program.

Entry-level courses:

RSP 110 through RSP 411 Learning Community Lab (every semester)

Upper-level courses:

RSP 402 Senior Capstone