

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

2018-19 Academic Year

University of Southern Maine

## A. College, Department, Date

*College* Academic Affairs  
*Department* Russell Scholars Program (RSP)  
*Date* May 30, 2019

## B. Contact Person for the Assessment Plan

*Name and title* Lisa Hibl, Director

## C. Degree Program

*Name of Degree Program*

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

## D. Assessment of Student Learning: Program Assessment

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

- a. Are your student learning outcomes published on your department's website?  
No – please see attached PDF for our Curriculum Map with SLOs noted

- i. If yes, please provide 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?**

1. Students will possess a sense of belonging to their learning community, their campus, and their community.

2. Students will be able to collaborate with purpose, efficiency, and effectiveness on group projects.
3. Students will use strong analytic and communications skills to clearly express their ideas with peers, faculty, and others.
4. a. Students will be able to select appropriate digital tools and deploy them to communicate with multiple audiences.  
b. Students will communicate effectively with both images and text.
5. Capstone students will value community engagement through their experience with significant, self-designed service-learning projects.

- b. ***Please identify which of your student learning outcome(s) were assessed this past academic year.***

Outcomes 1 and 2 were assessed.

- c. ***Do you have a **matrix or curriculum map** showing when your student learning outcomes are assessed and in which courses?*** Yes
- i. ***If yes, do you have this map published on your website? Please provide the url or attach a copy of the curriculum map.***

At this time, the map is not on the website, but it is attached as a PDF here.

### **Step 2: Assessment Methods Selected and Implemented**

- a. ***Identify which assessment measures (beyond individual student grading) were used to determine whether students achieved the stated learning outcomes for the degree. (NOTE: Many undergraduate programs are using their recently approved Capstone courses to assess student learning. Assessment plans included in your Capstone Proposal in the CCC may be referred to as examples of assessment work in your program.)***

Please see notes below.

- b. ***Briefly describe when you implemented the assessment activity; if a rubric or other structured approach was used to assess student outcome achievement, please describe and/or attach the rubric.***

Example: Outcome 1 was measured during the fall semester -- all majors completed a problem-solving case study during the \_\_\_ course. Case studies were graded on a rubric by two faculty members.

Example: Outcome 2 was measured during the spring semester -- all majors in the capstone course completed a research project. Research projects will be reviewed and graded by a group of faculty.

**Outcome 1** was qualitatively measured at the end of fall semester, when all Lab students participated in a verbal forum about their experience of the living-learning community.

**Outcome 2** was measured in the fall semester, at the conclusion of a group project in the EYE course. The research and presentation of these projects were graded on a rubric by two faculty members. \*Rubric attached.

Also, we continued the informal survey at the annual "all hands" program meeting for specific suggestions about the one-credit RSP Lab, for self-reported data on retention in the program and at USM, and (new this time) for feedback on travel-course or study-away course options for future planning.

Midterm course evaluations were given to students in EYE and College Writing, focused on gaining feedback on course pacing and student understanding of major course content.

### **Step 3: Using the Assessment results to Improve Student Learning**

- a. *Briefly describe your unit's process of reviewing the program assessment results (for example, annual discussion by faculty committee, etc.).*

Three faculty members were present at the verbal feedback forum in the final Fall Lab class, to listen and engage with students. The Director and Associate Director will be revisiting plans for the structure of the fall Lab class in summer 2019.

Following the assessment of group projects in the EYE, the co-instructors met with guest faculty members who attended the group presentations: plans are underway to implement this unit again, with small changes to the logistics.

Both sets of co-instructional teams reviewed the midterm course evaluation results (Elizabeth Dodge and Timothy Wooten, Lisa Hibl and Nathan Hamilton).

- b. *Identify the specific changes that have been or will be made to improve student learning based on these program assessment results. (For example, what changes*

*will the program make at the assignment, course, or program level to improve student learning, based on the assessment results?)*

We are pleased that taking last year's assessment measures into account to include more active learning opportunities and team-based learning found satisfaction with students in the EYE; we will work towards designating one tandem assignment/unit across two RSP courses, the EYE and College Writing, in fall 2019.

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

5/30/19 – for the purposes of this report.

**E. Other Assessment Activities:** *Briefly describe any additional assessment-related activities your program is using at the course level (for example, creating common assignments and/or assignment rubrics for use across different sections of required courses, examining student progress in entry-level courses, other assessment projects implemented by individual faculty, etc.).*

As RSP primarily supports first-year students in the bulk of course offerings, we will continue to look at methods for assessing the integration of the first-year courses on student learning.

**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.*

Community engagement is an expectation in RSP Community Lab, and 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.

We are also forging a partnership with Gateway Community Services, 501 Forest Ave., at which students may participate in a single event during their College Prep Series or may become more involved as a weekly math or writing tutor. We expect to launch the tutoring option in fall 2019.

*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)	R
Student-Faculty Community Research Project	O
Internship, or a Field Experience	O
Independent Study (community-related project)	O
Capstone Course (community-related project)	R
Service-Learning (course-based)	R
Study Abroad, or an International Program	O
Interdisciplinary Collaborative Project (community related)	O
Student Leadership Activities (related to a team project)	O
Students/Faculty Community Leadership (e.g., advisory boards, committees, conference presentations)	O
Other activities (please list):	O
-peer mentors	

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**

## RSP 103/EYE Archives for Action Research Project

(30% of course grade)



**Which of these global issues has caught your attention this semester?**

**How do you see these issues having an effect closer to home? How could you get involved?**

### GOALS

- To work collaboratively with classmates on solving a real world problem
- To directly apply your research to creative problem-solving
- To experience research as multi-sourced, integral to informed action, and evolving
- To engage with multimodal texts and create your own, using WordPress
- To envision a bridge between coursework and community action
- To build a class archive of current, valuable source materials and perspectives
- To begin a Russell Scholars archive of student research, writing, and thinking that showcases and advances the life and mission of this learning community

### DESCRIPTION

Students will select a topic from a list that mirrors course content to date, forming groups of 4-5 persons working on the same topic. While the topic list includes problems of a global scale, each group's assignment is to think about how they could make a social impact within that sphere on a more local level. For example, if the major topic is Natural Resource Depletion, interventions at a local level could propose a number of approaches to local sites/situations: mobilizing community members for the annual alewife counts, organizing a tree identification and appreciation session for students at the elementary school, planning a citizen-science day at Bradbury Mountain for a bioblitz, surveying students on campus about methods of spring break travel to assess fuel consumption. Some projects will carry an implicit "solution," while others may outline a plan for improvement. Given the course title, projects will fall under the umbrella terms of culture, community, and environment. The problem itself can be one of awareness, acceptance, or understanding as well as a situation needing immediate action. In other words,

proposals may seek to inform or educate persons as well as to intervene or create concrete change.

Your group will work together to identify a narrowed topic. You'll research its global impact and then focus on its effect on a smaller, local scale. Ultimately, you'll gather and curate a set of relevant resources on our WordPress site, [www.usmcourses/RSP103/](http://www.usmcourses/RSP103/), and create a timeline for action.

#### GENERAL SCHEDULE

**Week 8:** Groups form, identify narrowed topic, gain familiarity with WordPress, assign tasks

**Week 9:** Research the background/history of your topic and its large and smaller scale impact

**Week 10:** Choose your sources for the archive and post to our WordPress blog with annotations (detailed directions for creating and submitting blog entries appear on the Blog page of the course website); give and receive feedback on blog posts.

**Week 11:** Create and submit your group's Action Plan Timeline (to the WordPress site) and your individual two-page Reflection paper (hard copy to your instructor).

### THE ASSIGNMENT

#### I/ ARCHIVE BUILDING (GROUP)

2 images / 2 articles / 1-2 interviews / 1-2 videos

Each group will collaborate to build a selected archive for their specific topic. Each of these items must be cited in MLA style and accompanied by a brief (200 words) caption, introduction, or summary. Depending on the type of source, you will decide how to "package" it for your audience. Whatever your curatorial choice, you need to show your reasons for including it and your understanding of its main content. How does it contribute to your knowledge of the problem? How does it suggest an approach? How does it relate to the other materials your group has selected?

#### II/ ACTION PLAN TIMELINE (GROUP)

Design a virtual action plan to address the problem. This plan will be a timeline based on your research. The TAs will visit class to instruct students on using KnightLab's timeline tool and be available for extra help with this technology.

### III/ REFLECTION PAPERS (INDIVIDUAL)

Each student must submit to their instructor: A two-page paper reflecting on the experience of multimodal archive building in their group. Comment on the division of labor as well as your group's discoveries.

#### GRADING RUBRIC for ARCHIVE CONTENTS & TIMELINE

**A** - Archive compiles at least the required number and variety of sources with complete and correct MLA citation information, revealing an understanding and facility with multimodal sources. Sources are well chosen, showing immediate relevance to the group's topic. Sources relate well to one another, building a meaningful subset of materials through which the topic may be explored. Annotation information is clearly written, 5-7 sentences for each source, and appropriately introduces, captions, or summarizes the source, showing its relation to the group project. Annotations may comment on the multimodal aspects of particular sources and how this contributes to the content/delivery of the source.

The Action Plan Timeline proposes a clear, creative approach to solving the problem and includes 7-10 entries. It identifies the target audience and shows a viable timeline. It offers a strategy that seems effective to increasing awareness or intervention.

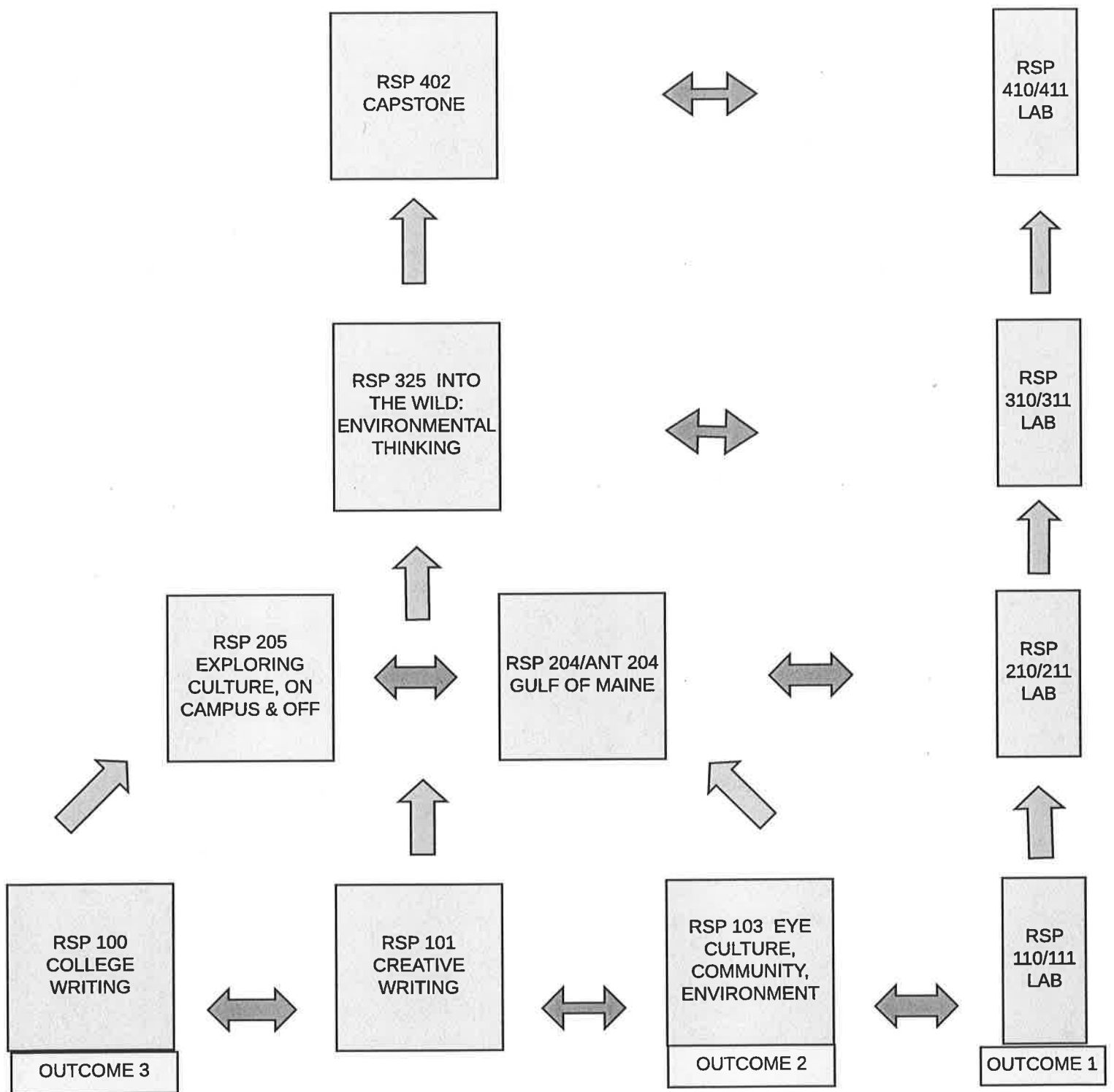
**B** - Archive compiles the required number and variety of sources with mostly complete and correct MLA citation information. Sources show relevance to the group's topic. Sources show cohesion, although the annotations for them could better articulate their relationship and usefulness. Sources may be less current or targeted. Annotations are complete and clear.

The Action Plan Timeline proposes a viable approach to solving the problem and may include fewer than 7-10 entries. Its target audience may not be clearly identified. It offers a strategy that appears effective but may not rely on a convincing timeline to achieving awareness or intervention.

**C** - Archive may not compile the required number and variety of sources and may not include appropriate MLA citation information. Sources may be too divergent to show a clear connection to one another or to the group's topic. Annotations may not be complete or clearly indicative of the sources' usefulness and may not be clearly written.

The Action Plan Timeline proposes a credible approach to solving the problem but does not include many entries (less than 5). The audience may not be identified. It may not include a convincing or detailed timeline for raising awareness or facilitation intervention to meet the group's problem.





## RUSSELL SCHOLARS

### Curriculum Map with Learning Outcomes