WINTHROP UNIVERSITY
COLLEGE OF VISUAL AND PERFORMING ARTS
MASTER OF ARTS IN ARTS ADMINISTRATION (MAAA)
ASSESSMENT OF STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES
2017-18

Assessment of student learning outcomes in the Master of Arts in Arts Administration occurs within the context of the following general principles:

1. Much of the assessment that takes place in the classroom is evaluative, and faculty members employ assessment tools everyday in many ways.
2. Academic assessment does not replace curricular, programmatic, and other types of ongoing review for improvement: it supplements and improves it.
3. Faculty ownership of and participation in assessment activities is essential. Assessment is embedded in the culture of the entire teaching/learning enterprise of the program.
4. The program has a history of making changes based on assessment results.
5. Academic assessment is aligned with recommended best practices of the Association of Arts Administration Educators (AAAE), the international professional organization that promotes standards for this academic discipline.

We also recognize that there is a difference between student learning outcomes and program outcomes. In the MAAA program, we assess both. To this end, we've developed these operational definitions:

Student Learning Outcomes (SLOs) describe, in measurable terms, what students should be able to do, what they will know, and/or attitudes they will hold at the end of a class, program, or as a result of a service.
Program Outcomes (AUOs) are process oriented and they describe how well the degree program intends to function or improve its services. Program outcomes focus on services, products, and /or processes that sustain the degree program and are essential to its operation.

This document focuses on student learning outcomes. Description of a few examples of assessment measures can demonstrate how the above general principles translate into concrete form.

Capstone Research Paper or Project Evaluation

A capstone research paper or project, structured by the program to give students an opportunity to demonstrate mastery of an array of skills and knowledge appropriate to the discipline, can be a useful assessment instrument. Successful completion of the capstone research activity requires students to achieve advanced, post-baccalaureate level competency in research and writing skills. The capstone research paper or project is evaluated by the course instructor, the program director, and a third reader (either a Winthrop faculty member or a regional professional expert on topic). Students develop their research and writing skills during the two years they are

enrolled in courses. The sequencing of their courses includes specific research projects that prepare students for the capstone research paper or project. In the first semester, they complete a writing assignment that summarizes information that they have gathered about field research through an interview with an arts administration practitioner. The course instructor evaluates this project according to a rubric that the program's faculty members have created. In the second semester, students complete a formal research paper on a potential capstone research topic. The course instructor evaluates this project according to a rubric that the program's faculty members have created. In the third semester, students complete their formal proposal for the capstone research paper or project. The course instructor evaluates this project according to a rubric that the program's faculty members have created, and the rest of the members of the review committee provide input in this evaluation. In their final semester of enrollment students complete the capstone research paper or project, and the course instructor evaluates it twice according to rubrics that the program's faculty members have created.

Programmatic Reviews

The MAAA program utilizes external program reviews, as it does not have national accreditation standards. The National Association of Schools of Art and Design (NASAD) provides some oversight of arts administration programs, courses, and activities at the institution, but NASAD offers no standards or guidelines for graduate level programs. In the absence of a discipline-specific accreditation organization, regular institutional program review that includes peer review of academic programs is a widely accepted method for assessing curricular sequences, course development and delivery, and the effectiveness of faculty. Using external reviewers is a useful way of analyzing whether student achievement correlates appropriately with departmental goals and objectives. Recommendations initiated by skilled external reviewers can be instrumental in identifying program strengths and weaknesses leading to substantial curricular and structural changes and improvements. Winthrop University is a member of the [Association of Arts Administration Educators (AAAE)](), the international professional organization that promotes standards of education in arts administration. While AAAE does not function as an accrediting organization, it offers many of the services of such a body. These services include: an annual national convention; consultative visits for external review; published guidelines concerning curriculum, faculty credentials, assessment, and best practices. In 2011 the CVPA dean relied upon AAAE to recommend a consultant to visit the Winthrop campus. That consultant's report generated substantial improvements that are still being implemented through the 2014-15 year. The program will be undergoing another regular review in the coming academic year.

Winthrop's academic planning process requires all programs to include discussion of assessment strategies in the planning process for all new undergraduate and graduate programs. The MAAA program's annual report to the dean includes a section on assessment. This program report serves as the foundation for the dean's annual report to the Vice President for Academic Affairs.

Annual Faculty Review
The Program Director reviews each faculty member's goals and record of accomplishment in May for the previous calendar year. Evaluation criteria include teaching, creative/scholarly activity, and service that supports student learning. On the basis of this assessment, faculty

members and the Program Director collaboratively consider and design new goals and objectives.

Classroom Observation
The Program Director observes the instruction of all faculty members at every class session. The Program Director regularly documents observations of instructors' effectiveness and then meets occurs with the instructors to review the observation/evaluation and make plans for teaching improvements.

Administrative Evaluations
All faculty members in the program make written evaluations of the Program Director. The dean collects and analyzes the faculty evaluations as one element in a larger, annual review of administrative effectiveness. Annual consultations between the Program Director and the dean occur where they develop a plan for improving administrative skills.

Professional Development
The Program Director and faculty members regularly attend conferences sponsored by AAAE and various national arts organizations. They also consult with staff members associated with various campus offices, such as the Office of Nationally Competitive Awards, the Academic Success Center, Career Counseling, Teaching and Learning Center, and Dacus Library. All these resources support excellence in the program's instruction.

Placement
Placement of graduates in professional positions with non-profit arts organizations (or in for-profit companies or with other kinds of non-profits) is considered in the assessment of program goals.

Arts Administration Advisory Board
The program director organized an advisory board for this program. The board is comprised of a) alumni of the program who are working in the non-profit arts field, b) arts leaders in the region, and c) representatives from municipal economic development and the for-profit arts sectors. The members of the advisory board offer their expertise concerning current trends and issues related to arts administration, so that the faculty can make the curriculum as current and relevant as possible.

Academic Rigor

Admission to the MAAA program requires high achievement in an arts-related bachelor's degree, a record of work experience in the non-profit arts and cultural environment, a writing sample, and an interview. This screening process identifies the most promising students for admission to the program. The record of work experience with a non-profit arts organization is essential for success in the program, as it represents the students' ongoing engagement in professional practice. While studying in the MAAA program, students draw upon their current work experience as context for the concepts, theories, knowledge, and materials presented in the curriculum, and they are expected to put their learning into practice in their professional lives. Students complete numerous assignments that specifically require them to demonstrate this synthesis. They create and regularly update their professional development plans, they write

monthly reflections, they complete written analyzes of course readings, they attend arts events and write reflections on those experiences, they create strategic plans, budgets, grants, etc., designed for the organizations where they work, and they meet on a monthly basis with faculty mentors for guidance in this process of synthesis. The course instructors design these assignments as direct assessments of the students' ability to make connections between their academic and professional work, and the course instructors use rubrics to evaluate student achievement through these various assignments. These rubrics are calibrated by the graduate faculty members and the program director as a team to measure achievement at the advanced, graduate level.

All proposals for new graduate programs, substantive changes in existing programs, or deletion of programs and courses must undergo review at the college, graduate school, and university levels prior to approval. An important part of this review process is consideration of the impact of the change on academic rigor. All of the courses in the MAAA curriculum were approved in this process to be numbered at the 600 level. Winthrop University policy asserts that 600 level courses are open only to graduate students for graduate credit. The admissions process, the content of the curriculum, and the expectations of achievement are advanced beyond the level of undergraduate studies.

The curriculum challenges students at the advanced graduate level, because the entire degree program is based upon core standards recommended by the AAAE for graduate programs in arts administration. This professional organization has also formulated standards for undergraduate programs in this discipline, and it is readily apparent that the content expected within a graduate program is more advanced than in an undergraduate one. The AAAE undergraduate standards expect "basic" skills and "foundation knowledge," and they do not include goals about legal/ethical/policy content, knowledge about the international environment, leadership, or research methodologies. The graduate standards expect "specific core competencies" in six areas of the discipline, and they expect graduate students to "conceptualize, analyze, synthesize, and evaluate." The AAAE standards for student learning outcomes (SLOs) at the undergraduate level call for "foundational," "basic," and "fundamental" understanding or knowledge. The AAAE standards for SLOs at the graduate level, however, call for demonstration of competencies at the best practice level of achievement. Graduate students are expected to demonstrate that they can "develop," "create," "design," "synthesize," "adapt," and "predict."

The MAAA program's goals and SLOs align with the AAAE graduate standards. The program offers a curriculum of study that includes content in all six of the content areas recommended by the AAAE graduate standards. The program also guides students to successful completion of a graduate-level capstone research paper or project. Graduates of the MAAA program are expected to demonstrate their knowledge and skills relating to all the content areas recommended by the AAAE graduate standards. Students demonstrate their achievement through two kinds of academic assignments throughout their two years of study. First, they complete numerous research projects and theoretical analyses of assigned readings. For example, in ARTA 685 the students complete a professional interview project that includes research in the field of the person they are interviewing. In ARTA 686 the students write a 10-15 page research paper on a topic that interests them. These two research projects prepare them for the culminating research activity in the degree program—the capstone research paper or project (completed in ARTA 695 and 696). Rubrics for evaluating these research activities are calibrated by the graduate faculty

members and the program director as a team to measure achievement at the advanced, graduate level. Course instructors design these assignments as direct assessments of the students' comprehension of the content as well as their capacities to develop, synthesize, adapt, and predict, and the instructors use rubrics to evaluate the students' achievement. Second, the students complete numerous "authentic" assignments, where they develop, create, or design projects that simulate tasks that they will undertake as arts administration professionals. Course instructors design these "authentic" assignments as direct assessments of the students' applied skills, and the instructors use rubrics to evaluate the students' achievement. These rubrics are calibrated by the graduate faculty members and the program director as a team to measure achievement at the advanced, graduate level.

As students move through the MAAA curriculum, they acquire knowledge of the literature of the discipline. The program utilizes a widely-used textbook that presents an overview of each content area. The program also requires students to use several standard, widely used reference texts—one on MLA writing style and one on the process for writing a large academic research paper. Instructors will also assign well-known, standard texts for specific courses, such as Borwick's *Building Communities Not Audiences*, McCarthy's *Gifts of the Muse*, and Bernstein's *Arts Marketing Insights*. The faculty members of the program have developed and maintain an arts administration bibliography that includes seminal and the most current works in the discipline. The program maintains a roster of URLs of important websites that MAAA students will find useful in their careers, including sites such as the U.S. Department of Labor (for legal and policy resources), the National Council of Nonprofits (for leadership and governance resources), Americans for the Arts (for advocacy resources), Blouin Artsinfo (for global arts resources), Claritas (for marketing demographic resources), and Guidestar (for governance and ethical resources). Students use these two resources as research tools for course assignments and for the literature review required for their theses. As this is a professional degree in an evolving, interdisciplinary field, the literature includes a substantial amount of ever-changing current materials and a substantial amount of literature that focuses on applied knowledge—the best practices in each content area of the discipline. In organizing their courses, instructors draw readings and presentation materials from a wide range of journals, newsletters, listservs, professional organization websites, government websites, and arts organization websites. The intention is to guide students to an awareness of WHERE to find data, research, best practices, and innovations, rather than exposing students to the WHAT. Every time instructors teach each course, they are updating their list of readings to include the most current resources. In ARTA 685, 686, 695, and 696 students compile an annotated bibliography of current sources in the professional literature. In ARTA 695 and 696 students are drafting, refining, and updating a literature review for their capstone research paper or project. In these four courses the faculty members and program director, working as a team, calibrate rubrics for their annotated bibliographies and capstone research papers/project draft to measure student achievement at the graduate level.

Assessment measures in this program demonstrate that:
   A. we have an assessment plan that tracks the where, how and when learning occurs for students during their academic careers in the Master of Arts in Arts Administration program at Winthrop. (The Assessment Map)
   B. the learning that occurs in the program aligns with the broader learning goals of the college, university, and external professional organizations. (Vertical Alignment)

C. we always attain the important symbiotic connection between assessment and change. (Closing the Assessment Loop)
D. we regularly review all components of our program's assessment plan (see fifth column of The Assessment Map)

A.   The Assessment Map in the MAAA Program:

ASSESSMENT ACTIVITY	ASSESSMENT RESULTS	ASSESSMENT FREQUENCY	RESULTS USED TO MAKE CHANGES IN:	ASSESSMENT ACTIVITY/TOOL REVIEWED
Student Evaluations of Courses (Indirect)	Student feedback data on instruction	Every semester	Advising; Pedagogy; curriculum	Every five years
Program Director's Classroom Observation of Instruction (Indirect)	Observation data by Program Director followed by individual meeting with faculty member	Every semester	Pedagogy and course content	Every five years
Faculty Meetings (Indirect)	Minutes of assessment discussions	Every month	Pedagogy; curriculum; Teaching Assignments	Every semester
Pre-Program Survey (Indirect)	Base-line data on student knowledge of program goals	Every Fall		Every four years
Mid-Program Survey (Indirect)	Student feedback on program effectiveness	Every Fall	Advising, Pedagogy, curriculum, teaching assignments, policies, course content	Every four years
Exit Survey (Indirect)	Student feedback on program effectiveness	Every June	Advising, Pedagogy, curriculum, teaching assignments, policies, course content	Every four years
Reflection Essays (Direct)	Student essays	Every semester	Advising; pedagogy; curriculum	Every four years
Arts Event Response (Direct)	Student essays	Every semester	Course content	Every four years

Professional Development Plan (Direct)	Student essays	Every semester	Course content	Every four years
Courses Assignments (Direct)	Student projects	Every semester	Course content	Every two years
Monthly Literature Reviews (Direct)	Student essays	Every semester	Course content	Every four years
Process Portfolio (Direct)	Student portfolios	Every semester	Advising; curriculum	Every four years
Practitioner Interview Project (Direct)	Student research data	Every Year	Advising, curriculum	Every four years
Internship Research Project (Direct)	Student research data	Every year	Curriculum; capstone policies	Every four years
Capstone Research Proposal (Direct)	Student projects	Every year	Advising; curriculum; capstone policies	Every four years
Capstone Research Paper or Project (Direct)	Student theses	Every year	Advising; curriculum; capstone policies	Every four years

The Program Director manages the above assessment tools consistently and regularly, as the third column in the chart indicates. The program's faculty members meet at least once per month during the academic year and in a retreat at the end of the academic year. They review assessment data and implement change in those meetings.

B.   Vertical alignment of learning goals:

The specific program mission and goals align with CVPA, university, and the AAAE professional organization missions and goals.

MAAA Mission Statement:
The Master of Arts in Arts Administration program combines theoretical study, academic research, and applied practice to prepare reflective leaders to work with professional skill, creative initiative, and humane integrity in non-profit arts environments.

MAAA Program Goals
1. To provide students a curriculum of best practices in governance, audience development, financial management, and legal principles pertaining to non-profit arts.
2. To prepare students for leadership roles in community engagement with the arts, arts advocacy, and arts policy development.
3. To explore evolving technologies, global issues, ethical questions, and leadership practices as they relate to non-profit arts.

4. To guide students to successful completion of an individual capstone research paper or project as a culminating experience.

The program mission statements and program goals share a focused vision of professional education and a commitment to developing students' leadership skills. The program's student learning outcomes, the student learning outcomes for each course, and the student learning outcomes for assignments in each course all connect directly to at least one of the MAAA program goals.

CVPA Mission Statement

The College of Visual and Performing Arts at Winthrop University offers nationally accredited programs in art, design, theatre, dance, and music, and provides academically challenging instruction in an interdisciplinary environment that inspires and prepares the next generation of artists, educators, scholars, and audiences. We promote intellectual inquiry and collaborative opportunities that encourage each student to develop a uniquely creative vision cultivated through artistry, teaching, scholarship, public performance, and community engagement.

The college mission statement asserts that students receive "academically challenging instruction." The program's mission statement affirms that we achieve this through "theoretical study, academic research, and applied practice." The program's goals also assert that the MAAA program expects its graduates to master "best practices" in the non-profit arts environment and to complete an "individual capstone research paper or project." The college mission statement and the MAAA program goals both include scholarship and community engagement as two important modes of learning.

Relevant Excerpt from the University Mission Statement

Winthrop University provides personalized and challenging undergraduate, graduate, and continuing professional education programs of national caliber within a context dedicated to public service to the nation and to the State of South Carolina. The values of service, excellence, diversity, community, and leadership provide the foundation for Winthrop's continuing development and shape Winthrop's continuing success.

Winthrop students acquire and develop knowledge, skills, capabilities and values that enrich their lives and prepare them to meet the needs and challenges of the contemporary world, including the ability to communicate effectively, appreciate diversity, work collaboratively, synthesize knowledge, solve complex problems and adapt to change. Ongoing assessment of programs and services ensures both that all academic programs challenge students at their highest level of ability and that the library, instructional technology and other academic service areas support courses of study that are consonant with best practices. As a result, Winthrop graduates are eminently well prepared to enter the most competitive graduate or professional schools as well as to be leaders in their chosen professions and in their communities.

In the program mission statement, we assert that we are preparing students to assume leadership roles in their profession. This links to the university mission statement's assertion that "academic programs challenge students at the highest level" as well as the university's commitment to preparing graduates "to be leaders in their chosen professions and in their communities."

AAAE Graduate Program Goals

When completing a graduate degree, students should possess specific core competencies in certain areas including:
1. Financial and audience development, strategic analysis and planning
2. The dynamics and logistics of institutional development related to how art gets presented and produced
3. The legal, ethical, and policy environments for the arts
4. Leadership in complex organizational environments including the dynamics of working with boards, organizational structure and staffing, and working with artists and other constituencies
5. The international environment for the arts and the impact of the global economy
6. The application of research methodologies to the field including the ability to conceptualize, analyze, synthesize, and evaluate data

The program goals include all the core competencies outlined in the AAAE program goals.

C.   Closing the Assessment Loop

Specific Assessment Activity in 2017-18

- Curriculum revision:
  - The program faculty members will continue to monitor the effectiveness of the capstone research project as the culminating research experience in this program. In the 2016-17 academic year five students from previous cohorts graduated by completing capstone projects instead of theses. This represents the highest number of completers in four years. This is an early, positive sign that the switch from thesis to capstone as a culminating experience is producing the desired results.
- Implementation in the 2017-18 year the following enhancements to the curriculum from previous years:
  - Students are completing a new assignment—the monthly reflection on the readings.
  - Students are including a literature review in the research paper in ARTA 686. The aspiration is to improve the quality of the literature review section of the capstone research project in the next year of study.
- Scheduled analysis of program elements:
  - Student Evaluations of Courses
  - Exit Survey
  - Capstone Proposal