PLNU faculty will design and implement a capstone or culminating experience in each academic field embedding the competencies based on the DQP outcomes. In the capstone experience students will demonstrate discipline specific knowledge informed by a liberal arts education, and the intellectual and professional skills necessary to be successful in their field. The capstone will also provide an opportunity for students to reflect on their vocation and how their professional and personal life can be lived as an expression of institutional core values. The capstones will be assessed using a common framework that is informed by the AAC&U Value Rubrics.

Objectives

The project has several key objectives:

- To provide a record of the challenges that a mission driven university faces when engaging in a national conversation around basic learning expectations for an undergraduate education while maintain the mission aspects in its learning outcomes.
- To shape a capstone or culminating experience in each academic program that will enable us to assess both discipline specific knowledge and general learning as embodied in the fundamental ideas contained in the DQP.
- Experiment with possible systems for externally benchmarking student learning with a coalition of institutions with similar faith-based missions.

Questions and Lesson Learned

Lessons learned to date:

- The DQP competencies seem to be built with the assumption that students will complete GE in the first two years of their education. That is not the case in a liberal education institution such as PLNU. This implies that assessment needs to happen during senior year.
- The capstone and culminating experiences on our campus vary significantly between disciplines. We are in need of some overall guidelines for capstones.

Questions:

- How is external benchmarking of DQP going to be possible? Will we ultimately end up having to use some sort of standardized test (CLA, ETS or others)?
- What are the best practices in university-wide capstone and culminating experience guidelines?

Timeline

Spring 2012:
- Inventory current senior-year capstone or culminating experiences for each major.

Summer 2012:
- Form a Working Group (faculty and co-curricular staff)
  - Define core components of a capstone or culminating experience based on (selected) DQP competencies.
  - Draft rubrics for assessing these competencies.
- Determine department load implications in implementing a DQP-infused capstone or culminating experience in every major.

Early Fall 2012:
- Ask a few pilot departments to attempt to modify their capstones or culminating experiences to fit the draft guidelines.
- Ask these departments to suggest modifications to the rubrics that would work with their capstone or culminating experience for the DQP items being measured.

Late Fall 2012:
- Programs to pilot test the new capstone/culminating experience format confirmed.
- Task force OK’s pilot programs’ draft syllabi
- Faculty forums
- Obtain any needed faculty and administrative approvals for the pilot tests.

Spring 2013:
- Updated DQP-infused capstone/culminating experiences pilot tested.

Summer 2013:
- Evaluate findings from pilot tests.
- Modify guidelines as needed.

Fall 2013:
- APC submissions from all departments for capstone or culminating experience modifications needed to address DQP proficiencies.

Spring 2014:
- Capstones and culminating experiences launched with embedded DQP