WMU Essential Studies

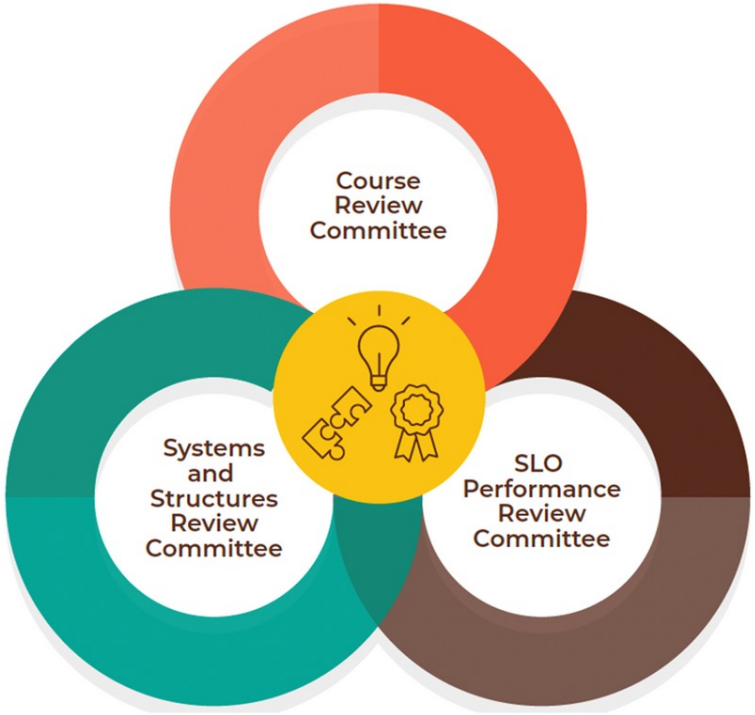
Advancing WES: Insights, Assessments, and Future Directions

WESTERN MICHIGAN UNIVERSITY
Merze Tate College
WMU Essential Studies

Results from the 2024-25 WES Comprehensive Review

WES Review: Notes on Process

1. This presentation will be recorded and placed on the newly-developed WES Faculty
2. Communication website. The slides contain relevant process information (committee members, methodologies, and on) that will not be discussed today.
3. Faculty Director, Dr. Jonathan Bush, with assistance from Dr. Brian Tripp and WES EA leadership, and Dr. Randy Ott, will complete the final report and submit it to Faculty Senate and Dr. Luchara Wallace (Dean, Merze Tate College) by June 30, 2025.
4. This report will include the following elements:
    - Executive Summary, including results and recommended initiatives
    - revised versions of these slides
    - Recording of the presentation
    - Link to folders from each committee that includes (1) brief summaries of findings and (2) raw data, lists, and other materials.
    - **NOTE: The Course Review process will conclude in December 2025 (see later note)**

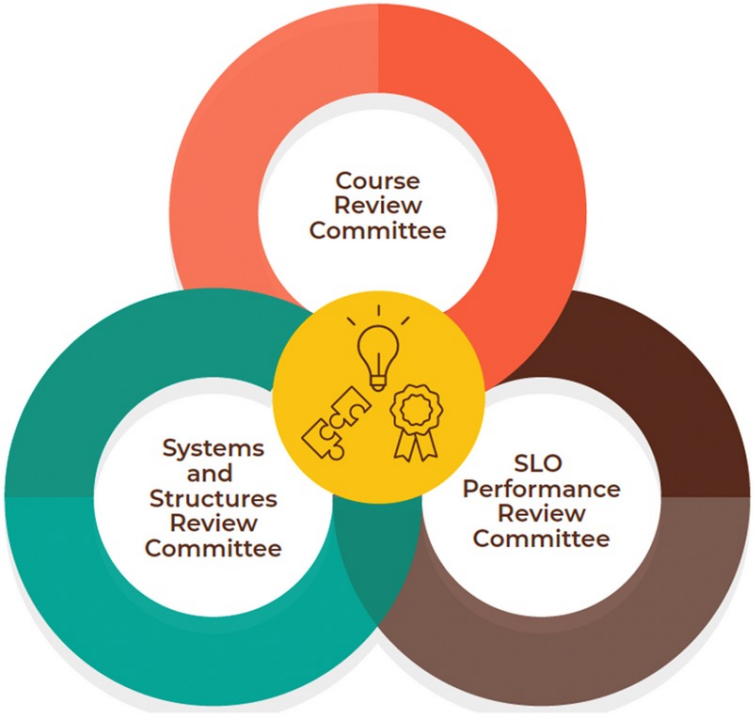


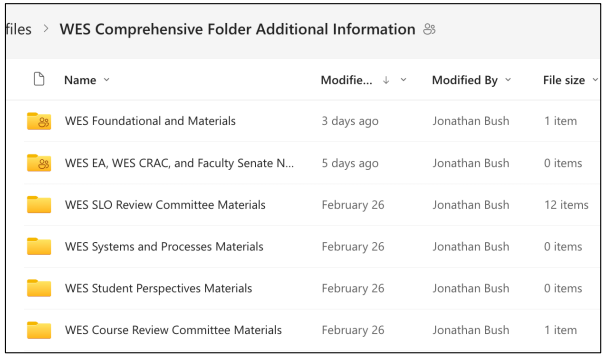
Today's Agenda

- **Introductions and Notes on Process**
  - *Jonathan Bush*
- **WES Development and Assessment: A History**
  - *Sarah Summy and Decker Hains*
- **4 Years of Lessons Learned/ Ongoing Improvements**
  - *Carol Weideman and Brian Tripp*
    - **Assessment Plans** - *Carol Weideman*
    - **Outcome Rubrics** - *Brian Tripp*
    - **Faculty Communication** – *Jonathan Bush*

Today's Agenda

- **Review Committee Reports**
  - **WES Course Review**
    - *Linda Borish and Cynthia Klekar-Cunningham*
      - Objectives, Methodology, Initial Results, Next Steps
  - **WES Student Learning Outcome Data Review**
    - *Daria Orlowska and Eli Rubin*
      - Objectives, Methodology, Initial Results
  - **WES Systems and Processes Review**
    - *Megan Hess and Veronica Rice McCray*
      - Objectives, Methodology, Initial Results
  - **WES Student Perspectives**
    - *Liberty Kostrzewa and Randy Ott*
      - Objectives, Methodology, Initial Results
- **Conclusion**
  - **Trends, Implications, and Next Steps**
    - *Brian Tripp and Jonathan Bush*



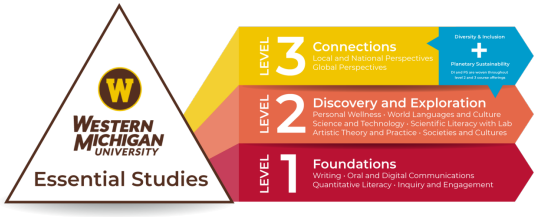


WES Report Archive

- Upon completion, the WES review report will be publicly available at the 2024-2045 WES Comprehensive Review.
- The report will include a link to a SharePoint archive of all materials relevant to each committee's work and kept as a record of processes and data.

https://wmich.edu/essentialstudies/review

By-the-Numbers: Spring 2025



Overall WES Course

TOTAL COURSES:	364
Level 1	79
Level 2	196
Level 3	89
CAS	236
CoA	2
CEHD	20
CEAS	22
CFA	31
CHHS	27
HCoB	17
LHC	9

WES Course Enrollment:

	Sections	Enrolled	SCH Produced
TOTAL:	656	21,014	66,108
Level 1	186	5,881	18,102
Level 2	360	12,201	38,810
Level 3	110	2,932	9,196
CAS	370	11,682	37,568
CoA	3	67	201
CEHD	70	1,706	4,857
CEAS	32	901	2,837
CFA	32	2,039	6,651
CHHS	72	2,090	6,413
HCoB	67	2,405	7,209
LHC	10	124	372

WES courses

- **were 78% full;**
- **produced 43% of total WMU UG SCH. (66,108/153,968)**

Data analysis: Ewa Urban, Ph.D.
Office of Institutional Research

BY THE NUMBERS: FALL 2024

Data analysis: Ewa Urban, Ph.D.
Office of Institutional Research

WES Courses

WERE 78% FULL

PRODUCED 43% of TOTAL WMU UG SCH.

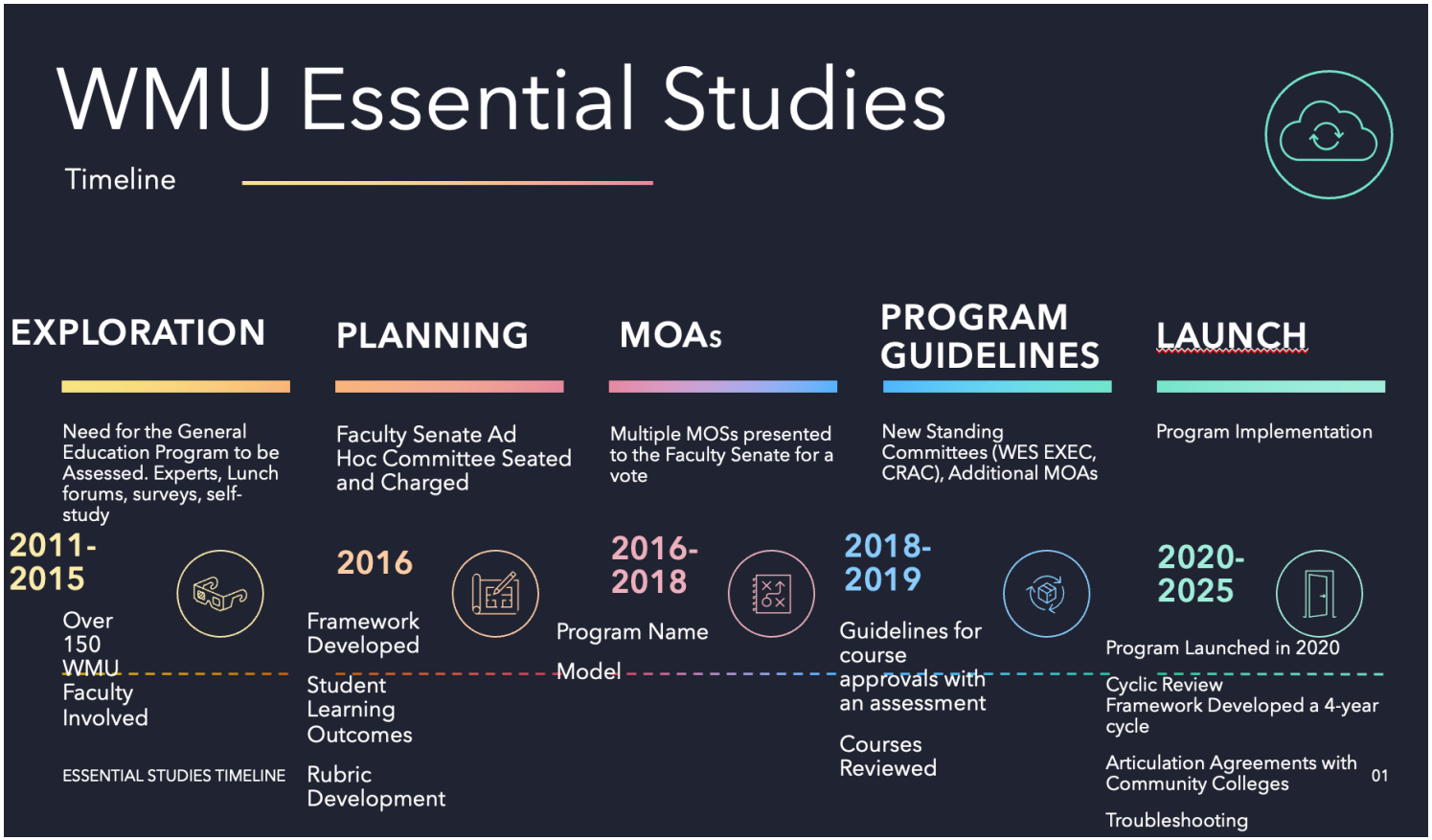
74,244/172,531

OVERALL WES PORTFOLIO

TOTAL COURSES:	396
LEVEL 1	84
LEVEL 2	207
LEVEL 3	105
CAS	264
CoA	2
CEHD	22
CEAS	24
CFA	25
CHHS	29
HCoB	20
LHC	10

WES COURSE ENROLLMENT

	Sections	Enrolled	SCH Produced
TOTAL	**717**	**23,654**	**74,244**
LEVEL 1	277	8,766	26,958
LEVEL 2	335	12,514	39,736
LEVEL 3	105	2,374	7,523
CAS	409	13,303	42,688
CoA	5	301	903
CEHD	80	1,918	5,461
CEAS	39	1,010	3,169
CFA	34	1,945	6,335
CHHS	73	2,455	7,522
HCoB	72	2,623	7,869
LHC	5	99	297



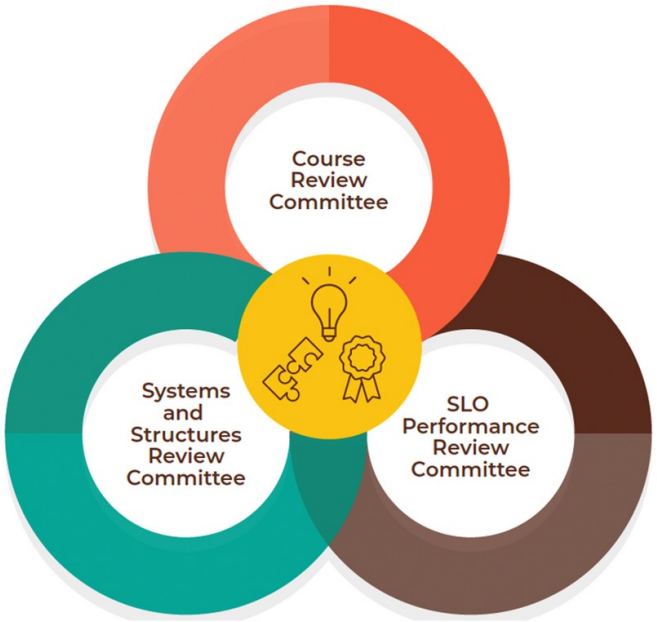
Assessment at the Core: A Brief History of **WMU Essential Studies**

Dr. Decker Hains and Dr. Sarah Summy

WMU Essential Studies **Review Process**

Y1 (2021-22)	Y2 (2022-23)	Y3 (2023-24)	Y4 (2024-25) PROGRAM REVIEW
WRITING	LOCAL/NATIONAL	GLOBAL PERSPECTIVES	Subcommittees review core information
SOCIETIES and CULTURE	SCIENCE/TECH with LAB	ARTISTIC THEORY and PRACTICE	
WORLD LANGUAGES/ CULTURES	SCIENCE/TECH	PERSONAL WELLNESS	
ORAL/DIGITAL	INQUIRY/ ENGAGEMENT	QUANTITATIVE REASONING	

*SUSTAINABILITY and D/I SLOs reviewed during the regular review.



- Academic Year 2025-26 is for review and implementation.
- WES Review cycle begins again in AY 2026-27.
- Next WES Comprehensive Review will occur in AY 2029-30.

WES: Four Years of Lessons Learned

- Based on lessons-learned and ongoing interim results of the WES Comprehensive Review, WES EA has begun three ongoing initiatives.
  - **Revision of Assessment Plans (Templates and Processes)**
  - **Review of SLO Outcome Rubrics**
  - **Faculty Communications**

Key Initiative: Assessment Plans (LEAD: CRAC)

Issue/Need

- Assessment Plan Templates can be confusing and hard to use
- Over-specificity (dates, assignments) in assessments causes difficulty in putting plans into place, particularly with multiple instructors.
- Poor/contradictory instructions for faculty

Results

- Too many rejected courses by CRAC due to Assessment Plan errors due
- (1) misunderstanding forms and instructions and (2) Wrong SLOs, less-than-expected- specific assessment
- Many courses are not using approved Assessment Plans due to over-specificity.

Current Initiatives

- New Instructions with detailed information and graphics
- New Assessment Plan Procedures and Guidelines: broad assessment, more instructor agency
- New Assessment Plan Templates: Better user-design along with example plans

New Templates will be launched prior to Fall Semester 2025.

Key Initiative: Assessment Plans

Level I: Foundations

Level I: Writing

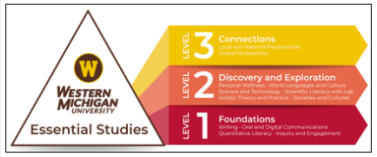
COURSE *(PREFIX, NUMBER, TITLE)*		
FACULTY MEMBER/COURSE COORDINATOR		
Briefly describe how the course will meet the intent of the WES student learning outcomes for Level I: Writing, as linked here. .		
Required SLOs: In the appropriate boxes below, describe how the course will integrate WES assessment activities in relation to the identified SLOs. *Be sure to describe how the assessment activities will address key traits as described in the appropriate WES SLO Outcome Rubric, as linked here.*		
	Demonstrate effective and appropriate written communication (WCL)	xxx
☐	Demonstrate and apply information literacy (ILL)	
Instructors must complete the WES outcome rubric embedded in its respective course eLearning shell FOR EACH SECTION TAUGHT. This rubric represents the instructor's summative evaluation of student performance as described in the course's WES assessment plan.		

WMU Essential Studies (WES) Assessment Plan Template

Use the appropriate template (attached) to create your WMU Essential Studies Assessment Plan.

For best use, only submit template specific to the level/area for your course. Delete all other levels.

Note that one assignment or learning activity may be used to address multiple outcomes.



The **Foundations Level (Level I)** includes four categories

- Each Level I category has two ***specific required*** Student Learning Outcomes. These are specified in each category and cannot be substituted.

The Exploration and Discovery Level (Level II) has six categories. Each course must include **two** Student Learning Outcomes

- Each Level II category has *one specific required* Student Learning Outcome.
- Each course includes *one additional* Student Learning Outcome to be *chosen* from the menu within the level. (*Exception: Level II Societies and Cultures has no required Student Learning Outcome. For courses in this category, choose two Student Learning Outcomes from the menu.*)
- **NOTE: The one additional Student Learning Outcome may *achieve Planetary Sustainability (PSL) or Diversity and Inclusion* (DIL) requirements.**

The Connections Level (Level III) has two categories. Each course must include three Student Learning Outcomes.

- Each Level III category has *one specific required* Student Learning Outcome.
- Each course includes *two additional* Student Learning Outcomes to be *chosen* from the specific menus within the level.
- **NOTE: One additional Student Learning Outcome may *achieve Planetary Sustainability (PSL) or Diversity and Inclusion* (DIL) requirements.**

WES Student Learning Outcomes (SLOs) (with linked outcome rubrics)

- Demonstrate effective and appropriate written communication abilities. *(WCL)*
- Demonstrate and apply information literacy. *(ILL)*
- Demonstrate effective and appropriate oral and digital communication abilities. *(ORL)*
- Analyze and interpret quantitative information. *(QLL)*
- Develop creative and critical thinking. *(CCL)*
- Increase foundational knowledge of the social sciences, humanities, or the arts. *(IFKL)*
- Increase foundational knowledge of the sciences, social sciences, or the arts. *(IFKL)*
- Develop understanding and practices for personal wellness. *(PWL)*
- Demonstrate familiarity with a language other than English and/or the culture associated with it. *(LCL)*
- Demonstrate and apply scientific literacy. *(SLL)*
- Demonstrate and apply scientific literacy with a lab. *(SLL)*
- Apply ethical, critical, and informed thought within or across disciplines. *(ECL)*
- Apply different methods of intellectual inquiry, investigation, and discovery. *(IIL)*
- Develop global awareness and international perspectives. *(GAL)*
- Work both independently and in collaboration with others to achieve goals. *(WIL)*
- Develop sensitivity to diversity and inclusion. *(DIL)*
- Develop practices for planetary sustainability. *(PSL)*

Dr. Carol Weideman

Key Initiative: Assessment Plans

- Roll-out
  - **Spring 2025:** CRAC will utilize old assessment plans, but consider requirements of new/broader plans in decision-making process
  - **Summer 2025:** Full announcement and use of new assessment plans.
  - **Fall 2025-on:** New assessment plans in-place for all new/revised courses
  - **Next cyclic review cycle (begins in Fall 2026)**. All courses will include new/revised assessment plan as part of cyclic review process.

Key Initiative: Outcome Rubric Review (LEAD: WES EA)

Issue/Need

- Some discrepancies/major variances in SLO outcome rubrics leads to confusion
  - Some are very short; others are highly detailed
  - Some include Outcome choices; others are controlled.
  - SSL: Scientific Literacy and "With a Lab"); two categories with same rubric
  - IFKL: Two versions, same SLO: "Humanities" and "Social Sciences"

Current Initiatives

- WES EA is reviewing all Outcome Rubrics and addressing issues. Goal is to work with faculty to (1) simplify and (2) standardize Outcome Rubrics.

Key Initiative: Faculty Communication (LEAD: Merze Tate College)

Issue/Need

- Current faculty resources are scattered and confusing.
- No comprehensive and easy-to-access source. Faculty need to go to multiple sites (Merze Tate and Faculty Senate to find various information
- Information is incomplete and contradictory

Result

- Confusion regarding faculty obligations and procedures
- Incomplete faculty understanding of WES goals and structures

Current Initiative

- 2025-2026 WES Faculty Fellow will create a comprehensive communication plan and infrastructure for all instructors, including user-friendly WES Faculty website (One-Stop Shop" dashboard for all faculty and advisor information)

WMU Essential Studies Executive Advisory Committee (WES EA)

- **Appointed Faculty Members**
  - **Elissa Allen** (Vice Chair) (Health and Human Services)
  - **Decker Hains** (Business)
  - **Elizabeth Isidro** (Education and Human Development)
  - **Lindsay Jeffers** Secretary) (Arts and Sciences)
  - **Lei Meng** (Arts and Sciences)
  - **Brenda Srof** (Health and Human Services)
  - **Brian Tripp** (Chair) (Arts and Sciences)
  - **Kathryn Wagner** (Fine Arts)
- **Appointed Administrative Members**
  - **Jessica Parker (Director,** Academic Advising, Merze Tate)
  - **Luchara Wallace** (Dean, Merze Tate)
- **Advisory Members**
  - **Jonathan Bush** (WMU Essential Studies Faculty Director)
  - **Carrie Cumming** (Registrar)
  - **Lisa DeChano-Cook** (Curriculum Manager)

WMU Essential Studies Course Review and Approval Committee (WES CRAC)

Faculty Appointed Members

- **Kirsty Eisenhart,** Arts and Sciences
- **Beth Ernst** , Business
- **Anne-Marie Guidy-Oulai** , Representative-At-Large (Business)
- **Dana Hammond ,** Engineering and Applied Sciences
- **David Kemp** (substitute for Matilda McLean for Spring 2025), Aviation
- **Kwangmin Lee** . Representative-At-Large (Education and Human Development)
- **Vincent Lyon-Callo** , Arts and Sciences
- **Mustafa Mirzeler** , Arts and Sciences
- **Nathan Tabor.** Arts and Sciences
- **Agatha Slupek,** Arts and Sciences
- **Carol Weideman (Chair),** Education and Human Development

Ex-Officio Members

- **Amy Naugle** (fall 2024 substitute for Decker Hains), Faculty Senate Executive Board
- **Brian Tripp,** WMU Essential Studies Executive Advisory Committee

Permanent Appointed Members

- **Jonathan Bush.** WMU Essential Studies Faculty Director
- **Lisa DeChano-Cook,** Curriculum Manager

Advisory Members

- **Jacquelyn Bizzell,** Arts and Sciences
- **Nick Gauthier,** Fine Arts
- **Anthony Helms,** Honors College
- **Melinda Lockett,** Health and Human Services
- **Christine Robinson,** Education and Human Development
- **Colleen Stano,** Business
- **Sharon VanDyken,** Aviation

2024-25 WES Review Committees

WES Course Review Committee

Chairs: *Linda Borish, Cynthia Klekar-Cunningham*
Reviewing all WES courses
to determine placement and status.

WES Systems and Structure Review

Chairs: *Megan Hess, Veronica Rice McCray*
Broadly reviewing the entire WES
program and processes.

WES SLO Performance Review Committee

Chairs: *Daria Orlowska, Eli Rubin*
Conducting a deep dive into all of
WES SLO performance data to seek relevant
trends and issues.

WES Student Perspectives (WSA-led)

Chair: *Liberty Kostrzwa* (with assistance from *Randy Ott)*
Conducting a survey and focus groups
with WMU students to better understand
student perceptions and knowledge of WES.

WES Course Review Committee

Chairs: *Linda Borish, Cynthia Klekar-Cunningham*

Reviewing all WES courses

to determine placement and status.

WES Course Review Committee:

Objectives

- **Evaluate all current WES courses (405) to determine:**
  - Keep the course as designed
  - Revise the course to better align with the level, category, and/or SLOs
  - Remove course from WES curriculum

WES Course Review Committee:

Methodology

- **Members (16) placed in three subgroups, one for each WES level – Level 1, 2, and 3 – to review key materials**
  - Syllabi and assessment plans
  - Cyclic review documentation
  - Course offering patterns of frequency of offerings and data

WES Course Review Committee:

Methodology

- **Evaluation Rubric**
  - Is there a syllabus, assessment rubric, cyclical review for the course?
  - Does the course syllabus include the WES designation and SLOs?
  - Has the course been offered once every year?
  - Committee members review decisions for consensus

WES Course Review Committee:

Initial Results

- **Comprehensive evaluation of all 405 WES courses completed and recommendations established:**
  - Courses meeting all requirements (retain)
  - Courses requiring specific adjustments (revise)
  - Courses not meeting requirements recommended for removal (11 identified)

WES Course Review Committee:

Lessons-Learned and Recommendations

- **Develop Tutorial for Review Committee**
  - Create clear examples of effective WES courses
  - Create more rigorous rubric

- **Implement standardized WES course documentation**
  - Establish precise SLO implementation guidelines
  - Provide template for WES course designation and SLOs
  - Maintain rigorous cyclic review process
  - Provide targeted faculty support for course revision

WES Course Review Committee:

Committee Members

Thank you to the committee members for your time and work

David Benac (History)

Tim Buchanan (Business Information Systems)

Tracey Corbett (Business Information Systems)

Zag Davaadorj (Finance and Commercial Law)

Bruce Ferrin (Supply Chain Management)

David Flanagan (Management)

Britt Hartenberger (IIAS)

Todd Kuchta (English)

David Kutzko (World Languages and Literature)

Lisa Paulius (Physics)

Amanda Quist (Gilmore School of Music)

Kathrine Suender (Teaching Learning and Educational Studies)

Mercedes Tubino-Blanco (Spanish)

Peter Voice (Geological and Environmental Sciences)

Kathryn Wagner (School of Theatre and Dance)

Takashi Yoshida (History)

Dr. Linda Borish and Dr. Cynthia Klekar Cunningham

WES Course Review Process:

- **Summer I 2025:** Full results are presented to WES EA for review
  - WES Faculty Director contacts all departments with a course recommended for
    - Removal from WES
    - Change Area/Level in WES
- **Summer II 2025**: Responses due to WES Faculty Director
  - Accept Recommendation
  - Appeal Recommendation (If appeal: including an Action/Remediation Plan)
- **Fall 2025**: Final Decisions and Recommendations
- **December 2025 (prior to end of Fall 2025)**: Omnibus WES registrar/catalog revisions (if not already removed/modified by department)

WES SLO Performance Review Committee

Chairs: *Daria Orlowska, Eli Rubin*

Conducting a deep dive into all of WES SLO performance data to seek relevant trends and issues.

WES SLO Performance Review Committee

Objectives

Investigating 5 years of data collection within 4 categories:

Coverage

- Most vs least taken SLOs
- DEI/Sustainability SLOs

Integrity

- SLO scores by level and attributes
- SLO scores by grades

Students

- Transfer
- Underrepresented
- International
- First generation

Progression

- Level progression
- Outliers by student rank
- Outliers by transfer status

WES SLO Performance Review Committee

Methodology

Co-Chairs	*Committee*	*Co-Chairs & WMUx*	*Subcommittees (5 members/category)*	*Committee*
Objective Proposal	Objective Revision	Data Acquisition & Documentation	Analyze Data and Identify Trends	Assessment Roadmap

Datasets available in supplemental folder

Prof. Daria Orlowska and Dr. Eli Rubin

WES SLO Performance Review Committee

Initial Results

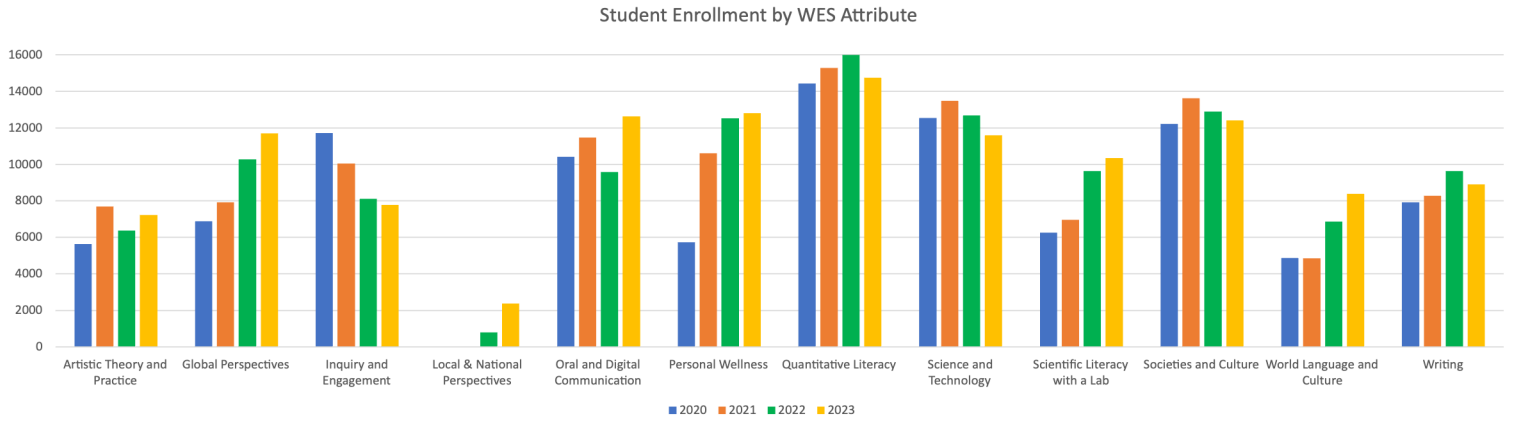
Coverage

What is the SLO coverage?

SLO Criterion Represented Across Years

- All criterion offered every year between 2020-2023
- Global Perspectives (WIL1, WIL2, WIL3) only offered in 2021 and 2022

SLO Enrollment by Attribute



WES SLO Performance Review Committee

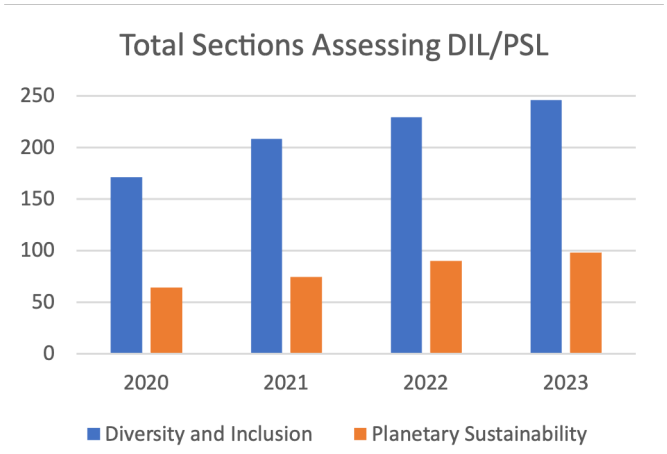
Initial Results

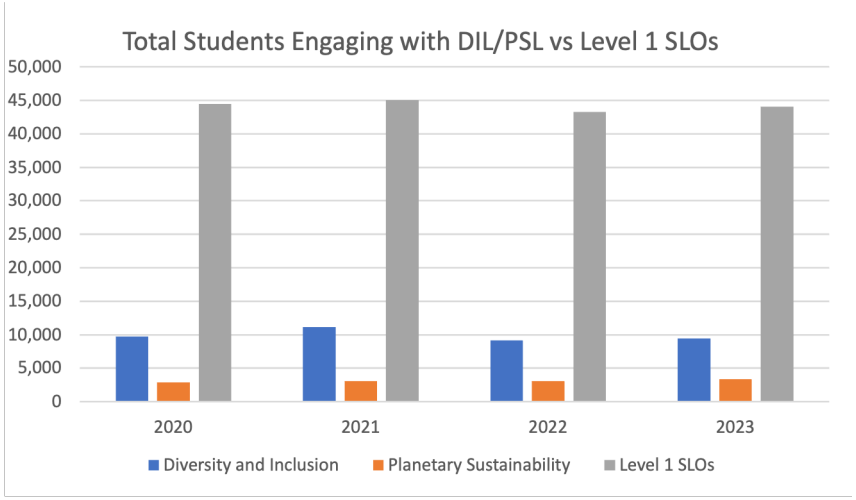
Coverage

What is the SLO coverage?

Diversity (DIL) and Sustainability (PSL) Student Learning Outcomes

Unclear if these sections are choosing to assess DIL/PSL over a Level 1 SLO.





WES SLO Performance Review Committee

Initial Results

Integrity

Are we assessing what we think we are assessing?

Average Scores for SLO by Level

Very little differences in SLO scores between levels, stable across years

<u>Exception Level 3</u>
Are increasing scores over time inflation or improvement?

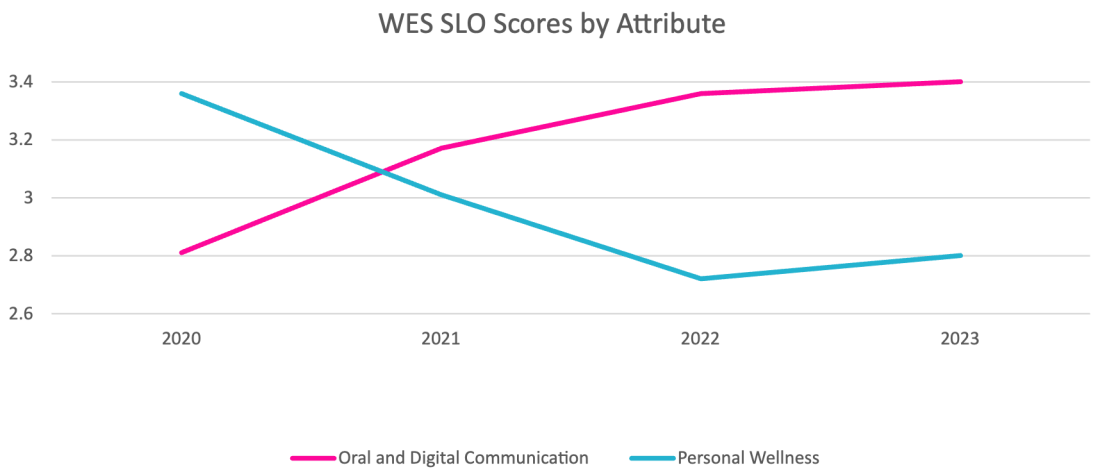
WES SLO Performance Review Committee

Initial Results

Integrity

Are we assessing what we think we are assessing?

Average Scores for SLO by Attribute: Stable Across Year



Oral and Digital Communication scores increased over years (driven by ILL)

Personal Wellness scores decreasing across years (driven by CCL, DIL, IFKL, IIL, PWL)

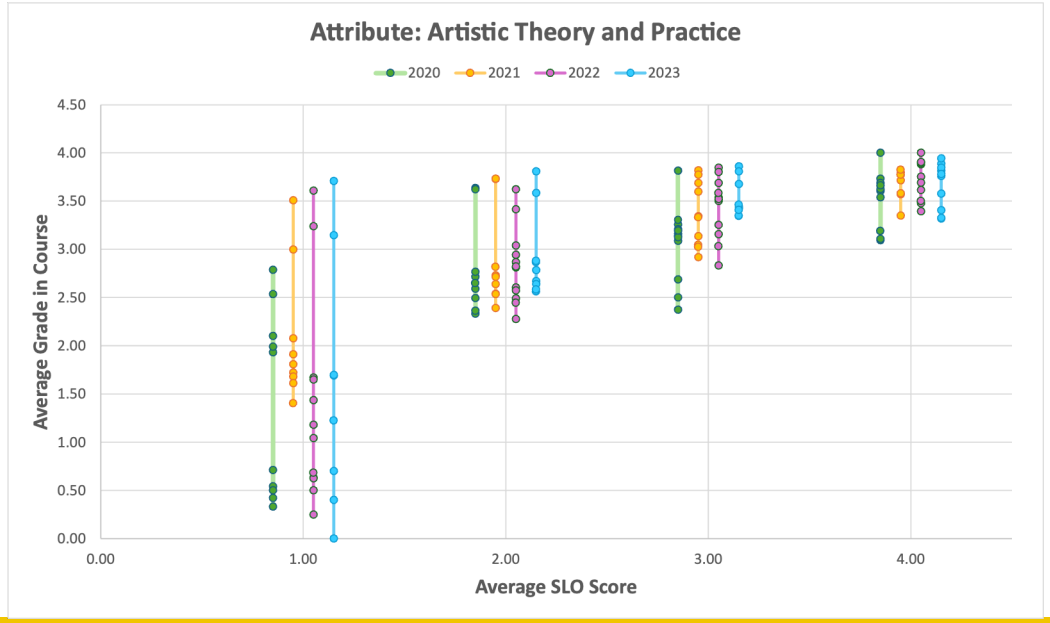
WES SLO Performance Review Committee

Initial Results

Integrity

Are we assessing what we think we are assessing?

Average scores for SLO by course grades



More spread in course grades for students earning lower SLO scores

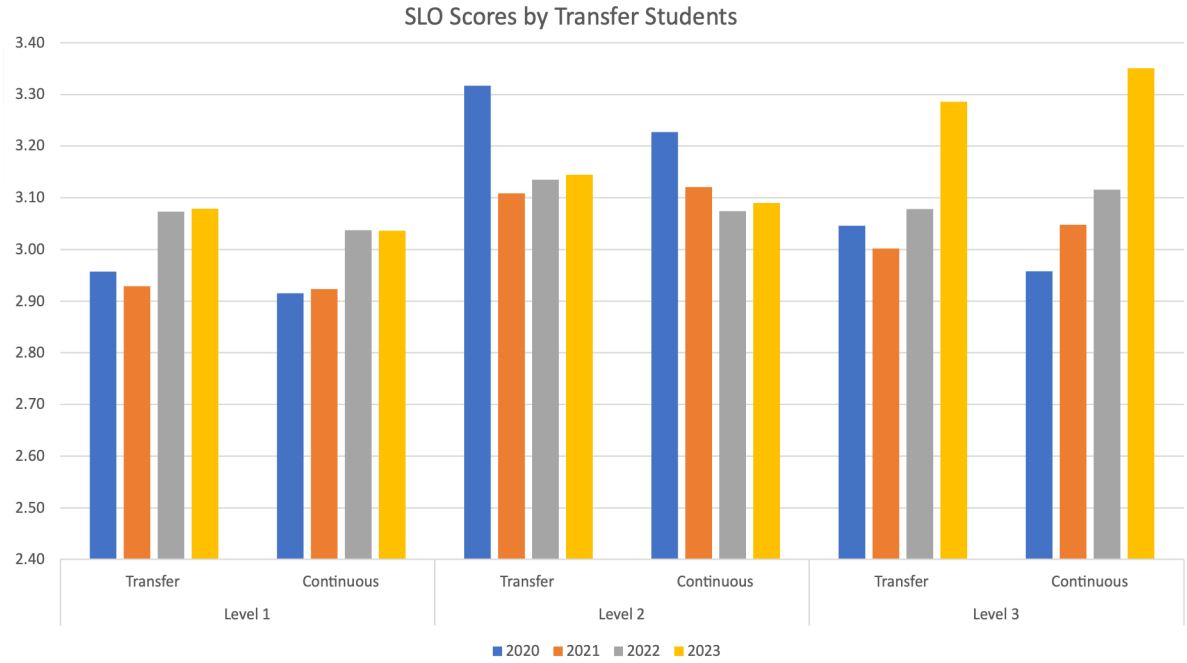
Additional graphs for each attribute available in the supplemental PDFs

WES SLO Performance Review Committee

Initial Results

Students

How are student groups performing against the average?



How are transfer students comparing to continuous students?

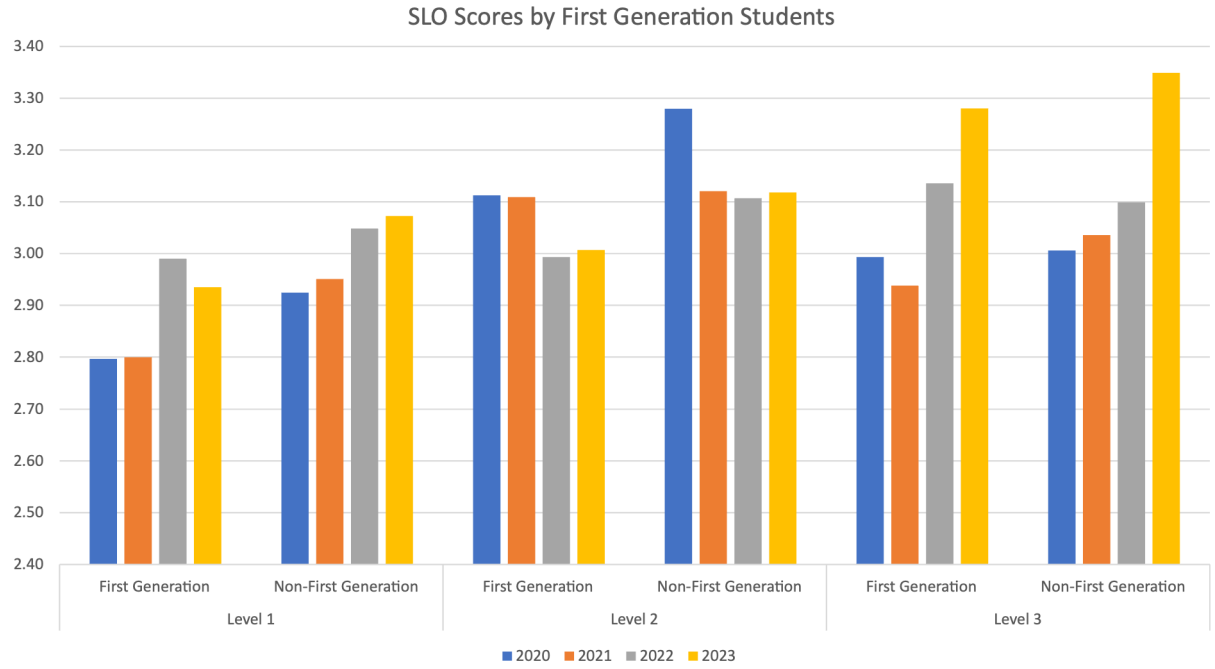
No meaningful difference between groups

WES SLO Performance Review Committee

Initial Results

Students

How are student groups performing against the average?



How are first gen students comparing to non-first gen students?

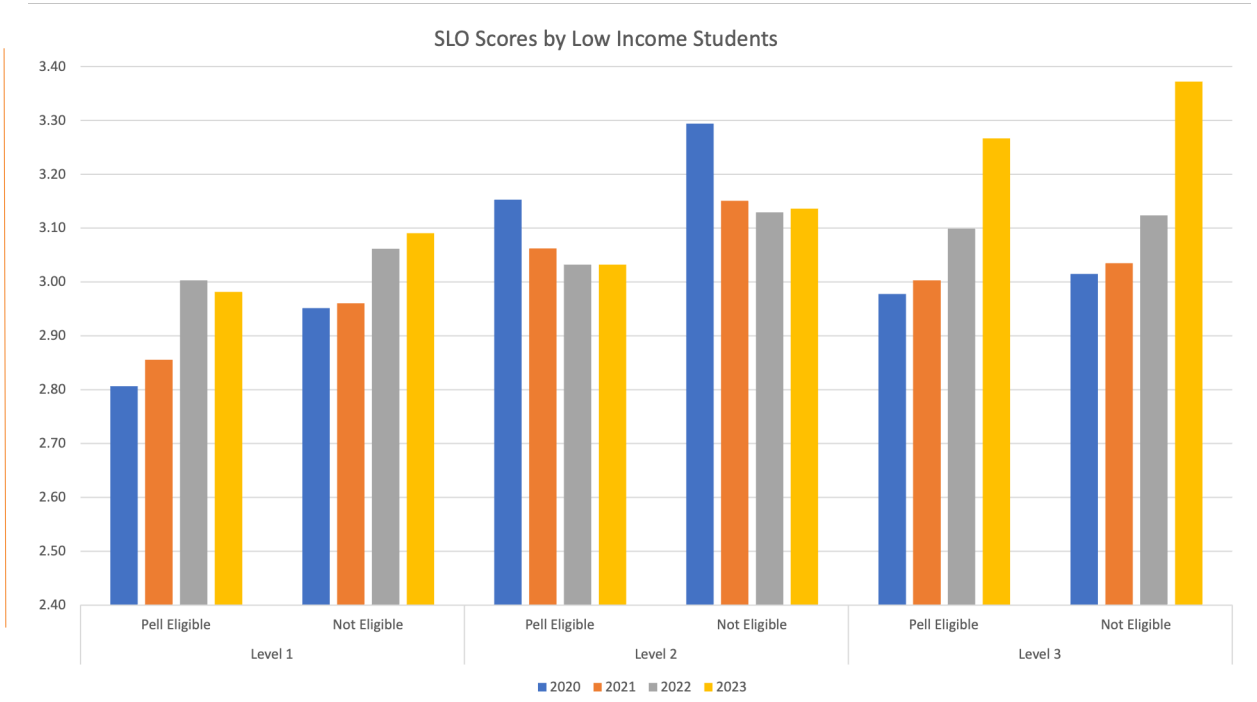
No meaningful difference between groups

WES SLO Performance Review Committee

Initial Results

Students

How are student groups performing against the average?



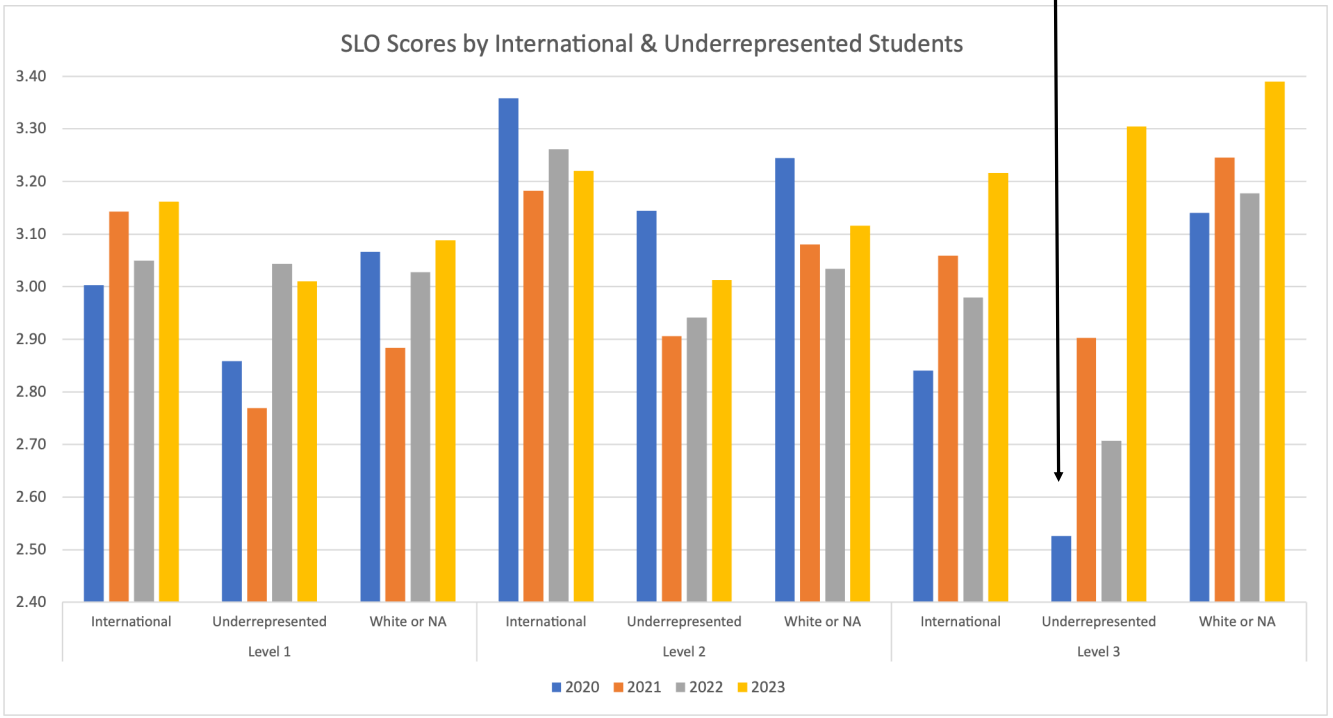
How are low-income students comparing to non-low-income students?

No meaningful difference between groups

WES SLO Performance Review Committee

Initial Results

Question about underrepresented group

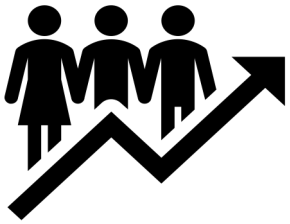


Students

How are student groups performing against the average?

WES SLO Performance Review Committee

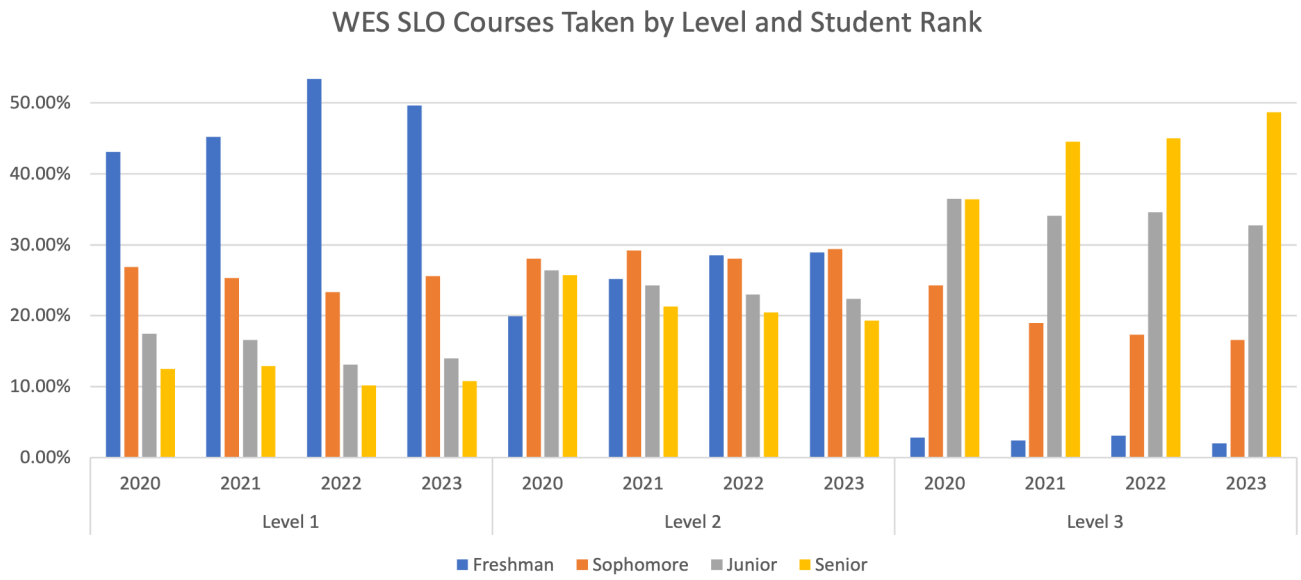
Initial Results



Progression

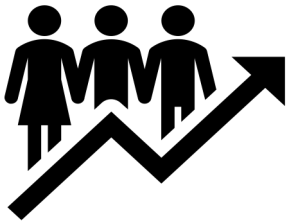
What is the order of taking SLO levels by student rank?

Overall Trend: WES SLO level match student rank



WES SLO Performance Review Committee

Initial Results



Progression

What is the order of taking SLO levels by student rank?

Overall Trend: Few transfer students take level 1 courses

Future work: Check if transfer students at higher rank are taking appropriate levels

WES SLO Performance Review Committee

Future Directions

Additional Data Exploration

- The role of assessor *(rotating faculty | part-time instructor | TA)*
- The role of assessment mode *(Elearning quiz | subjective grade | objective grade)*
- The role of advising *(appropriate progression through WES levels)*
- The role of timing *(assessment variations at different times in the semester)*
- The role of grades *(conflating course grade with SLO score)*
- The role of student groups *(experiential differences between groups)*

WES Program Revisions

- Better association of SLO criterion with courses in Banner
- Supplemental variable coding *(assessor, assessment mode, timing, modality)*
- Restating program values in changing times

WES SLO Performance Review Committee

Thank You For All Your Work!

Daria Orlowska
(Libraries)

Danyelle Gregory
(Diversity)

Jil Larson
(English)

Kevin Lee
(Statistics)

Marie Moreno
(Business)

Dave Paul
(Philosophy)

Eli Rubin
(History)

Lisa Singleterry
(Nursing)

Karen Stokes Chapo
(Effectiveness)

Kate Thomsen
(Theatre)

Savannah Xaver
(WMUx)

Sally Vliem
(Nursing)

WES System and Structure Review

Chairs: *Megan Hess, Veronica Rice McCray*

Broadly reviewing the entire WES program and processes.

WES Systems and Structure Review

Objectives

Review the key systems and processes of WES to identify areas of pride and improvement

Analyze friction points and challenges to inform future recommendations

WES Systems and Structure Review

Methodology: Our Systematic Approach

WES Systems and Structure Review

Initial Results

Areas of Pride: Student & Faculty Benefits

Cross-College Exploration

WES courses enable students to explore disciplines outside their primary college while earning credits toward their degree requirements.

Diverse Perspectives

The mixing of students from various majors and colleges creates rich classroom discussions and exposes students to multiple viewpoints.

Faculty Advantage

WES courses provide an opportunity for faculty to develop and offer classes that may not have enough interest solely in their home college.

WES Systems and Structure Review

Initial Results

Nuts & Bolts: Prerequisite Problems, Course Distribution, Approval and Review Process

Prerequisites

- **Definition of prerequisite:** Status of prerequisites at unit level unclear (outside WES structure/attached to WES-designated courses.
- **MOA defined prerequisite enforcement:** MOA 1803 #4 for courses that meet sequencing requirements, Level I foundations course categories Writing and Inquiry and Engagement: Critical Thinking in the Arts and Humanities are required prerequisite for Level II exploration and discovery course category Societies and Cultures, which is a prerequisite for connections course categories Local and National Perspectives and Global Perspectives.
- **Course application student option:** Application of WES designated course for WES requirements.

WES Systems and Structure Review

Initial Results

Nuts & Bolts: Prerequisite Problems, Course Distribution, Approval and Review Process

Course Distribution

- Structure and approval process questions prioritizing unit and faculty expertise or ensuring equal opportunity for all departments/programs (eg: Level 3 based on a geographical framework, limiting some department's/program's ability to offer).

Approval and Review

- Undergraduate catalog and course approval conflict created due to annual updating of course catalogue. The backlog of course approval contributes to an unresponsive curriculum that takes a long time for new courses to be added.

WES Systems and Structure Review

Initial Results

- **Communication Issues:** To Faculty and to Students
  - **Uncertainty Around Onboarding and Continued Communication** – Confusion about how faculty and students are introduced to WES, who is responsible for ensuring ongoing communication and updates, including how MOAs are communicated and enforced, and at what level (e.g., department chairs, orientation staff) this information should be shared.
  - **Inconsistent Interpretation and Communication of SLOs** – Differing interpretations of SLO goals and writing objectives, highlighting a need for clearer and more consistent communication
  - **Uncertainty Around Use of Rubric Data** – Instructors question how rubric data is used to support WES or student learning, leading some to doubt the value of completing them.
  - **Challenges Navigating WES Information** – Information is currently scattered across GoWMU and various pages within university web site, making it difficult to find and interpret.

WES Systems and Structure Review

Initial Results

- **Assessment & Rubrics**
  - **Questions About Assessment Authenticity and Scoring Standards** – Instructors are uncertain about the level of authenticity expected in WES course assessments and whether a single assignment can sufficiently demonstrate high proficiency, especially in level 1 or 2.
  - **Challenges with Rubric Design and Functionality** – Some rubrics are too long, difficult to use, and structured to measure multiple aspects, which may not align with their intended function in Elearning. Some instructors remove WES-related rubrics and assessments from their courses.
  - **Inconsistencies in Learning Outcome Assessment** – Learning outcomes are not consistently assigned or assessed across course sections, leading to variability in learning measurement
  - **Potential for Improved Assessment Structure** – Exploring tools within Elearning, such as the competencies, could enhance the efficiency and effectiveness of learning outcome assessment.

WES Systems and Structure Review
Committee Members

- **Megan Hess,** Instructional Designer Senior, WMUx
- **Veronica Rice McCray**, Faculty Specialist II, Business Information Systems
- **Nichole Andrews**, Faculty Specialist II, Department of Statistics
- **Micky Carignano**, Assistant Professor, University Libraries
- **Brian Gogan**, Professor of English
- **Gary Marquardt**, Faculty Specialist II, Intercultural and Anthropological Studies
- **Adrienne Redding,** Faculty Specialist II, Department of English
- **Nate Robinson,** Academic Advisor Senior, College of Arts and Science
- **Jay Treiman,** Professor of Mathematics

Thank you for all your hard work!

WES Student Perspectives (WSA-led)

Chairs: *Liberty Kostrzwa (with assistance from Randy Ott)*

Conducting a survey and focus groups with WMU students to better understand student perceptions and knowledge of WES.

WES Student Perspectives

Objectives

- Survey students for their overall and specific questions regarding WES
- Ask students overall impressions of the WES program, structure, and feedback from users

WES Student Perspectives

Methodology

What do WMU students say and know about WES?

Conducted an 11-question survey to reach the general student population.

- Survey was electronic through google forms.
- A table was run by a WSA student in the student center for 2 days to
- collect student opinion.
- Survey was accessible via a QR code.

Conducted a focus group with student leaders from various academic colleges.

- Brought similar questions from the surveys to Joint Student Advisory council.

Liberty Kostrzewa, WSA Executive Officer for Academic Affairs

WES Student Perspectives

Methodology

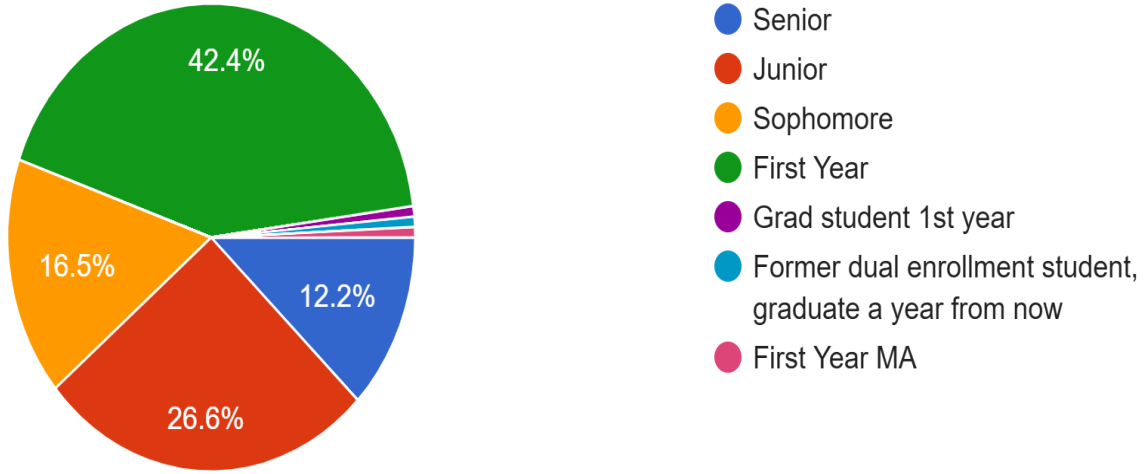
What to do different next time?

- Put the survey on paper AND online.
- Get the survey code posted in all academic colleges(TV or physical).
- Get the survey in a mass email.
- Plan a second focus group(one early one later).
- Have more days of tabling.
  - Select "popular" people to do the tabling
- Find an incentive to fill out the survey.
  - Money, Candy, Food?

WES Student Perspectives: Demographics

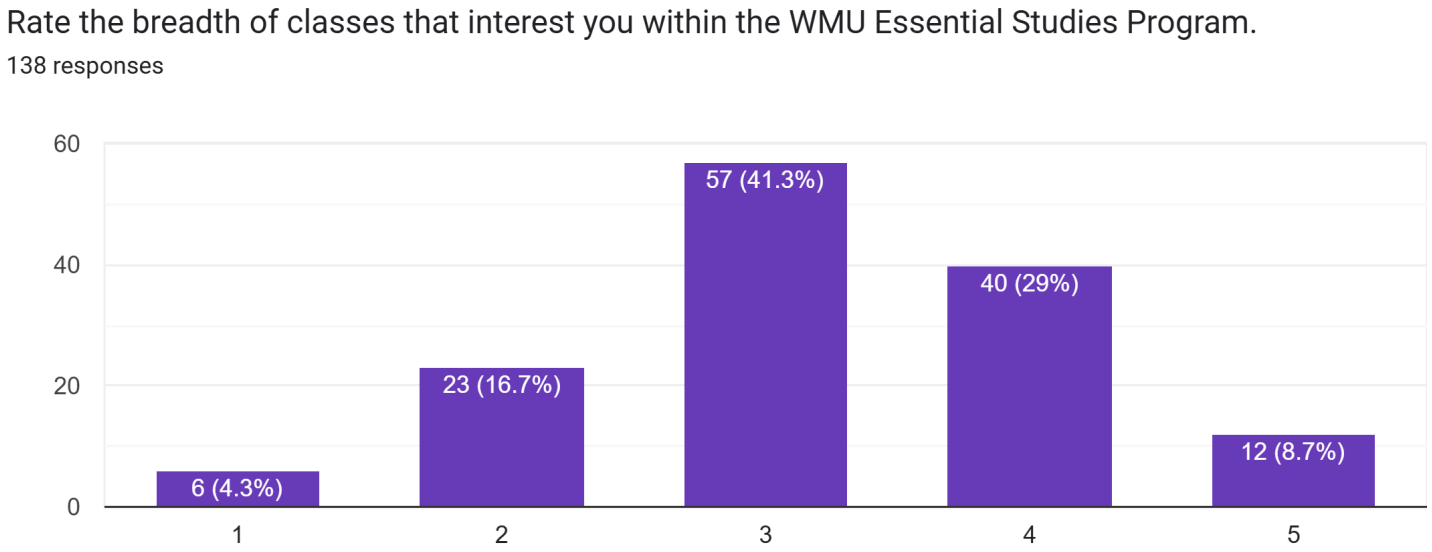
What year are you?

139 responses



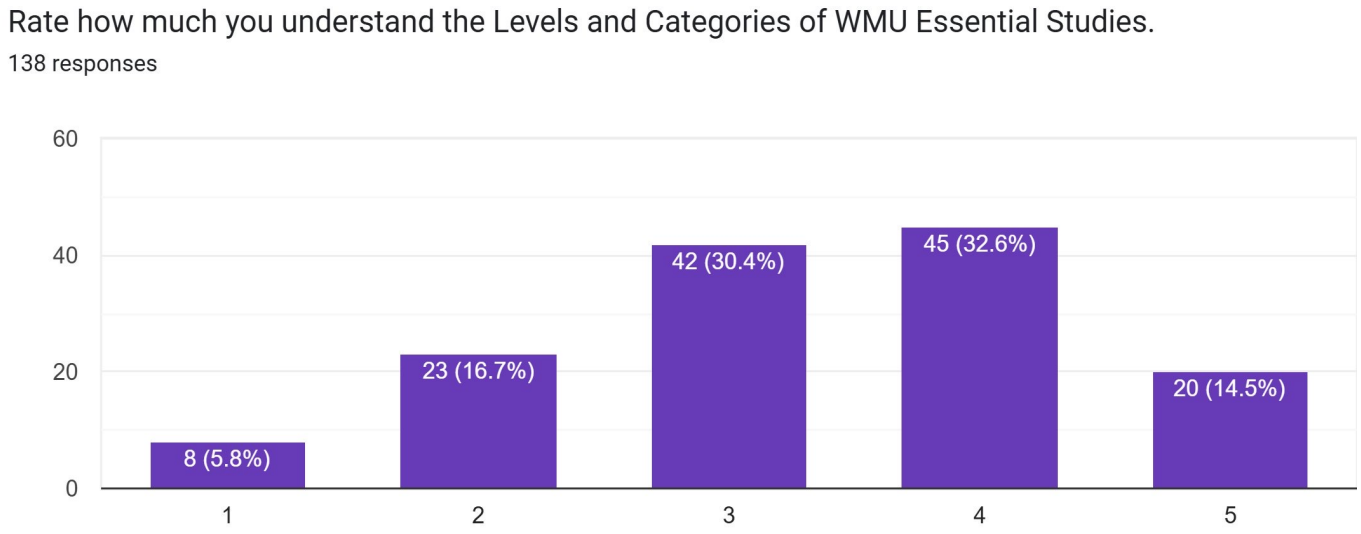
Liberty Kostrzewa, WSA Executive Officer for Academic Affairs

WES Student Perspectives: Some Results



What does this tell us?
The amount of classes in the WES program that interest students is pretty average.
Students are not super mad about the breadth of classes but we can do better.

WES Student Perspectives: Some Results



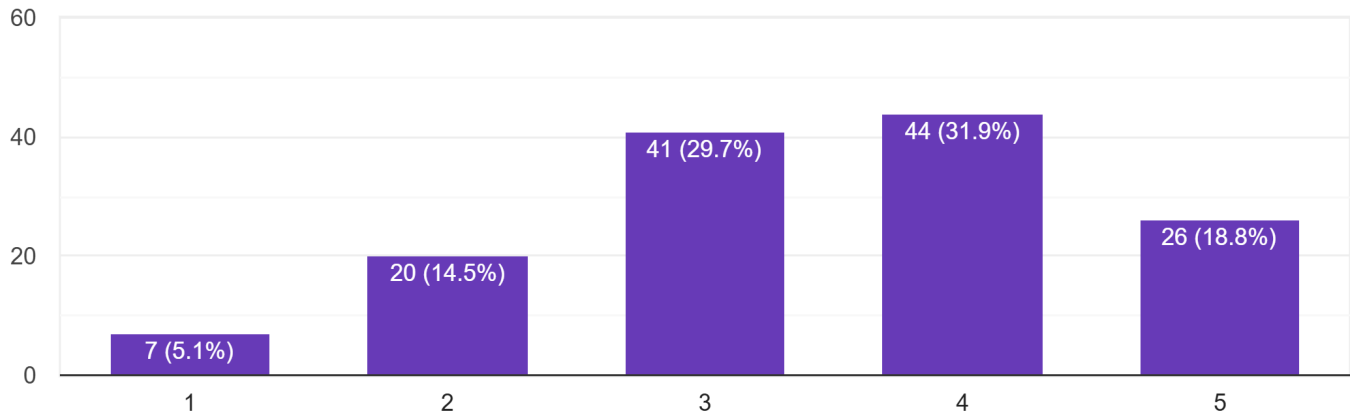
What does this tell us?
On average students rate their understanding of the levels of WES as a 3.3

Students seemed to understand what the categories are covering, but not why each category is placed in each level.

WES Student Perspectives: Some Results

Rate how much you understand the educational purpose of WMU Essential Studies.

138 responses



What does this tell us?
On average students rate their understanding of the educational purpose of WES at a 3.21

Students understand that WES is supposed to make them a well-rounded student but either don't know what that means or they disagree about what "well-rounded" means for any given student in the various academic colleges.

WES Student Perspectives: Some Statistics

Rank the following traits in order 1-7 in terms of importance when you pick a WMU Essential Studies class: 7 being the most important and 1 being the least

- 4.88(3.49/5) Fits my schedule
- 4.64(3.31/5) Personal interest
- 4.29(3.06/5) Helps my career/major
- 4.20(3.00/5) Course reputation
- 4.05(2.89/5) Instructor
- 3.80(2.70/5) Academic interest that isn't part of my major
- 3.58(3.55/5) Flexible delivery (online/hybrid)

WES Student Perspectives: Some Quotes

What are the strengths of the WMU Essential Studies Program?

- Some classes satisfy multiple requirements
- It gives a lot students insight into different courses and different majors
- I like how broad they are, it got me to consider an anthropology minor

What are the weaknesses of the WMU Essential Studies program?

- There are a lot that don't count at all for my major, so I'm taking a lot extra credits compared to my peers:
- Students might be frustrated that they are required to take a class that doesn't have anything to do with their career/occupation
- Some of the professors make it difficult to be interested

WES Student Perspectives: Some Quotes

If you were in charge of WES, what would you change?

- I would also share the purpose behind the WES program with WMU students (and share it more than once). I've realized while doing this form that my understanding of the reasons behind the WES program is all based on my assumptions rather than information I've been told. I may have been told as I was entering WMU, but I don't know where that information was from or if what I remember is accurate.

WES Student Perspectives: Some Quotes

If you were in charge of WES, what would you change?

- I would do whatever works for the students schedule. If there is a way to help students take alternative classes they want to take we should permit it. Sometimes all of the requirements take away from classes that students would take if they had an extra class.
- Prioritizing giving students a broad basis of knowledge and adulting skills without overloading their schedules with unneeded classes.
- a wide diversity of classes in each option so students can still expand the scope of what they learn but are less likely to be forced to take a course that they will do bad in because of the style or genre of a course.

WES Student Perspective: Focus Group Results

What did our student leaders have to say?

- It is difficult to follow the paths advisors recommend for WES because sometimes classes later on in ones major also cover a WES credit that advisors would prefer/recommend you take much earlier.
  - We need to find a way to make seeing overlaps between WES and academic majors easier.

WES Student Perspectives

Committee Members: Liberty Kostrzewa and Randy Ott

- WSA Members Involved
  - Liberty Kostrzewa-Executive Officer for Academic Affairs
  - Zach Nannfeldt-Chair for the College of Arts and Science
  - Eni Buckhanan-Chair for the College of Fine Arts
  - Members of Joint Student Advisory Council Including:
    - Alex Kasprzyk-2024-2025 Student Body President
    - Natalie Craft-Executive Officer of Governmental Affairs
    - Jackie Chavarria-Associate Justice

THANK YOU for involving Student Voices. ABOVE ALL, WES is for STUDENTS!

WES: Implications, and Next Steps

Summer 2025

- Results circulated to Merze Tate, WES EA, CRAC, and Faculty Senate Leadership
- WES Faculty Director creates "Lessons Learned" review document
- WES 2024-2025 Comprehensive Review Website/Archive (public facing) goes live on wmich.edu

Fall 2025

- WES EA and CRAC receive annual charges.
- All course deletions/modifications completed by end of semester.

Academic Year 2025-2026

- WES EA and CRAC implement charges; create modifications and initiatives

Academic Year 2026-2027

- Next WES Review Cycle begins (AY 29-30 WES Comprehensive Review)

The Next WMU Essential Studies **Review Process**

Y1 (2026-27)	Y2 (2027-28)	Y3 (2028-29)	Y4 (2029-30) PROGRAM REVIEW
	WRITING LOCAL/NATIONAL	GLOBAL PERSPECTIVES ORAL/DIGITAL	Program review team will include a subcommittee: members of Executive Advisory, CRAC, UG Studies Council
IMPLEMENTATION YEAR	SCIENCE/TECH with LAB WORLD LANGUAGES/ CULTURES	SOCIETIES and CULTURE ARTISTIC THEORY and PRACTICE	
	SCIENCE/TECH	PERSONAL WELLNESS	
	INQUIRY/ ENGAGEMENT	QUANTITATIVE REASONING	
*PSL and DIL SLOs reviewed during the regular review.			

- **Academic Year 2025-26 is for review and implementation.**
- **Cyclic review occurs over two AY.**
- WES Review cycle begins again in AY 2026-27.
- Next WES Comprehensive Review will occur in AY 2030-31.