SENIOR CAPSTONE EXPERIENCE

The capstone experience represents the culmination of the university educational experience by linking the content and methods of the major with the goals of general education. Capstone projects provide evidence of how well a student integrates and applies principles, concepts, and abilities.

Common Expectations for Capstone Experiences

1. Each capstone must be at least one-credit hour at the senior level and synthesize the knowledge, approaches, and results from the major discipline with the foundation established in the general education program.

2. Capstone experiences will be conceived, designed, and implemented within academic programs. The appropriate capstone experience will vary from discipline to discipline.

3. The capstone experience will address selected outcomes at the highest levels in at least three of the four general education goals.

4. While capstone projects may be used in the assessment of the general education, departments will determine both the capstone project and the rubric for grading it in the context of the capstone course.

5. Students in the course will be responsible for articulating how they have met all general education goals in their college experience.

6. Oral communication skill development must occur in either the Junior Writing in the Major or the Senior Capstone Experience.

The capstone course should include a writing experience in the major which adds to the conversation of the field. The WAC Program will support departments in developing the writing component of capstone experiences and guidelines for writing in the major. Those departments and programs without a capstone writing experience might require majors to take an advanced writing course in a related program or a proposed course in English which would allow students to write in their majors at a level appropriate to the capstone.

The senior capstone experience will offer an appropriate opportunity for the assessment of various elements of all four goals of the general education curriculum. Students in the capstone experience should produce assessable artifacts (e.g. writing, performance, etc.). Traditional portfolios and ePortfolios might provide an opportunity for student reflection on their general education experience. While the opportunity to assess the general education program goals within the capstone experience is appropriate and convenient, it is not the responsibility of this one course to instill all of those skills and areas of knowledge.

Each department or degree program will decide how to implement the capstone for its major(s), whether it is a course, thesis, creative product, or internship. We envision progressive implementation of the capstone requirement, as there are many departments and degree programs that do not yet have such courses or experiences. It will take time for those programs to modify existing courses or initiate courses that meet the requirements described above.
Several forms of senior capstone experiences are already being offered at Appalachian and others will be developed as the new general education curriculum is adopted. Among the more common forms offered at Appalachian and across the nation are senior honors theses, senior seminar courses, internships, and student teaching. Each of those will require somewhat different forms of assessment to ensure attainment of both general education and discipline-specific goals.