

<b>Program Profile</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Program Graduate Portrait</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Program Learning Outcomes (PLOs)</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Program Curriculum Map</b>	<b>2</b>
Learning Outcome #1: Self-direction for vocational goals and designing program curriculum	2
Learning Outcome #2: Synthesize and apply knowledge from different disciplines	2
Learning Outcome #3: Assess learning and growth in their vocational field	3
Learning Outcome #4: Gain familiarity with the praxis and primary research of their vocation	3
<b>Analysis Report for 2016-2017</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Analysis Report for 2017-2018</b>	<b>4</b>

## Program Profile

---

**Full-time Faculty in the Department:** Andrew Zwart

## Program Graduate Portrait

---

Interdisciplinary students work towards clear vocational goals; however, these goals might not lead them to traditional occupations. Instead, interdisciplinary students take interest in tackling the complex problems our world faces, synthesizing knowledge from a wide variety of fields to address these issues while also approaching them from a biblical perspective. Interdisciplinary students, then, possesses curiosity about a wide array of knowledge, risk thinking outside of traditional categories, and push themselves to work diligently in addressing issues they feel passionate about solving.

## Program Learning Outcomes (PLOs)

---

Upon completion of the requirements for the Interdisciplinary Program, students will be able to:

1. Utilize skills of self-direction, evident in articulating their vocational goal and designing their own program curriculum.
2. Synthesize knowledge from a number of different disciplines and apply this interdisciplinary approach to a particular question / issue in their vocational field.
3. Assess their own learning and growth in their vocational field of study and apply this to their chosen question / issue related to this field.
4. Become more familiar with the praxis of their vocational field and learn to conduct primary research in that area.

# Interdisciplinary Studies Assessment Plan

## Program Curriculum Map

---

### Learning Outcome #1: Self-direction for vocational goals and designing program curriculum

---

- ↑ **Program Requirement:** When students apply to the program, they produce a letter of application where they articulate why the interdisciplinary degree is a good fit for them and how they envision their educational path leading to their vocational goals:
  
- ↑ **Course:** ID 301 – Introduction to Interdisciplinary Studies
  - ↑ **Objectives:** To produce their own program learning outcomes with a curriculum map that meets degree requirements and is tailored to their chosen vocation. Students will understand the importance of self-assessment and design a program portfolio.
  - ↑ **Signature Assignments:** Student Learning Outcome Assignment; Curriculum Map Assignment; Begin Self-Assessment Portfolio
  - ↑ **Rubric Category:** Goals

### Learning Outcome #2: Synthesize and apply knowledge from different disciplines

---

- ↑ **Course:** ID447 – Interdisciplinary Capstone Research I
  - ↑ **Objectives:** To understand and articulate the advantages (and limitations) of an interdisciplinary research approach and articulate how this approach is optimal in addressing a relevant issue in their field.
  - ↑ **Signature Assignments:** Capstone Introduction; Journal Assignment
  - ↑ **Rubric Category:** Synthesis
  
- ↑ **Course:** ID447 – Interdisciplinary Capstone Research I
  - ↑ **Objective(s):** To formulate a research question related to their vocational field, acquire the appropriate sources from different disciplines that relate to that question, and produce a literature review that integrates scholarship from the disciplines pertinent to a question, problem, or issue directly related to their vocational objective.
  - ↑ **Signature Assignments:** Research Question; Literature Review
  - ↑ **Rubric Categories:** Critical Thinking, Information Literacy

### Learning Outcome #3: Assess learning and growth in their vocational field

---

- ↑ **Course:** ID 448 – Interdisciplinary Capstone Research II
- ↑ **Objectives:** To assess their performance on critical assignments they have completed in the prior courses and synthesize their secondary and primary research.
  - ↑ **Signature Assignment:** Research Proposal; Self-Assessment Portfolio; Final Paper
  - ↑ **Rubric Categories:** Assessment, Information Literacy

### Learning Outcome #4: Gain familiarity with the praxis and primary research of their vocation

---

- ↑ **Course:** ID448 – Interdisciplinary Capstone Research (II)
- ↑ **Objective(s):** To observe and practice the skills needed for their vocational field, and ethically engage in primary research.
  - ↑ **Signature Assignments:** Internship logs & journals; Transcriptions and Coding; Final Capstone Project
  - ↑ **Rubric Categories:** Information Literacy, Practice

## Analysis Report for 2016-2017

---

### General Observations and Areas to Address:

- Since IDS is a unique program that integrates courses from many different areas, the assessment process looks very different than other programs. The students in IDS have significantly more engagement in the assessment process than other programs because of the program requirements.
- The data for the IDS program currently has a very small sample size. As the program grows, the sample size will increase, but since the program requirements have the students create their own assessment plans, the analysis actually takes place with the student rather than as a program.

### Steps toward Improved Student Learning:

- With only a few students admitted into the program so far, we have not accumulated a sufficient amount of data to make a valid decision on changes to assignments or procedures. For the self-directed students who have begun the program, the current system seems to be moving them toward the intended outcomes.

### Improvements for Assessment Process:

- The revision to the overall curriculum has reduced the number of course offerings, which will make it challenging for IDS students to create their own program. A first area of consideration is how the new specializations could be utilized to piece together an interdisciplinary program.

## Analysis Report for 2017-2018

---

### General Observations and Areas to Address:

- As some programs at Kuyper have been discontinued, there are fewer courses for interdisciplinary students to choose from in building their major. After discussing different possibilities about how to accommodate students, we made two decisions regarding the program:
- First, the interdisciplinary program would focus on our new Specializations. That is, in designing their majors, interdisciplinary students will combine the specializations we offer to create their curriculum.
- Second, we will propose to AAC that students in the Cornerstone collaborative program become interdisciplinary majors. This decision was the result of analysis during assessment week. We recognized that it was difficult to both market and assess majors where the students took the majority of their classes over at Cornerstone. Essentially, students will still take most of their major classes at Cornerstone, but they will take an their introduction to the major and capstone/internship classes here; this will involve the same kind of self-reflection and self-assessment that other interdisciplinary students engage in (see more below).

### Steps toward Improved Student Learning:

- We still have a small sample of data, but those students who have completed the introductory course have done very well. They have, in fact, produced excellent work. This year we asked students during the intro course to begin researching possible internships and future job possibilities, and this has helped students look ahead to their capstone projects and internships.
- Next year, students will go through the redesigned capstone/internship process. This will involve secondary and primary research, and students will have to go through the IRB process.

### Improvements for Assessment Process:

- After students complete their final year, we will have the opportunity to do more in-depth assessment. At the end of the year, we plan on doing in-depth exit interviews with the students to look for areas of growth for the program. We will also have copies of their finalized portfolios to evaluate. And looking forward, we need to track our first set of graduates as they move into their chosen vocations.
- I have also decided to make the assessment for self-direction cover the entire portfolio since all programs no longer require an application and since all of the other elements (PLOs, curriculum map) are included in the portfolio.

## Analysis Report for 2018-2019

---

### General Observations and Areas to Address:

- Moving our collaborative students under the umbrella of Interdisciplinary Studies has been largely successful. Many students who began as collaborative students have changed their major to Interdisciplinary Studies.

- At the same time, our collaborative students have struggled to enroll in classes at Cornerstone due to the fact that they are considered guest students and must enroll after all other Cornerstone classes. With consultation from the registrar, we began a conversation with the faculty and the advancement team over the viability of continuing these collaborative programs. We are currently doing an assessment of the number of students who have persisted in collaborative programs as well as the cost of the program for Kuyper.
- We began to refocus the program around our Specializations. However, as enrollment has decreased, we have had to offer fewer courses under Specializations. We also realized that many transfer students were interested in the Interdisciplinary Program but that limiting these students to courses within Specializations makes the program unappealing. We have shifted back to a more open approach where students design their major with guidance. To address the concern of having enough classes to choose from, we have made some room for students to take classes through an online College Consortium.

#### **Steps toward Improved Student Learning:**

- At this point, the main changes have been to the assignments in Introduction to Interdisciplinary Studies. I have tried to break the process down into more manageable steps.
- I have also discussed how to reshape the Capstone course to fit better with students' Internship.
- I now have students read the book *Interdisciplinary Inclinations* as an introduction for the capstone. This helps them prepare for their research project as well give them a stronger sense of the value of their major. I am considering moving this to the Intro course.

#### **Improvements for Assessment Process:**

- The most difficult area for assessment has been keeping students accountable for updating their portfolio throughout their time at Kuyper. This is because they don't have any more specific classes in Interdisciplinary Studies between their intro course and their capstone course (rather they are taking courses in their created majors). We need to be more deliberate in using Advising Time to go over the students' working portfolios. This will help us do assessment on a more ongoing basis.

## **Analysis Report for 2019-2020**

---

#### **General Observations and Areas to Address:**

- Obviously, COVID had a great impact on students at the end of the year. Despite this, though, I was generally pleased with the caliber of the work students did, both in the Intro Course as well as for their capstone projects.
- Unfortunately, one of the senior students, a student who had done good work throughout their Kuyper career, really struggled to finish well. This was in part due to COVID and in part due to personal circumstances. Likewise, one of the first-year students dropped out altogether (COVID played a big role in this decision) and so did not finish the curriculum map. I would note both of these as exceptional circumstances.
- One additional item worth noting is that the program is growing. As we have graduated some very strong students, more students now view the program as viable and have a better understanding of what it is. Faculty too have a much clearer picture of what Interdisciplinary Studies entails as well.
- One tension I have noted is students who transfer, choosing Interdisciplinary Studies because it allows that to use more of their transfer credits. This is understandable, but in some cases, it can make it difficult for them to create a curriculum map that is deliberate. In other words, rather than choosing their courses based on their own personal learning objectives, they are creating objectives based on courses they have already taken.
- Mike McCarthy is overseeing the internships for Interdisciplinary students, and this is going well. They have found good placements and done well.

#### **Steps toward Improved Student Learning:**

- Because we have had trouble getting students to continue their own self-assessment between the time when they take ID301 and ID447, we have added an extra assignment that asks each student to write a reflection on the courses they have taken for their major. This will be implemented next year.
- In addition, rather than having students complete both the literature review and the primary research report in one semester, we are moving the primary research section to their internship class. This should allow them to see how this assignment connects to praxis (Learning Objective #4) while also making space for the course reflections in ID447 (see above).
- For ID301, rather than having students complete the course as an independent study, we will meet together for one group over the first half of the semester. This will give them a chance to reflect on the book *Interdisciplinary Inclinations* together as a group. This will also allow me to explain assignments one time in person (while still providing written instructions) and field any questions the class may have. This will be implemented next year.

#### **Improvements for Assessment Process:**

- Much of the above also covers assessment since one of the program's learning objectives concerns student self-assessment.
- Still, we have simplified the spread-sheets for data collection and analysis. First, we are creating a separate spreadsheet for each school year, helping to make the data clearer. Second, we have done a better job targeting which individual assignment targets the right learning objectives.

## **Analysis Report for 2020-2021**

---

## **General Observations and Areas to Address:**

- This was a very successful year for the program. Despite COVID, we were able to meet with students in class for ID301 as well as virtually for one on one conversations in ID447.
- Moving to a class format for the beginning of ID301 was successful, especially for discussing the class text. In general the students did well in this class although two students really struggled to complete their curriculum maps in a satisfactory manner. Part of this could have had to do with the fact that for the last two weeks of the semester, we had to return to all virtual classes. At the same time, these students have not done well academically in their other courses either. It could be that they will eventually transfer to the general studies program.
- Every one of the students in ID447 finished their capstone project (lit review and primary research), and each of them did excellent work. Each of the students were also placed in very good internships and received high praise from their supervisors. In addition, they did very well on their reflections for each of the courses in their major. This helped them to clearly assess the fact that they had reached their learning objectives. We also had students do this for any transfer credits they used in the major and this too forced them to think about the skills and knowledge they had gained from those courses that applied to their objectives. For example, one student was able to connect the kinds of work he did in some former math courses to his ability to do quantitative analysis and critical thinking, one of his competencies.
- This is the largest graduating class for Interdisciplinary students and perhaps the strongest.
- Advising went very smoothly this year, with many of the students utilizing their curriculum maps to help them choose their courses.

## **Steps toward Improved Student Learning:**

- Although moving to a whole class format for ID301 was successful, it would be more beneficial to meet for a few classes around each assignment. In other words, we would meet to discuss the first third of the text and to work on the first assignment, then giving them a few weeks to work independently before meeting again to discuss the next section of the text and the next assignment.
- We will definitely keep the current structure of assignments (the major courses reflections in ID447 and the primary research in VO4\_\_).
- We will also simplify the curriculum map assignment, keeping the essential material (learning objectives and course descriptions) while taking away some of the extraneous features (bibliography, strengths). These other features weren't adding much to their portfolios, and students were struggling to add to these during the years between ID301 and ID447.

## **Improvements for Assessment Process:**

- At this point, the assessment process is going smoothly although I would like to bring Mike McCarthy more into the process as he is overseeing the students' internships. I (Zwart) can easily enter his data, but it's very helpful to hear his qualitative assessment on the success of each student's internship.

## Analysis Report for 2021-2022

---

### General Observations and Areas to Address:

- While the program ran fairly smoothly this year, there were fewer students, and with the exception of a few standouts, the students were in general a weaker group. Having stated this, the students who did well, produced exemplary work. One of these students did superb work for her Capstone project and in her internship. She presented for Student Scholar day as well. Another student who started the program not only did great work in the introductory class but she commented on how helpful the assignments were in guiding her vocationally.
- This year we seemed recruit more transfer students than FTE's for the program. This does pose some logistical challenges since it's harder to plan their curriculum intentionally when they're also trying to make use of transfer credits. During one on one meetings, I have discussed this tension with the students. We do our best to address this when they write their course reflections/narrative.
- For ID301, we did in fact move to a hyflex model where I met with all the students together for certain classes to discuss the class text and introduce assignments and then individually to help them with the assignments and to give them feedback on their work (see Steps Toward Improving Student Learning Above).. This worked very well although I found that students needed a lot of reminding when we were meeting since it wasn't every week.
- Although the students in ID301 did well in designing their learning objectives and curriculum, one student had trouble understanding the project and did not meet the benchmark. I have communicated with her, and we are planning on meeting next fall to have her redo the assignment. It would have been better, though, to have had the time at the end of last semester to have her revise. With this in mind, I plan on pushing the due-date for this assignment up, allowing more time for student who need to revise.
- I have met with the Admissions counsellors twice in the last year and given them talking points for the program. Both of these meetings went well and reinforced for me what this program has to offer to students.

### Steps toward Improved Student Learning:

- As indicated above, making the assignment date for the curriculum map earlier will allow student who struggle with this assignment time to revise.
- Simplifying the curriculum map assignment (see Steps toward Improved Student Learning above)) turned out well. This works especially well as the students are now submitting digital portfolios rather than hard copies. However, for next year, I need to provide a more standard way for students to organize their portfolios for uniformity.

### Improvements for Assessment Process:

- I worked more closely with Mike McCarthy this year; however, there is still more room to have him help me assess the work the students do, not just when he oversees them. For example, it would be helpful to have him read over their capstone work before they begin the internship process for him.
- As the faculty discussed, it will be helpful to have benchmarks throughout the year in order to reflect on assessment on a more regular basis.



