Commission on English Language Program Accreditation

Commission Action Report

Program or institution: **Weber State University**
                              Learning English for Academic Purposes (LEAP) Department

Curriculum Standard 1: The curriculum is consistent with the mission of the program or language institution, appropriate to achieve the organization's goals and meet assessed student needs, and available in writing.

The program's curriculum, in alignment with its mission, prepares students with the language and cultural understanding necessary for academic success. The curriculum includes course goals, course objectives, and statements of student learning outcomes. It is documented in a curriculum handbook. There are seven levels in the program and they include instruction in writing, reading, listening and speaking, grammar, and either pronunciation (levels one through four) or community service (levels five and six). The seventh level involves advanced reading and writing classes which can be taken in conjunction with university classes. Levels 1 through 3 are non-credit and Levels 4 through 7 are credit-bearing. All students are fully matriculated university students.

No evidence was provided showing that the program had assessed student needs and then developed its mission and curriculum in light of those assessed needs.

In its response to the review team report, the program discussed several areas of its curricular practices, including placement testing and how it identified the language needs of individual enrollees, changes in student demographics which led to the introduction of two additional levels of instruction, the role of assessment development as it relates to student performance indicators, and how student understanding of American university and social culture is developed. The fact that the program has aligned the exit criteria for its Bridge classes with the university's English department composition course projected requirements was also mentioned, but not documented. While the site's response did provide some examples of curricular changes to align with student demographics, the response did not provide evidence of analysis of student needs or indicate how assessed student needs inform curriculum design as regular process.

> **Reporting Requirement 1**
> By October 1, 2018, document how the needs of the student population(s) sought, enrolled, and graduated from the program are assessed and established. (Curriculum 1)

"Weber State University LEAP Department response:
We feel that further explanation and elucidation of our current practices are in order.
When students come to the LEAP department to inquire about the program, they are required to take the LEAP Department Placement test. This test examines the four language skills, reading, writing, speaking, and listening. The test has been examined regularly to ensure that it is appropriately based on ACTFL guidelines if there are any changes in the profession.

"Based on 30 years' experience of placing students in the program, students are placed in a level where their identified needs in these areas can be addressed after the placement test has been graded. Students can contest the placement, but we have a less than 2% record of that happening, or of adjusting students to another level of instruction.

"Our ultimate goal is for students to enter English 1010, one of two English composition courses required by the university in General Education classes for the Associates degree. When students

complete our bridge classes they are approved to take English 1010. With this goal in mind, a meeting outlining the English Department's projected requirements which anticipate success in this class formed the basis for a needs assessment which was aligned in department discussions and meetings with the exit requirements of the Bridge classes.

"Over the last 34 years, several major adjustments have been made to the program in response to new student demographics, who have displayed the need for extra, alternative or more instruction to facilitate success. We added 2 levels of instruction to the beginner level of the program, we have advised students to take more grammar instruction for upper level placements, and we have provided extra classes for reading with written responses, for students who need further credits and intensive reading help.

"As professionals we regularly undergo training in updates in the profession and recently undertook an assessment training with two professors from the Weber State University Teacher Education Department who are experts in the field. We have examined the program at assessment and curriculum meetings to determine if we are addressing needs indicated in student work, progress through the department and student achievements in each course. We are aware of the purposes of assessment as opportunities for self-examination as teachers, examination of the curriculum as a whole, and SLOs and coursework in each course. We have discussed and employed alignment and backwards design to better serve, and address student needs indicated by the placement test, weekly quizzes, mid-terms and finals. We also employ practice tests to provide ourselves with the opportunity to assess our assessments and to determine if we have provided the students with sufficient opportunities to comprehend and utilize course material.

"When a student is falling behind in comprehension, indicated by their homework, class discussions or classwork, and their achievement, or engagement begins to indicate challenges and struggles with their SLA, they are invited to discuss their challenges with their instructor. If their achievement in all these artifacts falls below 77% (the LEAP department success rate) by mid-term, they are notified by their instructor(s) and invited to address these concerns so that the instructor might better understand their impediments to success and improve the instructor's response to their needs.

"We address the need to understand American university and social cultures as witnessed in 34 years of serving this population through orientation, specific training with Canvas, the university online platform, email, department policies as they impact the students, and as university graduates, who have struggled with the said university culture, ourselves. We have adopted specific measures to ensure greater familiarity and comfort with the university campus, various forms of testing, note-taking, study skills, writing for publication, library and Google assignments and research opportunities. Students make presentations through working individually, in pairs and small groups so that they understand the dynamics, and meet the needs and expectations of the American classroom and university, themselves. Access to the placement test is restricted to the LEAP office for reasons of security, and is not available to the general public unless as a testee. For the purposes of this reaccreditation access was available on-site at the time of the site visit. It will not be available as an artifact in this report.

WSU LEAP Department Plan of Action

The LEAP department will discuss the needs of this standard and how we might re-address the requirements. We will meet on 6th February 2018 and review our policies and procedures, and examine our needs assessment structure to discover to ourselves how we might more fully recognize our shortfalls and address the students' needs more fully.

Curriculum Standard 2: Course goals, course objectives, and student learning outcomes are written, appropriate for the curriculum, and aligned with each other. The student learning outcomes within the curriculum represent significant progress or accomplishment.

The program's course information is published in a curriculum handbook and a curriculum map overview shows vertically sequencing between levels and the lateral interconnection within each level. Information for each course at each level includes, among other things, the catalog description, a course goal, one or more course objectives, and student learning outcomes for some courses.

There are several concerns related to SLOs. First, they are not written in measurable and observable terms. Rather, they are checklists of tasks or pedagogy to be applied in the class. Second, SLOs are omitted from some courses, e.g. level 5 and 6 community based learning. Third, SLOs are not expressed in terms of academic readiness and do not represent significant proficiency gains from level to level. Fourth, when the SLOs in the curriculum handbook and those on the syllabi in use during the visit were compared, they did not match.

The Review Team Report included SLO examples which illustrated the concerns listed above: SLOs are missing from the levels 5 and 6 community-based learning courses; two level 6 grammar course SLOs are Understand conditionals that omit 'if'" and "Understand mixed time conditionals"; a level 3 listening and speaking course SLO is "At the end of the course students can show mastery of the following items with accuracy of 77% or better: community, transport, workplace, areas of study, plant, animals, and recreation"; and a level 6 writing course SLO is "An ability to work with a tutor to edit their work and with their teacher to revise any content and organizational problems they have with their essays."

In its response to the review team report, the program included a copy of its current curriculum handbook as well as a complete set of its current syllabi. In these documents, each course includes SLOs and, for all courses, SLOs are consistent between what is in the handbook and what is on syllabi. The site also explained that, for level 6, the ability to work with a tutor should actually be an objective rather than an SLO. The curriculum handbook and the course syllabi show that this error has been corrected.

The site stated that course SLO sections all begin with the statement "At the end of the course students can show mastery of the following items with accuracy of 77% or better." An examination the curriculum handbook and syllabi show that this is consistently the case. In many instances, the statement is followed by items beginning with, for example, use; create; write; identify; ask; describe, etc. In tandem with the opening statement, these items constitute statements of what students can do. As such, the statements are measurable and observable. Further examination of the handbook and syllabi provided in the response, however, does reveal a limited number of items for which this is still not the case. In addition to the two conditional examples from the review team report, these include, for example, "Communicate about general life topics and basic needs", "An understanding of word syllables" and "Serve a community member in need." The site did not address the concern regarding SLOs not representing significant proficiency gains from level to level.

> **Reporting Requirement 2**
> By October 1, 2018, provide evidence that all student learning outcomes are observable and measurable and that they represent significant proficiency gains from level to level. (Curriculum 2)

Weber State University LEAP Department response:

"There were some misconnections between the information contained in the curriculum handbook and the approved syllabi. This misconnects have be revised and corrected. Including the mistakes listed above and in the site visit report.

The above-cited sentence "the level 6 writing course SLO 'An ability to work with a tutor to edit their work and with their teacher to revise any content and organizational problems they have with their essays.'" Is in fact a course objective, which we do not feel needs to be revised. Visits to introduce

students to the writing center and writing tutors remains a goal for the course. The details of when and where remains a decision of the teacher of that course.

"We feel that if the SLOs are measured by the legend "At the end of the course students can show mastery of the following items with accuracy of 77% or better:" with a prescriptive list of goals and elements of goals, that are met in writing, speaking or by quizzes, then we have achieved a measureable outcome. We feel that regular assessment and review of these measures assesses the need for further instruction, or for remediation on the part of the teacher and the student. Details of how, when, where and for how long a remediation or remediations should remain at the discretion of the teacher

Please find the updated "curriculum handbook", and complete list of "all approved syllabi" attached.

WSU LEAP Department Plan of Action

The LEAP department will discuss the needs of this standard and how we might re-address the requirements. We will meet on 14th March 2018 and review our policies and procedures, and examine the structure we use to observe and measure the adopted SLOs, so we might provide evidence that all student learning outcomes are observable and measurable and that they represent significant proficiency gains from level to level. These measures will be added to the Department and Curriculum handbooks.

Faculty Standard 1: Faculty members have education and training commensurate with their teaching assignments.
At the time of the visit, the program employed three full-time faculty and one adjunct. Each of the full-time faculty had a master's degree in TESOL or in a closely related field with a TESOL certificate. The adjunct faculty member was teaching level 6 and her credentials were an MEd in K-12 curriculum and instruction, an MEd in administration, and an expired ESL endorsement for grades one through eight. No evidence was provided to show that she had the knowledge base and skill set required by the standard.

In its response to the review team report, the program discussed the adjunct instructor's efforts to investigate the status of her ESL grades 1-8 endorsement as well as her plans to take courses to meet he CEA education and training requirements. No documentation was included in the response.

> **Reporting Requirement 3**
> By October 1, 2018, provide evidence to demonstrate that instructors who teach academic preparation courses have acquired the knowledge base and skill set as presented in the discussion section of the standard, or that a plan is in place for the faculty member(s) to acquire the components of the knowledge base and skill set. (Faculty 1)

Weber State University LEAP Department response:
Maria Mortensen, the adjunct instructor, has in recent years been employed by Weber State's English department to teach Bi-lingual and ESL teacher education classes, including Methods and Strategies, and Assessment. She is currently working on classes to complete the CEA's minimum requirements but in her M.Ed programs she has covered Foundations of Curriculum and Instruction; Standards Based Curriculum and Instruction; Instructional Design; and has undergone guided practicums when she has team taught and been evaluated by her peers in the Department. She has been evaluated as a model and experienced instructor and recommended in the past as a teacher worth observing for adjuncts and FT instructors alike.

Maria's consultation with the Weber State University School of Education about her ESL endorsement on 11 October 2017, advised: "*No, the minor in ESL meets the requirements for the university but may not meet the requirements for the State Board of Education. The following is the link for the ESL endorsement through the state office: https://schools.utah.gov/file/a00abe77-a1ce-493f-a4f2-5b9f9ed9c923. Review the coursework requirements and compare them to your transcripts and make sure you have completed all the required courses. If you have not, go back and fill in the holes. In regards to renewing the endorsement, I have not heard of a requirement to update the endorsement requirements.*" Maria's investigation into the coursework requirements still being met, indicate that she is still in compliance with the ESL endorsement requirements. She has applied for the MENG TESOL strand at WSU, and the linguistics committee is researching how to address repeating courses that she completed with high grades in her U/G degree at the higher level of the Master degree. She tried to register for these courses last school year, and is awaiting the decision of the committee. If she is not accepted to these courses at WSU, she will register at another institution.

The documentation for the other recent adjuncts employed by the Department are located in the Chair's office. The Chair was asked to show documentation of the evaluation process, but not details of qualifications of adjuncts employed in the department. Details for full-time and Maria Mortensen were included in the files collected for the site team's visit, as these were the current employees.

WSU LEAP Department Plan of Action: As of the beginning of the fall semester 2017 the adjunct in question was removed from classes in level 4 – 7 where a Master degree plus the six areas of teaching requirements set by the CEA in Faculty Standard 1 is deemed acceptable education and training. The department will not hire any adjunct who has not fulfilled these requirements, or has set forth, in writing, a plan to achieve this level of education and training. These classes are available in the WSU MENG program.

Faculty Standard 7: The program or language institution describes to faculty clearly and in writing the performance criteria and procedures for evaluation at the onset of the evaluation period; conducts faculty performance evaluations that are systematic, regular, fair, objective, and relevant to achieving program or institutional goals; and conveys evaluation results to faculty in writing in a timely manner.
The program has a faculty evaluation procedure which is described in its LEAP department handbook. Students complete end of course evaluations of faculty and some evidence was found in faculty files of peer observations and self-evaluations. These activities are not, though, carried out on a regular basis. Both the irregularity of documentation on site and interviews conducted by the review team confirmed that the program does not perform faculty evaluations that are systematic, regular, based on multiple forms of data, and documented.
In its response to the review team report, the program provided a copy of its LEAP department handbook. In the section on faculty performance evaluation, the handbook stated that evaluation for full-time faculty will occur every three years. The evaluation will include student evaluations, classroom observations, the teacher self-evaluation form, a teaching portfolio, and a consultation with the chair. Additional documentation included with the response were several observation and team teaching forms. Dates on forms ranged from 2013-2015 and one was from 2016. The site stated and provided evidence that two instances of observation occurred outside the regular evaluation process. In one case, the observation had been triggered by an unruly student and the other took place when an applicant for an adjunct position wanted to see a class.
The response concluded with the statement that, because of downsizing and rescheduling, time for faculty evaluation had been limited. The program has recommitted to implementing the process that is in place, and states that faculty evaluation will occur in the second block of the current semester.

> **Reporting Requirement 4**
> By October 1, 2018, provide evidence that the program carries out faculty evaluations that are systematic, regular, based on multiple forms of data, and documented. Provide sample redacted performance evaluations as evidence the process has been carried out. (Faculty 7)

Weber State University LEAP Department response:
The faculty performance evaluation policy determined by eight Full-Time faculty involved in the creation of the initial CEA accreditation process, determined that faculty who had been employed for more than 3 years should be evaluated by the Cahir and their peers every three years. The present Chair took tenure in 2014 when the last evaluations (kept in the main office) were undertaken. As there is now only three full-time faculty who were evaluated in 2014, and the Chair has been coordinating the re-accreditation report, the evaluations are set for the middle of the current semester.
Previous evaluations however include these listed below;
Due to a problem student who was split between two levels resulting in him taking classes only with Giana Curtis, Giana was observed by the Chair and the International Student Senator, Hasan Nezam in March 2015. The purpose of the evaluation was to verify the challenging situation in which the instructor found herself with this troubled young student. We took the opportunity to evaluate the instructor as she taught as well as observe the student. That report is available in the chair's office, and **below**. The same instructor was also evaluated as a team teacher/mentor by a colleague, Yana Kareva, in November 2015 in a randomly selected observation exchange between instructors then employed by the department. The evaluation form is **below.**
Maria Mortensen was also observed as a team teacher/mentor by the same colleague in November 2015 these notes are copied **below**. And as a team teacher by the chair, Dr. Sheridan see **below**
Amy Hudson offered to allow an adjunct interviewee a short 15 minute time slot to teach a demonstration lesson in her level 4 grammar class in March 2016. She also agreed to the Chair using that time to observe and evaluate her teaching and how she coped with any disruption the interviewee

would cause. She moved seamlessly through the lesson without any disruption to the flow of instruction. The notes of this evaluation are available in Amy's office and are copied **below**.

Dr. Sheridan team taught with Maria Mortensen for 3 semesters. The two instructors evaluated each other at the end of each semester. Maria Mortensen has copies of those evaluations in her office, they are copied **below** .and here. Dr. Sheridan mislaid her copies of the evaluations but has now stored copies of Maria's copies.

With program downsizing and rescheduling, our time for evaluations has been limited, but we are now recommitted. Evaluations of the faculty will be conducted in the second block of this semester.

WSU LEAP Department Plan of Action

Full-time Faculty evaluations were conducted in Spring 2018 according to the three-year cycle adopted while the department carried out the initial accreditation. The Chair was evaluated by her peers, and the FT faculty were evaluated by the chair. The chair conducted evaluations of all adjunct faculty in the fall semester 2017, including a classroom observation of each, a faculty self-evaluation form completed by each faculty member, student evaluations of each faculty, and a follow-up interview with the chair. The newest adjunct faculty, Jamie Aoyama underwent her initial evaluation and interview in Fall 2017, but at that time there were no student evaluations available as this was her first assignment. Her first evaluation of 2018 in early spring did include a review of student evaluations as well as the requisite forms.

Administrative and Fiscal Capacity Standard 4: The program or language institution defines, encourages, and supports appropriate professional development activities for faculty, administrators, and staff.

Both the university and the program encourage and support professional development and LEAP administration, staff, and faculty participate in development. On-campus activities are provided by both the university and the program. Grants are available to administrators and staff and a development stipend can be used by faculty to, for example, attend conferences. Participation in professional development is documented.

The program does not, however, have a written statement(s) of its policies, expectations, or standards for the professional development of faculty, administrators, or staff.

In its response to the review team report, the program cited language that now appears in the LEAP department faculty handbook. This language explains that the chair oversees professional development and that all university employees are expected to improve performance and capability. It goes on to say that faculty should use conference travel money to achieve the greatest impact for students, for themselves, and for the department, and that they should share with peers what has been learned upon their return. Expected benefits should be discussed with the chair prior to making a request for travel money. The handbook does not include such things as how much professional development faculty should carry out over what period of time, what activities other than conference attendance constitute professional development, or if/how development should be documented.

The site response focused on faculty professional development and did not reference professional development for administrators or staff.

>   **Reporting Requirement 5**
>   By October 1, 2018, provide evidence that the program defines in writing its standards and requirements for the professional development of administrators, faculty, and staff. (Administrative and Fiscal Capacity 4)

Weber State University LEAP Department response:

To meet this standard the following legend has been added to page 10-11 of the LEAP Department Faculty Handbook;

"**Professional Development**

As described in the PPM 1-18 the Department chair is responsible to "Oversee . . . ongoing professional development. . . of staff and adjunct faculty, contract faculty, and tenure-track faculty" https://www.weber.edu/ppm/Policies/1-18_DeptChairs.html . Every employee of the university is expected to improve his/her performance and capability in the execution of her/his job. As you review your personal professional development, please plan where and when to spend travel monies (when available) for the best impact for our students, your professional growth and the improvement for the department as a whole. Please ensure that the conference you select is a site for the presentation of peer reviewed papers. When you have selected your preferred site, please discuss the benefits and anticipated gains with the Department chair when you make the request for an allocation of travel money. After you have attended professional conferences, training or workshops for professional development, please be ready to share your discoveries, self-improvement or teaching improvements with the rest of the department at the following faculty meeting. Travel money may not be used for membership dues."

WSU LEAP Department Plan of Action

The LEAP Department will meet on 3rd April 2018 to discuss the specific expectations and requirements for the professional development of administrators, faculty, and staff in the department. These expectation and requirements will be added to the above legend on pp.10-11 in the LEAP Department Faculty Handbook which is kept in hard copy in the Department mailroom, and in electronic copy in the LEAP Department Canvas Sandbox

Administrative and Fiscal Capacity Standard 5: The program or language institution describes to administrators and staff clearly and in writing the performance criteria and procedures for evaluation at the onset of the evaluation period; conducts administrator and staff performance evaluations that are systematic, regular, fair, objective, and relevant to achieving program goals; and conveys Weber State University LEAP Department response:

To meet this standard the following legend has been added to page 10-11 of the [LEAP Department Faculty Handbook](#);

"**Professional Development**

As described in the PPM 1-18 the Department chair is responsible to "Oversee . . . ongoing professional development. . . of staff and adjunct faculty, contract faculty, and tenure-track faculty" https://www.weber.edu/ppm/Policies/1-18_DeptChairs.html . Every employee of the university is expected to improve his/her performance and capability in the execution of her/his job. As you review your personal professional development, please plan where and when to spend travel monies (when available) for the best impact for our students, your professional growth and the improvement for the department as a whole. Please ensure that the conference you select is a site for the presentation of peer reviewed papers. When you have selected your preferred site, please discuss the benefits and anticipated gains with the Department chair when you make the request for an allocation of travel money. After you have attended professional conferences, training or workshops for professional development, please be ready to share your discoveries, self improvement or teaching improvements with the rest of the department at the following faculty meeting. Travel money may not be used for membership dues." **evaluation results to administrators and staff in writing in a timely manner.**

The university has formal, written policy for the evaluation of administrators and staff and the evaluation described appears to be systematic, regular and relevant to achieving program goals. In the case of the administrative assistant, evaluation addresses skills, effort, responsibility and working conditions. Input comes from the chair, faculty who choose to provide it, and the administrative assistant. Once evaluation results have been provided to the assistant, a follow-up discussion occurs. The assistant may dispute the evaluation if he/she so chooses. Records of evaluation were found in the administrative assistant's file.

The LEAP department chair is evaluated in the terminal year, which is the third one. The evaluation is carried out by the dean and it involves, but is not limited to, both a formal survey and interviews with faculty regarding the chair's effectiveness and an interview with the dean.

There was no documentation on site to indicate that the chair had been evaluated. While it is the case that the university does not require written evaluation feedback or records, this standard does require that written evaluations of the chair be conveyed in writing. Because no written records were available, it could not be confirmed that the chair had undergone regular evaluation and been provided with evaluation results.

The site response addressed faculty input and the role it played in the university decision tree regarding reappointment. The issue of chair evaluation being documented in writing was not addressed.

      Reporting Requirement 6

      By October 1, 2018, provide evidence that program chair is regularly evaluated and that evaluations results are conveyed to the chair in writing. (Administrative and Fiscal Capacity 5)

Weber State University LEAP Department response:

"At the end of the Chair's third (terminal) year as chair, faculty were queried as to whether she should be re-appointed. So long as 2/3 of faculty support the reappointment of chair, said chair can be reappointed. The recommendation to the Dean from the faculty is reappointment. In this case the Dean recommended reappointment and informed the chair and the department. The records from the faculty survey are not stored, as this is an anonymous vote. The Provost of the university recommends reappointment and the board of trustees approves. This is recorded in the board of trustees minutes."

According to the dean who supervises the process of evaluating the Chair, this was sufficient to indicate that the chair was performing satisfactorily.

WSU LEAP Department Plan of Action

As the department was facing structural changes, the chair, Dr. Debi Sheridan, asked the faculty if they would be willing to evaluate her performance according to the expectations that we had of the CEA report and our own department policy, which is guided by the WSU PPM 1-18 Department Chairs https://www.weber.edu/ppm/Policies/1-18_DeptChairs.html PPM 3-62 Evaluation of University Personnel https://www.weber.edu/ppm/Policies/3-62_EvalPersonnel.html and PPM8-11 Evaluation of Faculty Members https://www.weber.edu/ppm/Policies/8-11_EvalFacultyMembers.html. Sandy Thomas, the Administrative Specialist (AS), located a copy of the university evaluation for Deans, and circulated the copy to the Full-time faculty members Amy Hudson and Giana Curtis. After suggestions for changes or accepting the evaluation, were made, Sandy created a new approved _**LEAP version**_. Copies were distributed to 2 FT and 4 adjunct faculty on 30th November 2017. The evaluations were due by 5th December. The last evaluation was received 18th January 2018, following which the results were collated by the AS, sent to faculty, Chair and Deans, and are attached below.

Length and Structure of Program of Study Standard 2: The program or language institution's curricular design clearly indicates the levels of instruction and specifies how students progress through a full program of study.

Levels of instruction and student progress through the program of study are clearly indicated in the LEAP curriculum handbook, in the student handbook, and on course syllabi. Reductions in program resources, however, have impacted student progress through the program. Levels 1, 3 and 5 are now only offered in the first block of the semester and Levels 2, 4 and 6 are offered in the second block. Thus, if a given student fails to meet the outcomes in Level 3 during the first block, they cannot repeat it in the second block because it is not offered then. Rather, they are moved on to the second block's Level 4. Interviews on site indicated that, if the student passed Level 4, they would retroactively pass Level 3. If the student did not pass Level 4, the next semester they would repeat Level 3 and then Level 4. As a result of the program's dealing with resource reductions in this manner, how students progress through the program differs from what is described in published materials. The situation also impacts whether progression decisions are based on achievement of course and level student learning outcomes (see Student Achievement Standard 2).

Furthermore, the standard requires 1) that the program monitor and document patterns of student progression through the courses and levels of the curriculum and 2) that the program is able to document that students, in the aggregate, progress through the program of study by achieving course, level, and program student learning outcomes as anticipated by the design of the curriculum. As data, LEAP provided 2015 and 2016 grade lists from summer, fall, and spring terms as well as a pie chart indicating passes and failures. This data does not provide sufficient evidence of aggregate pass/fail patterns, rates of promotion, time spent in levels, or analysis of patterns to identify unacceptable passing or progression rates.

In its response to the review team report, the site stated that the data described above as well as instructor insights into the students they have taught was, along with other curricular matters, a focus of discussion at a late September 2017 Curriculum Committee meeting. As a result of the discussion, changes were made to a few course SLOs and course goals. The program stated that faculty were satisfied that the present curriculum is successful, efficient and cohesive, and that the rate of success of their students is a reliable indicator of that success.

Concerns with the reduction of course offerings are addressed in the program's Student Achievement 2 response. The site concludes by stating that there is only now sufficient data drawn from the reduced offerings structure to undertake a comprehensive analysis of student progression. This analysis will be conducted in Spring 2018.

> **Reporting Requirement 7**
> By October 1, 2018 provide evidence that students, in the aggregate, progress through the program of study by achieving course, level and program student learning outcomes as anticipated by the design of the curriculum. If patterns of student achievement in courses and levels or patterns of progression through the program of study as a whole are not as anticipated, provide evidence of how the program is addressing the matter. (Length and Structure of Program of Study 2)

Weber State University LEAP Department response:
Student progress is documented in student files in the LEAP office. Current transcripts are readily available to the student, the LEAP office and all faculty through the eWeber portal. Progress/failure lists

are issued to ensure that students take and pass the required courses without missing the instruction and mastering the SLOs deemed necessary before progressing to the next course. These artifacts with the pie chart analysis, and instructor insights to students in the courses taught have been the discussion of the most recent Curriculum Committee Meeting (25 – 28 September 2017). The discussion focused on the effectiveness of the curriculum as a whole, the efficiency of the separation of the current levels, the cohesion of the skills between levels, and the appropriateness of the SLOs for each course. A few changes were made to a few course SLOs and course goals as a result. The faculty were satisfied that the present curriculum is successful, efficient and cohesive, and that the rate of success of our students is a reliable indicator of that success.

The above criticism of the recent changes of the course offerings due to a downturn in resources are addressed in SA2. As the changes to the course offerings have just completed their second year, there is only now sufficient data to undertake a comprehensive analysis concerning student progression under the new schedule. We will analyze this data in Spring 2018

WSU LEAP Department Plan of Action

Student Achievement Standard 1: The program or language institution has a placement system that is consistent with its admission requirements and allows valid and reliable placement of students into levels.

Program students are placed using an in-house test consisting of timed reading and writing sections, an un-timed but self-limiting listening and note-taking section, and an oral interview with program faculty. Based upon results, students are placed in Levels 1-6, the level 7 academic bridge courses, or freshman English. During the first week of the term, students are closely observed or given a diagnostic exam. Processes are in place should an instructor or student feel misplacement has occurred, but such situations are rare, which supports the reliability and validity of the placement process.

Rubrics for the speaking and writing portions of the placement test were reviewed on site. It could not, however, be determined upon what basis students are placed into levels in the other skill areas.

In its response to the review team report, the site explained that the reading test consisted of 83 questions. A student's raw score on this section is converted into a percentage and that percentage is used for placement. The percentage cut-offs mirror those numbers listed in the writing rubric, e.g. Level 1: 1-10, Level 2: 11-20. The writing rubric was included with the response. No mention was made of how scores on listening and note-taking portions of the placement exam contributed to overall placement into courses.

> **Reporting Requirement 8**
> By October 1, 2018, provide documentation showing how placement test results in listening and note-taking are used in student placement. (Student Achievement 1)

Weber State University LEAP Department response:
The rubric for scoring the writing portion of the placement test, which is available in the LEAP office with the placement tests and placement test keys, has remained unchanged over the last 5 years when the rubric for level 1 and 2 placement were added. The writing rubric is accessible in this report. The reading test is a raw score of answers to 83 questions that is then converted into a percentage. The percentage for the reading placement uses the same scores outlined in the writing rubric.
WSU LEAP Department Plan of Action

Student Achievement Standard 2: The program or language institution documents in writing whether students are ready to progress to the next level or to exit the program of study, using instruments or procedures that appropriately assess the achievement of student learning outcomes for courses taken within the curriculum.

In-house, teacher-created assessments are used to determine level progression and exit from the program of study. Because some of the program's SLOs are not observable and measurable and because some courses lack SLOs (see Curriculum Standard 1), the program's assessments do not consistently measure student progress or SLO achievement.

Additionally, not all of the program's SLOs are assessed. Examples of where this is not the case come from Level 3, e.g. summarizing, making inferences; Level 4, e.g. outlining, compound and complex sentences; and Level 5, e.g. paraphrasing, supporting opinions.   Also lacking is a system in place to ensure that course assessments are aligned with and consistently measure student learning outcomes of courses.

The program also uses indirect measures of achievement in determining students' grades, which themselves determine progression. As was verified on-site as well as on syllabi and in the student handbook, these indirect measures are attendance and homework completion. Alone or in combination, syllabi showed that the weight assigned to these measures ranged from 10-25% of a grade.

Last, due to recent program restructuring (see Length and Structure Standard 2), some students may pass to the next level despite failing the previous one and, depending on timing, may retroactively pass the failed one. In such cases, progress is not based upon assessed achievement.

In its response to the review team report, the program stated that it had addressed the review team's concerns with SLOs. This area of insufficient compliance has not been resolved. (see Curriculum 2)

Regarding assessment of SLOs, the program cited examples contained in the review team report and stated that in these cases SLOs were assessed through homework assignments. In the case of Level 3, they also mentioned a rubric provided to students with homework assignments and assessment through the midterm and final papers. No documentation was provided to verify these statements or to show evidence that SLOs had been appropriately assessed.

In terms of indirect measures of assessment, the site stated that assigned homework was not busy work and that each assignment served a purpose in relation to SLOs and progress measurement. The site went on to state that attendance was included as a grading factor to motivate students to attend classes and keep SEVIS, FAFSA or scholarship requirements.

With respect to the timing of course offerings/program restructuring, the program stated that if a student were able to pass a higher course after failing the previous one, this indicates that, during the higher course, they had mastered the skills of the earlier one. This is because skills are sequentially ordered and build upon themselves.

Because the response did not provide evidence of how assessments establish that homework, midterm, and final papers demonstrate direct evidence of achievement of SLOs, and because it is not clear how the indirect indicators of achievement (completion of homework and attendance) demonstrate achievement of SLOs, the following reporting requirement is issued.

Note: The site is encouraged to consult with CEA staff on the requirements of the standard, which prohibit homework <u>completion</u> as a progression factor.

Reporting Requirement 9
By October 1, 2018, provide evidence that program documents in writing whether students are ready to progress to the next level or to exit the program of study, using instruments or procedures that appropriately assess the achievement of student learning outcomes for courses taken within the curriculum. Provide evidence that progression decisions are based on direct evidence of achievement of student learning outcomes (Student Achievement 2)

Weber State University LEAP Department response
SLOs identified by the site visit team have been addressed and updated to meet required measures for C2, above.

From the site visit report; "Level 3 reading has SLOs about summarizing, paraphrasing, organizing information, and making inferences. No evidence could be found that these skills were tested." These skills are assessed in homework assigned, mid-term exams and final papers. These skills are taught specifically during the course and are measured by the rubrics created for students to complete with each homework assignment. "For level 4 writing, there was no evidence of assessment of the SLOs regarding pre-writing, outlining, compound and complex sentences, or self-editing;" These concepts are also taught specifically in this level and are evaluated through homework assignments. There is no time in the instructor's day or the students study time to assign busy work for homework. Each assignment has a purpose in achieving an SLO, or meeting a step in the progression to meeting an SLO. Thus if homework is assigned it is part of a grade based requirement, because we use the homework assignments to prepare students for the assessments that measure their progress.

Attendance is required as part of a grade to motivate students to attend classes and keep SEVIS, FAFSA or scholarship requirements. This policy was the subject of an extended discussion of the entire faculty when there were eight full-time faculty.

"however, spelling is tested but has no corresponding SLO." Correct spelling is deemed a necessary step for all students to learn the language and as it has not been deemed necessary of specific SLOs, that discussion will take place during the Assessment Week 20-24 November 2017. "Student learning outcomes not tested for the level 5 academic communication course include paraphrasing, summarizing, and expressing and supporting opinions about in-class academic materials." These SLOs are also assessed by homework assignments and as such add veracity to the grades achieved for this course.

Students who do not pass a course in block one, and who are already registered for the next course in block two are thereby offered another opportunity to pass the first class. Less than 5% of students have not taken advantage of the opportunity to increase their efforts and dedication to course- and home-work and achieve successful outcomes in subsequent courses. Students may progress to the next level because the skills are sequentially ordered and build upon themselves. For example, if a student does not pass level 3 writing for any reason, they are given the opportunity to attempt level 4 writing. The level 4 writing is more advanced and demanding and if a student can demonstrate that they are able to fulfill the tasks required by level 4, then it can be reasonably inferred that the student is capable of fulfilling the simpler tasks required by the lower level. However, if the student does not pass the higher level, they are required to repeat both levels. This is not much different from a program run on semesters. Ours may be viewed as having a "progress report" in the middle with the conclusion of a level. Some students take a little more time to adjust to rigorous language study at a university, and therefore do not perform well in their first seven-week block, but will adapt and perform better as time goes on and their language skills improve. In addition, the higher levels review and continue to practice

skills developed in the lower levels, and just that much repetition may be enough for a student to grasp a concept that they previously struggled with.

This decision to effectively go to semester-long coursework was not made lightly or without much reflection. If a student is without sufficient credits because they pass the first class and fail the second, they are offered the opportunity to take the Special projects class, which offers dedicated supporting work in reading, writing, speaking and listening, thereby increasing their ability and confidence in their SLA process. Now that we have completed two years of offering this revised and reduced number of classes we can make a more focused analysis of the program of study.

WSU LEAP Department Plan of Action

Student Achievement Standard 3: The program or language institution maintains and provides students with written reports that clearly indicate the level and language outcomes attained as a result of instruction.

Students have electronic access to written course grade reports which can be printed from CANVAS should they so choose. Grades for individual assessments and percentages assigned to grading categories are displayed on the course Canvas pages. The program maintains records of end-of-term grades in student files in the program office; it does not keep copies of individual achievement reports.

The program's reporting system does not include an achievement scale indicating the range of language abilities as reflected in levels or an interpretation of the scale or an achievement scale which includes descriptors of observable and measurable student learning outcomes for each course at each level.

In its response to the review team report, the site stated that achievement and expectation descriptors can be found in the LEAP pages in the university catalog, which can be found on the university website. In its response, the site also noted that each individual syllabus contains the course's SLOs and an explanation of the university's grading system.

The site's curricular materials include a LEAP Department Curriculum Map, a chart which displays each of the courses in the program along with a descriptor of the purpose of the course. The curriculum map meets the requirement of the achievement scale and interpretation of the scale, but is available to faculty and administrators.

The site meets the requirements of the standard, but because it may be difficult for students and others who need to know to access the achievement scale and interpretation of the scale in the course catalog, course syllabi only show that course's SLOs, and the curriculum map is not widely available, a recommendation is issued to ensure that students or other interested parties could access the achievement scale and interpretation of the scale.

Recommendation 1
The site would benefit from making the curriculum map available and easily accessible to students and others who need to know. (Student Achievement 3)
Weber State University LEAP Department response:
Achievement and expectation descriptors according to ACTFL are located on the LEAP page in the WSU catalog located at
http://catalog.weber.edu/preview_entity.php?catoid=12&ent_oid=2635&hl=%22LEAP%22&returnto=search and copied **below.** At the bottom of the page there is also a link to individual course descriptions. Each syllabus includes a grid displaying the university achievement scale determining student grades according to the achieved percentage. The SLOs are also listed in each syllabus. So if students achieve a 93 – 100% pass on each section of the class requirements displayed on canvas, they can locate the grade in the grid displaying the university grading scale. Passing grades are determined as 77% success rate. Students can track their achievement daily through canvas, which displays the percentage requirement completed. Students are counseled if they have any questions regarding their grades. This grading system helps prepare students for the university, which reports grades in the same manner.
WSU LEAP Department Plan of Action

Program Development, Planning, and Review Standard 1: The program or language institution has a plan, in writing, for development of the program or language institution, including planning, implementation, and evaluation.

The program has a written strategic plan which is available to faculty for review. The plan, however, lacks the following: tasks, processes, responsible parties, and timelines, and a list of documentation that provides explicit evidence that the plan has been implemented. The plan also lacks many of the areas defined as good practice in the standard's discussion. Additionally, evidence on site indicating plan implementation was insufficient and a review of faculty meeting notes did not include information about the systematic review of all features of the plan.

In its response to the review team report, a discussion of the decision chain for reviewing and updating the strategic plan was provided. The program also stated that the strategic plan would be reviewed at the Assessment meeting in November 2017. The response stated that the plan includes goals, implementations due, and completed implementations, and stated that this inclusion is the evidence that the plan has been reviewed and goals completed.

To ensure the most recent version of the written plan is reviewed with the site's response, the reporting requirement below asks for an updated copy of the plan.

> **Reporting Requirement 10**
> By October 1, 2018, provide a copy of a plan for the development of the program which contains the tasks, processes, responsible parties, and timelines, and a list of documentation that provides evidence that the plan has been implemented for review areas listed in the standard's discussion. Provide evidence of implementation of the plan. (Program Development, Planning, and Review 1)

Weber State University LEAP Department response:
The Strategic Plan is reviewed and updated annually by the Chair, who then forwards it for review to the dean of OIP, and the Vice Provost, who is also Dean of the Division of Continuing Education. If there are no additions from these supervisors, then the faculty are asked to review the plan and it is then discussed in the next faculty meeting if there are questions, comment, concerns or suggestions for further changes. Goals identified for implementation, or updates suggested are the subject of further curriculum or assessment development during the following year. The current Strategic Plan is due to be reviewed during the Assessment Meeting week 20-24 November 2017. The Strategic Plan includes goals, implementations due, and completed implementations. It is the evidence that this plan has been reviewed and goals completed.

WSU LEAP Department Plan of Action

Program Development, Planning, and Review Standard 2: The program or language institution regularly reviews and revises its program components and has plans, in writing, to guide the review of curricular elements, student assessment practices, and student services policies and activities. The plans are systematically implemented.

The program itself has a written plan for the review of curriculum and of assessment. It includes plan items and elements required by the standard and deals with review of textbooks, SLOs, curricular objectives, and final exams. It lacks, however, a list of documents to serve as evidence of plan implementation. Further, on-site evidence indicating that review has been taking place consistently was lacking, e.g. there was little evidence of the data or information that the site collects, analyzes, and uses to inform program changes.

The university provides the majority of student services used by the program and there are university processes in place for the review and planning of these services. There was no evidence, however, of how specific LEAP student services, such as orientation, advising, and social events, are reviewed and revised by the program.

In its response, the program discussed at some length how LEAP-specific student services are carried out. The response did not address these student services in relation to regular review and revision as reflected in a plan document, nor provide supporting evidence of implementation of the plan for review of curriculum and assessment.

To ensure the most recent version of the written plan is reviewed with the site's response, the reporting requirement below asks for an updated copy of the plan.

> **Reporting Requirement 11**
> By October 1, 2018, provide a copy of the plan(s) for the review and revision of curricular elements, student assessment practices, and student services policies and activities. Provide evidence of implementation of the plan(s). (Program Development, Planning, and Review 2)

Weber State University LEAP Department response:
The LEAP Department orientation is an integral part of the orientation provided by the ISSC at the beginning of each semester. the ISSC and the LEAP Chair and Administrative Specialist (AS) meet to discuss the contents and the success/failures of the previous orientation, and to set the date for the next orientation. The discussion of dates takes into account the existing national/university holidays. More recent discussions have included the availability of the on-campus housing and dining services, to ensure that all services are available to incoming students.
A short orientation is held by the Kaori Gale, the student aide, in individual classes at the beginning of the semester to ensure that all students are aware of how to use canvas, the dates for W grades, and of class and block times. Classroom and homework responsibilities, cell phone policies, lab times and student complaint procedures are also outlined. Students are advised that for any further problems in using these services, help is available in the LEAP office and individual tutorials with these procedures is available on demand.
Academic advising is covered in many ways in the Department. As the program is basically sequential, advising is at a minimum. Initial advising is undertaken on the day that placement test results are made available by either the AS, or the Chair, depending on who gives the test results. The chair is available should any questions arise. During the semester any student who wants advice can make an appointment or drop in to visit the Chair, the same service is available from the AS.

Social events are organized by the Student Aide under the direction of the chair. Post-activity discussions are undertaken on an informal basis by the hair, the AS and the Student Aide with input from the faculty, and/or guests from the ISSC and Study Abroad office,\ during the annual Tri-program planning meeting (LEAP, ISSC, and Study Abroad).

WSU LEAP Department Plan of Action