

Summary of Key Evidence: AY 2020-21 [CAPS] Assessment Reporting for UCORE UCORE Assessment | Washington State University

Background

Established as part of WSU's general education curriculum (UCORE) beginning in 2012, Integrative Capstone [CAPS] courses bring opportunities for integration, application, and closure to the undergraduate experience. All CAPS courses require students to demonstrate at least four of the seven university learning goals: Critical & Creative Thinking, Information Literacy, Depth, Breadth, & Integration of Learning, and Communication. In addition, Quantitative Reasoning, Scientific Literacy, and/or Diversity may be included as appropriate to the discipline or course. CAPS courses are 400-level courses and students should have at least junior-level standing as a general prerequisite. CAPS may be for majors-only or open to non-majors.

Each department, school, or program determines its CAPS policy for its majors. Students may be required to take a CAPS course inside the major OR outside the major; or the choice may be left to the student. Given their position within the UCORE curriculum, CAPS courses carry a strong responsibility for culminating evidence of student achievement of the learning goals of undergraduate education.

Methods and Responses

CAPS course instructors were asked to complete CAPS Assessment Reports for UCORE for fall 2020 and spring 2021. The report asked instructors to provide an overall holistic assessment of student performance of all students in their CAPS course. For AY 2020-21, the CAPS report form focused on Information Literacy, Integrative Learning, Quantitative Reasoning (optional), and Scientific Literacy (optional).

A total of 167 reports were submitted by 138 instructors, representing **84%** of CAPS classes and **84%** of students enrolled in CAPS courses in fall 2020 and spring 2021. In **65%** of reports, instructors indicated that their students were primarily (>90%) seniors. Instructors indicated that their students were primarily (>90%) majors in **67%** of reports. Approximately 83% of students enrolled in all CAPS courses in fall 2020 and spring 2021 were seniors. *Note: For fall 2020 and spring 2021, undergraduate courses at WSU were delivered at a distance and completed remotely, with extremely limited exceptions for in-person instruction, due to the COVID-19 pandemic. While roughly 73% of fall 2020 and spring 2021 CAPS instructors indicated that there were substantial impacts to course assignments, learning activities, instruction, and/or grading in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic, roughly 81% of instructors indicated that they had confidence in their ability to assess student achievement of these WSU Learning Goals.*

To complement CAPS Assessment Reporting for UCORE (direct measure, using faculty expert judgement), CAPS course enrollments and C-/D/F/W rates are also monitored (indirect measures, giving information about success and progress through the curriculum) for UCORE assessment (see the [Appendix: Supplemental Focus on Student Enrollment and Course Grades in AY 2020-21 CAPS Courses](#) for more information).

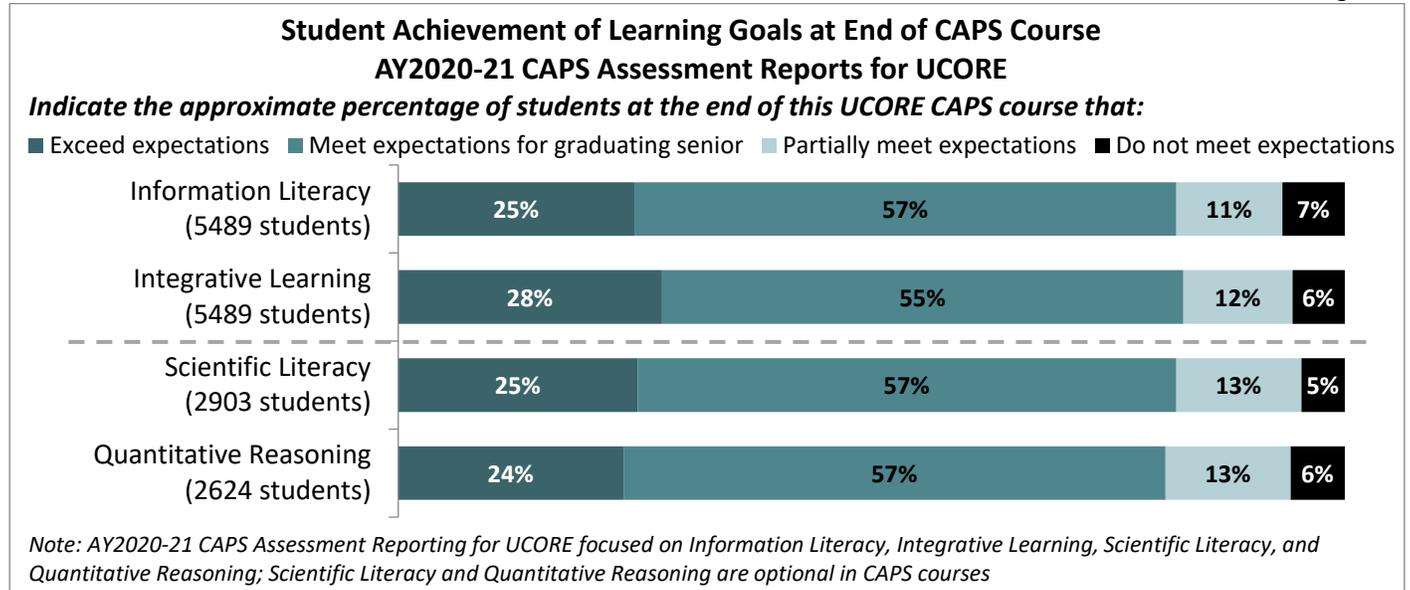
Overall Achievement of WSU's Learning Goals

Instructors rated students on their ability *at the end of the CAPS course* on four WSU Learning Goals, basing their evaluation on students' holistic performance in the course. Instructors only rated the learning goals demonstrated in their course.

Required Learning Goals. Overall, AY 2020-21 CAPS instructors indicated that **82%** of students met or exceeded expectations at the graduating undergraduate level for **Information Literacy**. Additionally, instructors indicated that **83%** of students met or exceeded expectations at the graduating undergraduate level for **Integrative Learning**. See *Figure 1*.

Additional Learning Goals. In AY 2020-21, 50% of reports indicated that the course syllabus required students to demonstrate Scientific Literacy and 43% required students to demonstrate Quantitative Reasoning. In these courses where instructors found enough elements to evaluate student learning on additional learning goals, instructors indicated that **82%** of students met or exceeded expectations for **Scientific Literacy** and **81%** met or exceeded expectations for **Quantitative Reasoning**. See *Figure 1*.

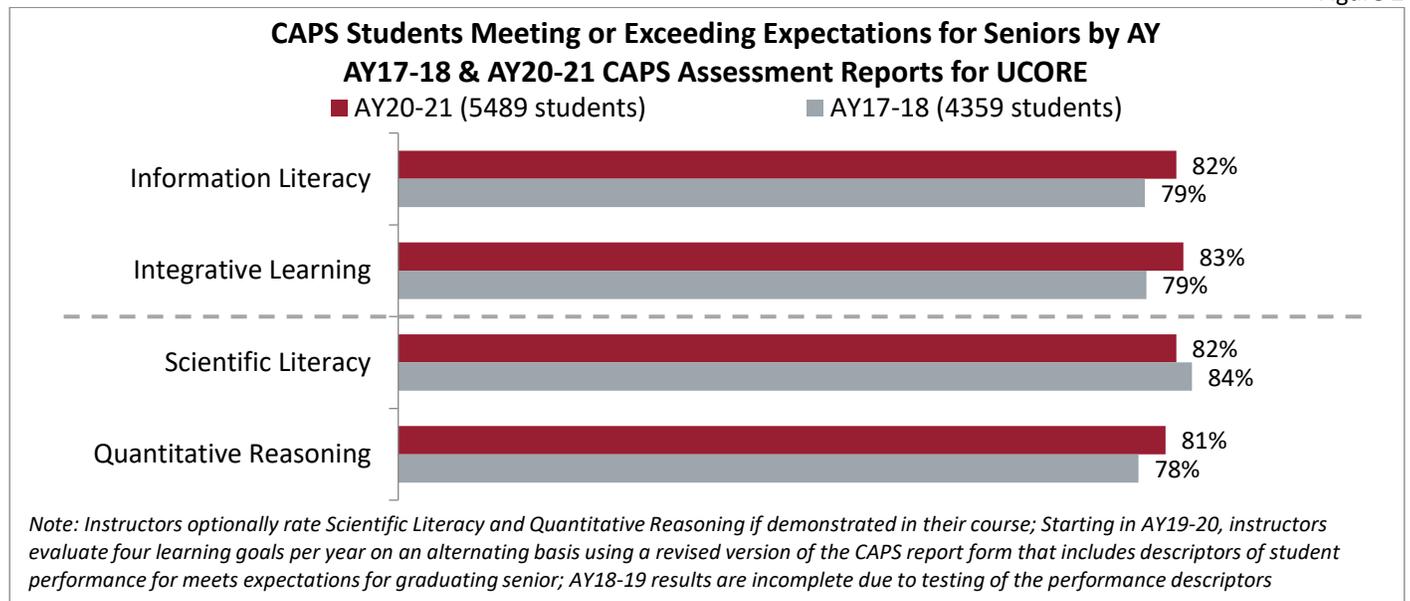
Figure 1



Achievement by Seniors. Instructors generally rated more students as *meeting or exceeding expectations* for *graduating seniors* in courses with primarily (>90%) seniors and primarily (>90%) senior majors (not shown).

Achievement Over Two Academic Years. The percentage of students *meeting or exceeding expectations* at the graduating undergraduate level was generally larger (average +2%) in AY 2020-21 compared to AY 2017-18 for the four Learning Goals assessed. See *Figure 2*. *Note: Instructors optionally rate Scientific Literacy and Quantitative Reasoning if demonstrated in their course. Additionally, starting in AY19-20, instructors evaluate four learning goals per year on an alternating basis using a revised version of the CAPS report form that includes descriptors of student performance for meets expectations for graduating senior; AY18-19 results are incomplete due to testing of the performance descriptors and are not shown.*

Figure 2



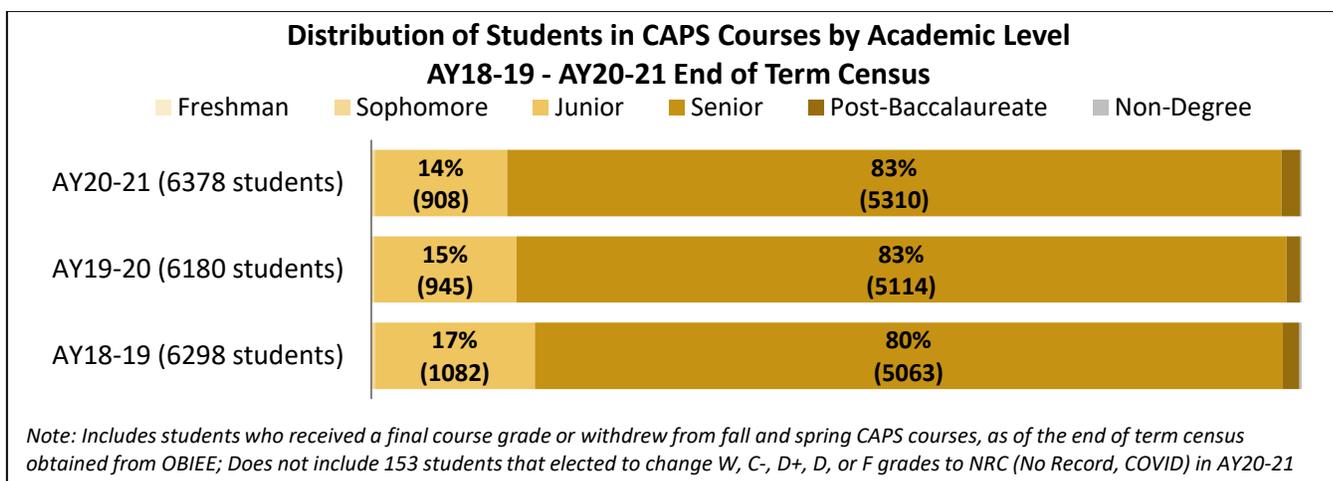
Appendix: Supplemental Focus on Student Enrollment and Course Grades in AY 2020-21 CAPS Courses

To complement CAPS Assessment Reporting for UCORE (direct measure, using faculty expert judgement), CAPS course enrollments and C-/D/F/W rates are also monitored (indirect measures, giving information about success and progress through the curriculum) for UCORE assessment. CAPS course enrollments and C-/D/F/W rates for all fall and spring CAPS courses are obtained from OBIEE end of term census data.

Note: In spring 2020, WSU made the emergency move to distance education beginning March 23rd as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. An emergency grading accommodation expanded the pass/fail option for undergraduate students to include P (converted from A, B, or C grades) and PP (converted from C- or D grades). Additionally, the COVID-19 Incomplete (IC) grade was created for instances where the incomplete was COVID-19 related. In spring 2020 CAPS courses, 101 students received a P grade, 30 students received a PP grade, and 28 students received an IC grade. For fall 2020 and spring 2021, undergraduate courses at WSU were delivered at a distance and completed remotely, with extremely limited exceptions for in-person instruction. Students enrolled in courses during the fall 2020 and/or spring 2021 semesters could elect to change W, C-, D+, D, or F grades to NRC (No Record, COVID). In CAPS courses, 74 students utilized the NRC grade in fall 2020 and 79 students utilized the NRC grade in spring 2021.

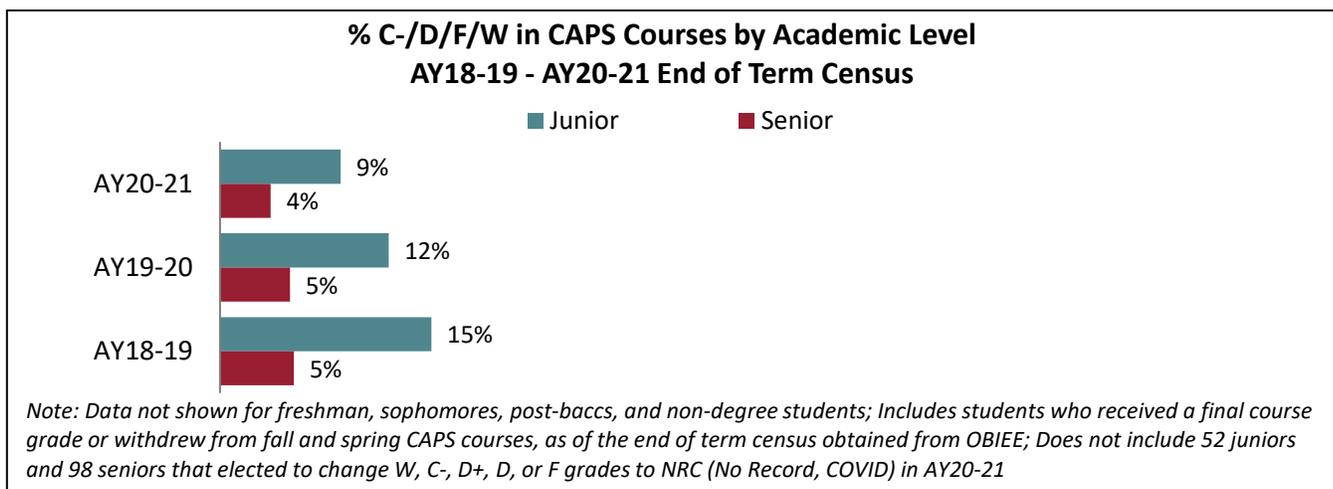
Overall CAPS Course Enrollments: Distribution of Students by Academic Level

Over the past three AYs, roughly 1 in 6 students in CAPS courses were juniors:



Overall CAPS C-/D/F/W Rates: % C-/D/F/W by Academic Level

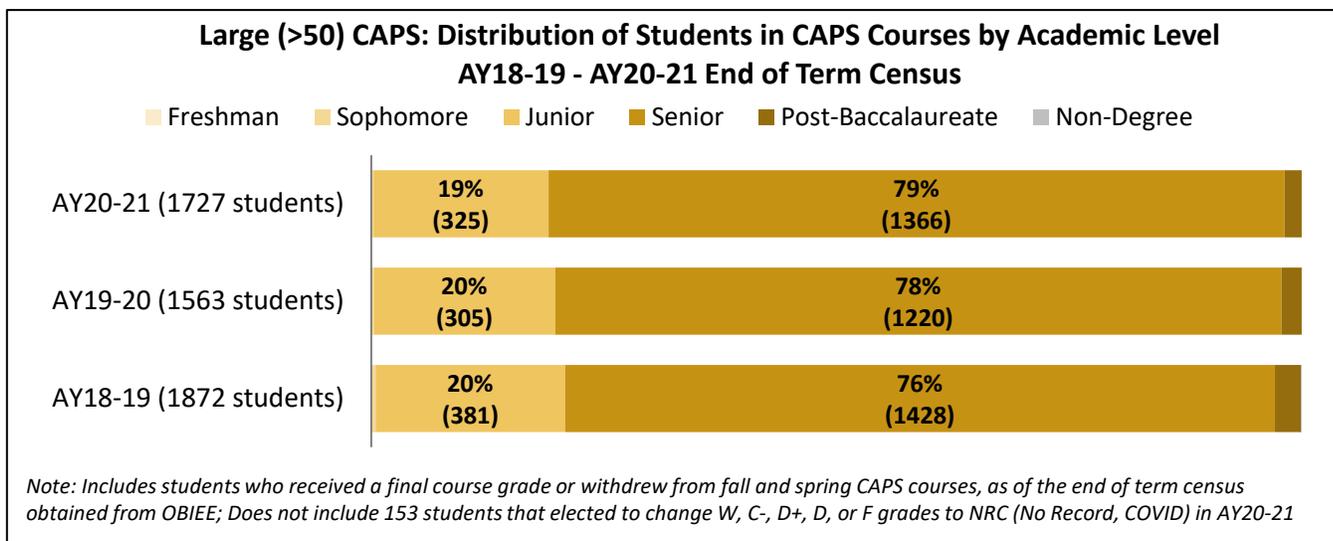
Over the past three AYs, juniors earned C-/D/F/W grades in CAPS at more than double the rate of seniors:



Large (>50) CAPS Course Enrollments: Distribution of Students by Academic Level

As outlined in the [UCORE Policies for Departments](#), ideally CAPS courses should keep enrollments to less than 50 students. In Fall 2020 and Spring 2021, **1727 students** were enrolled in a large (>50) CAPS course, representing **27% of students** enrolled in CAPS courses (1727 out of 6378 students).

Over the past three AYs, roughly 1 in 5 students in large (>50) CAPS courses were juniors:



Large (>50) CAPS C-/D/F/W Rates: % C-/D/F/W by Academic Level

Over the past three AYs, C-/D/F/W rates were typically higher for both seniors and juniors in large (>50) CAPS classes, compared to all CAPS classes (see previous page):

