MUSEUM STUDIES PROGRAM
ASSESSMENT REPORT FOR 2018-19
NOVEMBER 1, 2019

Name of Program: Museum Studies M.A. Program
Type of Program: Graduate (Master of Arts)
Department: Art + Architecture
College of Arts and Sciences

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1. Mission Statement

The mission of the University of San Francisco's **Master of Arts (M.A.) degree in Museum Studies** is to shape leaders in museums and cultural organizations of all disciplines. Through a curriculum that emphasizes social justice, community engagement and hands-on experience, students acquire the skills and knowledge necessary to strategically transform museums in a constantly changing global context.

This mission statement was revised in AY2016-17.

2. Our Program does not have **Program Goals**

3. In AY2016-17, we also revised our **Program Learning Outcomes (PLOs)** with feedback from the Dean's Office to the following three points:

Students who complete the M.A. in Museum Studies will be able to:

1) Articulate a critical understanding of the histories, challenges and methodologies related to museums as complex public service organizations.

2) Analyze institutional practices in light of USF's mission of social justice.

3) Apply skills and knowledge essential for successful professional patterns of behavior and practice in all types of museums and like organizations.

Brief summary of most recent assessment plan: Since we assessed Program Learning Outcome # 3 in Fall 2018, we decided to assess **Program Learning Outcome #1 in Fall 2019. MUSE PLO 1:** Articulate a critical understanding of the histories, challenges and methodologies related to museums as complex public service organizations.

An independent group of three faculty members assessed this PLO using one assignment from three different courses (two required and one elective) that students take as they progress through the program. We wanted to examine the progression of student learning and ability to articulate a critical understanding of museums as complex service organizations at the Introductory, Developing, Competent and Mastery levels.

Academic Program Review: the Museum Studies Program had its very first Academic Program Review in Spring 2019. The external reviewers advised that we try to streamline and simplify our assessment process, and so we have attempted to do that with this year's assessment of PLO #1.

The following rubric was developed to assess PLO # 1 across three classes: MUSE 600: Museum Studies: History/Theory; MUSE 607: Museums & the Law Practicum; MUSE 630: Museum Studies Capstone

Rubric for MUSE PLO 1: Articulate a critical understanding of the histories, challenges and methodologies related to museums as complex public service organizations.

PLO 1	Mastery	Competent	Developing
Identification of issues relating to museums as complex public service organizations	Describes issue(s) comprehensively, addresses significant aspects	Issue stated and described, scope is focused and manageable for the assignment	Issue stated but with some ambiguity, relevant aspects not explained
Articulation of connections between museum histories, challenges and methodologies	Effectively and convincingly develops strong, logical, and coherent connection(s)	Effectively articulates connection	States a main idea or connection, but struggles to effectively articulate
Use of evidence, research *Note: citations and research are not required for all assignments*	Synthesizes, evaluates, and analyzes in-depth information from various sources; questions viewpoint of sources; develops a comprehensive interpretation and analysis; uses accurate & complete citations (appropriate use of paraphrasing and direct quotations, distinguishing between common knowledge and info requiring citation, accurate citation style)	Presents information from relevant source(s); acknowledges varying perspectives or approaches; incorporates analysis and/or synthesis of information; mostly correct use of citations with minor errors (mostly appropriate use of paraphrasing and direct quotations, distinguishing between common knowledge and info requiring citation, and accurate citation style)	Presents relevant info with limited interpretation or analysis; does not question source, information, or assumptions; limited use of citations (may struggle to distinguish how and when to cite information appropriately; uses specific citation style but makes consistent errors)
Organization and written or verbal expression	Organization and writing or speech effectively supports thesis and purpose, with fully effective transitions, well organized information, clear writing/speaking style	Organization and writing or speech mostly supports thesis or purpose, with appropriate transitions and sequence of ideas.	Organization and writing or speech adequately supports a simple thesis or purpose, some adjustments could improve flow of ideas
Analysis and interpretation, connection to museums as complex public service organizations	Effectively organizes and analyzes evidence, ideas to reveal insightful observations about the impact of museums on communities	Organizes and analyzes evidence, ideas to articulate connection to the impact of museums on communities	Lists and organizes ideas or evidence, but doesn't effectively consider connection to the impact of museums on communities
Conclusions	Conclusion is sophisticated and logical, emerges from informed evaluation, analysis, and synthesis of appropriate evidence	Conclusion is more complex, arises from and responds inquiry and analysis presented	Conclusion is general, or is logical because information has been chosen to fit the desired conclusion

In what follows, we will review the measurement tools used for each of the three courses and their respective assignments (A-C):

A. Measurement Tools for MUSE 600: Museum Studies: History/Theory
The final research paper assigned for this course was used to assess this PLO, since most students conducted peer-reviewed research on topics related to the theme of "museums as complex service organizations." Three different faculty members read the final paper and scored them measuring six traits, using the rubric above. The expectation was that all students would be at the beginning or developing levels.

Direct Data for assessing PLO# 1 in MUSE 600, Final Research Paper Assignment:

Introductory:	0%
Developing:	12.5% (bordering on Competent)
Competent:	62.5%
Mastery:	25%

Analysis for MUSE 600: One of the stated learning outcomes of the Museum Studies: History/Theory course (MUS 600) that aligns directly to PLO#1 is that students will: *Write a substantial research paper on an issue affecting museums today that is informed by the study of museum history and theory.* Faculty used the written work students completed for the Final Research Paper assignment to assess this learning outcome from the Fall 2018 course, MUSE 600. A substantial research paper assignment encourages and demonstrates critical thinking about important issues in the field and demonstrate students' knowledge of, and ability to, use recognized and peer-reviewed museum research resources (including books, journals, museum and AAM websites etc.)

In short, this multi-part assignment required the students to select a relevant topic informed by the course syllabus, identify scholarly sources (mix of primary and secondary), write an annotated bibliography, and then write out their argument in the body of the paper.

What aligned with your expectations?

Most students are learning to integrate current literature and their knowledge of current issues and problems in the field in relation to the history and theory of museums into a final project at the end of their first semester of study. The majority of the students wrote "competent" level papers, with a few at the "mastery" level and just one student that was borderline between "developing and competent. We were pleasantly surprised to see that some students' understanding and discussion of museums as complex service institutions in this introductory course is already at a solid level of professionalism. Very few students struggled with how to explain and clearly define the complex roles of museums in society, and the majority exceeded our expectations at either the "competent" or "mastery" level.

What do you understand these results to mean?
We believe these results provide evidence that our students are committed to learning to apply the established standards and practices of critical thinking and engaging with the history and theory of museums to better understand museums as complex service organizations. This multi-faceted research paper assignment, accompanied by an oral presentation, although challenging for many students in their first semester of graduate school, is an appropriate assignment for assessing PLO #1, and also prepares students for deeper research in the capstone course.

What are the implications of the data?
The required course MUSE 600 is taken during the first semester (fall) in the graduate program and is seen as the foundational course. Students come to the program with varied levels of educational and professional backgrounds and experience. This is reflected in the results of the assessment of this assignment. We have already developed a plan to use this paper as a kind of "litmus test" for students who struggle with writing, and those whose grade on the paper falls below a B- are strongly encouraged to take a graduate level writing class in the spring semester.

One thing we learned from this assessment is to adjust the language on the rubric, as there is one question (second to last on "Analysis") in which the criteria of measuring the students' ability to analyze "the impact of museums on communities" was not clear.

Another thing we learned is that in the future we might embed the language of PLO# 1 into the final research paper assignment, so students will be asked to address it directly in their choice of paper topic.

B. Measurement Tools for assessing PLO# 1 at the Developing level in MUSE 607, Museums & the Law:

One of the stated learning outcomes of the Museums and the Law course (MUS 607) that aligns directly to PLO#1 is that students will: "Think critically and creatively about complex and interrelated museum practices that involve various legal and related ethical concerns and propose courses of action to address these concerns in a practical way, taking into account the effect they will have on museum operations and constituencies."

Faculty used the written work students completed for the third question on the final exam in Fall 2018. In short, the question asked the students to comment on an ethical dilemma a museum faced in whether or not to acquire a collection of art with a questionable provenance, and to engage in a project led by an outside consultant who was a relative of the collector offering the donation. The results of this assignment showed with the following results:

Direct Data for assessing PLO# 1 in MUSE 607, Final Exam Question #3:

Introductory: 0%
Developing: 50%
Competent: 50%
Mastery: 0%

What aligned with your expectations?
Faculty was pleased by these results. This course is taken primarily by students in their first semester of the program, and we are encouraged by the even split between "developing" and "competent." All students were able to apply and integrate some current issues and literature in the field of museum law and ethics to a proposed situation with a fictitious institution. Most demonstrated "developing" or "competency" in their ability to make professional recommendations as to how the museum should respond to a legal and ethical dilemma.

The students seem to be learning to integrate current literature and professional practice into a final exam at the end of their first semester of study. Some students' applications of these issues within institutional practices is sophisticated, while others are first learning how to articulate a strong argument on behalf of an institution and will benefit from furthering their knowledge of ethical museum practices in future courses such as Museums and Social Justice, or Cultural Heritage and Social Justice, and their relevant assignments.

What do you understand these results to mean?
We believe these results provide evidence that our students are committed to learning to think critically and creatively about complex and interrelated museum practices that involve various legal and related ethical concerns, and to propose courses of action to address these concerns in a practical way." This final exam essay question is an appropriate assignment for assessing PLO #1.

What are the implications of the data?
The data implies are that we should continue to use both fictitious and real world case studies in order to help apply skills in a real world setting.

    C. **Measurement Tools for assessing PLO# 1 at the Mastery level in MUSE 630: Museum Studies Capstone:**

Review MUSE 630/Capstone course (required) – final written capstones.

After they complete their first year of coursework, students enroll in an internship course that helps them track their progress and learning at a host site. Faculty assessed the student portfolios of their internship work, in addition to feedback provided in writing by site supervisors for 24 students (some sites hosted more than one student and thus these results only reflect 20 sites).

Direct Data for assessing PLO# 1 at the Mastery level in MUSE 630:

Introductory: 0%
Developing: 0%
Competent: 0%
Mastery: 100%

What aligned with your expectations?
We were very pleased to see that the final capstones all were scored at the level of "Mastery" for PLO#1 and students uniformly were able to articulate a critical understanding of the histories, challenges and methodologies related to museums as complex public service organizations.

What do you understand these results to mean?
By the time of their fourth and final semester in our 16-month M.A. program, students have obtained an excellent understanding of this key learning outcome that is essential for success in the professional museum field.

What are the implications of the data?
The progression of courses in our curriculum successfully positions students to obtain a thorough understanding of museums as complex public service organizations, which in turn provides them with important knowledge and critical thinking skills to succeed in the field. While the capstones that were assessed were chosen randomly by alphabetical order, we recognize that they represent a sub-set of all students in a given cohort, and there may be some students who are not yet at the mastery level. While we are presently exploring different models for the running the capstone as a directed study course, these results are encouraging that students are in fact progressing in their knowledge of PLO#1 as they advance through the curriculum.

Final Results of AY 2018-19 Assessment:
Closing the Loop: In AY2019-20, MUSE faculty will continue to refine the curriculum after we have had a chance to process the recommendations from our very first Academic Program Review in Spring 2019. We plan to meet as a faculty, and also to meet with the Dean's office, to discuss the reviewers' recommendations on possible changes to our curriculum, especially

regarding required versus elective courses. Following this discussion, we may choose to revise our curriculum and then revise the Curricular Map and possibly the progression of courses taken throughout the sixteen-month program to ensure that the students have ample opportunities in all of their courses to develop professional skills.

Finally, following our Program's debrief on the Academic Program Review, we will reassess our assessment methodology. We did make some positive changes this year that resulted in three independent faculty members reviewing the "work products" and aligning our scoring systems. Next year we might consider new strategies for assessment that include: 1) tailoring the language in assignments (specifically the open-ended research paper assignment in MUSE 600) to "match" specific PLOs; 2) creating online rubrics embedded in Canvas, which many of our faculty use in their courses, as they may be more effective for measuring our PLOs for courses taught by multiple faculty members. This will allow us to incorporate assessment more directly into existing course assignments so that we can capture more data with less effort.