

AC 2025 – 2026 Assessment

M.Ed. Curriculum & Instruction (C & I MED) (504)

Reading Specialist Add-On Certificate (026)

**Division: Gallaspy College of Education and Human Development Department:
School of Education**

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Date: 5/15/2026

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Date: 5/28/2026

Northwestern Mission. Northwestern State University is a responsive, student-oriented institution committed to acquiring, creating, and disseminating knowledge through innovative teaching, research, and service. With its certificate, undergraduate, and graduate programs, Northwestern State University prepares its increasingly diverse student population to contribute to an inclusive global community with a steadfast dedication to improving our region, state, and nation.

Gallaspy College of Education and Human Development Mission. The Gallaspy Family College of Education and Human Development is committed to working collaboratively to acquire, create, and disseminate knowledge to Northwestern students through transformational, high-impact experiential learning practices, research, and service.

Through the School of Education and Departments of Health and Human Performance, Military Science, Psychology, and Social Work, the College produces knowledgeable, inspired, and innovative graduates ready for lifelong learning who contribute to the communities in which they reside and the professions they serve. Additionally, the GCEHD is dedicated to the communities served by the Marie Shaw Dunn Child Development Center, NSU Elementary Laboratory School, NSU Middle Laboratory School, and the NSU Child and Family Network to assist children and their families related to learning and development.

School of Education Mission. The School of Education offers exemplary programs that prepare candidates for career success in a variety of professional roles and settings. As caring, competent, reflective practitioners, our graduates become positive models in their communities and organizations. This mission is fulfilled through academic programs based on theory, research, and best practice. Further, all graduates learn to value and work with diverse populations and to incorporate technologies that enrich learning and professional endeavors.

Curriculum & Instruction Program Mission Statement. The Master of Education in Curriculum & Instruction (MED-CI) program provides certified teachers advanced knowledge in research, pedagogy, and content instruction in a chosen emphasis area, including English Education, Reading, School Librarian, Transition to Teaching, or English as a Second Language. Program faculty provide highly effective coursework electronically

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to meet the needs of candidates who wish to grow as teacher leaders in their schools or districts. During the course of their program, candidates become reflective educators who understand both the practical and the theoretical roles of education, blending them to create highly effective instruction for students, to act as mentors for other teachers, and to take on leadership roles in their discipline areas in their schools or districts. Master teachers who graduate from this program will have a positive impact on student learning.

Methodology:

The assessment process for this program includes:

1. Data from assessments provide results on candidate knowledge, skills, and dispositions as appropriate for professional education programs.
2. Content and key assessments in each program/course are aligned with the respective professional preparation/application standards, and candidates apply the standards in all their coursework.
3. Data from assessment tools are collected and returned to the program coordinator.
4. The program coordinator analyzes the data to determine student learning and whether students have met measurable outcomes and discusses the results with program faculty.
5. Annually, program faculty and stakeholders review data to make data driven, curricular decisions.
6. The program coordinator, in consultation with program faculty and other relevant stakeholders, proposes needed changes to measurable outcomes, assessment tools for the next assessment period, and the curricula and overall program.

Student Learning Outcomes:

SLO 1: Demonstrate Discipline-Specific Content Knowledge

Departmental Student Learning Goal	Program Student Learning Outcome
Demonstrate discipline-specific content knowledge. (Differentiated Instruction Portfolio)	C & I MED graduate candidates demonstrate depth and breadth of discipline-specific content knowledge in the subjects they teach. [90% of candidates will meet proficiency (minimum of 90%) on the Differentiated Instruction Portfolio.]

Course Map: EDCI 5050 Differentiated Instruction.

Measure 1.1. (Direct—Knowledge)

SLO 1 is currently assessed with the *Differentiated Instruction Portfolio*, a critical synthesis of current research through which candidates explore highly effective, proven

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instructional strategies that focus on instructional strategies that differentiate instruction. in their areas of emphasis and certification. Thus, the instrument used to measure SLO 1 is the *Differentiated Instruction Portfolio*. It is scored with a criterion-based rubric from the National Board of Professional Teaching Standards, which has established validity and reliability, Portfolio Entry #2.

Validity was established by 1) aligning items to state and content standards, 2) avoiding bias and ambiguous language, and 3) stating items in actionable terms on the rubric. Analyses were conducted using the CAEP Evaluation Framework, resulting in Unacceptable, Acceptable, or Target ratings. Since the criteria for this assessment directly correlated to state and national standards, this artifact is a valid measure that indicates candidates' mastery of content-specific pedagogical practice, which, in turn, should translate to increased student content learning.

Finding. AC 2025 – 2026 the target was **met**.

Analysis.

In AC 2024-2025, the target was **not met**. Fewer than 90% of candidates achieved proficiency (minimum of 90%) on the Differentiated Instruction Portfolio. Based on the information gathered from an analysis of the AC 2024-2025 data, program faculty made the following changes in AC 2025-2026 to drive the cycle of continuous improvement. Program faculty implemented more instructional videos, virtual office hours to answer questions, and additional resources as needed.

As a result of these changes, in AC 2025 – 2026 the target was **met**. 100% (n=3) of candidates achieved proficiency (minimum of 90%) on the Differentiated Instruction Portfolio. Based on their latest performance, candidates provided clear consistent evidence to demonstrate they were able to reflect insightfully on the effectiveness in meeting the challenges of teaching.

Decision.

In AC 2025-2026, the target was **met**. Based on the analysis of the AC 2025-2026 results, the program faculty will implement the following changes in AC 2026-2027 to drive the cycle of improvement. Program faculty will provide brief, structured check-ins via email, Web-Ex, Zoom, and/or Moodle throughout portfolio development to support student progress. Furthermore, candidates will demonstrate knowledge of differentiated instruction by analyzing a brief case study and identifying effective strategies to meet diverse student needs.

These changes will improve candidates' ability to demonstrate discipline-specific content knowledge, thereby continuing to push the cycle of improvement forward.

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SLO 2: Apply Discipline-Specific Content Knowledge in Professional Practice

Departmental Student Learning Goal	Program Student Learning Outcome
Apply discipline-specific content knowledge in professional practice. (Reflective Teaching Model Culminating Project)	C & I MED graduate candidates demonstrate depth and breadth of discipline-specific content knowledge and pedagogical skills that incorporate literacy support, in the subjects they teach to ensure student learning. <i>90% of candidates will meet proficiency (Satisfactory) on the Reflective Teaching Model Culminating Project.</i>

Course Map: EDCI 5120 Advanced Instructional Theories and Strategies

Measure 2.1. (Direct—Knowledge, Skills, and Dispositions)

SLO 2 is assessed with a three-part signature assignment, the *Culminating Project: A Reflective Teaching Model*:

- Candidates demonstrate discipline-specific content knowledge and pedagogical expertise while implementing literacy support within their discipline areas. Based on current research trends and literacy support theory to improve content learning in their fields of study, candidates create and teach a lesson in which “best practice” literacy strategies are implemented.
- Candidates write a case study of the experience and self-reflect on their performance and student learning outcomes.
- Candidates also create an oral presentation that is suitable for delivery to a grade level meeting at their schools and to share with peers in a class discussion forum. This Project Based Learning (PBL) assignment/assessment is administered across all emphasis areas in the C & I program.

Validity and Reliability: A panel of 8 EPP faculty and external stakeholders each conducted independent rubric-based evaluations of anonymous work samples submitted by candidates from each advanced program. The Content Validity Ratio (CVR) was calculated using the Lawshe (1975) method to assess content validity. CVR $\bar{x}$ = 1.00 with CVR (Critical, 8) = .75 and no single item below critical value of .75. ICC = .88. The Intra-class Correlation Coefficient (ICC) by Fisher (1954) was used as a measure of inter-rater reliability with respect to the Lawshe method ratings. ICC of .75 - 1.00 reflects “excellent” inter-rater agreement.

Finding. AC 2025 – 2026 the target was **met**.

Analysis.

In AC 2024-2025, the target was **met**. 100% (n=3) of candidates achieved proficiency

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(satisfactory) on the Reflective Teaching Model Culminating Project.

Based on the information gathered from an analysis of the AC 2024 – 2025 data, program faculty made the following changes in AC 2025-2026 to drive the cycle of continuous improvement. Program faculty supported students with multiple opportunities for collaboration via Web-Ex and Zoom. They had full access to a variety of resources via Moodle that offer a wider variety of exemplary literacy strategies, videos, and other guides to ensure their understanding of the assessment expectations. As a result of these changes, in AC 2025 – 2026 the target was **met**. These changes had a direct impact on the student's ability to achieve proficiency (satisfactory) on the Reflective Teaching Model Culminating Project.

100% (n=4) of candidates achieved proficiency (satisfactory) on the Reflective Teaching Model Culminating Project in 2025-2026.

Decision.

In AC 2025 – 2026, the target was **met**.

Based on the analysis of the AC 2025-2026 results, the program faculty will implement the following changes in AC 2026-2027 to drive the cycle of improvement. Candidates will submit questions via email, Web-Ex, Zoom, and/or Moodle throughout project development. Candidates will also incorporate targeted feedback checkpoints in Moodle to guide revisions and improve instructional practice. Furthermore, the program faculty will transition the key assessment to utilize a current, common continuous improvement project required across all advanced programs that will more effectively measure these learning outcomes. However, while these common assessments are being developed and piloted, the current measure will remain in place to ensure continuous improvement efforts, thereby pushing the cycle of improvement forward.

These changes will improve candidates' ability to apply discipline-specific content knowledge in professional practice, thereby continuing to push the cycle of improvement forward.

SLO 3: Model Professional Behaviors and Characteristics

Departmental Student Learning Goal	Program Student Learning Outcome
Model professional behaviors and characteristics. (Professional Dispositions and Characteristics Scale)	C & I MED graduate candidates demonstrate the professional dispositions and characteristics of effective educators in their interactions with peers and program faculty. <i>90% of candidates will meet proficiency (Sufficient) on the Professional Dispositions and Characteristics Scale.</i>

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Course Map: EDUC 5850 Action Research for School Improvement

Measure 3.1. (Direct—Dispositions)

SLO 3 is assessed through the *Professional Dispositions and Characteristics Scale in Advanced Programs (PDC)*. Likert scale. Criteria for this assessment align with state and content standards, avoid bias/ambiguous language, and state items in actionable terms. The measure of professional dispositions and characteristics of program candidates is based on a compilation of each candidate's professional demeanor during coursework, communication interchanges, and field experiences throughout the program. The assessment is completed by students' self-evaluation in EDUC 5850 at the end of the program. The PDC instrument allows students to self-evaluate attributes recognized as professional dispositions & characteristics of practicing teachers at the graduate level. Faculty created the dispositional evaluation based on agreed-upon best practices and constructs outlined in INTASC standards.

Validity and Reliability: EPP faculty members from initial and advanced programs, as well as programs not associated with CAEP accreditation conducted an independent critique using the 2021 CAEP workbook. Construct validity established by 1) aligning items to constructs, 2) avoiding bias and ambiguous language, and 3) stating items in actionable terms. Rating = "Sufficient."

Finding. AC 2025 – 2026 the target was **not met**.

Analysis.

In AC 2024-2025, the target was **not met**. Based on the information gathered from an analysis of the AC 2024-2025 data, program faculty made the following changes in AC 2025-2026 to drive the cycle of continuous improvement. Program faculty increased the breadth and depth of disposition discussions communicated through Moodle, emails, and the monthly Zoom meetings to deepen students' understanding of dispositions required and their impact on the field. Despite these changes in AC 2025-2026, the target was **not met**. 89% (n=8) of candidates achieved proficiency (Sufficient) on the Professional Dispositions and Characteristics Scale in 2025-2026. The ninth student received Developing scores on the Communication, Flexibility, and Integrity sections of this scale.

Decision.

In AC 2025 – 2026, the target was **not met**. Based on the analysis of the AC 2025-2026 results, the program faculty will implement the following changes in AC 2026-2027 to drive the cycle of improvement. Candidates will keep a short, 1-2 sentence biweekly note on how they demonstrated professional behaviors (time management, communication with

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program faculty, self-directed progress) during thesis work. Program faculty will periodically review students' professional communication in emails, submission of thesis drafts, and responses to feedback throughout the semester. Program faculty assess whether students demonstrate timeliness, clarity, respect, and professional tone as evidence of meeting professional dispositions. Additionally, the program faculty will transition the key assessment to utilize a current, common continuous improvement project required across all advanced programs that will more effectively measure these learning outcomes. However, while these common assessments are being developed and piloted, the current measure will remain in place to ensure continuous improvement efforts, thereby pushing the cycle of improvement forward.

These changes will improve candidates' ability to model professional behaviors and characteristics, thereby continuing to push the cycle of improvement forward.

SLO 4: Exhibit Creative Thinking that Yields Engaging Ideas, Processes, Materials, and Experiences Appropriate for the Discipline

Departmental Student Learning Goal	Program Student Learning Outcome
Exhibit creative thinking that yields engaging ideas, processes, materials, and experiences appropriate for the discipline. (Critical Reflective Essay)	C & I MED graduate candidates demonstrate their leadership abilities to recognize, analyze, and solve school- wide/district-wide problems and plan strategically for school and instructional improvement in their disciplines with the goal of improving student learning. <i>90% of candidates will meet proficiency (Sufficient) on the Critical Reflective Essay.</i>

Course Map: EDCI 5040 Instructional Coaching

Measure 4.1. (Direct—Knowledge and Skills)

SLO 4 is assessed through the *Evaluating Coaching Practices in Your School or District (Critical Reflective Essay)* and scored with a criteria-based rubric. Ratings depend on research and data collection such as surveys, interviews, and other documentation, reflection and analysis of the strengths and challenges in the school/district, strengths and areas for improvement in the school/district, recommendations for the school/district, clarity and organization of the message and accurate APA Citations.

Validity and Reliability: The Content Validity Ratio (CVR) was calculated using the Lawshe (1975) method to assess content validity. The Intra-class Correlation Coefficient (ICC) by Fisher (1954) was used as a measure of inter-rater reliability with respect to the Lawshe method ratings. A panel of 8 EPP faculty and external stakeholders each conducted independent rubric-based evaluations of anonymous work samples submitted by

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candidates from each advanced program. CVR $\bar{x}$ = 1.00 with CVR(Critical, 8) = .75 and no single item below critical value of .75. ICC = .79. ICC of .75 - 1.00 reflects “excellent” inter-rater agreement.

Finding. AC 2025 – 2026 the target was **met**.

Analysis.

In AC 2024 – 2025, the target was **met**. Based on the information gathered from an analysis of the AC 2024-2025 data, the program faculty made the following changes in AC 2025-2026 to drive the cycle of continuous improvement. Program faculty utilized the newly created rubric criteria to provide specific expectations for the new measure and take the proper actions. This newly designed measure better allowed students to demonstrate their abilities and knowledge in the areas of curriculum and instruction, recognize, analyze, and solve school- wide/district-wide problems, and plan strategically for school and instructional improvement in their disciplines with the goal of improving student learning. As a result of these changes, in AC 2025 – 2026 the target was **met**. These changes had a direct impact on the student’s ability to achieve proficiency (Sufficient) on the Critical Reflective Essay.

100% (n=8) of candidates achieved proficiency (Sufficient) on the Critical Reflective Essay in 2025-2026.

Decision.

In AC 2025 – 2026 the target was **met**. Based on the analysis of the AC 2025-2026 results, the program faculty will implement the following changes in AC 2026-2027 to drive the cycle of improvement. Program faculty will provide short, real-world classroom or school scenarios from a variety of resources and ask students in a brief reflection to outline one creative instructional solution or improvement plan for one classroom or scenario. This builds on strategic planning and problem-solving in curriculum and instruction in a concise way. Program faculty will also provide short, targeted feedback during class discussions on students’ ideas for curriculum or instructional improvements, emphasizing clarity, feasibility, and alignment with learning goals. This refines their thinking and planning simultaneously, reinforcing rubric expectations.

These changes will improve candidates’ ability to exhibit creative thinking that yields engaging ideas, processes, materials, and experiences appropriate for the discipline, thereby continuing to push the cycle of improvement forward.

SLO 5: Make Responsible Decisions and Problem-Solve, using Data to Inform Actions when Appropriate

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Make responsible decisions and problem-solve, using data to inform actions. (C&I Portfolio Defense Presentation)	C & I MED candidates demonstrate their proficiency in the planning and execution of action research and data analyses, designed to measure curriculum knowledge and instructional approaches that directly affect student learning in their content areas. <i>90% of candidates will meet proficiency (a mean of 2.5) on the C&I Portfolio Defense Presentation.</i>
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Course Map: EDUC 5850 Action Research for School Improvement

Measure 5.1. (Direct—Knowledge and Skills)

SLO 5 is assessed through the *C & I Portfolio Defense Presentation*, a performance-based evaluation of action research and a direct approach to the measurement of candidates' knowledge and skills in the program. The work for this assessment is accomplished over two semesters toward the end of the program. Initiated in EDUC 5010, the research and presentation components are completed in EDUC 5850 when the work is defended to faculty. The defense also includes a presentation of the work and includes important “takeaways” from EDCI 5020 (curriculum) and EDCI 5030 (instruction) course learnings. Passing this defense is a condition of graduation, and successful results are formally submitted to the Graduate School as program completion. The assessment reliably measures six areas of classroom- based action research and four areas of program curricular knowledge and instructional design skills. Overall, the work provides evidence that candidates know how to plan and execute research that is relevant to practice in their disciplines and has positive impact on student content learning.

Validity and Reliability: The Content Validity Ratio (CVR) was calculated using the Lawshe (1975) method to assess content validity. The Intra-class Correlation Coefficient (ICC) by Fisher (1954) was used as a measure of inter-rater reliability with respect to the Lawshe method ratings. A panel of 8 EPP faculty and external stakeholders each conducted independent rubric-based evaluations of anonymous work samples submitted by candidates from each advanced program. $CVR \bar{x} = 0.95$ with $CVR(\text{Critical}, 8) = .75$ and no single item below critical value of .75. $ICC = 1.00$. ICC of .75 - 1.00 reflects “excellent” inter-rater agreement.

Finding. AC 2025 – 2026 the target was **met**.

Analysis.

In AC 2024 – 2025, the target was **met**. 100% of candidates achieved proficiency (a mean of 2.5) on the C&I Portfolio Defense Presentation. Based on the information gathered from an analysis of the AC 2024 – 2025 data, program faculty made the following changes in AC 2025-2026 to drive the cycle of continuous improvement. Program faculty offered exemplary and explicit instructions for each section of the research process during the first courses (EDUC 5010) in addition to ensuring an in-depth understanding of the APA 7th ed.

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required format. This provided students with a strong foundation as they transitioned to their final course (EDUC 5850) to complete the defense presentation. These changes had a direct impact on the student's ability to make responsible decisions and problem-solve, using data to inform actions when appropriate; thereby continuing to push the cycle of improvement forward.

As a result of these changes, in AC 2025 – 2026 the target was **met**. 100% (n=3) of candidates achieved proficiency (a mean of $\bar{x} = 2.5$) on the C&I Portfolio Defense Presentation in 2025- 2026.

Decision.

In AC 2025 – 2026, the target was **met**.

Based on the analysis of the AC 2025-2026 results, the program faculty will implement the following changes in AC 2026-2027 to drive the cycle of improvement. Program faculty will provide a brief tip sheet on best practices for portfolio defense presentations. Program faculty will also encourage brief peer check-ins prior to the thesis defense, where candidates can discuss key decisions, questions, or insights about their project. This opportunity is designed to support reflection, reinforce responsible decision-making, and promote professional dialogue. Moving forward, the program faculty will transition the key assessment to utilize a current, common continuous improvement project required across all advanced programs that will more effectively measure these learning outcomes. However, while these common assessments are being developed and piloted, the current measure will remain in place to ensure continuous improvement efforts, thereby pushing the cycle of improvement forward.

These changes will improve candidates' ability to make responsible decisions and problem-solve, using data to inform actions, thereby continuing to push the cycle of improvement forward.

Comprehensive Summary of Key Evidence of Seeking Improvement Based on Analysis of Results.

Program faculty made several decisions after examining the results of 2024-2025 data analysis which resulted in improved learning and program improvement for AC 2025-2026:

SLO 1 – Program faculty implemented more instructional videos, virtual office hours to answer questions, and additional resources as needed.

SLO 2 – Program faculty supported students with multiple opportunities for collaboration via Web-Ex and Zoom. They had full access to a variety of resources via Moodle that offer a wider variety of exemplary literacy strategies, videos, and other guides to ensure their understanding of the assessment expectations.

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SLO 3 – Program faculty increased the breadth and depth of disposition discussions communicated through Moodle, emails, and the monthly Zoom meetings to deepen students' understanding of dispositions required and their impact on the field.

SLO 4 – Program faculty utilized the newly created rubric criteria to provide specific expectations for the new measure and take the proper actions. This newly designed measure better allowed students to demonstrate their abilities and knowledge in the areas of curriculum and instruction, recognize, analyze, and solve school- wide/district-wide problems, and plan strategically for school and instructional improvement in their disciplines with the goal of improving student learning.

SLO 5 – Program faculty offered exemplary and explicit instructions for each section of the research process during the first courses (EDUC 5010) in addition to ensuring an in-depth understanding of the APA 7th ed. required format. This provided students with a strong foundation as they transitioned to their final course (EDUC 5850) to complete the defense presentation.

Plan of Action for Moving Forward:

The Program faculty examined the evidence and results of data analysis from AC 2025-2026 and will take the following steps to continue to improve candidate learning in AC 2026-2027:

SLO 1: Program faculty will provide brief, structured check-ins via email, Web-Ex, Zoom, and/or Moodle throughout portfolio development to support student progress. Furthermore, candidates will demonstrate knowledge of differentiated instruction by analyzing a brief case study and identifying effective strategies to meet diverse student needs.

SLO 2: Candidates will submit questions via email, Web-Ex, Zoom, and/or Moodle throughout project development. Candidates will also incorporate targeted feedback checkpoints in Moodle to guide revisions and improve instructional practice. Furthermore, the program faculty will transition the key assessment to utilize a current, common continuous improvement project required across all advanced programs that will more effectively measure these learning outcomes. However, while these common assessments are being developed and piloted, the current measure will remain in place to ensure continuous improvement efforts, thereby pushing the cycle of improvement forward.

SLO 3: Candidates will keep a short, 1-2 sentence weekly note on how they demonstrated professional behaviors (time management, communication with program faculty, self-directed progress) during thesis work. Program faculty will periodically review students' professional communication in emails, submission of thesis drafts, and responses to feedback throughout the semester. Program faculty assess whether students demonstrate timeliness, clarity, respect, and professional tone as evidence of meeting professional

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dispositions. Additionally, the program faculty will transition the key assessment to utilize a current, common continuous improvement project required across all advanced programs that will more effectively measure these learning outcomes. However, while these common assessments are being developed and piloted, the current measure will remain in place to ensure continuous improvement efforts, thereby pushing the cycle of improvement forward.

SLO 4: Program faculty will provide short, real-world classroom or school scenarios and ask students in a brief reflection to outline one creative instructional solution or improvement plan for one classroom or scenario. This builds on strategic planning and problem-solving in curriculum and instruction in a concise way. Program faculty will also provide short, targeted feedback during class discussions on students' ideas for curriculum or instructional improvements, emphasizing clarity, feasibility, and alignment with learning goals. This refines their thinking and planning simultaneously, reinforcing rubric expectations.

SLO 5: Program faculty will provide a brief tip sheet on best practices for portfolio defense presentations. Program faculty will also encourage brief peer check-ins prior to the thesis defense, where candidates can discuss key decisions, questions, or insights about their project. This opportunity is designed to support reflection, reinforce responsible decision-making, and promote professional dialogue. Moving forward, the program faculty will transition the key assessment to utilize a current, common continuous improvement project required across all advanced programs that will more effectively measure these learning outcomes. However, while these common assessments are being developed and piloted, the current measure will remain in place to ensure continuous improvement efforts, thereby pushing the cycle of improvement forward.