1) What are the student learning outcomes for your program? If these have been revised over the past year, please describe.

The Special Major allows fewer than ten students each year to pursue specialized academic programs by combining coursework from multiple disciplines. Each student in the Special Major builds an individualized course of study in consultation with faculty advisors recruited from regular university programs. Each student develops a unique and interdisciplinary body of knowledge. There are no existing student learning outcomes for the Special Major. The one skill these students have in common is the ability to integrate knowledge from multiple disciplines. This will serve as the Special Major Program’s student learning outcome for the purposes of this assessment exercise.

2) How do you plan to communicate these learning outcomes to students in your program?

As Program Director, I conduct an extensive intake interview with each prospective student, during which I help the student formulate a preliminary plan of study. During this interview, we discuss the benefits of integrative interdisciplinary learning and then consider how the student will combine the curricula of their proposed sub-disciplines into a coherent program of study. As part of submitting a formal major proposal, the student must provide a concise written rationale for the interdisciplinary nature of the program of study, explaining the intellectual relationship between the multiple fields. The faculty advisors and I consult regularly with each student during the planning process, helping each one to understand and articulate a unique set of interdisciplinary learning objectives.
3) Please identify one or two student learning outcomes that your program will focus on for assessment this year. Briefly describe the rationale for selecting these specific outcomes for investigation this year.

I will assess the student’s ability to integrate knowledge from multiple disciplines. This is the single learning outcome that all students in the Special Major share, so it is the only one that can be assessed.

4) What specific assessment activities will you conduct this year in order to measure program student learning in these areas?

Each student proposes and completes an independent capstone project that combines their multiple fields into a single academic project. I will review each capstone project proposal to ensure that it outlines a rigorously interdisciplinary scholarly activity of suitable scope. And I will ask each student’s faculty advisor to provide me and the student with a written narrative evaluation of the capstone project that focuses on how effectively it demonstrates the ability to integrate knowledge from multiple disciplines into a coherent intellectual inquiry.

5) What new or additional resources/support might your program need in order to conduct these assessment activities this year? (Please provide specific information regarding your needs and related costs)

None.