

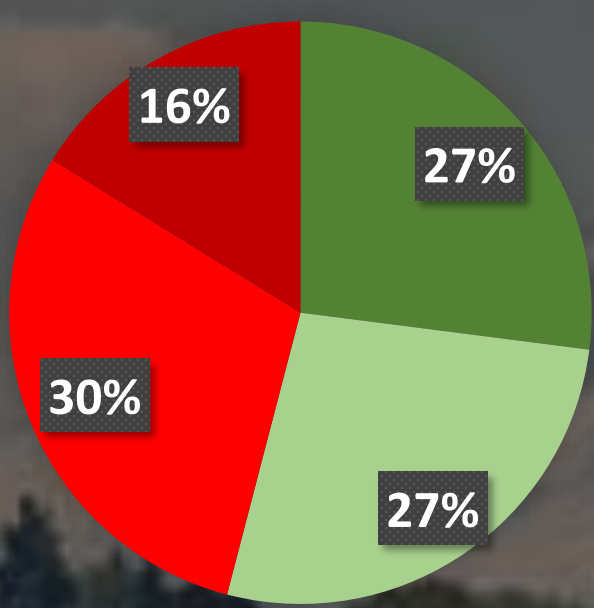
What's the Greatest Barrier to Capstone?

2018 MetaCapstone Abstract

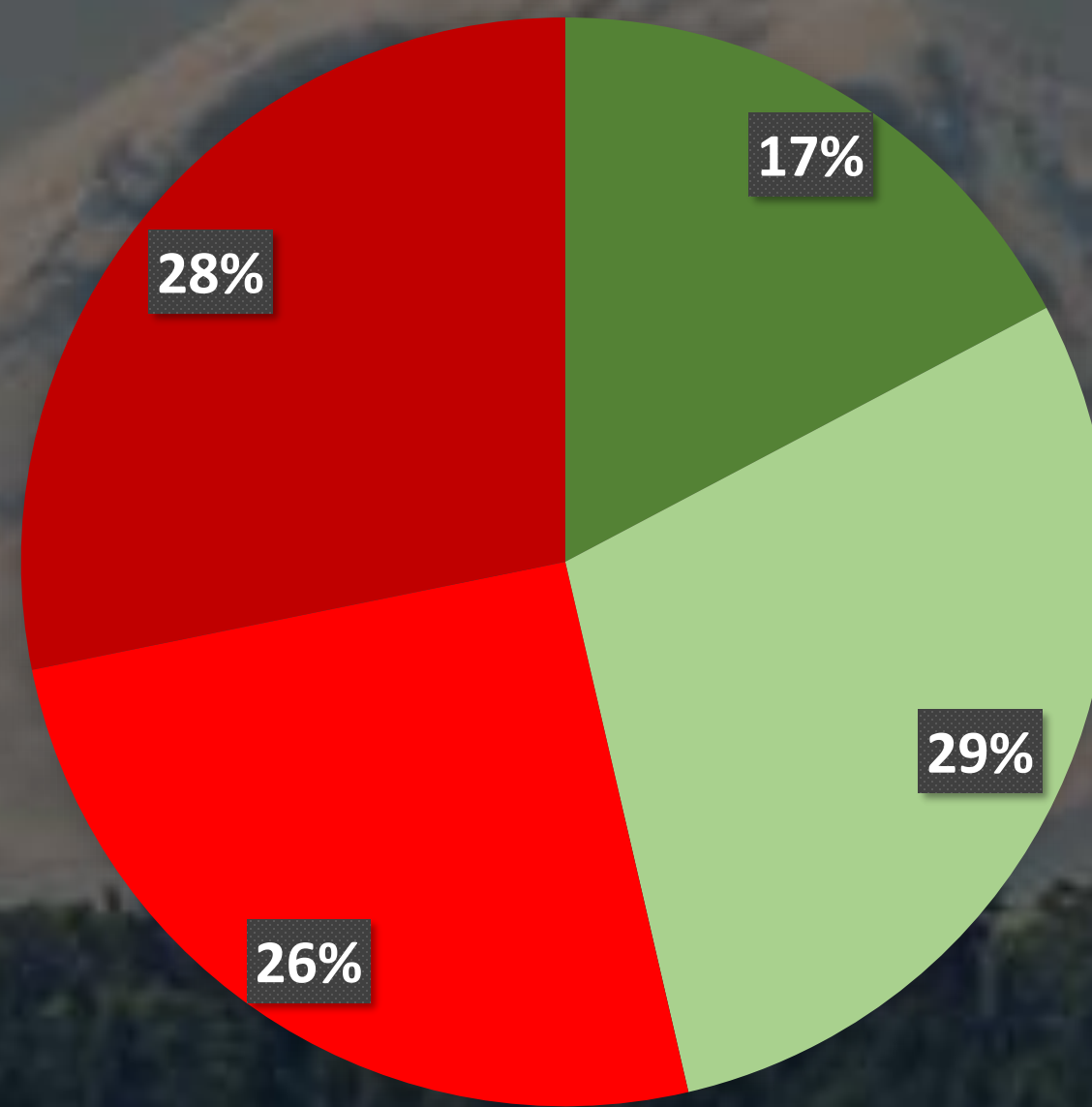
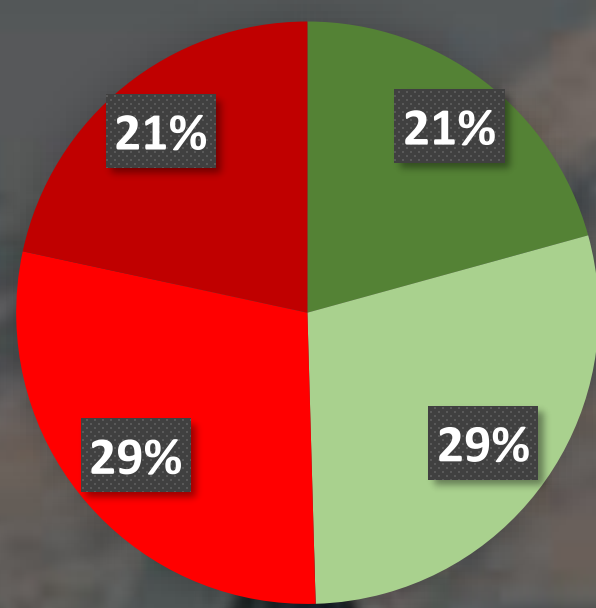
The University of Washington Information School Capstone is both feared and anticipated. It challenges students to actively begin the transition between academic and professional life. With the goals of innovation and improvement in mind, the iSchool wished to identify the strengths and weaknesses of the Capstone Process as a whole. While several strengths were also identified, this project directly asked past, present, and future Capstone students to identify those areas in which they experienced barriers that hindered their Capstone projects. This information can then be used to the benefit of future cohorts and the iSchool as a whole.

Informational Barriers

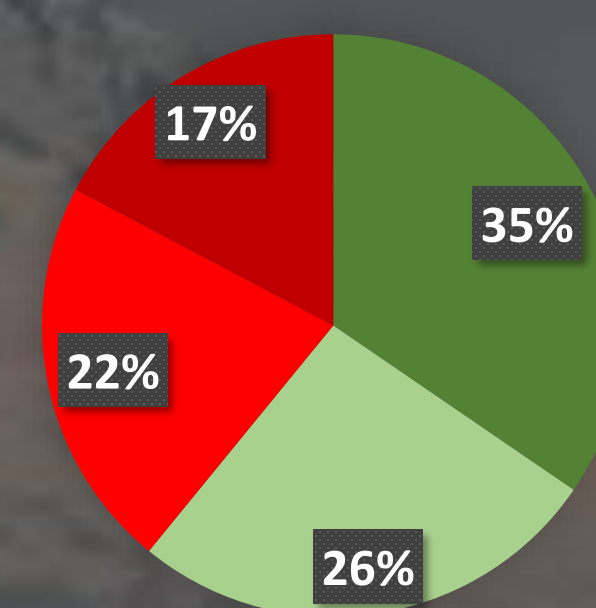
Academic Barriers



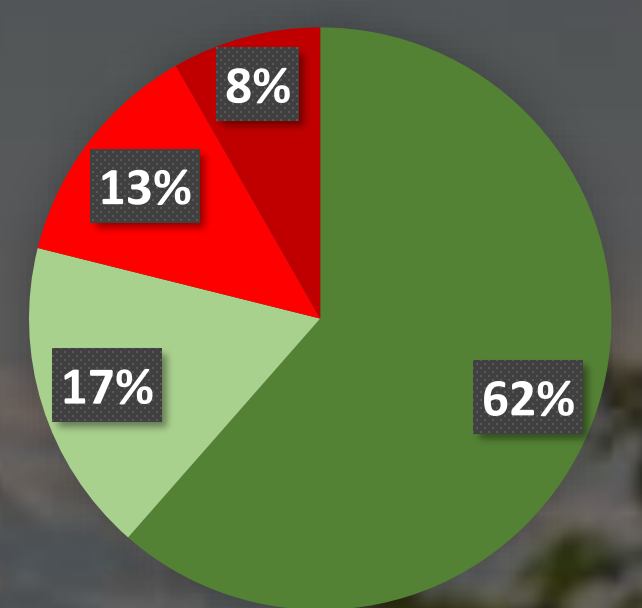
Emotional Barriers



Professional Barriers



Social Barriers



Not Hindered

Slightly Hindered

Somewhat Hindered

Greatly Hindered

"Many of the deliverables were unnecessary or irrelevant to our work. We ended up doing extra work because of it. The process was not flexible to meet our needs."

~2016 MLIS Online Student

"I didn't feel that the TA or instructor really cared about our project. They didn't know much about the goals we wanted to achieve or why we were doing it."

~2017 MLIS Residential Student

"I wish we could get guidance on how to interact with sponsors more professionally."

~2018 INFO Student

"Our TA does not seem to know what is going on. I feel like it is easier to not contact the TA and just kind of try to interpret the written instructions."

~2018 MLIS Residential Student

"Our sponsor didn't seem to have much knowledge of the capstone process or requirements."

~2017 MLIS Online Student

"I hated being pitted against my fellow classmates. It seemed antithetical to the iSchool values of being an inclusive community."

~2018 MSIM (Full-Time) Student

"It was challenging to be encouraged to collaborate with other students for capstone, such as the MSIM students, when I'd never had a class with them or met them."

~2015 MLIS Online Student

"Collaboration is not the problem, nor is teamwork, it is that some people are on top of things and others are not."

~2018 MLIS Online Student

"This project doesn't showcase my skills and won't help in getting a job in the field I want."

~2018 INFO Student

Project Description

The UW iSchool constantly seeks to innovate and improve. Faculty and staff, as well as students, wanted to take a step back and assess the Capstone Process as a whole. Given the grand nature of such an assessment, this project focused primarily on identifying the various barriers students encounter.

Methodology

Using a combination of formal and informal interviews and small group discussions, this project began by looking at the history of the Capstone Process to better understand its current state. Based on this data, a survey was built and distributed to past, present, and future iSchool students. These results were then analyzed to identify which types of barriers have been the most prominent to students.

Conclusions

Informational Barriers were statistically the largest source of hinderances. Emotional Barriers were in a close second, but were almost always associated with anxiety and/or frustration of not knowing expectations. A statistical presentation and recommendations will be given to iSchool administrators and distributed to other stakeholders afterward. Additionally, a prototype tri-fold pamphlet was created to consolidate the Capstone Process timeline and to facilitate communication to various stakeholders.

Impact

While this project impacts the iSchool as a whole, results found from this research project come in two major ways:

- 1) Facilitate information of barriers experienced by the student body to faculty/staff.
- 2) Identify the largest area(s) of concern so that faculty/staff can concentrate their efforts rather than try to improve everything at once.