General Education Annual Course Assessment Form

Course Number/Title: Comm 41/Critical Decision Making  GE Area: A3

Results reported for AY 2013-2014  # of sections: 26  # of instructors: 9

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Department Chair: Deanna Fassett  College: CoSS

Instructions: Each year, the department will prepare a brief (two page maximum) report that documents the assessment of the course during the year. This report will be electronically submitted, by the department chair, to the Office of Undergraduate Studies, with an electronic copy to the home college by October 1 of the following academic year.

Part 1

To be completed by the course coordinator:

(1) What SLO(s) were assessed for the course during the AY?

Optional SLO: Demonstrate an understanding of what constitutes plagiarism

(2) What were the results of the assessment of this course? What were the lessons learned from the assessment?

This assessment includes the results of the 292 students registered in eleven sections of COMM 41 during the Spring 2014 semester. The assessment indicates that 64 percent of the students (187 students) mastered this learning objective at a grade level of B+ or more. Another 29 percent of students (84 students) demonstrated an average mastery of this learning objective (a grade level of C). Together, these results indicate that 93 percent of the students participating in COMM 41 during the Spring 2014 semester (271 students) can demonstrate an understanding of what constitutes plagiarism at an average level and above. Nevertheless, seven percent of these students (21 students) failed to demonstrate an understanding of what constitutes plagiarism (see chart below).

Instructors also reported on their experiences with teaching the course and implementing SLO 5: Evaluate information and its sources critically and incorporate selected information into your knowledge base and value system. In terms of weighting this learning objective, instructors agreed that it was critical, but that specifying it as a percentage of the overall grade proved to be difficult given its interrelationship with the other learning objectives. Almost all instructors estimated that this learning objective should reflect at least 25 percent of the overall course grade. The instructors shared activities where students evaluated sources critically through problem solving exercises related to real issues students face within the SJSU community and engaging the students in exercises where they the position they do not agree and think critically to defend that position.

In summary, the assessment indicates that SLO 5: Demonstrate an understanding of what constitutes plagiarism is mostly adequately addressed, as 93 percent of students demonstrating at least an average mastery of the goal. In terms of recommendations for the course, instructors agree of the importance of relating the course assignments and content to the students’ everyday experience.
(3) What modifications to the course, or its assessment activities or schedule, are planned for the upcoming year? (If no modifications are planned, the course coordinator should indicate this.)

Instructors reported that they are not expecting to change their assignments and activities significantly if they teach this course again. Some instructors mentioned the importance of using assignments that are relevant to the students’ lives. Assignments varied from research reports where students reflect on how findings apply to them, to problem solving real issues students face.

**Part 2**

To be completed by the department chair (with input from course coordinator as appropriate):

(4) Are all sections of the course still aligned with the area Goals, Student Learning Objectives (SLOs), Content, Support, and Assessment? If they are not, what actions are planned?

Yes, the course coordinator and instructors are doing an excellent job keeping the goals, SLOs, content, support, and assessment consistent across sections. Regular communication between the coordinator and instructors and between the instructors maintains continuity within and across sections.

(5) If this course is in a GE Area with a stated enrollment limit (Areas A1, A2, A3, C2, D1, R, S, V, & Z), please indicate how oral presentations will be evaluated with larger sections (Area A1), or how practice and revisions in writing will be addressed with larger sections, particularly how students are receiving thorough feedback on the writing which accounts for the minimum word count in this GE category (Areas A2, A3, C2, D1, R, S, V, & Z) and, for the writing intensive courses (A2, A3, and Z), documentation that the students are meeting the GE SLOs for writing.

We cap enrollment in Comm 41 to 27 students. Since we do not offer larger sections, students are able to receive thorough feedback and engage in practice and revisions of their writing within the current configuration of the course and workload of the instructors.