General Education Annual Course Assessment Form

Course Number/Title: EnvS 010   GE Area: B2
Results reported for AY 2017-2018   # of sections: 7   # of instructors: 2
Course Coordinator: Lynne Trulio   E-mail: lynne.trulio@sjsu.edu
Department Chair: Lynne Trulio   College: Social Sciences

Instructions: This report will be electronically submitted to <curriculum@sjsu.edu>, by the department chair, to the Office of Undergraduate Studies, with an electronic copy to the home college by October 1.

Part 1 To be completed by the course coordinator:

(1) What GELO(s) were assessed for the course during the AY?
   GELO 3: Students should be able to use the methods of science, in which quantitative, analytical reasoning techniques are used.

(2) What were the results of the assessment of this course? What were the lessons learned from the assessment?
   We assessed 297 students using a scientific paper analysis in which students began by using the MLK library to find a peer reviewed article on a biology, ecology, or environmental issue of their choice. After reading the article they were required to determine the research objectives, important results, management and/or policy implications and future research needs. Of these students 57% (167/297) received an A or B on this assignment, 20% earned a C, and 23% received a D or F.
   Overall, as demonstrated by the grades, students performed relatively well on this assignment. Students who received As on the assignment demonstrated a high level of sophistication in the analysis. In general, students who followed the directions generally succeeded, while those who ignored them did not do as well. Many students struggled with understanding what pieces of information, particularly in the results and discussion sections, are important and how to summarize the information.

(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.)
   We found this assignment to be a good tool to assess this GELO and most students demonstrated proficiency, but there is room for improvement. Over the years, the instructors have honed the direction sheet, rubrics, and citation template to help students succeed. Also, students are provided the opportunity to have drafts of the paper reviewed by the instructor before submitting their papers. However, there are students who wait until the night before the assignment is due and then are not able to answer the questions. One instructor is going have students read the scientific paper article before coming to class to get a preview of the topics students are selecting and to encourage them to better ask questions during the in-class portion of the activity. This, hopefully, will help more students succeed on the homework portion.

   One instructor felt this course should not be taught in the large section format (120 students) as it is difficult to build the connections with the students and they become less motivated/invested. Students simply cannot receive as much attention as they need. This is a comment that has emerged numerous times in our GE discussions with instructors. We started large sections a few years ago, on a trial basis. However, after approximately 3-4 years of exploring this format, we are returning to sections of no more than 40 (plus or minus a few). We emphasize scientific review and information analysis in this course, and we feel these goals cannot be met as successfully in the large 120-student sections.
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 (GELOs), Content, Support, and Assessment? If they are not, what actions are planned?
   Yes, all sections are aligned with area Goals, Student Learning Objectives (GELOs), Content, Support, and Assessment.

(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 GELOs for writing.
   NA--this is a B2 course.