General Education Annual Course Assessment Form

Course Number/Title: EnvS 010, Life on a Changing Planet  
GE Area: B2

Results reported for 2015-2016  
# of sections: 4  
# of instructors: 2

Course Coordinator: Lynne Trulio  
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Department Chair: Lynne Trulio  
College: Social Sciences

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 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 of the following academic year.

Part 1

To be completed by the course coordinator:

(1) What GELO(s) were assessed for the course during the AY?
GELO 1: Students should be able to use the methods of science and knowledge derived from current scientific inquiry in life or physical science to question existing explanations.

(2) What were the results of the assessment of this course? What were the lessons learned from the assessment?
Students gained proficiency with this GELO piecing together a scientific puzzle concerning the sea otter population decline off the coast of Alaska. Students received background information about the issue on otter illness, predation by killer whales, reproductive issues, pollution, etc. They then had to hypothesize, not only the cause of the decline, but why. Students must perform mathematical calculations to test their hypothesis. Students first worked in small groups in class to discuss information pertinent to the issue. Then, they had a follow-up at home assignment where they delve a little deeper, making additional hypotheses, doing additional calculations, and considering policy decisions. Of the 77 students we assessed, 83% received an A or a B, which demonstrates excellent proficiency for this SLO.

(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.)
Students did very well with respect to this SLO, indicating the current pedagogical approaches are working well. But, it would be great to add additional case studies where they have to use critical thinking as well as elements of the scientific method in order to figure out problems and come up with mitigations. We are transitioning the course enhance the ecology component, which will foster this.

Additional opportunities for students to first talk in small groups before discussing something as a class could help increase participation and perhaps even interest in the material. Again, the move to more ecology should allow for more flexibility to do this.
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, they are. The course GE coordinator meets with all instructors each year to ensure all sections align with GELOs, course content and assessment requirements.

(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.

None of the sections offered for this course exceeded the enrollment limit by more than 10%.