General Education Annual Course Assessment Form

Course Number/Title: Biology 54, Human Understanding

Results reported for AY 2015-2016

# of sections: 5
# of instructors: 3

Course Coordinator: Mary Poffenroth
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Department Chair: Dr. Jeff Honda
College: Science

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

SLO 3: Students will be able to use appropriate social skills to enhance learning and develop positive interpersonal relationships with diverse groups and individuals.

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

During the AY 2015-2016, three instructors lead courses that served a total of 260 students. Both Youngman and Goyal modeled their courses off of Ms Poffenroth’s original course, which helped to make assessment of SLO3 much easier. Some of the assessment tools used for this academic year included a self analysis of the student’s emotional intelligence with tools they could implement to help strengthen their resulting weaker areas.

Although many students in the in-person sections were hesitant to work in groups and participate in open class discussions, once the barriers of shyness were broken down, students became more engaged in discussions on mental health, addiction, psychosocial well being, coping mechanisms and how we deal with death. These same discussions occurred with students in the online courses, but it seemed much easier for students to engage in deep and meaningful exchanges because of perceived anonymity and the available time to think out an eloquent response. In the online courses, students were required to post at least one of their own thoughts and respond in kind and professional language to at least two students per assignment. Many students far surpassed this as they became more engaged in the conversation.

In the online courses, a huge spike in engagement was found in such assignments as The Power of Vulnerability, the Behavior Change Contract, and dealing with death and one’s own finite existence in Your Last Lecture.
Final results of SLO3 were very strong with over 90% of students across all sections able to achieve a C or better.

(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.)

A common theme among all three instructors for future sections was more interpersonal engagement during and outside of class time. Ms. Poffenroth has already implemented this in Fall 2016 by creating an unmonitored forum where students can connect, help each other, plan in person or online study sessions, and create deeper connections to other students in the course.

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

(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.

This is an Area E course, and with course section enrollments of approximately 50 students, there are no issues with grading for writing or activities.