**General Education Annual Course Assessment Form**

Course Number/Title _______ ASTR101_________ GE Area _________ R________________

Results reported for AY ______14-15____ # of sections _____6_______ # of instructors ___2__________

Course Coordinator: _______Olenka Hubickyj_________ E-mail: ___olenka.hubickyjcabot@sjsu.edu____

Department Chair: _______Michael Kaufman__________ 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?.
SLO2 – A student should be able to distinguish science from pseudoscience. This objective was worked into the course by:
   1. introducing the steps of the scientific method
   2. understanding the elements of collecting data
   3. reporting results of experimentation/observation

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

96%  (48 of 50) students met this objective

The subject of pseudo-science is introduced early in the semester by comparing astrology to astronomy. Worksheets are passed out to examine the true nature of astrological consequences: a) certain professions should have an abundance of people with the same astrological sign; this is tested with presidents’ birthdays; the result is that there is not a preferential presidential astrological sign. b) personality characteristics as prescribed by astrology are handed out without these characteristics being defined by the sign; students are to match their astrological personality to the description; less than 15% of the students are able to correctly match their personality to the astrological one.

Another approach used to distinguish science from pseudo-science is for the students to demonstrated an understanding of the scientific method by writing a mythbuster type essay. Each student writes a report on a hypothesis and how to test it and how to introduce controls whenever feasible. When the report is written the class discusses that any hypothesis can and should go through such a testing procedure and should not be considered a science until it does.
(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.)

These worksheets are working well. The class discussions and debates add to the student understanding. Updating the discussion with new topics of pseudo-science (UFO’s, climate change, etc) are noted when appropriate in the course material. Any other modification is not necessary.

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?

All sections of the course still aligned with the area Goals, Student Learning Objectives (SLOs), Content, Support, and Assessment
DATE: October 16, 2015
TO: Board of General Studies
VIA: Stephan Branz, Associate Dean for Undergraduate Studies
FROM: Michael Kaufman, Chair, Physics & Astronomy
RE: Exceeding enrollment limits in ASTR101

Our department received notice on Oct. 19 from Associate Dean Branz that GE courses were being audited for exceeding enrollment limits. Our Area R Astronomy 101 course was listed as having exceeded the limit of 40 students during four section offerings between Fall 2014 and Fall 2015. In all cases, the enrollments were 49 or 50 students.

Both of the instructors are well versed in the writing requirements for Area R, and we cap the early-registration enrollment at 44 for all sections so as not to exceed the policy requirement not to go over by more than 10%. However, the instructors have repeatedly asked permission to exceed the limit so that a few more students may make progress to degree. I have granted that request only upon receiving reassurance that they are willing to give the required feedback to the additional small number of students. Both instructors are deeply committed to student success and are trying their best to balance curricular requirements with student progress.

If this assurance is not sufficient for your committee, I will instruct all sections to stay within the “no more than 10% over” (i.e. maximum of 44 students) in all future offerings. Please let me know how to proceed.