General Education Annual Course Assessment Form

Course Number/Title: EnvS 100W, Environmental Research and Writing  
GE Area: Area Z

Results reported for 2015-2016  
# of sections: 4  
# of instructors: 1

Course Coordinator: Lynne Trulio  
E-mail: Lynne.Trulio@sjsu.edu

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 2: Students should be able to explain, analyze, develop, and criticize ideas effectively, including ideas encountered in multiple including ideas encountered in readings and expressed in different forms of discourse
   Other: Reading—Models of Research Excellence
   Tools used to achieve this element were:
   - Annotated Bibliography (grey literature) (400 words). Students find sources and annotate a bibliography of 10 non-peer reviewed sources.
   - Annotated Bibliography (peer-reviewed literature) (400 words). Students find sources and annotate a bibliography of 10 peer-reviewed sources.
   - Critical Review (700 words). Students read and critically review a peer-reviewed source, including analysis of the methodology and results and relevance to their research topic.

(2) What were the results of the assessment of this course? What were the lessons learned from the assessment?
   Students gained proficiency with GELO 2 by producing an outline of their research paper in which they determined the organization of their paper. The outline included 20 valid sources and there were 2 drafts of 500 words each. Students were assessed with a multi-page research paper using 20 sources to provide sufficient background and their own calculations to answer a unique research question. There were 3 drafts for a total of 2,500 words. Of the 68 students who finished the course, 75% received an A or a B on the research paper, which demonstrates very good performance with respect to this GELO.

(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.)
   With respect to GELO 2 and the "Reading" element, students do well finding sources in the library, as well as reading and extracting relevant information from the articles. They are often very good at categorizing the information so that several sources support their main arguments. However, students often struggle with the organization of their papers, especially the order of ideas in the paper for logical flow. Students often don’t know where to look for specific data that are not in peer reviewed journal articles.
To further improve the course, between Fall 2015 and Spring 2016, the instructor introduced an assignment in which students use a “Storyboard” to identify and order the main messages of the paper. In this assignment, students move away from the details of the Annotated Bibliographies and can focus on the flow of the paper (and work in their right brain using illustrations/artwork) to get back to bigger, overarching concepts. The feedback from the students was positive and this new assignment will be used, evaluated and changed as necessary to improve student proficiency. I want to work with Peggy Cabrera to add a section that will help students look for gray literature and government documents that can provide them with data for calculations. The instructor will work with Peggy Cabrera to add a section that will help students look for gray literature and government documents that can provide them with data for calculations.

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 of this course we offered exceeded the 40 student maximum by more than 10%.