General Education Annual Course Assessment Form

Course Number/Title: **Biology 20/ Ecological Biology**  
GE Area: **B2/B3**

Results reported for **AY2014/2015**  
# of sections: **3**  
# of instructors: **2**

Course Coordinator: **Stephanie Trewhitt**  
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Department Chair: **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?

SLO1: 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?

SLO1 is taught throughout the course in both lecture and lab sections. In Fall 2014, this SLO was assessed with a research paper in a scientific format, inclusive of primary literature as references, and a minimum of 1500 words. The paper requires research on a validated threatened or endangered species or a topic of current ecological concern. Of the 43 students assessed, 93% of the students accomplished this assignment with a passing grade of 70% or higher. In Spring 2015 the students used their knowledge of natural selection, speciation, extinction, behavioral ecology, evolution, genetics and community services to present a journal discussion to the class on a specific topic on these topics. They used their knowledge gained in lecture and on lab assignments to choose a scientific article on one of the previously mentioned topics. Each student presented their chosen topic to their peers in lab and then led a discussion involving all students on the issues studied in the paper and how the paper ultimately reinforced concepts learned in lecture and lab. Students were required to turn in a paper on this assignment to assess their individual comprehension of the primary scientific article stating the specific hypothesis, experiments conducted, results and conclusions. As well, students were to include five discussion questions that they would ask the class and all ecological concepts presented in the paper. In Spring 2015, all 44 students successfully completed this skill with an 80% average passing grade.
(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.)

Since the course has not been updated in many years, I am currently working on updating both lecture and lab to reflect the new ecological issues relevant to the world today, such as global climate change, sustainable water supplies, and alternative energy sources. A new textbook had been chosen and used for the last two semesters. New labs are being developed with updated materials, the Journal Discussion is a new assignment that began in Spring 2015 to engage students to read and evaluate the scientific literature in this subject, and new areas for field trips have been established.

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?

To the best of my knowledge all sections are aligned with respect to area goals, SLOs, content, support and assessment. There are only two instructors for this course and they work together to maintain consistency.

(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.

NA-This course is an Area B2/B3 course.