General Education Annual Course Assessment Form

Course Number/Title:  EnvS 001: Introduction to Environmental Issues    GE Area:  D3

Results reported for:  AY 2012-2013    # of sections:  10    # of instructors:  4

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, by the department chair, to the Office of Undergraduate Studies, with an electronic copy to the home college by September 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 4 - Students will be able to evaluate social science information, draw on different points of view, and formulate applications appropriate to contemporary social issues.

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

SLO 4 was assessed primarily with written essays. One instructor had students write a comprehensive course memo from the perspective of “energy advisor to the President” which required students collect, describe, compare, assess differing perspectives and data to make a reasoned recommendation for US energy policy.

Another instructor used an assignment in which students wrote an essay on the major social, economic, and environmental advantages and disadvantages of the Three Gorges dam to China. In AY 2012-2013, 360 students took this course in 10 sections. Of these students, 84% received an ‘A’ or a ‘B’ on the relevant assignments. Another 5% received a ‘C’. These results show the great majority of students are performing adequately or very well on this assignment.

All four instructors found that students who were timely in their work generally did well, but many students procrastinated and did not do well, while others did not turn in the assignment at all. Students struggle with completing all assignments and required readings. Also, some students have weak writing and analytical skills. One instructor found students do well with academic research and evaluation once this is taught in lecture. Instructors teaching on-line sections found students were unprepared to work outside the classroom setting and often did not complete assignments.

(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.)

This SLOs requires the synthesis of a wide array of material, the analysis of that information from multiple perspectives, and the communication of the material in a coherent form. Achieving these tasks on time can be a challenge for lower-division students. To help students be more timely with their work, several instructors plan to make clear the importance of deadlines and make those deadlines very obvious. One instructor plans to implement peer review writing exercises in class and writing assignments in smaller steps. Another instructor thought that, since the students are doing well on this SLO, a good addition would be to encourage a more sophisticated analysis of stakeholder perspectives, such as using criteria of equity among current generations or equity between current and future generations as the basis for evaluating the sustainability of projects.
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 EnvS 001 are aligned with the GE D3 SLOs and course assessment procedures. The instructors teaching the course work together on lectures and assignments and they also work with Dr. Trulio on assessment to ensure the course meets the SLOs and SLOs are effectively measured. Instructors meet with the course coordinator at least twice a year and are regularly in contact with the coordinator about course assessment.