General Education Annual Course Assessment Form

Course Number/Title: Biology 101
GE Area: R

Results reported for AY: 2012-2013
# of sections: 2
# of instructors: 2

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Department Chair: Michael Sneary
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, 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 1: A student should be able to apply a scientific approach to answer questions about the earth and environment.

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

This course emphasizes that 1) science is both empirical and theoretical; 2) science is a powerful though limited way of knowing; 3) science is a human, not mechanical endeavor; and 4) science is a dynamic process. We use a game activity called the “Card Exchange” in which students are dealt a hand of cards containing statements that characterize different “nature of science” paradigms (e.g., “Science is open-ended, but scientists operate with expectations based on the predictions of theory”; this statement reflects a belief that science is primarily a rationalistic, theory-driven endeavor). Students then exchange cards with their neighbors, discarding statements they do not agree with, while trying to add cards to their hand that have statements they do agree with. Students then look for someone with whom they share relative agreement (i.e., someone with a similar hand). This pair looks for another pair with similar cards. Student either then write an essay summarizing his or understanding of the nature of science or alternatively, analyze the viewpoints (using the four criteria listed above) of different contemporary scientists interviewed in the PBS documentary Darwin’s Dangerous Idea. Of the 59 students assessed, 46% mastered SLO 1 at a high level (90% or better) and 51% achieved an understanding of SLO 1 at an average level (70% to 89%). Three (3) percent of students did not submit the assignment.

(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.)

No modifications are planned.
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 are still aligned with the area Goals, SLOs, Content, Support and Assessment for Bio 101.