General Education Annual Course Assessment Form

Course Number/Title ___Geology 107 Prehistoric Life___ GE Area ___________ R __________________

Results reported for AY ____14-15______ # of sections ____8____ # of instructors _____4______

Course Coordinator: _____J. Miller ___________________________ E-mail: _____jonathan.miller@sjsu.edu____

Department Chair: _____Jonathan Miller_______ 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?

GELO 3: 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?

GELO 3 is woven throughout the entirety of Geol. 107 Prehistoric Life, as the course is about the evolution of life forms, including in response to environmental changes over geological time scales. In each section of the class in Fall 2014 and Spring 2015, GELO 3 was directly assessed using numerous targeted quiz and exam questions, in class hands-on activities, and in class and take-home writing assignments.

Of 305 total students assessed, 283 demonstrated proficiency at GELO3 by achieving passing grades (typically 80% or better) when aggregating data for all assignments and instructors.

A common problem with essay-based assignments, both in exam questions and in papers, is writing quality, and all Geology 107 instructors are tough graders in this respect—typically passing rates for writing assignments are lower than for multiple choice exam questions and in class activities used to assess GELO 3. However, instructors for 107 documented that writing quality on average improved during the course of each semester. This may be because students preferred the later assignments, or it could be because they focused more on the quality of their writing to improve their performance in the class.

(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.)

In future semesters, we intend to continue to emphasize the importance of writing quality and clarity as key to students demonstrating their comprehension and mastery of course learning outcomes. One approach that is being tried in some sections will be to give smaller and more frequent writing assignments to meet the writing requirement for the class. The idea here is to
assess whether more numerous and direct feedback will increase writing proficiency and promote greater student success in applying scientific approaches to answering questions about Earth.

**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?

Yes for all sections

(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.

All sections taught are below the enrollment limit for Area R courses, and students receive ample feedback on writing by a combination of essay questions on quizzes and exams and take-home writing assignments, which in total have 3000 word minimum word counts. On each assignment, instructors provide detailed editorial and grammatical corrections, as well as general comments that are based on a uniformly adopted grading rubric provided to each student.