General Education Annual Course Assessment Form

Course Number/Title: Biology 100w  
GE Area: Z

Results reported for AY: 2012-2013  
# of sections: 7  
# of instructors: 4

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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?

Learning Objective 1: Students shall be able to refine the competencies established in Written Communication IA and IB as summarized below:

IA Student Learning:
Students should be able to perform effectively the essential steps in the writing process (prewriting, organizing, composing, revising, and editing).
Students should be able to express (explain, analyze, develop, and criticize) ideas effectively.
Students should be able to use correct grammar (syntax, mechanics, and citation of sources) at a college level of sophistication.

IB Student Learning:
Students should be able to use (locate, analyze, and evaluate) supporting materials, including independent library research.
Students should be able to synthesize ideas encountered in multiple readings.
Students should be able to construct effective arguments.

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

While most assignments in Biology 100w taken together address this objective, the research report and literature review in particular encompass all of the competencies of SLO 1. The research report is completed over several weeks in stages (including revisions), and involves library research and a synthesis of the primary scientific literature. Students also must discuss research findings, and argue why their hypothesis was/was not supported. As with all assignment in Biology 100w, students must use correct grammar and write at a level appropriate for a university course. The research report was assigned by two instructors teaching four of the seven sections. Of the 85 students assessed using the research report, 29% mastered SLO 1 at a high level (90% or better), 42% mastered SLO 1 at an average level (70% to 89%), and 29% failed to master SLO 1 (72% or lower).

The other assignment that addresses SLO 1 is the literature review, which is used by two instructors teaching the other three sections. The literature review requires students to do a comprehensive summary and analysis of primary research on a specific topic in biology. Of the 74 students assessed
using the literature review, 58% mastered SLO 1 at a high level (90% or better), 35% mastered SLO 1 at an average level (70% to 89%), and 7% failed to master SLO 1 (72% or lower).

(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.)

We made one change in this GE assessment report to make GE assessment more consistent with course grading. In previous years, our reports indicated that “failure” to meet an objective was an assignment grade of 69% or lower. Since a passing grade in Biology 100w is actually 73%, “failure” to meet a learning objective is now indicated by a grade of 72% or lower.
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 100w. Instructors meet several times during the course of the semester to discuss problems and successes, and to share ideas for course development, etc.