Crime, Law, & Society - Minor

Assessment Report Summary

7. Summary of Assessment Results with Focus on Program Improvement: Describe evidence-based changes that have taken place within the last few assessment cycles because of assessment. Statements must be supported by evidence from the assessment report(s):

Several changes have been made in the assessment process which give more precise information that has helped strengthen learning outcomes for the students and improve the program. In 2015, supervisor evaluations were included in assessment for the first time and have been found to be a meaningful measure of student learning; they also increase the reliability of student answers. The prompt for the first outcome (origins of criminal behavior) was changed in 2016. Previously, students related theories to their internship in very broad terms, not necessarily addressing the origins of criminal behavior. The change has resulted in more specific answers that address the outcome more directly. The prompt for the second outcome (consequences of crime for society) will be changed in the 2018-19 assessment cycle to differentiate consequences of crime for society from consequences of crime for the individual criminal.

In a less formal assessment of the program, one student stated in her final analysis “I have a better understanding of the criminal justice system because I participated in it”, a sentiment echoed by many interns.

Environmental and Sustainability Studies - Minor

Assessment Report Summary

7. Summary of Assessment Results with Focus on Program Improvement: Describe evidence-based changes that have taken place within the last few assessment cycles because of assessment. Statements must be supported by evidence from the assessment report(s):

Although the 2015-16 data are considered “baseline” for Measures 1.1, 1.2, 2.1, 2.2, 3.2, and 3.2, some changes to the measures were made between 2015-16 and 2016-17 due to staffing changes, making 2016-17 a more accurate point of comparison. Because Measures 1.3, 2.3, and 3.3 were introduced in 2017-18, this year’s data provide a baseline for future years. The introduction of these measures is an important improvement to our program assessment, which will allow us to assess and improve effectiveness throughout the program, not just in the introductory course, ENV 200.

For the original measures (i.e., those obtained in the introductory course), average scores for all measures except 2.1 and 3.1 have shown continual improvement, with 2017-18 scores increasing by 1.5%, 0.5%, -2.8%, 1.7%, -2.6%, and 2.1% since 2016-17 and by 3.0%, 9.2%, -12.8%, 25.8%, -1.7%, and 7.1% since 2015-16. In terms of percent of students reaching the 80% benchmark, however, performance mostly declined (-2.3%, 0.4%, -10.1%, 1.7%, -12.4%, and -9.5% compared to 2016-17, the first year for which these benchmark data are available). Most of these changes are small, particularly given the inherent variability among sections, semesters, and years, owing to variation in instructors, use of different exam questions, etc. The greatest gains have been in Measure 2.2 and are largely attributable to improvements in the documentary assignment. Measure 1.2 has also shown improvement, corresponding with improvements in the design of the assignment.

Analysis of assessment results from the introductory course reveals Measures 2.1 as our highest priority for improvement. Consequently, ENV 200 instructors will be encouraged to share and discuss teaching materials, exam questions, review activities, and student performance with each other, in order to promote improved instruction as well as reflection on how best to teach these concepts. In addition, all ENVT faculty will be encouraged to participate in an upcoming SLU workshop on systems thinking (SLO 2). However, for consistent improvement in ENV 200 we need consistent staffing via roster faculty, which is currently lacking, particularly outside of SSM.

Considering all data together, two additional patterns emerge. First, as noted before, students performed better on written assignments (1.2, 1.3, 2.2) than on exam questions (1.1, 2.1, 3.1, 3.2). Thus, particular attention will be paid to improving lectures and facilitating student review of concepts before exams.

Second, the three new measures, which assess upper-level students and graduating seniors, showed notably better performance than most of the other measures, which are based on the introductory course. Additional data will be necessary to determine whether these outcomes are stable through time. Nonetheless, current data suggest that ENSS is highly successful in producing upper-level students and graduates who are interdisciplinary thinkers with confidence in their mastery of program SLOs. The most effective improvement in the ENSS program would be to begin offering an undergraduate major, for which student demand is high.

Film Studies - Minor

Assessment Report Summary
7. Summary of Assessment Results with Focus on Program Improvement: Describe evidence-based changes that have taken place within the last few assessment cycles because of assessment. Statements must be supported by evidence from the assessment report(s):

Measure #1

We were pleased to see that so many students (90.9%) met or exceeded the requirements for film analysis and written interpretation skills (SLO #1). This is the first time that we used this SLO; it was an attempt to move to a broader assessment of analytical skills rather than focus on film theory, which, depending on the course, may or may not be as highly emphasized. Given the high number of upper level students and film minors in this particular class, this high score is not surprising.

In the future, we would like to see the percentages towards a higher level of visual literacy (SLO #2). To ensure this happens, we will consider measures we can take to put more emphasis on film aesthetics in class, including implementing more resources that help students gain proficiency in this area. Professors will put necessary emphasis in instruction in order to equip students with the appropriate visual literacy skills and the specialized vocabulary of film. But we were pleased to find that a significant number of our students (72.7%) successfully meet or exceed expectations in visual literacy. We should also note that it is possible that the decrease in this area from last year (from 84.2 to 72.7%) may reflect a difference in the current assessor’s understanding of “visual literacy” rather than a decrease in student skills/ability.

SLO #3 (research skills and methods) was met or exceeded by 81.8% of students, representing an improvement over the previous year, when 63.2% of the students met or exceeded the standard for demonstrating a sufficient level of synthesized material and research skills in the process of producing original scholarly essays that analyze film text materials. This represents a significant increase in student research skills. Again, it should be noted that it’s possible this reflects the assessor’s understanding of research skills/methods more so than a significant shift in students’ ability.

Measure 2: Survey results show good results for all three SLOs, with film analysis and visual literacy ranked the highest. The third SLO, research skills, appears to have room for improvement, based upon both measures, and so we plan to place more attention and effort into instruction of research skills and methods in our upper-level courses.

Neuroscience - Minor

Neuroscience Assessment Report Summary

7. Summary of Assessment Results with Focus on Program Improvement: Describe evidence-based changes that have taken place within the last few assessment cycles because of assessment. Statements must be supported by evidence from the assessment report(s):

Although the results indicate improvement from the previous year on both measures and even though almost all students graduating with the Neuroscience minor were assessed, the population of 10 students is still a small number to definitively indicate improvement between years vs. cohort effects. Monitoring the performance on the assessment measure over several years will be the best indicator of where improvements can be made.

Southern Studies - Minor

Assessment Report Summary - Southern Studies - Minor

7. Summary of Assessment Results with Focus on Program Improvement: Describe evidence-based changes that have taken place within the last few assessment cycles because of assessment. Statements must be supported by evidence from the assessment report(s):

SLO1: 75% of students met outcome using measure 1, and 86% met outcome using measure 2.

SLO2: 67% of students met outcome using measure 1. No data yet for Measure 2.

SLO3: No data yet. Measures 1 and 2 come from SOST 400, which will be offered for the first time in S2019.