Department of Environmental Studies: Master Assessment Plan

**Department:** Environmental Studies; **Program:** Environmental Education

**Assessment Coordinator:** Medler / Myers

**Departmental Mission:** The Environmental Studies Department fosters excellence in applied interdisciplinary environmental problem solving by providing undergraduate and graduate students with learning and leadership challenges at crucial human interfaces with natural/ecological systems. The department pursues its goals through partnerships with, and service to, non-governmental organizations, businesses, governmental agencies, civil society and other institutions at the local, state, regional, national and international levels.

**Department Student Learning Objectives:** Upon graduation, Environmental Studies students will be able to:
- ENVS 1 ethically evaluate social priorities and their risks in the context of environmental problem solving.
- ENVS 2 apply an integrative approach towards understanding human-environment interactions.
- ENVS 3 work collaboratively to identify and analyze complex environmental problems, recognize diverse stakeholder perspectives, and synthesize creative solutions.
- ENVS 4 transfer academic learning to a real-world context of constraints and opportunities.
- ENVS 5 produce, interpret and apply research in a solution-oriented context. (See EE 2, 4 and 6)
- ENVS 6 analyze and communicate ideas effectively in oral, written, and visual forms (See EE 5)

**Environmental Education Program Mission:** The mission of the undergraduate and graduate programs of study of environmental education at Huxley College is to prepare professional practitioners to assume positions of service and leadership in this field.

**Environmental Education Undergraduate Student Learning Objectives:** Upon graduation, Environmental Education majors will be able to:
- EE 1 demonstrate a level of environmental literacy sufficient to enable them to educate others. (See ENVS 2)
- EE 2 synthesize his or her own philosophy of EE based on analysis of the field’s history, goals, theory, methods and research base, and through reflective practice.
- EE 3 understand and accept the ethical responsibilities associated with practicing environmental education.
- EE 4 design effective instruction about the environment.
- EE 5 facilitate learning about the environment and about issues and problems of human-environment interactions using a variety of instructional and communicative methods.
- EE 6 assess and evaluate the outcomes of environmental education instruction programs.
### Student Learning Objectives Assessed:

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<tr>
<th>Measures</th>
<th>SLO’s Assessed</th>
<th>Use of the Information</th>
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<tr>
<td>Rubric A-guided rating of major paper in ENVS 305&lt;sup&gt;1&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>ENVS 1</td>
<td>Summaries of student performance, relative to the SLO, are reported to the Chair/assessment coordinator by faculty teaching ENVS 305. The Chair/coordinator summarizes responses for the department. The faculty will decide the need for, and content of, an improvement plan that responses to the results.</td>
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<td>Two approaches will be tried initially: Rubric B-guided rating of student product from ENVS 303; and rating of a program-specific 400-level course product&lt;sup&gt;2&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>ENVS 2 &amp; EE 1</td>
<td>Students take different courses from among a few options that contribute to this SLO, which should characterize the department graduates broadly. To determine the pattern of achievement of this SLO the first time it is assessed we will compare a sample of student performance on written products from a department core course (ENVS 303) with a sample of student performance on at least one program-specific 400 level course using the same Rubric. Summaries of results will be reported to the Chair / assessment coordinator by faculty teaching the courses. These data are summarized, shared, and acted upon, as described for other ENVS 1, above. Information may be used to modify required courses, and/or course content, and future assessment decisions.</td>
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<td>Self-report instrument administered to students at conclusion of Capstone courses&lt;sup&gt;3&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>ENVS 3</td>
<td>Instructors of capstone courses tabulate student responses and summarize main themes for the Chair/assessment coordinator. These data are summarized, shared, and acted upon, as described for ENVS 1, above.</td>
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| Assessment of experiential application write up<sup>4</sup> Alumni survey <contingent on resources!> | ENVS 4 | -Advisors forward to Chair/assessment coordinator all students' responses to standard experiential application report prompt; responses summarized and acted upon as described above.  
-Alumni are asked to self-report adequacy of their skill, knowledge & dispositions provided by their degree, as measured by their job performance. These data are summarized, shared and acted upon, as described above. |
| ENVS 381 exam & final EE philosophy paper<sup>5</sup> | EE 2 & ENVS 5 | Summary results of analysis of student products according to rubric will be done by course instructors and presented to program faculty. This information will be discussed and acted upon by course and program faculty. |
| Spring Block outdoor schools curricula and delivery<sup>6</sup> | EE 3 | Summary results of analysis of student products according to rubric will be done by course instructors and presented to program faculty. This information will be discussed and acted upon by course and program faculty. |
| Spring Block Original Lesson Plan<sup>7</sup> | EE 4 ENVS 2,5 | Summary results of analysis of student products according to rubric will be done by course instructors and presented to program faculty. This information will be discussed and acted upon by course and program faculty. |
Notes:
1. Rubric A for assessing student products for ENVS 1
2. Rubric B for assessing student products for ENVS 2 will focus on understanding of natural system concepts, understanding of human system concepts, ability to interpret interactions between these systems at different levels of organization and across space and time, and ability to integrate theoretical perspectives to produce comprehensive and multi-faceted explanations.
3. Rubric C will be generated for use in scoring the items related to a Capstone self-report for ENVS3. Questionnaire will tap each student’s self-perceptions of: preparation for teamwork; strengths and weaknesses of team’s work to maintain itself and achieve goals; individual’s ability to understand and work across disciplines and other social perspectives; and ability of the student to define problems in ways that enable effective solutions such as defining the problem in a multi-dimensional fashion, understanding diverse perspectives, generating alternatives, methodically comparing alternatives, foreseeing consequences and defending the option chosen for implementation.
4. Standard prompt included in all instructors’ instructions for experiential application write up: “Compare how your coursework on the one hand, and your experiential application work on the other, have contributed to your understanding of the creation and application of knowledge in your field of study.” This question will be examined to determine whether, how, and to what extent students transferred their academic program knowledge and skills to the real-world context, and how that experience may have affected their conceptions of knowledge and professional performance in their field.
5. Essays will be analyzed for patterns of student understanding and cogent synthesis of history, goals, theories, methods and research base of environmental education.
6. Student-produced curricula will be reviewed, and instructional performance observed, and student instructors interviewed. This information will be evaluated according to the NAAEE Guidelines for Excellence in EE Materials; sensitivity and inclusivity; respect of the individual learner’s welfare and autonomy, and the student’s ability to justify the values assumptions reflected in the plans and the performance.
7. *Spring Block Original Lesson Plan* will be assessed on dimensions of: experiential pedagogical foundations; accurate and complete socio-ecological knowledge foundations; procedural plan; engaging learners; differentiated instruction; flexibility; assessment. Criteria for each dimension (exemplary / adequate / inadequate) will be defined by a scoring rubric.
8. *Spring Block Original Lesson delivery & whole curriculum delivery* (the latter includes instructed elements in addition to original lesson) will be assessed for use of effective experiential instructional methods & written, oral and visual communication techniques. Criteria for each dimension (exemplary / adequate / inadequate) will be defined by a scoring rubric.
9. *ENVS 382 (Curriculum for Env and Sustainability) foundations & assessment component* will assess use of env. education research in framing approach of the lesson; and appropriateness, accuracy, utility, feasibility and propriety of the assessment and evaluation component of lesson plan. Criteria for each dimension (exemplary / adequate / inadequate) will be defined by a scoring rubric.