Department of Environmental Studies: Master Assessment Plan

Department: Environmental Studies; Program: Geography

Assessment Coordinator: Medler / Rossiter

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 if 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 GEOG 4);
- ENVS 6 analyze and communicate ideas effectively in oral, written, and visual forms.

Geography Program Mission: The mission of the undergraduate and graduate programs in Geography at Huxley College is to develop students’ ability to understand and analyze places, spaces, and landscapes and the socio-natural processes that produce them for the purposes of identifying sustainable futures.

Geography Program Student Learning Objectives: Upon graduation, Geography majors will be able to:
- GEOG 1 demonstrate literacy around the concepts of space, place, landscape, and location;
- GEOG 2 demonstrate an understanding of and appreciation for the diversity of national and global cultures;
- GEOG 3 recognize patterns on the earth’s surface and understand the processes that create them;
- GEOG 4 analyze space, place, landscape, location, and human-environment interactions for the purposes of explanation and prediction;
- GEOG 5 assess human and environmental issues/problems using the latest technologies (i.e. Geographic Information Sciences).
### 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</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/coordination 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:</td>
<td>ENVS 2</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 SLO 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</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 SLO ENVS 1, above.</td>
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| Assessment of experiential application write up                          | 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. |
| Assessment of final exam/project from ENVS 322, 325, 342, 343            | GEOG 1         | Course instructors assess a sample (10-20%) of final essays or projects for SLO achievement. Results from individual course assessments forwarded to Geography assessment coordinator for summary. Where assessment findings warrant, Geography faculty will revise course content collectively to enhance attainment of SLO. |
| Assessment of final exam from ENVS 331, 333, 334, 335 or final essay/project from ENVS 431, 444 | GEOG 2         | Course instructors for 300-level courses assess a sample (10-20%) of final exams for SLO achievement. Results from individual course assessments forwarded to Geography assessment coordinator for summary. Where assessment findings warrant, Geography faculty will revise course content collectively to enhance attainment of SLO. Course instructors for 400-level courses assess a sample (10-20%) of final essays or projects for SLO achievement. Results from individual course assessments forwarded to Geography assessment coordinator for summary and comparison to findings of... |
| Assessment of final exam/essay for ENVS 426, 427, 428, 443, 444 | GEOG 3 | Course instructors assess a sample (10-20%) of final essays or projects for SLO achievement. Results from individual course assessments forwarded to Geography assessment coordinator for summary. Where assessment findings warrant, Geography faculty will revise course content collectively to enhance attainment of SLO. |
| Assessment of final essay/project from ENVS 431, 441, 443, 444 | ENVS 5, ENVS 6, GEOG 4 | Course instructors assess a sample (10-20%) of final essays or projects for SLO achievement. Results from individual course assessments forwarded to Geography assessment coordinator for summary. Where assessment findings warrant, Geography faculty will revise course content collectively to enhance attainment of SLO. |
| Assessment of final project for ENVS 422, 423 | GEOG 5 | Course instructors assess final essays or projects for SLO achievement. Results from individual course assessments forwarded to Geography assessment coordinator for summary. Where assessment findings warrant, GIS faculty will revise course content collectively to enhance attainment of SLO. |

Notes:
1. Rubric for assessing student products for SLO 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.
2. Capstone self-report questions tap each student's self-perceptions of: preparation for teamwork; strengths and weaknesses of team's 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. Rubric C will be generated for use in scoring the items.
3. 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.