Student Learning Outcomes
Urban Planning Major
2013

Evaluator: Nicholas Zaferatos, Urban Planning Major, Department of Environmental Studies

An alumni survey of 2008-2013 graduates from the Urban Planning major was conducted in November-December 2013 for purposes of program planning. The survey sought to measure the graduates’ overall satisfaction with their Huxley College education and, in particular, their rating of how well the planning curriculum prepared them for work in planning or planning related fields or graduate studies. The survey also measured students’ ability to find work in a planning or planning related job, whether they went on to pursue graduate education in planning or a closely related field and their interest in returning to Huxley for graduate studies in planning and related fields. The survey allows assessment of one Department-level Student Learning Outcome (SLO) for students in this major.

Student Learning Outcome (SLO) Assessed:

ENVS 4: transfer academic learning to a real-world context of constraints and opportunities.

This SLO may be assessed by a survey in which “Alumni are asked to self-report adequacy of their skill, knowledge & dispositions provided by their degree, as measured by their job performance.”

Methodology:

All alumni with valid contact info from the Urban Planning major graduating between 2008 and 2013 were emailed a request to complete an on-line survey. Of approximately 100 students contacted, 53 completed the questionnaire, a response rate of approximately 53%. Analysis consisted of reporting frequencies of response options.

Results:

Graduate Education
17% indicated that they entered into graduate education during the first year after graduating.

Finding a Job
Over 60% of graduates seeking work were successful in finding a job in a professional planning or planning related field within 12 months of graduation. 28% of the graduates found a job in a professional planning field. 32.5% found jobs in a planning-related field. 39% were unable to find a planning or planning related job within 12 months of their graduation.

Planner Certification
None of the respondents indicated having applied to take the AICP examination, the certification exam for professional planners.

Urban Planning Curriculum Preparation of Students
In terms of how well the planning program prepared them for either a career in planning or graduate school, 17% indicated “excellent”, 53% indicated “very good”, 25.5% indicated “good”, and 4.25% indicated “not so good”.

Closing the Loop

These results will be shared with program faculty. Together these results suggest that most (60 to 70%) of Urban Planning major graduates were able to “transfer academic learning to a real-world context of constraints and opportunities” as evidenced by their career attainments after graduation, and by their assessment of the preparation offered by their major. Roughly 25 to 40% appear not the have succeeded as well by this metric.

Proposed changes

Proposed changes to the program to improve graduates’ transfer of learning to real world settings through increased graduate entry into professional planning employment and graduate studies in planning include:

- Expand curriculum in selected classes to emphasize attributes of, and entry into professional careers in urban planning. Possible course revision to Introduction to Planning.
- Expand curriculum to include APA code of ethics. Possible course revision to Planning Theory.
- Expand curriculum to introduce procedural and content material of AICP exam. Possible course revision to Planning Methods.

These changes, and others at the discretion of the instructors, will be tried in the planning program in 2013-14 and 2014-15.