Department of Geology: Master Assessment Plan

Department: Geology

Assessment Coordinator: Thor Hansen

Departmental Mission: The Geology Department at WWU is committed to excellence in both teaching and research. Our goal is to offer the highest possible quality education in the geological sciences at the undergraduate and graduate levels. The mission of our department is to serve three main populations: graduate students, undergraduate geology majors, and undergraduates from other departments for their general education courses. For all of these students we strive to create excitement about discovery and the process of geologic inquiry. We want to develop in all students an appreciation of how geological processes affect the earth and society so that they will be environmentally responsible, scientifically literate citizens. We strive to produce majors with an interdisciplinary content background in geology and the physical sciences who are competent in the field, who can work collaboratively, conduct original research, and effectively communicate their results.

Departmental Student Learning Outcomes:

Cognitive outcomes: Our students will have a deep understanding of the following foundational geologic principles:
1. Earth has a history of biological and physical change over billions of years.
2. Earth's surface is affected by dynamic processes on a range of timescales.
3. Earth's composition varies and these compositions provide the raw materials for the rock cycle.
4. Earth's interior is dynamic and drives plate tectonics.
5. Earth scientists use repeatable observations and testable ideas to understand and explain our planet.
6. Geology and society are fundamentally inter-related.

Skills: Our students will have critical skills required by professional geologists. Graduates:
7. Have developed their observational, analytical and quantitative skills.
8. Can create maps and understand what they tell us about the Earth.
9. Will be able to apply physics, chemistry, and mathematics concepts to the study of Earth.
10. Will be able (alone or in teams) to present geological information clearly.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assessment Measures</th>
<th>SLO's Assessed</th>
<th>Use of the Information</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Final exams, papers, presentations and projects in 200-400 level courses.</td>
<td>1,2,3,4,5,6,7,8,9,10</td>
<td>Summaries of student performance, relative to the SLO’s, are reported annually to the Chair/assessment coordinator by faculty teaching geology courses. The Chair/coordinator summarizes responses for the department, together with other data, in the annual assessment meeting. The meeting concludes in the creation of a departmental improvement plan.</td>
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<td>Projects in Senior Capstone Course (Field Methods/Geologic Mapping)</td>
<td>5,7,8,10</td>
<td>Summaries of student performance, relative to the SLO’s, are reported annually to the Assessment Coordinator by faculty teaching Field Methods/Geologic Mapping. This data is summarized, shared, and acted upon, as described above.</td>
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<td>ASBOG Exam (WA State geology licensing examination)</td>
<td>1-5, 7-9</td>
<td>Passing rate on the ASBOG exam. These data will be collected by a faculty member currently on the WA State licensing board, or the Chair.</td>
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<td>Successful employment in a geology field or acceptance into graduate school.</td>
<td>1,2,3,4,5,6,7,8,9,10</td>
<td>The chair will keep a record of the number of graduates employed in a geology field or accepted to graduate school. These data will be collected via the department newsletter.</td>
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<td>Senior Exit Survey</td>
<td>1,2,3,4,5,6,7,8,9,10</td>
<td>Students are asked to self report satisfaction with their skill and knowledge, as measured by their performance, relative to each SLO. This data is summarized, shared and acted upon, as described above.</td>
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