

Academic Affairs Programs

Program Improvement Report - Summer 2019

This summary report describes the evidence that assessment results are being used for program improvements in the Academic Affairs programs, as reported by the departments' Assessment of Student Learning Plans (ASLP) forms for the 2018-19 academic year.

Honors Program

The Honors Program is now a “minor” option for degree-level students. We have been regularly assessing the “reflection” learning outcome in our HON 100 courses. However, the Program has significantly enhanced our curriculum and we plan to create a new assessment for HON 215 and HON 415 at our summer faculty retreat. The Honors program has expanded our curriculum in the last two years. Once we create the embedded assessments in these two required courses, it will allow us to collect rich qualitative and quantitative data.

The Honors Faculty Council has a standing committee that specifically focuses on assessment. The Honors Assessment Committee reports to the larger Honors Faculty Council. The Council annually agrees upon areas of the curriculum to be assessed, and the committee implements the work, produces reports, then makes recommendations for change, based upon the findings. Thus far, the assessment committee has recommended creating new program learning outcomes and new courses, which we just finished this past year. Now, we are ready to assess student learning in our new and improved curriculum.

Summary: The Honors program completed a review of their program learning outcomes and added new Honors courses. They are currently developing course-embedded assignments to use in the upcoming year, and will begin assessing the updated outcomes in the two required courses beginning this fall.

Russell Scholars Program (RSP)

The RSP program (a living-learning community) primarily supports first-year students in the bulk of course offerings, we will continue to look at methods for assessing the integration of the first-year courses on student learning.

During the past year, the outcomes assessments included: the participation of all Lab students in a verbal forum to discuss their experience in the RSP program, and a group project in the EYE course. In addition, we continued our informal survey administered to students for their program-level feedback,

and midterm course evaluations were given to students in EYE and College Writing courses, focused on gaining feedback on course pacing and student understanding of major course content. Three faculty members were present at the verbal feedback forum in the final Fall Lab class, to listen and engage with students. The Program Director and Associate Director will be revisiting plans for the structure of the fall Lab class during the summer 2019.

Following the assessment of group projects in the EYE course, the co-instructors met with guest faculty members who attended the group presentations, and plans are underway to implement this unit again, with small changes to the logistics. Lastly, both sets of co-instructional teams reviewed the midterm course evaluation results. Based upon the past year's assessment measures, we will include more active learning opportunities and team-based learning with students in the EYE course; we will work towards designating one tandem assignment/unit across two RSP courses, and the EYE and College Writing, in fall 2019.

Summary: The RSP program plans to make a number of course-level changes, based upon survey and course evaluation data. In the upcoming year, improvements will be to re-structure the lab course, add more team-learning activities in the EYE course and make assignment changes across a few courses.

Women & Gender Studies (WGS)

The WGS program assessed the program outcome of “students can compare and assess theories of gender and the intersections of gender with other forms of identify and difference such as race, class, religion, sexuality, nationality, ability, and species” during this past academic year. Students were asked to write reflection papers in two upper level courses (WGS 390-Contemporary Feminist Theories and WGS 490 Capstone Experience) to assess the quality of instruction they had received and their ability to apply “intersectional” and “disability” theories in their assigned research projects. The decision to focus on these particular aspects of feminist theory was based on student feedback regarding these areas.

The reflective assessments will be reviewed by the WGS Faculty Council in fall 2019, as part of a planned curriculum review and revision process. The results will potentially help us revise courses to ensure that the (above) outcome is adequately introduced (at the entry-level) and reinforced (at the mid-level) so that student can achieve mastery in their application of these aspects of feminist theory in their capstone projects.

Last year, the WGS faculty drafted a rubric for the thesis defense, a component of thesis oral presentation of the capstone project, which has always been assessed without reference to a rubric. The rubric will be considered by the WGS Curriculum Committee in the fall 2019 for adoption in the spring 2020.

Summary: The WGS program made course-level curriculum changes (adopted rubric for capstone project) based upon their assessment results, and plan to revise courses at the entry-level and mid-level, after reviewing the reflective assessments.