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Overview of Advising Materials:

Apart from the advising of individual students (see the "**Mentoring and Advising of Individual Students**" section in this dossier), during AY 2017-18 I was Director of Undergraduate Studies for the Environmental Studies (ENS) program. At that time ENS had about 60-70 majors. My duties included but were not limited to: assisting students to plan out their ENS coursework to degree, finding and approving substitute coursework required for major – if needed; identifying and approving study abroad itineraries for inclusion in ENS, certifying degrees, creating new degree maps for double-majors, and overseeing the annual Student Learning Outcome Assessment.

The two documents included here indicate some important milestones accomplished during that time:

- ENS was relatively new when I became DUS; it was just 4 years old. Those first 4 years were marked by instability and lack of progress developing basic infrastructure required by the students. When **designing the ENS degree program**, for instance, we very consciously decided to create an interdisciplinary program of study which could accommodate students' desire to double-major. However, by the time I was named DUS, there still did not exist any **curricular maps for double-majors** to use. Consequently, I oversaw the creation of such maps for all the double-majors among our students, which was a significant number at that time. I created the curriculum-map for ENS-Philosophy double majors, and this document is included here.
- At the end of each year, all major programs are required to complete a degree evaluation for submission to the College of Arts and Sciences. This is the so-called **Annual Student Learning Assessment Report**. The year I submitted the SLO document was a very important year in our history, as this marked the year where first-year ENS majors graduated our program. As noted already, the first 4 years of the program's existence was rocky. The Director of the program had recently left and a new Director installed. Introductory major requirements had been taught inconsistently, and higher-level ENS requirements had either not been offered regularly or were staffed at last minute. Program assessments did not exist, or if they did these were incomplete. Consequently, the SLO report I completed was one of the most comprehensive and impactful submitted to date. **Recommendations** regarding the writing requirements contributed to a significant redesign of the degree requirements. The assignment of staff for the capstone class was stabilized. And program assessment has become more consistent. My SLO assessment, submitted spring 2018, is included here.

4-YEAR CURRICULAR MAP

Double Major

- Bachelor of Arts in **Environmental and Sustainability Studies**
- Bachelor of Arts in **Philosophy**

| Year 1 | |
|--|---|
| ‡UK Core CC1 ✕Foreign Language 101 PHI 260 : History of Philosophy: From Greek Beginnings to the Middle Ages (HUM) UK Core QFO UK Core ACR Total Credits: 15 | ‡UK Core CC2 ✕Foreign Language 102 PHI 270 : History of Philosophy: From the Renaissance to the Present Era (HUM) UK Core SSC UK Core SIR Total Credits: 15 |
| Year 2 | |
| ENS 201 ✕Foreign Language 201 PHI 320 UK Core CCC A&S NS & Lab Total Credits: 16 | ENS 202 PHI 330 : Ethics <u>OR</u> PHI 335 : The Individual and Society (CCC) ✕Foreign Language 202 UK Core NPM A&S NS Total Credits: 15 |
| Year 3 | |
| ENS 300 PHI 336 (A&S Humanities) PHI 350 Metaphysics <u>OR</u> PHI 351 Epistemology (GCCR) 300+ Area 1 (A&S SS) 300+ Area 2 Total Credits: 15 | A&S NS UK Core GDY PHI 500+ Group A PHI 500+ Group B 300+ Area 1 Total Credits: 15 |
| Year 4 | |
| PHI 500+ Group C PHI 500+ ENG 425 300+ Area 1 300+ Area 3 Total Credits: 15 | ENS 400 PHI 500+ 300+ Area 1 300+ Area 1 300+ Area 2 Total Credits: 15 |

- ‡ Incoming Students are Strongly Encouraged to take WRD 112 to fulfill CC1 and CC2 requirements if they have any of the following: an ACT English score of 32 or Higher, and SAT Verbal score of 720 or Higher, or an AP English Composition score of 4 or 5. If the Student has been accepted into the University Honors Program, the Student is required to take WRD 112, to fulfill CC1 and CC2.
- * To be discussed with your academic advisor.
- ✕ Students who have taken at least 2 years of a language in high school can complete the A&S Foreign Language Requirement with 3 college semesters of a different language. Students choosing this option should replace the 4th semester of language with electives. Also note that if you take a foreign language placement exam, you may be exempt from 1 or more of the

- beginning semesters of that language. In this case, replace the by-passed language courses with electives. Any language sequence may be used to satisfy the foreign language requirements.
- ◇ 6 hours of 'free' electives – that do not count toward any other requirement – must be taken. Additional electives may be required to reach the required minimum of 120 hours. Consider pursuing a 2nd major or minor.

**TASKSTREAM TEMPLATE:
ANNUAL SLO ASSESSMENT REPORT**
*Office of University Assessment
University of Kentucky*

* Please note the University is moving to a new reporting system as of April 2017. Only one student learning outcome and method type can be submitted per report. Please consider this as you complete your annual reports.

ASSESSMENT ACTIVITIES

I. Student Learning Outcome (SLO)

State the Student Learning Outcome (SLO). It should be clear, measurable, and directly related to student learning. It should be related to students' performance of knowledge, skills, and abilities, such as papers, projects, or presentations. It should not be related to operational objectives, such as graduation/retention rates or GPAs.

In general, we assess the demonstration of specific knowledge for economic, environmental, and social aspects of sustainability. This year we are assessing our GCCR class, most particularly the writing element of this requirement. In fulfillment of this requirement, the ENS Senior Capstone class required two papers of 8-10 pages each. The first was a conceptual clarification paper; the second an assessment of sustainability metrics. The artifact this year is the first of these formal written assignments, which totals at least 2,225 words and which has been revised at once via instructor review.

The **paper assignment** is **appended** to this report, as is the explanation of or **FAQ** about the GCCR process.

II. Method Type: (select only one)

Direct Student Artifact

Direct Exam
Direct Portfolio
Direct Other

Indirect Survey
Indirect Focus Group
Indirect Interviews
Indirect Other

III. Rationale for use of assessment tool and how tool aligns to the Student Learning Outcome

Provide a clear description of the assessment tool/activity/method that was used for this assessment cycle.

The program is primarily using direct methods, i.e., an exam/paper and assessment rubric. We used the AACU "written communications value" rubric. This rubric clearly outlines measurable assessment of 5 distinct areas.

The SLO assessment for this cycle specifically measures written communication as expresses in this first of the two Capstone assignments, i.e., the conceptual clarification paper. Consequently, we are measuring thesis presentation, conceptual clarity, argumentation and logical consistency, use and document of evidential sourcing, and grammatical competency.

Given the SLO area. i.e., the GCCR program course, the AACU written communications value rubric best matches the assessment parameters this cycle.

No other tools were used, but the tool employed is widely used and well-credentialed. We did employ four different reviewers in order to decrease the incidence of bias.

IV. Target/Benchmark/Goal

Provide the benchmark/target/goal for the assessed student learning outcome. Be specific and explain how the benchmark/target/goal was determined.

There are five areas of concern. The benchmark for each is as follows.

- (i) Context and purpose of writing: The context of writing is the situation surrounding a text: who is reading it? who is writing it? The purpose for writing is the writer's intended effect on an audience.
- (ii) Content development: Content development concerns the ways in which the text explores and represents its topic in relation to its audience and purpose.
- (iii) Genre and disciplinary conventions: Concerns the formal and informal rules that constitute what is seen generally as appropriate within the interdisciplinary field of environmental and sustainability studies.
- (iv) Sources and evidence: Texts from their coursework that our students draw on as they work for a variety of purposes -- to extend, argue with, develop, define, or shape their ideas. Evidential source material is used to extend, in purposeful ways, writers' ideas in a text.
- (v) Control of syntax and mechanics: Use of language that is clear, grammatically correct, and stylistically engaging.

The **rubric** and scoring guide is **appended** to this report.

V. Data Collection (includes time/semester and place, sampling process, population description, and data review process)

Provide a complete explanation of each data collection process and protocol so the reviewer fully understands the data collection methodology.

The artifact we used is one of two paper assignments. Students submitted a first draft version for instructor review. Each student met with the instructor to discuss ways to improve the paper.

This artifact is the second final draft version of the paper submitted for a grade. The paper assignment is included among the documents submitted with this artifact. The DUS collected together all the papers (in electronic format) and removed all identifying marks in the documents before transferring to ENS faculty for SLO review.



Taskstream will now ask you to attach documents to support the above responses.

ASSESSMENT RESULTS

VI. Summary of Results

Please present your assessment results below in a *summary* format only. We encourage charts and graphs however they will need to be submitted as an attachment below.

See the **Excel document attached**, especially the "Summary Results" page.

As noted, we used the AACU "Written Communication Value Rubric." This rubric has four outcome categories: benchmark (1), Low Milestone (2), High Milestone (3), and Capstone (4). We discovered students hit an average of 2.83 in all areas, i.e., just below "High Milestone."

In individual areas assessed the students hit on average:

- (1) Context of and Purpose for Writing – 2.94 – ca High Milestone;
- (2) Content Development – 2.91 – ca. High Milestone;
- (3) Genre and Disciplinary Conventions – 2.75 – Median to High Milestone;
- (4) Sources and Evidence – 2.88 – Median to High Milestone;
- (5) Control of Syntax and Mechanics – 2.65 – Median Milestone.

VII. Interpretation and Reflection of Results

Provide a complete description on the interpretation of results below. Reflect on your assessment process and results.

Four reviewers in total participated in the interpretation of results: Director of Program, Betsy Beymer-Farris, Director of Undergraduate Studies, Bob Sandmeyer, and two ENS Program Faculty, Alan Fryar (EES) and Tony Stallins (GEO). Each reviewer received approximately an equal number of essays to review. Reviewers used an Excel spreadsheet (attached) to record and tabulate scores.

A report of the results will be shared to faculty and stakeholders in the program at an upcoming faculty meeting.

(a) The artifacts assessed were produced in the ENS Senior Capstone course. Consequently, the aim of this exercise was to hit or come near to CAPSTONE level results on average. Given that the artifacts showed on average an achievement below HIGH MILESTONE, we are UNSATISFIED with the results.

(b) While the ENS program has an adequate reporting record for previous SLO assessments at the entry- and mid-level coursework, we lack data for previous Capstone level work. Two reasons can be identified for this. First, the Capstone has not regularly been taught. Second, given the irregularity of the course and the relative youth of this program, the Capstone class has experienced depressed representation in the SLO assessment cycle for ENS.

(c) The ENS Capstone course is meant to reinforce and apply core concepts of the program. That is to say, the Senior Capstone is intended to give students the opportunity synthesize and apply work from entry- and mid-level coursework. However, it became apparent during the teaching of the course, itself, that deficiencies existed among a plurality of students regarding basic conceptual understanding of sustainability and core writing competencies. These deficiencies are reflected in results of the artifacts themselves. Therefore the program has identified reform in the preliminary and mid-level coursework which provide a basis that allows for synthesis and application of expertise at the capstone level. Very many of these deficiencies have been addressed since the change in leadership in the ENS program, but these changes did not affect the capstone cohort this term for obvious reasons.

VIII. Actions Intended for the Improvement of Student Learning

Provide a discussion of your intended improvement actions that focus specifically on student learning.

Intended improvement actions will engage the initial assessment recommendations from Fall 2016 and from this review, i.e., identifying a group of specific SUSTAINABILITY concepts to track in all ENS prefix classes. This could include factual information amenable to analysis by a pre-test at the beginning of ENS 201 or 202 and a post-test following ENS 400, clear and attainable writing outcomes to be met at specific program levels, and coordination of fundamental learning objectives at the entry level, mid-level, and capstone level coursework

A review of all core classwork, including those prefix courses outside of ENS, is required to ensure that (a) core conceptual content is being taught in a developmentally appropriate manner, and (b) core competencies are perfected as the students move through the program. The DUS and Program Director will work with program faculty to establish a clear developmental structure to the core program coursework specifically regarding the core conceptual content and effective writing competencies. Where ENS 201/202 shall provide introductory material, and ENS 300 and PHI 336 should provide reinforcing conceptual articulation.

In all ENS core coursework, but especially the core writing coursework required for all students, the program will engage in a review to ensure adequate technical writing skills are developed and practiced throughout. Consequently, artifacts will be developed and selected to assess the

appropriate development and reinforced application of the concepts central to and writing competencies necessary to the successful practice of sustainability and environmental studies.

IX. Target/Benchmark/Goal Achievement

Did you meet your anticipated target/benchmark/goal: (select only one)

Exceeded

Met

Not Met



Taskstream will now ask you to attach documents to support the above responses.

X. Additional Insights or Reflection [This section is not scored]

Are there any insights you would share regarding your assessment efforts?

As noted in our previous review, ENS has undergone a recent change in leadership. Changes that affect the deficiencies indicated in this assessment have already been enacted, e.g., a more coherent teaching plan of the idea and practice of sustainability at the introductory level. Next year, the program will undergo a serious and exhaustive review of all Area and core coursework, most especially in the domain of writing. A concerted effort by these faculty to put into effect developmental program structure as outlined above and systems and assessment strategies to evaluate our students' development of expertise is a top priority.

If you have additional notes regarding your assessment efforts that should be considered in future reflections of this work, please include them below.

The director of the program and the DUS both agree that a wider variety of assessment should be conducted in future years. There should be an assessment of outcomes at every level of the program: entry, mid-level, and capstone.

Is there any other work being done in the program that may not be directly related to the learning outcome that you would like to share? If so, please provide that information below.

For the last two years, the artifacts used for assessment have come from the coursework of one professor in the department. The DUS will provide assistance and advice as to how to create effective assessment artifacts for future reporting for the benefit of all faculty.