

UNIVERSITY ASSESSMENT COMMITTEE
Feedback to Academic Departments on Assessment Activities Reported in 2009/2010 Annual Reports
GRADUATE PROGRAMS

DEPARTMENT: Biology

DATE: 3-3-11

COMMITTEE MEMBER(S) CONDUCTING REVIEW: Dexter Perkins and JoAnne Yearwood

1. STUDENT LEARNING GOALS

- | | | | |
|---------------------------------------|------------------|----------------|---------------------------|
| • Were any goals referenced? | YES <u> X </u> | NO <u> </u> | QUALIFIED Y/N <u> </u> |
| • If so, were goals well articulated? | YES <u> X </u> | NO <u> </u> | QUALIFIED Y/N <u> </u> |
| • Do goals address student learning? | YES <u> X </u> | NO <u> </u> | QUALIFIED Y/N <u> </u> |

Comments:

The graduate Assessment plan has three learning goals with two or more objectives each, along with a detailed description of the direct and in-direct assessment methods used at the Masters and PhD. Levels.

2. ASSESSMENT METHODS

- | | | | |
|--|------------------|----------------|---------------------------|
| Were any specific assessment methods referenced? | YES <u> X </u> | NO <u> </u> | QUALIFIED Y/N <u> </u> |
| • If so, were specifically chosen assessment methods appropriately aligned with individual goals? | YES <u> X </u> | NO <u> </u> | QUALIFIED Y/N <u> </u> |
| • Were both direct and indirect assessment methods used as components of a “multiple measures” approach? | YES <u> X </u> | NO <u> </u> | QUALIFIED Y/N <u> </u> |

Comments:

At the graduate level students are assessed to determine their biological knowledge and comfort with essential skills such as statistics and writing. Later on in the program they defend a thesis or dissertation and also take a comprehensive exam. Graduate students are also surveyed annually about their perceptions of the program and the learning goals of the program, as well as their thoughts on how well they actually achieved the learning goals.

3. ASSESSMENT RESULTS

- | | | | |
|--|------------------|----------------|---------------------------|
| Were any assessment results reported? | YES <u> X </u> | NO <u> </u> | QUALIFIED Y/N <u> </u> |
| • If so, were the results clear in terms of how they specifically affirm achievement of goals? | YES <u> X </u> | NO <u> </u> | QUALIFIED Y/N <u> </u> |
| • If so, were the results clear in terms of how they indicate need for improvement? | YES <u> X </u> | NO <u> </u> | QUALIFIED Y/N <u> </u> |
| • Were the results tied to goals for student learning? | YES <u> X </u> | NO <u> </u> | QUALIFIED Y/N <u> </u> |

Comments:

This was the first year that the department had data for a single cohort of students in the graduate program. The data collected for each student learning goal was shared in tables as well as in narrative format. The report indicated that in the three year window covered, “graduate students are doing well, although there were areas that could be improved”.

4. CLOSING THE LOOP

Were any actions taken on the basis of assessment results reported?

YES ☒ X ☐ NO ☐ QUALIFIED Y/N ☐

- If so, do curricular or other improvements/ changes arising from assessment results directly address goals for student learning?

YES ☒ X ☐ NO ☐ QUALIFIED Y/N ☐

Comments:

It was reported that the entire Biology faculty reviewed and discussed the assessment results to determine how the department should respond. Faculty have committed to making a more conscious and deliberate effort in a number of areas and have also agreed to a number of curricular changes that will expose students to more of the literature, help them develop higher-order thinking skills and needed statistical and writing skills.

SUMMARY

Strengths

- ☒ A specific plan for assessment is in place.
- ☒ Student learning goals are well-articulated.
- ☒ Assessment methods are clearly described.
- ☒ Assessment methods are appropriately selected.
- ☒ Assessment methods are well-implemented.
- ☒ Direct and indirect methods are implemented.
- ☒ Results are reported.
- ☒ Results are tied to closing the loop.
(Decision-making is tied to evidence.)

Areas for Improvement

- ☐ No specific plan for assessment is in place.
- ☐ Student learning goals are not well-articulated.
- ☐ Assessment methods are not clearly described.
- ☐ Assessment methods are not appropriately selected.
- ☐ Assessment methods are not well-implemented.
- ☐ A single type of assessment methods predominates.
- ☐ No results are reported.
- ☐ Results are not clearly tied to closing the loop.
(Decision-making is not directly tied to evidence.)

OVERALL SUMMARY AND RECOMMENDATIONS:

The Biology department's Graduate Assessment Plan is also very well implemented and the program goals and objectives are easy to follow. It is apparent that the assessment results were carefully reviewed and changes implemented based upon results.

MATERIALS REVIEWED

- ☒ Annual report
- ☐ Appendices (cited in annual report)
- ☐ Other (please describe)

- ☒ Assessment plan (as posted)
- ☒ Previous assessment review

Reviewer(s):	Name	Dexter Perkins	JoAnne Yearwood
	Department	Geology	Teaching & Learning
	Phone Number	2991	3947
	e-mail	dexter.perkins@und.edu	joanne.yearwood@email.und.edu

Section 1: ☐ Y ☐ Section 2: ☐ Y ☐ Section 3: ☐ Y ☐ Section 4: ☐ Y ☐

Coding Key:

- Y = yes, this is done appropriately and well
- N = no, this is not done at all, or it is not done in relationship to student learning
- NA = no information reported
- ? = action or progress is apparent; however, evidence is lacking that this is completely and appropriately done

UNIVERSITY ASSESSMENT COMMITTEE
Feedback to Academic Departments on Assessment Activities Reported in 2009-2010 Annual Reports
UNDERGRADUATE PROGRAMS

DEPARTMENT: Biology

DATE: 3-7-11

COMMITTEE MEMBER(S) CONDUCTING REVIEW: Dexter Perkins and Jo-Anne Yearwood

1. STUDENT LEARNING GOALS

- | | | | |
|---------------------------------------|--------------|--------------|-------------------------|
| • Were any goals referenced? | YES <u>X</u> | NO <u> </u> | QUALIFIED Y/N <u> </u> |
| • If so, were goals well articulated? | YES <u>X</u> | NO <u> </u> | QUALIFIED Y/N <u> </u> |
| • Do goals address student learning? | YES <u>X</u> | NO <u> </u> | QUALIFIED Y/N <u> </u> |

Comments:

The Biology Dept. received a glowing review when last reviewed in 2007, and they continue to do an excellent job with program assessment. The undergraduate Assessment Plan has two student learning goals with three or more objectives. The plan also describes each of the educational experiences that are linked to the student learning goals.

In addition to the Departmental goals, please also consider UND's Institutional and Essential Studies goals for student learning (shown in alignment within parentheses). Use 'U' (undergraduate) or 'G' (graduate) to identify UND/Essential Studies goals which are similar to the referenced departmental goals.

- X 1 Communication – written or oral (“able to write and speak in various settings with a sense of purpose/audience”)
 X 2 Thinking and reasoning – critical thinking (or “be intellectually curious”; analyze, synthesize, evaluate)
 X 3 Thinking and reasoning – creative thinking (or “be intellectually creative”; explore, discover, engage)
 4 Thinking and reasoning – quantitative reasoning (“apply empirical data...analyze graphical information”)
 X 5 Information literacy (“be able to access and evaluate...for effective, efficient, and ethical use”)
 6 Diversity (“demonstrate understanding of diversity and use that understanding...”)
 7 Lifelong learning (“commit themselves to lifelong learning”)
 8 Service/citizenship (“share responsibility both for their communities and for the world”)

Comments regarding departmental goals and alignment of departmental goals with institutional and Essential Studies goals:

Departmental student learning goals for students graduating with an undergraduate degree in Biology as well as graduate degrees, are aligned with the Institutional and Essential Studies goals.

2. ASSESSMENT METHODS

- | | | | |
|--|--------------|--------------|-------------------------|
| Were any specific assessment methods referenced? | YES <u>X</u> | NO <u> </u> | QUALIFIED Y/N <u> </u> |
| • If so, were specifically chosen assessment methods appropriately aligned with individual goals? | YES <u>X</u> | NO <u> </u> | QUALIFIED Y/N <u> </u> |
| • Were both direct and indirect assessment methods used as components of a “multiple measures” approach? | YES <u>X</u> | NO <u> </u> | QUALIFIED Y/N <u> </u> |

Comments:

The Biology Dept. has a well-developed “direct, value-added” and multi-dimensional assessment plan and uses a variety of direct and indirect assessment methods to measure student learning at the undergraduate level. At the undergraduate level the direct methods include a combination of multiple-choice as well as written assessment exams that are administered to incoming freshmen and seniors. Some of the indirect methods include the collection of data about the success of students in Introductory and Core Courses and Alumni surveys.

3. ASSESSMENT RESULTS

Were any assessment results reported?	YES <u>X</u>	NO ____	QUALIFIED Y/N ____
• If so, were the results clear in terms of how they specifically affirm achievement of goals?	YES <u>X</u>	NO ____	QUALIFIED Y/N ____
• If so, were the results clear in terms of how they indicate need for improvement?	YES <u>X</u>	NO ____	QUALIFIED Y/N ____
• Were the results tied to goals for student learning?	YES <u>X</u>	NO ____	QUALIFIED Y/N ____

Comments:

Data is collected on 1st year students and graduating seniors. The report indicated that no compelling curricular changes were necessary at this time based on the assessment findings.

In addition to departmental goals, some assessment results may be applicable to institutional and Essential Studies goals. Use 'U' (undergraduate) or 'G' (graduate) to identify those results which are applicable to institutional/Essential Studies goal achievement. For indicated items, please describe findings in the appropriate section below. .

- x 1 Communication – written or oral (“able to write and speak in various settings with a sense of purpose/audience”)
- x 2 Thinking and reasoning – critical thinking (or “be intellectually curious”; analyze, synthesize, evaluate)
- x 3 Thinking and reasoning – creative thinking (or “be intellectually creative”; explore, discover, engage)
- x 4 Thinking and reasoning – quantitative reasoning (“apply empirical data...analyze graphical information”)
- x 5 Information literacy (“be able to access and evaluate...for effective, efficient, and ethical use”)
- 6 Diversity (“demonstrate understanding of diversity and use that understanding...”)
- x 7 Lifelong learning (“commit themselves to lifelong learning”)
- 8 Service/citizenship (“share responsibility both for their communities and for the world”)

Comments regarding results and the application of results to departmental, institutional and Essential Studies goals:

The use of written assessment activities (they call them CLAT = College Learning Assessment Tasks) allows direct evaluation of student writing/communication skills (#1, above). The CLAT exams are also evaluated for critical thinking and scientific reasoning (involving components of #2 and #3, above). Evaluations are done using specific rubrics tied to each of the programmatic learning goals.

Additionally, one of their goals (and data they collect for that goal) deals with ethics and so contributes to #5 and #7, above.

4. CLOSING THE LOOP

Were any actions taken on the basis of assessment results reported?	YES _____	NO ____	QUALIFIED Y/N <u>x</u> ____
• If so, do curricular or other improvements/changes arising from assessment results directly address goals for student learning?	YES _____	NO ____	QUALIFIED Y/N <u>x</u> ____

Comments:

The assessment report indicated that no major deficiencies were apparent in effectively meeting departmental goals and as a result “no compelling curricular changes are warranted at this time”. There was mention of informing the faculty about the learning goals where seniors performed lowest and encouraging them to place more emphasis on those goals in their classes. There was also mention of changes that would be taking place regarding the CLAT being replaced by the Senior Capstone Seminar.

SUMMARY

Strengths

- ☒ A specific plan for assessment is in place.
- ☒ Student learning goals are well-articulated.
- ☒ Assessment methods are clearly described.
- ☒ Assessment methods are appropriately selected.
- ☒ Assessment methods are well-implemented.
- ☒ Direct and indirect methods are implemented.
- ☒ Results are reported.
- ☐ Results are tied to closing the loop.
(Decision-making is tied to evidence.)

Areas for Improvement

- ☐ No specific plan for assessment is in place.
- ☐ Student learning goals are not well-articulated.
- ☐ Assessment methods are not clearly described.
- ☐ Assessment methods are not appropriately selected.
- ☐ Assessment methods are not well-implemented.
- ☐ A single type of assessment methods predominates.
- ☐ No results are reported.
- ☒ Results are not clearly tied to closing the loop.
(Decision-making is not directly tied to evidence.)

OVERALL SUMMARY AND RECOMMENDATIONS:

The Biology Dept. has a very good assessment plan that is very well implemented. In future reports, it would be good if they gave examples of specific changes made in response to the data they collect, and where possible describe or show how the changes were effective.

MATERIALS REVIEWED

- | | |
|--|--|
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Annual report | <input type="checkbox"/> Assessment plan (as posted) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Appendices (cited in annual report) | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Previous assessment review |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Other (please describe) | |

Reviewer(s):	Name	Dexter Perkins	JoAnne Yearwood
	Department	Geology	Teaching & Learning
	Phone Number	2991	3947
	e-mail	dexter.perkins@und.edu	joanne.yearwood@email.und.edu

Section 1: ☒ Y ☐ N Section 2: ☒ Y ☐ N Section 3: ☒ Y ☐ N Section 4: ☐ ? ☐ NA

Coding Key:

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