UNIVERSITY ASSESSMENT COMMITTEE
Feedback to Academic Departments on Assessment Activities Reported in _2013-14_____

GRADUATE PROGRAMS

DEPARTMENT_Earth System Science & Policy_____DATE_May 5, 2015_____

PROGRAM(S) COVERED IN REVIEW _M.E.M. , M.S., & Ph.D in Earth System Science & Policy

COMMITTEE MEMBER(S) CONDUCTING REVIEW_Casey Ozaki, Deborah Worley, & Kevin Buettner_____

1. STUDENT LEARNING GOALS

- Were any goals referenced?   YES_X___   NO____   QUALIFIED Y/N ___
- If so, were goals well-articulated?   YES_X___   NO____   QUALIFIED Y/N ___
- Do goals address student learning?   YES_X___   NO____   QUALIFIED Y/N ___

Comments:
The assessment plan was revised in 2013 to "refine and specify the mission, goals, and student learning outcomes for the Department as a whole, and for each specific degree, M.E.M., M.S., and Ph.D." In this process, the learning goals for the department were pared down from 8 to 6 goals and outcomes were developed specific to each degree (M.E.M, M.S., & Ph.D). The goals are appropriate and the language lends itself toward assessment.

2. ASSESSMENT METHODS

Were any specific assessment methods referenced?   YES_X___   NO____   QUALIFIED Y/N ____
- If so, were specifically chosen assessment methods appropriately aligned with individual goals?   YES_____   NO____   QUALIFIED Y/N __X__
- Were both direct and indirect assessment methods used as components of a "multiple measures" approach?   YES_X____   NO____   QUALIFIED Y/N ____

Comments:
The department utilizes both direct and indirect assessment methods, which are aligned with the specific departmental student learning objectives. The majority of the methods identified are course and final projects (theses/dissertations), direct assessment. Previous assessment plans had more assessment tools that were well described; in the updated plan the program may want to provide similar description and consider some additional indirect assessments in order to provide a balance of data. In addition, now that distinct program learning outcomes have been identified, it seems reasonable that methods may be differentially appropriate for the individual programs.

Furthermore, it's unclear in the assessment plan update if elements from the previous plan (e.g., other non-course related assessment activities, timelines for assessment, assessment activities across program/faculty) are still applicable, given the changes to the departmental goals and addition of program goals. If the intent is to utilize previous elements, streamlining and aligning the documents and content would eliminate confusion or inconsistency.

3. ASSESSMENT RESULTS

Were any assessment results reported?   YES_X___   NO____   QUALIFIED Y/N ____
- If so, were the results clear in terms of how they specifically affirm achievement of goals?   YES____   NO____   QUALIFIED Y/N __X__
- If so, were the results clear in terms of how they indicate need for improvement?   YES____   NO____   QUALIFIED Y/N __**X**__
- Were the results tied to goals for student

learning?   YES__X__   NO____   QUALIFIED Y/N ____

Comments:
Results were provided specific to Departmental Student Learning Goals 2 and 4. Learning Goal 3 was addressed in relation to student exposure to specific content, but did not provide results.

The results for Learning Goals 2 & 4 largely described the content and activities students were exposed to in specific coursework and some of the assessment activities. Data was provided from ESSP 502 on the assessment of oral presentations. The department's assessment of student learning would benefit from collecting and examining more data like this in order to identify trends and patterns beyond the descriptive elements of how students were assessed.

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_____   NO____ QUALIFIED Y/N ___X_

Comments:
Three examples of concerns faculty had related to student learning and ways that changes were or will be made were described. Two relate to Learning Goal 2, but did not flow from the results presented. An additional "loop closing" activity directly stemmed from the oral presentation data and related to Learning Goal 4; it focused more on improving process at this point in order to have more data for assessment.

SUMMARY

Strengths	*Areas for Improvement*
_X___ A specific plan for assessment is in place.	____ No specific plan for assessment is in place.
_**X**___Student learning goals are well-articulated.	____ Student learning goals are not well-articulated.
____Assessment methods are clearly described.	____ Assessment methods are not clearly described.
__X__Assessment methods are appropriately selected.	____ Assessment methods are not appropriately selected.
____Assessment methods are well-implemented.	____ Assessment methods are not well-implemented.
____Direct and indirect methods are implemented.	____ A single type of assessment methods predominates.
____Results are reported.	____ No results are reported.
____Results are tied to closing the loop.	__X__ Results are not clearly tied to closing the loop.
(Decision-making is tied to evidence.)	(Decision-making is not directly tied to evidence.)

OVERALL SUMMARY AND RECOMMENDATIONS:
The assessment plan was recently updated and reflected changes to departmental learning outcomes in addition to the specification of program outcomes. Methods are clearly aligned with learning goals and reflect assessment that is embedded in coursework. Ongoing assessment would benefit from additional data and the consideration for how data might be examined across courses and beyond individual faculty assessment. To this end, it could be useful to track results according to program if you are not already doing so.

MATERIALS REVIEWED

__X___ Annual assessment report
_____ Annual report
__X___ Assessment plan (as posted)
__X___ Previous assessment review
_____ Other (please describe)

Reviewer(s):	Name	*Kevin Buettner*	*Deborah Worley*	*Casey Ozaki*
	Department	*Nursing*	*EHD*	*EHD*

Phone Number	*777-4509*	*777-3140*	*777-4256*
e-mail	*kevin.buettner@und.edu*	*deborah.worley@und.edu*	*carolyn.ozaki@und.edu*

Section 1: _Y____   Section 2: _Y____   Section 3: _Q____   Section 4: _Y____

Coding Key:
    Y   = yes, this is done appropriately and well (bearing in mind the kind of program(s) reviewed and recognizing that assessment is a cyclical process, i.e., with additional kinds of data to be collected in other years)
    Q   = qualified yes as action or progress is apparent; however, evidence is lacking that this is completely and appropriately done
    N   = no, it is unclear whether it was done at all, or it is not done in relationship to student learning

Revised Sept 24, 2014