

Components of a Program-Level Student Learning Assessment Plan*

1. **Mission Statement.** This section includes a brief description of the program's mission and focus and of how program learning goals relate in general to the missions of the program and of the college.

The department's primary mission is to prepare students for a successful post graduate career in one or more earth and environmental science fields. In addition, we hope to instill values of responsible environmental citizenship in all students who interact with our programs. We attempt to do this in accordance with the overall mission of Juniata College.

2. **Student Learning Outcomes.** Student Learning Outcomes are statements of what you intend students "to know, do, and care about" after successfully completing your program. Think in terms of knowledge, skills, attitudes, abilities, etc. What kinds of discipline-based knowledge should students develop in the program? What are the skills (lab, communication, technical, computer, etc.) that the graduates should have acquired? What kinds of attributes should the students develop (appreciation for diversity, understanding learning styles, etc.) during the program of study? Briefly describe the process for developing student learning goals and how they relate to institutional goals.

Quantitative & Technical Skills

Communication Skills

Environmental Citizenship

3. **Assessment Tools and Methods.** Next, each program will identify or create appropriate assessment tools and methods for gathering evidence regarding student learning. Effective assessment programs entail a combination of direct and indirect measures and may include both quantitative and qualitative information. Assessment tools include tests, portfolios, course-embedded measures, capstone evaluations, and others. In addition, this section should describe why particular measures were chosen, and how, when, and by whom they will be administered.

While faculty are responsible for individual course assessment, the department's primary measure of success is student placement. Using senior exit surveys and by tracking graduates, we estimate that we have reached nearly 100% placement in career and graduate schools for the past 5 years. We use informal assessments such as evaluation of student knowledge at the senior level as previously discussed.

Conference presentations, grants written, peer reviewed papers, etc... Workshops and other training as applicable. Student centered research projects.

in class exams, presentations, and writings, research abilities. We also use post graduate placement success. GRE scores.

Club involvement in environmentally conscience activities. Attendance and participation in env. type events.

4. **Time line for Implementation.** Each program will identify a realistic timeframe for implementation of the assessment plan. Will a pilot of tools and methods be conducted, if so when? When will data be collected and the results analyzed?

This information is already tracked and reviewed annually.

5. **Analysis of Results.** Following the collection of data, the program will need to carefully analyze the results. Who will conduct the analysis? How will the results be shared with the faculty? What types of thresholds and comparisons will be used?

Excellent placement of students in graduate programs and professional settings. In the past 5 years we have steadily approached 50%+ placement of students to graduate schools such as Wisconsin, Michigan, Penn State, Univ. of North Carolina, to name but a few

Currently, we are doing well in this area. In the past three years, the EES faculty have 21 refereed journal articles, 33 conf presentations and posters, as well book chapters, journal editorials and reviews, and multiple continuing education courses developed and taught.

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We have recently decided to adopt the ABET criteria for Accrediting Applied Science Programs. We will also consider other appropriate measures such as ASBOG and APPAM.

A realization of the importance of research based projects on ultimate student success. Many of the classes involve one or more projects and presentations. ESS has a Senior Capstone course that is project based and all of the faculty in EES have independent studies students working with them each semester.

6. **Program for Improvement.** The goal of assessment is to improve student learning, and thus, the critical step in improving student learning is to use the results of assessment to make changes to the curriculum, course exercises, and activities. Identify the strategies that the program will use to link the analysis of results to program improvements.

The department devotes time out of departmental meetings to discuss assessment results and revisions to the curriculum to better serve the needs of the students.

*Sources: *Student Learning Assessment: Options and Resources* (Middle States Commission on Higher Education, 2003); *Student Outcomes Assessment Plan* (Indiana State University, 1995); Barbara E. Walvoord, *Assessment Clear and Simple: A Practical Guide for Institutions, Departments, and General Education* (Jossey-Bass, 2004).