Central Washington University
Assessment of Student Learning
Department and Program Report

Academic Year of Report: 2010-11        College: COTS
Program: Primate Behavior & Ecology (Degree MS in Primate Behavior)

Check here if your assessment report covers all graduate degree programs: [X]

1. What student learning outcomes were assessed this year, and why?
The complete list of program goals and SLOs are attached to this report, with SLOs/goals assessed in this report highlighted in yellow. We assessed SLOs related to Goals 2 (2 SLOs), 3 (1 SLO), 4 (3 SLOs), and 6 (1 SLO).

We assessed these particular goals because they enabled us to explore knowledge- and skill-related program goals; they revealed the potential impact graduates of the program are having on the broader profession through their research; and they indicated whether the program has been designed so that students can complete it in two years.

2. How were they assessed?

2a. What methods were used?
We assessed the SLOs related to Goals 2 and 3 using rubrics for the students’ discussion leads in PRIM 501 Introduction to Primatology and class presentation for PRIM 511 Primate Conservation. For the remaining goals, assessment data were taken from an annual evaluation form submitted by thesis committee chairs, with one evaluation form filled out for each student.

2b. Who was assessed?
- 2010 Primate Behavior student cohort: eight students (goals 2 and 3)
- 2008, -9, and -10 Primate Behavior student cohorts: 24 students (goal 4)
- Four students who have graduated from the program (goal 6)

2c. When was it assessed?
Goals 2 and 3 were assessed during fall quarter 2011. During that quarter, eight (100%) of incoming 2011 graduate students enrolled in PRIM 501 Introduction to Primatology and seven (88%) of incoming 2011 graduate students enrolled in PRIM 511 Primate Conservation. Goals 4 and 6 were assessed at the end of spring quarter 2011 when 24 graduate students completed an annual evaluation in consultation with each student’s thesis committee chair.

3. What was learned?
Goal 2, SLO 1: On discussion leader sessions in PRIM 501 Introduction to Primatology, 80% of students will earn 80% of points from the assignment grading rubric. SLO2: Student performance as discussion leader will improve as she or he becomes more aware of the interdisciplinary nature of primatology.

The goal set in SLO 1 was met: Seven of eight (88%) students earned a grade of 80% or better on the assignment. The sole student who did not meet the standard was an
international student for whom English is a second language (although another international student did meet the standard).

The goal set in SLO 2 was not met: All of the students performed similarly in discussion sessions across the quarter, and at such a high level that little improvement could be obtained. For example, students typically earned 9 or more of 10 points on each discussion assignment, so there was very little room to improve on their performance. It is evident that this SLO will not measure the goal, so it will need to be modified to better assess students’ abilities to synthesize the contributions that various disciplines make to the field of anthropology.

Goal 3, SLO 2: During oral presentations given in PRIM 511, 80% of students will be able to describe biodiversity and cite biological and societal reasons explaining why biodiversity is important.

The goal set in SLO 2 was met: Six of seven (86%) of the students accurately described what biodiversity is and why it is important, based on a rubric used to assess their in-class presentation. One student was unable to do so.

Goal 4, SLOs 1, 2, 3: Every student will participate in at least one professional activity before graduating (grant, presentation, peer-reviewed article).

The goals set in SLOs 1, 2, and 3 have been met for the 2008 student cohort but not for all 2009 or 2010 students.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Total Cohort Size</th>
<th>No. of Students Who Have Completed 1+ Professional Activity</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2008 cohort</td>
<td>4 (100%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2009 cohort</td>
<td>7 (78%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2010 cohort</td>
<td>9 (82%)</td>
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Goal 6, SLO 5: 80% of student theses will be accepted by the Graduate Studies office without being returned to the committee for additional revisions.

The goal established in SLO 6 was not met. To date, four students have submitted theses to Graduate Studies. One of these theses was returned to the committee for additional revisions, so the current percentage passing is 75%.

4. What will the department or program do as a result of that information?
This assessment report has been provided to all program faculty. We will meet during winter quarter 2012 to discuss the results and to lay the ground work for assessing other goals.

During our meeting, I will make the following recommendations:

- We need to develop a different mechanism for assessing whether students understand the interdisciplinary nature of primatology; the current rubric applied to an in-class assignment is not sensitive enough to capture this.
- As the program grows, we need to develop a means to better track alumni and communicate with current and future students. We will create a Facebook page to
communicate our students’ professional successes (funded proposals, presentations, and publications) to the broader discipline and to prospective students; to provide current students with information on courses and research opportunities; and to maintain connections with alumni. It is hoped that Facebook will be easier to update and maintain than is a webpage.

- We should one meeting each quarter devoted to a discussion of each student’s progress through the program. This might provide additional support to advisors whose students are struggling in the program and could increase the rates of students participating in one or more professional activities before graduation.

5. What did the department or program do in response to last year’s assessment information?
We created a timeline that was included in our revised graduate handbook to clarify for students how long each step in the program takes. We applied the rubrics created in previous years to assignments in core courses. We continued to fill out an annual evaluation form, which provides data to track students’ progress through the program.

6. Questions or suggestions concerning assessment of student learning at Central Washington University
None.

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Primate Behavior MS
Program Goals (revised May 2009; highlight indicates goals assessed in 2010-11)

Core Courses

- PRIM 501 Introduction to Primatology (presentation of interdisciplinary nature of the field)
- PRIM 503 Current Issues in Primatology
- PRIM 504 Culture and Cognition
- PRIM 505 History of Primate Interconnections
- PSY 550 Research Methods

Goal 1 (Knowledge): PB MS students will demonstrate knowledge of the field of primatology, including current issues, methods, theories, and topics of study.

1. On written papers in PRIM 503, 80% of students will earn 80% of points from grading rubric.
2. On oral presentations in PRIM 504, 80% of students will earn 80% of points from grading rubric.
3. On written papers in PRIM 505, 80% of students will earn 80% of points from grading rubric.

Goal 2 (Knowledge): PB MS students will understand the interdisciplinary nature of primatology and how biologists, psychologists, and anthropologists approach the study of primates.

1. On discussion leader sessions in PRIM 501, 80% of students will earn 80% of points from grading rubric.
2. Student performance as discussion leader will improve during the quarter as she or he becomes more aware of the interdisciplinary nature of primatology.

Goal 3 (Value): PB MS students will value biodiversity.

1. During oral presentations in PRIM 511, 80% of students will accurately identify the major causes of primate endangerment.
2. During oral presentations in PRIM 511, 100% of students will be able to describe biodiversity and cite biological and societal reasons explaining why biodiversity is important.

Goal 4 (Skill): PB MS students will engage in professional activities. All students will engage in at least one professional activity before graduation.

1. The student’s thesis advisor will document on an annual evaluation form the number of student presentations submitted, rejected, and accepted.
2. The student’s thesis advisor will document on an annual evaluation form the number of student publications submitted, rejected, and accepted.
3. The student’s thesis advisor will document on an annual evaluation student grant proposals submitted, rejected, and accepted.

Goal 5 (Skill): PB MS students will be able to effectively communicate.

1. On oral presentations in PRIM 503, 80% of students will earn 80% of points from grading rubric.
2. On written papers in PRIM 504, 80% of students will earn 80% of points from grading rubric.

Goal 6 (Skill): PB Students will be able to design and carry out an independent research project of significance to primatology.

1. In PSY 550, students will demonstrate the ability to operationalize behaviors to facilitate data collection, as indicated by a score of 80% or better on ethogram assignment.
2. Each student will successfully defend her or his research proposal, as indicated by the thesis committee members signing the Graduate Committee and Option Approval form, by the end of the student’s first year in the program.
3. Each student’s IACUC/IRB form will be submitted and approved by the end of the student’s first year in the program.
4. The student will successfully defend her or his thesis, as indicated by the committee members signing off on the thesis.
5. 80% of student theses will be accepted by the Graduate Studies office without being returned to the committee for additional revisions.