Central Washington University  
Assessment of Student Learning  
Department and Program Report

Please enter the appropriate information concerning your student learning assessment activities for this year.

Academic Year of Report: 2012/13  
College: COTS  
Department: N/A  
Program: Environmental Studies

1. What student learning outcomes were assessed this year, and why?
In answering this question, please identify the specific student learning outcomes you assessed this year, reasons for assessing these outcomes, with the outcomes written in clear, measurable terms, and note how the outcomes are linked to department, college and university mission and goals.

This year, our program assessed learning outcome listed as nr. 2: “Students can describe the various perspectives that different constituencies bring to environmental issues”. The reasons for choosing this outcome for assessment are (i) that the method of assessment and the criteria are clearly defined in the Student Learning Outcome Assessment Plan with which we are currently working, (ii) that the data was easily accessible.

This outcome is linked to the program goals in that “students are prepared for informed environmental citizenship”. This goal is also related to college goals 1 and 2 to “maintain and strengthen an outstanding academic and student life at all sites” and to university goals 1, 2 (which are the same as the college goals 1 and 2) and 5, which seeks to “achieve regional and national prominence for the university”.

2. How were they assessed?
In answering these questions, please concisely describe the specific methods used in assessing student learning. Please also specify the population assessed, when the assessment took place, and the standard of mastery (criterion) against which you will compare your assessment results. If appropriate, please list survey or questionnaire response rate from total population.

A) What methods were used?
Student products were used in two courses to assess goal 2:
(i) designated assignment and exam questions in ENST 303, Environmental Management, and
(ii) the final report in ENST 444, Environmental Policy Formulation.

These products were compared to the standard of mastery as defined respectively by:
(i) majors who receive a grade of B- or higher on one ENST 303 assignment and two tests, and
(ii) majors who present perspectives from at least three different constituencies on a policy topic in the final report in ENST 444.

B) Who was assessed?
All ENST majors in ENST 303 (n=22) and all majors in ENST 444 (n=26).

C) When was it assessed?
ENST 303 in Winter 2013 and in ENST 444 in Spring 2013.
3. What was learned?
In answering this question, please report results in specific qualitative or quantitative terms, with the results linked to the outcomes you assessed, and compared to the standard of mastery (criterion) you noted above. Please also include a concise interpretation or analysis of the results.

Of the 22 majors assessed in ENST 303, 16 (i.e., 73%) attained an average score of 80% or higher, which represents the B- standard of mastery. Thus, based on assessment in ENST 303, 73% of the majors met the criterion.

Of the 34 majors assessed in ENST 444, 26 (i.e., 76%) provided perspectives from at least three different constituencies. Thus, based on assessment in ENST 444, 76% of the majors met the criterion.

4. What will the department or program do as a result of that information?
In answering this question, please note specific changes to your program as they affect student learning, and as they are related to results from the assessment process. If no changes are planned, please describe why no changes are needed. In addition, how will the department report the results and changes to internal and external constituents (e.g., advisory groups, newsletters, forums, etc.).

Based on the process and results obtained in this assessment as well as the feedback from last year, the ENST advisory committee will be pursuing the following goal:
Review and modify current programmatic goals and learning outcomes as they have not been modified since 2008 when the program was first generated. To do this we
a. plan for a programmatic retreat in Winter 2014 to update goals and learning outcomes, and
b. seek staff support to enter into a data base collected information from an exit survey that we implemented in 2011.

5. What did the department or program do in response to last year’s assessment information?
In answering this question, please describe any changes that have been made to improve student learning based on previous assessment results. Please also discuss any changes you have made to your assessment plan or assessment methods.

We realize that our program has now grown to a relatively constant size of ~ 70 majors since its inception in 2008 and that we do not have the staff support necessary to collect and process the data necessary for programmatic and learning outcomes assessment. We also learned that our goals and learning outcomes need updating. These are challenges that are likely very typical of interdisciplinary programs that have been established in relatively recent years and we are committed to addressing these in the next year as indicated by our plan above.

6. Questions or suggestions concerning Assessment of Student Learning at Central Washington University:

We suggest that the university do some outreach with prospective fields of employment to ensure the skill sets we are providing students match those sought by prospective employers in specified fields. The ENST program needs dedicated staff support to collect the data necessary to effectively assess the program.