Classroom Observation Form

for Tenure Track Faculty

This form is to be completed by administrators, department chairs, or tenured faculty members performing formal observations for inclusion in a tenure track faculty member’s portfolio. When possible, observers are encouraged to meet with the tenure track faculty member prior to the observation to gain context for the class session that will be observed and to identify any areas where the faculty member would like specific focused feedback.

This form must be completed and returned to the faculty member within **one week** of the formal observation. It is suggested but not required that the observer meet with the faculty member to review feedback in person.

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| Instructor’s Name | **Linda Monroe** | Class and Section Observed | **Microbiology 233, sec: EFG** |
| Observer’s Name | **Dianne Deanson** | Date of Observation | **XX/XX/XX** |
| Relation of Observer to Instructor | **Dean of Instruction** | Number of Students Enrolled | **18** |
| College | **Olive-Harvey** | Number of Students Attending | On time: **7** Tardy: **10** |

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| **Directions for Assigning Ratings** |
| For each category below, a description is included to guide the observation. **It is not necessary for all bullets to be addressed or observed**; rather, the bulleted list offers direction and suggestions to guide ratings and comments. In commentary, describe observed strengths as well as areas for growth. ***Commentary is required for each section.*** After offering commentary, select the appropriate descriptive rating based on the following definitions:* **Strong**—evidence indicates that the instructor consistently meets and sometimes exceeds expectations. Specific examples illustrating strength should be included in commentary to justify the rating.
* **Satisfactory**—evidence indicates that the instructor tends to meet expectations and the observer does not identify any specific concerns in a given area.
* **Needs Improvement**—evidence indicates minor to moderate concerns in the given area and focused support is needed. A detailed explanation of concerns and the type of support needed should be outlined in commentary.
* **Significant Concern**—evidence indicates significant concerns in the given area, suggesting that a formal action plan may be needed. A detailed explanation of concerns and necessary improvements should be outlined in commentary.
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| **Syllabus** |
| *The following list of elements is offered to guide your comments and rating:** Official course description and course prerequisites are stated
* Course objectives and Student Learning Outcomes are stated, are appropriate for the course, and match departmental master syllabus if existent
* Student Learning Outcomes are measureable
* Grading system is stated clearly and standards used to assess students’ work are adequately explained
* Variety of assignments listed (e.g., in-class tests, lab reports, essays, etc.) indicate that Student Learning Outcomes will be assessed using multiple methods
* Course policies (e.g., ADW, late work, participation) are stated clearly, and all policies are consistent with college policies
* Adequate information regarding course content (e.g., required texts and materials, course outline, etc.) is included
* Adequate information regarding student support (e.g., office hours, and appropriate academic support services) is included
* Syllabus is easy to navigate, well written, and professional
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| Comments:**The syllabus includes all required elements and is clear and easy to navigate. Class policies appear carefully thought out and designed to aid student success. Strategies for success are also included.** **What I don’t see that could move this syllabus into the “strong” category is a sense of the overall themes of the course and the questions the course will help students to answer. As noted in my commentary below, I encourage LM to organize the course around larger themes and questions to help put the SLOs of the class into a larger context of scientific inquiry.**  |
| [ ] Strong [x] Satisfactory [ ] Needs Improvement [ ] Significant Concern |

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| **Description of Class Session Observed** |
| Describe the class session observed including the session’s intended purpose, the types of instructional techniques used (e.g., lecture, discussion, small group activities, in-class writing, experiential learning, etc.), and the sequence of activities, including the approximate amount of time spent on each activity.**Seven students are present at, 11:30, the start of class. Students are given several minutes at the beginning of class to prepare for an extra credit quiz. Students appear to be reviewing powerpoints, personal notes and past assignments. At 11:42, LM passes out the quiz and gives students 10 minutes to complete the quiz. At 11:53, the class goes over the quiz. 17 students are now present. LM leads the class in reviewing the quiz, which includes 15 multiple choice recall questions and three short answer questions. She reviews each question one at a time. At 12:25, the review of chapter 7 of the textbook began and lasted until 12:54 (30 minutes). Students provide much of the material that ends up on the board.** **Students took a break and then returned to a lab that had been started in a prior class. Much of the review of their lab results was directed by LM, who assisted students extensively in determining their results.**  |

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| **Learning Environment** |
| *The following list of elements is offered to guide your comments and rating:** Class is managed in a way that is conducive to learning and demonstrates respect for students
* Distractions (cell phones, side talking, etc.) are minimized and do not interfere with learning
* Policies stated in the syllabus are appropriately and consistently enforced
* Instructor’s expectations of students are clear and consistent throughout the class session
* Instructor works to ensure that students are on task (e.g., by circulating during group work, by acknowledging off-task behavior and redirecting students, etc.)
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| Comments:**Students appear to be generally engaged. One student is on a cell phone intermittently, although she may be reviewing material for the class (hard to tell). One student has a bluetooth on and another student has one headphone in, though neither appear turned on.** **Ten students were late, several of them missing the extra credit quiz all together. I notice that the syllabus mentions that students should get to class early and sign a sign-in sheet. Is this policy enforced? Since students got the first ten minutes to prepare for the quiz, it does not appear to me that there is an incentive for them to arrive on time. Might giving them study time at the beginning of class be encouraging tardiness?****During the teacher-directed review of the chapter, all students that I could see appeared to be engaged and taking notes.**  |
| [ ] Strong [x] Satisfactory [ ] Needs Improvement [ ] Significant Concern |

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| **Content and Lesson Organization** |
| *The following list of elements is offered to guide your comments and rating:** Class session’s purpose is clear and time is organized effectively to meet the session’s purpose
* Class session’s purpose is aligned with one or more of the stated Student Learning Outcomes
* Lesson is organized logically and content is sequenced appropriately
* Pacing and difficulty of material are appropriate for the level of the class
* Instructor’s command of subject matter is evident (TO BE COMPLETED BY OBSERVERS WITH DISCIPLINE TRAINING ONLY)
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| Comments:**An agenda at the side of the board reports that the three tasks are as follows: (1) Extra credit quiz on viruses, (2) Continue with chapter 7 Microbial Nutrition, (3) Look at results for unknown project.** **Through the quiz (study time, taking the quiz and reviewing the quiz), 55 minutes, or nearly 30% of class were spent reviewing prior learning. Although this review is probably very useful to students, I’m concerned that spending this much time on review does not require the amount of mental stretch that I would expect from a college level class. I would prefer to see this time spent helping students to further their ability to think critically about the course material.** **It was unclear to me to what extent the review of chapter seven was adding new material or simply reviewing the textbook chapter. My sense is that this portion of class was primarily a review session, in which case I again would encourage LM to demand more mental stretch from students. (I spoke to LM later and she reported that students are encouraged but not required to complete textbook reading.)****When I referred to the syllabus, I was not able to readily tell how the review of the chapter was directly helping students to meet course outcomes. My sense is that the class work required less mental stretch than what is demanded in the course outcomes. Although the lab in the second half of the class acted to start to bridge this gap, I would like to see more of the class time spent engaging in the level of thinking demanded by course SLOs.** **It should be noted that the challenge of organizing class to engage the level of mental stretch required by course SLOs is extremely difficult and few teachers meet this bar. Though I am marking “needs improvement” in this category, this is not a negative reflection on LM, but speaks to the difficulty of this category.**  |
| [ ] Strong [ ] Satisfactory [x] Needs Improvement [ ] Significant Concern |

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| **Presentation and Delivery** |
| *The following list of elements is offered to guide your comments and rating:** Instructor conducts him/herself in a professional manner
* Instructor begins and ends class on time
* Instructor manages time effectively to maximize students’ time engaged in learning activities
* Instructor opens and closes lesson effectively, situating learning within the broader context of the course
* Instructor’s verbal communication is effective (e.g., instructor enunciates clearly and can be heard and understood throughout the room, etc.)
* Instructor’s written communication is effective (e.g., use of board, handouts, PowerPoint, visual aids, etc.)
* Instructor is clear when delivering content, giving directions, and answering questions
* Instructor helped students to grasp challenging material by presenting examples to clarify points, relating new ideas to familiar concepts and students’ prior knowledge, restating important ideas at appropriate times, and/or varying explanations of complex material
* Students are actively engaged (e.g., taking notes when appropriate, participating in activities and discussions; demonstrating body language that suggests engagement)
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| Comments:**LM conducts herself in a very professional manner; her verbal communication is clear and her writing on the board is very easy to read. She also provides a written study guide for students, ostensibly to help them organize their notes (?)** **The class time was organized into the following segments: study time for the extra credit quiz (10 min), taking the extra credit quiz (10), teacher-directed review of the quiz (35), teacher-directed review of the textbook chapter (30), a brief break, and the continuation of a lab begun in a previous class.** **The review of the quiz as well as the review of the textbook chapter were both teacher directed. During the quiz review, LM encourages students to answer the questions orally, she then reiterated all student answers and writes the answers on the board. A similar model was used for the review of the textbook chapter. This format was very easy to follow and would be especially useful for visual learners. It also helps students take clear notes. On the other hand, this format puts the responsibility and focus on the instructor and thus does not necessarily help students develop self-directed learning practices. For students who did not choose to orally answer questions, this class format would allow them to remain very passive.** **I would encourage LM to tie the presentation of details from the textbook chapters to larger themes and to the course SLOs. As an outsider in class, it was hard for me to get the “big picture” of what the textbook chapter was about and how it tied to overall course themes.**  |
| [ ] Strong [x] Satisfactory [ ] Needs Improvement [ ] Significant Concern |

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| **Critical Thinking** |
| *The following list of elements is offered to guide your comments and rating:** Instructor employs methods that develop students’ ability to communicate and problem solve using the discipline’s thinking, practice, and procedures
* Class session provides the appropriate level of challenge and is designed to help students grow intellectually and think in new ways
* Method of instruction helps to build critical thinking
* Instructor creates an environment that fosters students’ intellectual curiosity
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| Comments:**The majority of the extra credit quiz appeared to me to be basic review of prior knowledge (thus primarily demanding only student recall). This seemed to me to be quite a lot of focus on rather basic level of thinking. The third short answer question on the quiz appears to be a critical thinking question, as students are asked their opinion about whether or not a virus should be considered living. I think this is a great critical thinking question. LM did have one student answer for the class with each opinion and stated that she would give credit for either answer. I think this question provides a great opportunity for students to engage more deeply with an open-ended question and practice creating effective justifications for various answers. I would love to see them work in groups to make an effective argument on one side or the other and try to win favor for their side. In other words, I saw this question as a great opportunity to deepen students’ critical thinking skills.** **Overall, I would like to see class time organized around broader questions that demand a high level of critical thinking. I encourage LM to consider the work of Grant Wiggins and Backwards Design in order to design course units that focus on these broad and challenging questions and teach smaller details within the context of these broader questions. Such a strategy tends to aid in retention of knowledge and transfer of skills. (Backwards design will be a large focus of the Second Semester Seminar, but I encourage LM get a head start by googling Grant Wiggins and Backwards Design – several brief youtube clips are available, which introduce the concept and will plant the seed for future growth in this area.)** **Please be aware that I find that almost all instructors I review need improvement in this area.**  |
| [ ] Strong [ ] Satisfactory [x] Needs Improvement [ ] Significant Concern |

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| **Student Assessment and Support** |
| *The following list of elements is offered to guide your comments and rating:** Instructor exhibits ability to determine whether or not students understand material and uses formative assessment to determine appropriate pacing of instruction and next steps (e.g., follow up assignments, use of student resources, etc.)
* Instructor promotes students’ reflection on, and ownership of, their own learning progress by helping them self-assess and determine appropriate next steps
* Instructor displays respect for and interest in students (e.g., uses of students’ names, maintains eye contact with students, greeting students as they enter the class, etc.)
* Instructor identifies and assists students who are struggling
* Instructor conveys confidence in each students’ ability to learn
* Instructor engages all students, including both quiet or low-achieving students and those who are vocal or successful
* Instructor fosters student peer interaction that supports learning and promotes cooperation, collaboration and teamwork
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| Comments:**At a number of points during the quiz review, LM asked students if they got questions correct so as to gage the understanding of the class. She also collected the quizzes so she could review students answers and see how students are doing.** **During the lab portion of the class, LM regularly circulated, checking in with students.****She works to support students by providing a number of study aids, extra credit opportunities, etc. I encourage her to consider though if some of these forms of short-term support may undermine students’ development of deeper habits that may aid in their success in future courses.** **I would like to see LM work to foster student peer interaction that supports learning by encouraging students to work in groups to answer questions for each other, rather than looking to the teacher to answer questions.** **I would also like to see LM work to help students reflect on and take ownership of their own learning.**  |
| [ ] Strong [x] Satisfactory [ ] Needs Improvement [ ] Significant Concern |

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| **Additional Comments** |
| Use this space for any of the following purposes:1. to comment specifically on any focus area the instructor has identified for the observation;
2. to report on progress since the last observation (when applicable);
3. to provide any questions you had during the observation regarding instructional or classroom management choices;
4. to offer any additional commentary not covered above;
5. to offer summative commentary to highlight notable strengths or areas for growth and/or to offer focus for the faculty member’s future professional development;
6. to include any needed action plans. (An action plan must be developed in coordination with the candidate and must include an agreed upon list of measurable next steps with dates for completion and follow up.)
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| Comments:**I encourage LM to focus on adding more “mental stretch” to her classes by engaging students’ critical thinking, and helping students to become more self-directed learners. LM utilizes a number of strategies to help students to be successful in the course (e.g., extra credit quizzes, class time spent on review, chapter note templates, etc.). These tools can be very helpful for short-term success, which is excellent. If students come to rely on them, however, they may undermine students’ development as self-directed learners, thus limiting students’ success in higher level classes and in the work place. I encourage LM to consider ways to help students take ownership for their own learning and start to devise their own study and review strategies so that they can use these personalized strategies in future courses. I also encourage her to help students use each other as resources rather than relying on the instructor.****Much research on science education reveals that it is extremely difficult for students to develop critical thinking, and often even at the best universities students show little to no growth in critical thinking over time. Though engaging students in deep critical thinking through course work clearly presents challenges both to students and instructors, I encourage LM and all instructors to put considerable effort into helping students to become active and critical problem solvers, as these are the skills that will benefit them most in the workplace. Reorganizing class time to limit review would free up time that could be devoted to deeper critical thinking. This change will place higher expectations on students and may meet with some student resistance; however, the change is likely to lead to deeper learning and thus has great long-term benefit.****Overall, LM is a conscientious, organized, caring instructor. She shows clear respect for students and expresses a genuine desire to help students be successful in the course. This level of care (which is so wonderful to see in faculty!!) may be leading her to put too much of the responsibility for doing the mental work during class time on herself and not enough on the students.** **In LM’s portfolio reflections I would like to hear her discuss ways that she will work on these issues in the future, both through the organization of class time (less time on review, more time engaged in critical thinking activities) and through broader course design techniques (organization of the course around larger themes and questions).** |

Signature: Dianne Deanson Date: **XX/XX/XX**