

Wright College Academic Department/Program Assessment project Results Fall 2017

What?

The biology department assessed how students develop and demonstrate an understanding of ethical values, life goals, and interpersonal skills that will prepare them for life-long learning, and how our student learning outcomes (SLO's) linked to the College's educational mission. The goal of this year was to designate specific course level activities as assessment tools, and then collect data to assess how our students were meeting this SLO. We collected data across our courses during the Fall 2017 and Spring 2018 semesters and used these results in to institute meaningful change.

Why?

The biology department is currently examining how well our department SLO's link with the College SLO's, and this year we examined how our students develop and demonstrate an understanding of ethical values, life goals, and interpersonal skills. In our previous assessment activities we had determined that we needed to build a stronger culture of assessment in our courses and in our department. With this fourth assessment project we continued to develop such a culture by using the same methodology to devise and analyze leaning assessments as we had used for previous SLOs.

How?

All full-time faculty met in August 2017 to discuss how to implement our departmental assessment project for the current year (College SLO #4). In keeping with past semesters we chose to utilize classroom elements (labs, tests, etc.) as assessment tools, which continues to develop our long-term goal of building a culture of assessment in our department. Each course had a designated coordinator, and each coordinator was tasked with identifying an assessment tool and submitting a plan of how this tool was to be used to assess SLO#4. We as a department consulted our SLO map, which connects the college SLO's to our department SLO's, which in turn are linked to course specific SLO's. From our course specific SLO's we selected coursework-based assessment tools. Each coordinator was the responsible for analyzing the results of their assessments and reporting back using a standardized form. These results then served as the basis for potential changes to be implemented in the spring 2018 semester as necessary. For classes that did not meet the designated success criteria an intervention was designed, implemented, and analyzed in the Spring 2018 semester. For those courses that met their success criteria the assessment was repeated and analysis to confirm the utility of the chosen classroom task.

What we found

The goal of this project was to collect data in order to assess how our students are meeting SLO#4 (develop and demonstrate an understanding of ethical values, life goals, and interpersonal skills). In our Fall 2017 semester, the majority of our courses met their success criteria and no interventions were planned. However, we did look to see if our success rates persisted in these classes by reexamining Spring 2018 data using the same assessments. For those courses that did not require an intervention and for classes that required an intervention this semester we examined if the planned interventions worked as intended.

For Bio 121 a lab on the scientific method was used in measure SLO4. From approximately 500 students who participated over 99% passed this activity. As such no interventions are planned for Bio 121 in the spring. An examination of data in Spring 2018 confirmed the success rate for Bio 121 students. For Bio 122 a presentation activity was selected as an assessment. Upon analysis students in Bio 122 met the success criteria for this presentation assessment so no changes were planned for spring 2018. Bio 122 students had a similar success rate in Spring 2018. In Bio 114, and in Bio 115 a survey of career goals was implemented in the beginning of the semester. For Bio 114 the results indicated that students were thinking about and prepared for lifelong learning and as such no intervention was required. However, in Bio 115 the results were lower than the selected benchmark so a revised survey is being prepared for the spring 2018 semester. A revised survey was administered in Bio 115 in the spring, and results were higher regarding student response, meeting the success criteria for SLO4. Bio 119 students were asked to prepare a short paper regarding ethical values in relation to the environment. In the Fall 2017 semester students met the success criteria for this assessment so no interventions were planned. Spring 2018 data was also consistent for Bio 119. For Bio 226 and Bio 227 these classes are currently under revision in regards to course SLOs, lecture content, final exam questions, etc., and as such there were no selected assessments until these activities are complete. Finally, for Micro 233, a lab was selected to serve as an assessment tool. This particular lab involved the development of skills related to using a microscope, which will carry over to other courses and/or careers in the scientific field. The success rate for this lab was higher than the selected benchmark rate in Fall 2017 so no further interventions are required. An analysis of Spring 2018 data was similar, again indicating no intervention was required.