

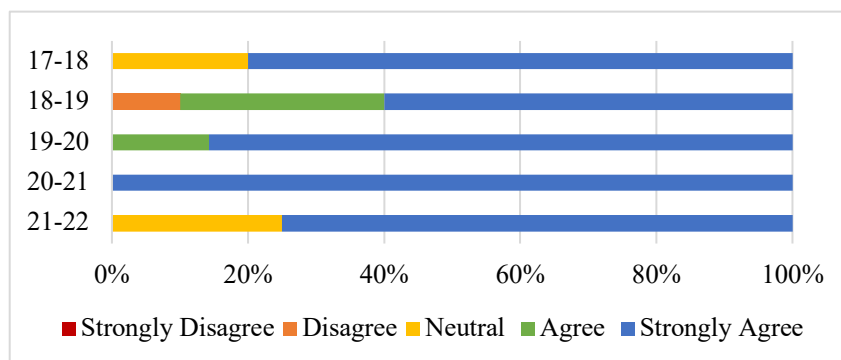
Environmental Studies Assessment Report 2021-22 Academic Year

In accordance with the Environmental Studies (EVST) Student Assessment Plan (SAP), we evaluated EVST Program Learning Goal 3 at the completion of the 2021-22 academic year. This goal states that students should be able to “*describe world views and values that guide humans as they interact with the natural world*”. To accomplish this assessment, we used three instruments from our 2020-2021 SAP: the senior survey (indirect), the thesis capstone rubric (direct), and a holistic senior assessment (direct) accomplished via a discussion between the EVST faculty during our annual assessment meeting.

Indirect Assessment: Senior Survey

One question on the senior survey specifically addresses EVST Program Learning Goal 3 (LG3). Students are asked to respond, on a five-point Likert scale, to “*I feel that the Hendrix College Environmental Studies curriculum has taught me to describe world views and values that guide humans as they interact with the natural world.*” There were seven graduating seniors in 21-22, and four completed the survey. We have included the previous four years for comparison in the table and figure below.

Year	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree	Surveys Completed	Number of Seniors	Percent Responded
2017-18	0	0	1	0	4	5	6	83%
2018-19	0	1	0	3	6	10	12	83%
2019-20	0	0	0	1	6	7	9	78%
2020-21	0	0	0	0	2	2	6	33%
2021-22	0	0	1	0	3	4	7	57%



In addition to the Likert scale question (which we ask every year for each learning goal), we also asked students to expand on their response for the specific learning goal being assessed that year. The following bullets are the open responses we received.

- I said "strongly agree" because I feel that the major does a good job of conveying this across its many disciplines. Environmental Philosophy helps you understand the names for and theory behind many attitudes towards nature, Microeconomics and Environmental Economics help you understand how those attitudes affect, are affected by, and intertwine with questions of economics, markets, and practical living in the world, and Public Policy and Environmental Policy help you understand what our status quo is and how it could change through our current governmental and legal systems. The Colloquium helps you take those interdisciplinary skills and apply them to one specific topic, which you then do yourself in the Senior Seminar
- Didn't get a lot of that

- I think that our conversations around sustainability could have been a little more in-depth. They felt surface level in comparison to our other discussion topics.

In general, the Likert responses indicate that seniors feel that the program meets LG3 well, with 89% of respondents (N=40) in the last five years agreeing or strongly agreeing that the program helped them to describe world views and values that guide humans as they interact with the natural world. In 21-22, 75% of students (N=4) strongly agreed the program met this learning goal. Student comments were mixed, however, with one seeming to misjudge the learning goal we were asking about (the third bullet above appears to be assessing LG4). Of the remaining two responses, one offered limited insight (“Didn’t get a lot of that”) while the other provided rich detail that highlights the value of our diverse courses in helping to achieve this learning goal.

As in previous years, we wish to achieve 100% completion of the senior survey, and so in the future, we will give the students the survey during a class period towards the end of our senior capstone course EVST 497: Senior Seminar. The instructor will explain the importance of feedback on the targeted learning goal. Hopefully this effort will promote more complete and rich feedback.

Direct Assessment: Capstone Rubric

This year, we started our senior capstone course with nine seniors. Seven of the nine completed their theses, with the two incompletes representing one senior who took a leave of absence and another who left Hendrix altogether.

The thesis-based capstone involves writing a thesis on a topic of the student’s choosing, which they develop throughout the fall semester of their senior year. For the seven students who completed the capstone, the two faculty who graded each thesis completed a rubric that scored the students’ achievement of the program’s learning goals through the thesis. The scores ranged from “not achieved = 1” to “mastered = 5”. The two scores for each student were averaged and the numbers of individuals meeting each level of achievement for LG3 are shown in the table below.

Learning Goal 3	Not achieved	Developing	Competent	Proficient	Mastered
Capstone (thesis)	0	0	3	2	2

These data suggest that all of the 2021-22 seniors achieved this learning goal with their thesis at least at the level of competent, with 57% in the proficient or mastered categories. While we would like to see the numbers here shift to only the proficient and mastered levels, it is important to note that it is not a requirement of the capstone to fully meet each programmatic learning goal. Some thesis topics lend themselves to meeting certain learning goals over others. Regardless, we feel it would be helpful for the students to consider how their theses might address the program’s learning goals in order for them to be cognizant of how these learning goals might guide their writing. In the future, we will incorporate an activity into the capstone class in which they will reflect on the learning goals that they will achieve with their theses. This exercise will help them articulate the arguments more clearly with their targeted learning goals in mind.

Direct Assessment: Holistic Senior Assessment

This assessment tool involves a discussion among program faculty of our seniors’ achievement of learning goals throughout their time in the EVST program. This discussion occurred during our annual assessment meeting, which took place on May 4, 2022, and was attended by six of nine faculty. We discussed each senior’s progress towards LG3 in their classes, internship experience, and capstone work, coming to a consensus on their level of achievement. The results of this discussion are presented in the table below.

Learning Goal 3	Not achieved	Developing	Competent	Proficient	Mastered
Holistic assessment	0	0	3	2	2

These results indicate that all our seniors demonstrated at least competency in meeting LG3, again with 57% in the proficient or mastered categories. We hope to move all seniors into the proficient and mastered categories for LG3 (and all learning goals), but we feel targeted assessment at different stages of their EVST major will help us devise a strategy for this objective. Thus, each year we will ensure that questions about the program's learning goals are present on the course feedback forms for our three EVST coded courses, which students take at the beginning (EVST 110: Intro to Environmental Studies), middle (EVST 310: Environmental Studies Colloquium), and end (EVST 497: Senior Seminar) of their EVST major. We will discuss the results of these surveys at our annual assessment meeting each year to help generate ideas for incorporating targeted exercises in EVST-coded courses to help students achieve these learning goals.