

Departmental Assessment Meeting: Report

Please fill out this report based on your department's conversation and return via e-mail to Megan Leonard or Sasha Pfau by March 31, 2017.

Environmental Studies Program

Spring 2017

Summary of past decisions

Changes made since previous HLC visit and reasons for changes:

- Added an interdisciplinary introductory course (EVST 110: *Introduction to Environmental Studies*, 2009)
 - In response to the first consultant visit (2006), EVST 110 was created to provide a common entry point for all students and allow students to explore how the various disciplines inform and contribute to improving environmental issues.
- Created and significantly revised learning goals for major
 - EVST program learning goals were initially too broad to use as effective assessment tools. The revised learning goals are more focused and easier to understand and assess.
- Created EVST Program Executive Committee
 - Suggested by administration and external consultant to efficiently manage and think innovatively about the continued growth of the program

Please note that only three of the major changes since the previous HLC visit have been highlighted here. Many other changes, including curricular changes, have been made as well and are identified in the program's recent external review (2016).

Changes to information gathering about student development:

- Alumni survey collected (fall 2015)
- Facebook page established to share internship opportunities and remain connected to alumni of the EVST program
- Senior webpage developed to highlight graduating seniors activities related to the EVST major
- Continued annual data collection including number of majors, senior surveys, internship location and titles, papers and grades of senior research papers, and professional plans of recent graduates.

Looking forward

Looking forward, the EVST program faculty members intend to focus on the following areas of student development:

- Complete evaluation and revision of the new senior paper rubric. Evaluation of the rubric effectiveness will be determined based on assessment of two papers by all faculty members. Precision of grades assigned will be compared statistically to precision of grades assigned to two previous papers using our previous senior paper rubric.

- Collect information to explore creation of a professional track for the senior thesis. Currently our senior thesis is based on an extensive research paper. However, our recent external consultant suggested looking into possible project-based senior theses. Thus, the program Executive Committee will be tasked to collect information available from other programs to determine if this change is appropriate and what it might look like at Hendrix.
- Continue to identify ways to develop a stronger sense of departmental unity/community. Although current resources prevent implementation of new events and student/faculty activities, the EVST program faculty will explore ideas for how to develop better relationships between students and faculty associated with EVST.

Achieving departmental goals for students

Please see attached EVST program curricular map completed spring 2016. The EVST 497 *Senior Seminar* together with the senior capstone experience acts as a common student experience that allows for a culminating analysis of the interdependence of humans with the natural world. As shown in the attached curricular map, the senior experience successfully addresses each of the recently revised EVST learning goals.

The EVST program provides guidance in the effective use of research and information resources within individual courses (e.g., CHEM 280 includes librarian-guided instruction in scientific literature research methods) and in the Senior Seminar course, including the EVST Senior Survival Guide. Looking forward, we hope (if institutional resources allow) to institute a new *Environmental Methods* course to help bridge the introductory and capstone courses and more formally provide guidance in the effective use of research and information resources.

Your department's role in achieving the college's shared goals for students

Please see attached mapping of EVST Program learning goals to the recently adopted Vision for Student Learning Goals. The current EVST Program learning goals map very well with the goals outlined in the Vision for Student Learning. Specifically, at least three of the EVST Program learning goals help to achieve any given goal outlined in the Vision for Student Learning.