

**Student Learning Assurance Report Requirements
Word Template**

AY 2011/2012

Report Date: 10/01/2012
School/College: USF / A&S
Department/Program: Environmental Studies (ENVA)
Person completing the Report: Gerard Kuperus (Co-Chair)

1. **Overview Statement:** Briefly summarize the student learning assurance activities that were undertaken this academic year, indicating:

- a. which program learning outcomes were assessed this year.
 - b. who in your department/program was involved in the evaluation of the above learning outcomes
- a. 1 and 2
- b. Gerard Kuperus, Melinda Stone, Steve Zvestoski

2. **Please Answer the Following Questions for Each of the Student Outcomes Assessed:**

a. What did you do?

Describe clearly and concisely how you assessed the learning outcomes that were evaluated this year (e.g., measures, research methods, etc.). [please use bullet points to answer this question]

In the last year we have assessed student learning through our Capstone course, ENVA 450. Since it is in principle the final class for our students, it is a natural point to use this course for this purpose. The assessment has been done entirely through observation.

b. What did the faculty in the department or program learn?

Summarize your findings and conclusions as a result of the student learning assurance indicating strengths and weaknesses in student learning demonstrated by this evaluation.

Outcome 1A.

For the most part it was found that students had a strong grasp on how various disciplines came together in ways that provided a stronger lens on which to focus on environmental problems. Many of their projects were sociological based (gleaning, resource sharing, resilience and sustainability

community building) and required them to understand historical precedent and the politics (policies) that they were working with and against to affect change.

80 percent of the class had average achievement of outcome. 10 percent had very good achievement of outcome and 10 percent had poor achievement of outcome.

Outcome 1B.

The class focused on ultra local community building projects: working with the community of NOPNA to help create an Arts, Resilience and Community (ARC) organization, establish a local currency, build a gleaning network that resulted in a monthly free community dinner and host a Sustainability Block Party. By the end of the semester everyone in the class achieved the ability to compare/contrast the causes/consequences of local environmental problems. There were few students who could do this immediately and was disappointed with the performance of about 25 percent of the students through most of the semester. But there was something that finally clicked with them by the last 4 weeks of the semester and all of them reported evidence of success in this realm. Possibly students did not having enough experience in the service-learning realm to understand that actively participating in and creating community projects is as valuable as writing term papers about issues.

Outcome 1C.

Many projects dealt directly with social norms, cultural beliefs, market forces, public policies, historical precedent and social institutions. The majority of the students achieved this outcome through first hand experience. Students had to reckon with our social norms and cultural beliefs around food, public policy shaping preparing meals for groups, and work with multiple social institutions to ensure that their projects achieved success. There were only two students who struggled throughout the semester to achieve these outcomes.

Outcome 2A.

By the end of the semester all students achieved the goal through our multifaceted projects that were based in this very specific place known as NOPNA. Even if the projects were not 100 percent successful

the students were able to critique their outcomes and understand from a socio-cultural perspective why they were not successful and what could be implemented in the future for greater success.

Outcome 2B.

This cannot be assessed through ENVA 450.

Outcome 2C.

Our class was entirely focused on proposing solutions to environmental problems on a small local level. For example: It is a known statistic that 40% of our food supply is thrown away. Solution: Rescue food from the waste stream and make it available to communities who need it. Three students focused on solidifying Bon Appetit's relationship with Food Runners, a SF based non-profit that works with large companies to ensure that their food waste makes it to communities in need, and by the end of the semester there were regular food pick ups that carted our cafeteria's excess food to local homeless shelters. A majority of the class worked on a gleaning project that focused on working with farmers at the five local farmers markets to salvage the vegetables, fruits and other wares that they usually throw out at the end of the day. The students rescued this food and transformed it into delicious meals served to the local community. Both of these projects continue through the efforts of students enrolled in Capstone. Not everyone found a way to integrate into these projects in a comfortable way, but at least 80 percent of the class did very good in this category.

c. What will be done differently as a result of what was learned?

Discuss how courses and/or curricula will be changed to improve student learning as a result of the evaluation. Include a discussion of how the faculty will help students overcome their weaknesses and improve their strengths.

As this report shows, not all learning outcomes can be assessed through ENVA 450 and the report itself shows us that we need to rethink SLA throughout the curriculum. As we are in the final parts of developing a new curriculum, it is at this point also important to rethink how we assure student learning.

One of the problems for a program such as ENVA is that we offer few courses and rely heavily on what other departments offer within the realm of environmental studies.

Many of our foundation courses are thought by ENVS. Having many courses in the curriculum that lie outside of our control makes assessment difficult.

d. What student learning improvement initiatives did you implement as a result of what was learned from this Year's student learning assurance report?

Discuss how courses and/or curricula were changed to improve student learning as a result of the Year's student learning assurance. Include a discussion of how the faculty has helped students overcome their learning weaknesses and improve their strengths.

In our new curriculum we have added several courses that are offered particularly for ENVA majors and minors only. One of those courses that will be in particular important for SLA is the cornerstone course, since it will provide a point after students have concluded the foundation courses and prepare for a specialization in the second part of their studies.

In addition, students will create a portfolio in the cornerstone that they will update every year. We plan to keep track of student learning through the cornerstone and the capstone as well as the portfolios that will include their best work and reflections on their own learning and development.

3. Attach a copy of the components of the department/program student learning assurance plan that have been modified since its initial submission:

- a. Program Mission
- b. Program Learning Goals
- c. Program Learning Outcomes
- d. Program Learning Rubrics aligned with outcomes
- e. Curriculum map that shows the courses that pertain to the outcome

Please return to: Office of Student Learning Assurance by September 30.

Please send your replies as Word attachment (to: wmurry@usfca.edu).

If you have any questions, please contact: William Murry, Director of Student Learning Assurance (wmurry@usfca.edu or x5486).