

2019-2020 Yearly Assessment Report FEEDBACK

MS in Data Science

College of Arts and Sciences (CAS)

Dear Data Science Faculty, the purpose of this feedback report is to share with you our review of your 2019-2020 Yearly Assessment Report for your program. The college greatly appreciates and acknowledges the efforts you and your department took to complete this report, especially in these times of the pandemic. Understand that we consider your submission and our feedback to be part of a continuing learning process for everyone concerned as we work together in an effort to document and strengthen student learning within the college. Please be sure to contact Jack Lendvay, the Faculty Director for the Sciences with any comments or questions that you or your faculty have resulting from this feedback report.

Alternative Report Submission:

The Data Science Faculty chose to submit the alternate report this year that considered a series of questions related to the shift to remote/distance learning as a result of the COVID Pandemic.

I empathize with the challenges you faced with remote instruction during the pandemic. This was truly a challenge for our institution and was never the manner in which we intended to deliver our curriculum. That said, it sounds like your faculty did the best they could with the situation. I doubt this helps much, but comments such as yours were ubiquitous in the College. One thought about developing a sense of collegial interaction among new students might be to consider some Zoom activities, see <https://teambuilding.com/blog/zoom-games>. Additionally, the Energy Systems Management program had some success with social meetings via Zoom, so it might be worth your effort to reach out to that program for additional information. I don't mean to suggest they replace the in-person social interaction that your program is known for, but they can help foster some interaction amongst the students. Of course, this does also lead to further reliance on Zoom and the fatigue that can follow. There are no perfect solutions, but our efforts do matter. The time zone issue is also particularly problematic. I do like the "solution" you found for this issue and want to acknowledge that effort.

I also want to remind you that for this academic year, 2020-2021, the expectation is that some form of direct data analysis resumes. If direct data assessment is not feasible, then it is acceptable to have a year of reflection for your annual assessment. This means that so long as your program assesses each and every PLO at least once per Academic Program Review cycle, it is acceptable to have a periodic reflection of those results that promotes further evaluation and continuous improvement of your PLOs and assessment plans.

Summary

The Data Science graduate programs chose to utilize the alternative assessment procedure for the 2019-2020 academic year. In doing so, they surveyed their students and faculty to elucidate some important understanding of the effectiveness and challenges of remote instruction. These were significant results.

The college and I look forward to your continued assessment and use of assessment results to improve student learning within your program.