IDR Honors College

Learning Outcome 1: Define Problem

Start: 9/1/2018

End: 8/31/2019

Progress: Completed

Learning Outcome Description:

Identify and articulate problems/issues in a way that facilitates critical analysis and takes into account relevant contextual factors, i.e., its historical, ethical, social, cultural and disciplinary dimensions.

1.0: **Honors College Assessment _First Year Final Project, and Honors Theses**

Start: 9/1/2018

End: 8/31/2019

Assessment Method

1. **Data Source:** Honors students' Final First Year Project and Honors Theses. Introductory and Developing Skills of the outcome are expected in the First Year (HON1000, HON PS1010), while Mastery of the outcome is expected for the Theses (HON4998). Scores from first row of the Honors College Assessment rubric are used to assess Learning Outcome 1, second row of the Honors College Assessment rubric are used to assess Learning Outcome 2, the third row of the Honors College Assessment rubric are used to assess Learning Outcome 3, and the fourth row of the Honors College Assessment rubric are used to assess Learning Outcome 4.

2 & 3. **Data gathering and timeline:** Honors First Year faculty collect these projects as a part of normal class requirement at the end of First Year coursework. Departmental Theses advisors report the scores to the Honors College Advisor.

4. **Data Scoring:** Student work are scored by Honors First Year faculty and Honors Theses advisors using the Honors Assessment rubric.

5. **Scales**: The rubric is based on an ordinal scale of 1 – 4, and defines each of the scores from 1 – 4 (Please refer to Honors College Assessment rubric).

6. **Criterion for Acceptable performance:** A score of 2.0 or above on this Learning Outcome is acceptable.

7.   **Review of Results:** Honors faculty conduct an annual review of student performance on this assessment by May 15th each year.

Results

Average score on students' Define Problem from Fall 2018 – Winter 2019 is 3.49 on the 4 point scale. This average exceeds the target of 2.0 for this learning outcome.

Average score on students' Senior Theses Define Problem from Fall 2018 – Winter 2019 is 3.85 on the 4 point scale. This average substantially exceeds the target of 2.0 for this learning outcome.

Actions

The results from the assessment for Define Problem during AY 2018-2019 were down somewhat from the year before, but as in the past, controlling for the coders present during both 2017 and 2018 suggests that there was actually no measurable change in the assessments of those who saw both years.

With the consolidation of the Honors foundation sequence courses into the first semester and the offering of new Honors Foundation Seminars in the second semester, we are making major changes to the overall curriculum based on a collaborative process among the instructors and support staff to combine the best elements of the first and second semester curricula into a single one-semester course while respond to student comments obtained through the new and extremely effective semester-end evaluation forms. These efforts include:

i.   Refocusing the new Honors1000 syllabus to emphasize the identification of problems specifically related to the city of Detroit including a major "problem-identification-based" paper and two 3-week segments devoted to identifying the specific problems related to de-industrialization and segregation in Detroit.
ii.   Repackaging and abbreviating tools related to problem definition, including emphasis on downstream v. upstream thinking and lecture content based on problem-identification in works by Biggs and Helms.
iii. Use of student-based projects for the lectures during the final two weeks during which we will use students' own problem identification as examples.
iv.   Emphasis on engagement with elected officials and topic experts in ways that will expose them to other forms of problem-identification.

It is also important to note that students will continue to learn this skill during the Winter 2020 semester Honors 2020 Foundation Seminars, but because these

courses will not have a common curriculum, we will not be able to assess them with the same techniques. Finally, it is important to note that prompted by both by the limitations of the current assessment techniques and the need to continue high-quality assessment within the new course framework, Honors College Senior Lecturers are working on new assessment techniques and applying for grants designed to improve the quality and relevance of our assessment.

Timeline

Honors faculty will implement the action items listed above throughout AY 2019-2020.

Data for this assessment will be gathered and analyzed again during April – May, 2020.

Reporting

We have discussed this information during the May 2019 Foundation Sequence curriculum meeting and are disseminating this information in our May 2019 Honors staff meeting.

Learning Outcome 2: Analyze Issues Critically and Comprehensively

Start: 9/1/2018

End: 8/31/2019

Progress: Completed

Learning Outcome Description:

Efficiently gather and critically analyze information necessary to identify and/or develop actual and potential solutions to the problem.

2.0:   Honors College Assessment 2_First Year Final Project, and Honors Theses

Start: 9/1/2018

End: 8/31/2019

Assessment Method

1. **Data Source:** Honors students' Final First Year Project and Honors Theses. Introductory and Developing Skills of the outcome are expected in the First Year (HON1000, HON PS1010), while Mastery of the outcome is expected for the Theses (HON4998). Scores from one section of the Honors College Assessment rubric are used.

2 & 3. **Data gathering and timeline:** Honors First Year faculty collect these projects as a part of normal class requirement at the end of First Year coursework. Departmental Theses advisors report the scores to the Honors College Advisor.

4. **Data Scoring:** Student work are scored by Honors First Year faculty and Honors Theses advisors using the Honors Assessment rubric.

5. **Scales**: The rubric is based on an ordinal scale of 1 – 4, and defines each of the scores from 1 – 4 (Please refer to Honors College Assessment rubric).

6. **Criterion for Acceptable performance:** A score of 2.0 or above on this Learning Outcome is acceptable.

7. **Review of Results:** Honors faculty conduct an annual review of student performance on this assessment by May 15th each year.

Results

Average score on students' Analyze Issues Critically and Comprehensively from Fall 2018 – Winter 2019 is 3.33 on the 4 point scale.
This average exceeds the target of 2.0 for this learning outcome.

Average score on students' Senior Theses Define Problem from Fall 2018 – Winter 2019 is 3.72 on the 4 point scale. This average substantially exceeds the target of 2.0 for this learning outcome.

Results showed a drop from the previous academic year but controlling for the lecturers performing the assessment in both years shows only a slight decline.

Action

Although the restructuring of coursework to only a single common semester will significantly reduce the classroom time available for pursuing this goal as a unit, we hope to minimize the impact of time reduction on critical-analysis-related performance through the following adjustments:

i. Focus on critical thinking regarding specific issues related to the development of Detroit (deindustrialization, segregation)
ii. Designing the scaffolded research paper (see below) to require critical analysis skills as part of the paper itself.
iii. Work with the Honors Librarians to refine the annual librarian-research-week small sections to include discussions of fact-checking and information literacy.

As above, it is important to note that the merger of the two-semester Honors course sequence into a single semester will require some consolidation of material but will create additional opportunities for individual Senior Lecturers to expand on this material in the Winter 2020 semester Foundation Seminars.

Timeline

Honors faculty will implement the action items listed above throughout AY 2019-2020.

Data for this assessment will be gathered and analyzed again during April – May, 2020.

Reporting

We have discussed this information during the May 2019 Foundation Sequence curriculum meeting and are disseminating this information in our May 2019 Honors staff meeting.

Learning Outcome 3: Evaluate Proposed Solutions/Hypotheses to Problems
Start: 9/1/2018

End: 8/31/2019

Progress: Completed

Learning Outcome Description:

Develop and/or evaluate potential and actual solutions with detailed consideration given to relevant contextual factors, feasibility, and effects/impacts, and recommend or offer conclusions based on same.

3.0:   Honors College Assessment 3_First Year Final Project, and Honors Theses

Start: 9/1/2018

End: 8/31/2019

Assessment Method

1.   **Data Source:** Honors **s**tudents' Final First Year Project and Honors Theses. Introductory and Developing Skills of the outcome are expected in the First Year (HON1000, HON PS1010), while Mastery of the outcome is expected for the Theses (HON4998). Scores from one section of the Honors College Assessment rubric are used.

2 & 3.   **Data gathering and timeline:** Honors First Year faculty collect these projects as a part of normal class requirement at the end of First Year coursework. Departmental Theses advisors report the scores to the Honors College Advisor.

4.   **Data Scoring:** Student work are scored by Honors First Year faculty and Honors Theses advisors using the Honors Assessment rubric.

5.   **Scales**: The rubric is based on an ordinal scale of 1 – 4, and defines each of the scores from 1 – 4 (Please refer to Honors College Assessment rubric).

6.   **Criterion for Acceptable performance:** A score of 2.0 or above on this Learning Outcome is acceptable.

7.   **Review of Results:** Honors faculty conduct an annual review of student performance on this assessment by May 15th each year.

Results

Average score on students' Evaluate Proposed Solutions/Hypotheses to Problems from Fall 2018 – Winter 2019 is 3.34 on the 4 point scale.
This average exceeds the target of 2.0 for this learning outcome.

Average score on students' Senior Theses Define Problem from Fall 2018 – Winter 2019 is 3.65 on the 4 point scale. This average substantially exceeds the target of 2.0 for this learning outcome.

Again, results showed a substantial increase from the previous academic year but controlling for the lecturers performing the assessment in both years shows an extremely similar results in both years.

Action

While the results from the assessment for Evaluate Proposed Solutions/Hypotheses to Problems during AY 2018-2019 were good, we hope to continue the solid results after consolidation of the courses by making the following adjustments to the changes in coursework:

i. Focus the evaluation process on policies specifically concerning Detroit and incorporate the process into an individual research paper (reducing the possible asymmetry of authorship in the current group-paper on this topic)

ii. Further developing procedures (introduced in AY 2018-2019) for encouraging students to reach out to elected officials and topic and assisting them in using their direct experiences to enrich their paper. (And if possible convince the university's Office of Government Affairs to move its student lobby day to the Fall semester).

iii. Revising and rewording the question for the Scaffolded Research Paper to help students assess the most feasible mode of solving the problems they raise, with focus on upstream and downstream solutions.

iv. Dealing directly with students' difficulties in obtaining responses from policymakers and other policy experts by teaching them methods of reaching and dealing with administrative staff.

As above, the Winter Semester Honors Foundation Seminars may also build upon this basis to expand problem-solving skills.

Timeline

Honors faculty will implement the action items listed above throughout AY 2019-2020.

Data for this assessment will be gathered and analyzed again during April – May, 2020.

Reporting

We have discussed this information during the May 2019 Foundation Sequence curriculum meeting and are disseminating this information in our May 2019 Honors staff meeting.

Learning Outcome 4: Compose Effective Written Arguments

Start: 9/1/2018

End: 8/31/2019

Progress: Completed

Learning Outcome Description:

Compose written arguments that are responsive to the question, analytical (incorporates LO1, LO2, LO3), organized, substantiated and clear.

4.0:   Honors College Assessment 4_First Year Final Project, and Honors Theses

Start: 9/1/2018

End: 8/31/2019

Assessment Method

2.   **Data Source:** Honors students' Final First Year Project and Honors Theses. Introductory and Developing Skills of the outcome are expected in the First Year (HON1000, HON PS1010), while Mastery of the outcome is expected for the Theses (HON4998). Scores from one section of the Honors College Assessment rubric are used.

2 & 3. Data gathering and timeline: Honors First Year faculty collect these projects as a part of normal class requirement at the end of First Year coursework. Departmental Theses advisors report the scores to the Honors College Advisor.

4.   **Data Scoring:** Student work are scored by Honors First Year faculty and Honors Theses advisors using the Honors Assessment rubric.

5.   **Scales**: The rubric is based on an ordinal scale of 1 – 4, and defines each of the scores from 1 – 4 (Please refer to Honors College Assessment rubric).

6.   **Criterion for Acceptable performance:** A score of 2.0 or above on this Learning Outcome is acceptable.

7.   **Review of Results:** Honors faculty conduct an annual review of student performance on this assessment by May 15th each year.

Results

Average score on Compose Effective Written Arguments from Fall 2018 – Winter 2019 is 3.35 on the 4 point scale. This average exceeds the target of
2.0 for this learning outcome but stands out as the lowest of the four indicators.

Average score on students' Senior Theses Define Problem from Fall 2018 – Winter 2019 is 3.70 on the 4 point scale. This average substantially exceeds the target of 2.0 for this learning outcome.

On this indicator also, results showed a substantial increase from the previous academic year but controlling for the lecturers performing the assessment in both years shows virtually no change.

Action

The results from the assessment for Evaluate Proposed Solutions/Hypotheses to Problems during AY 2018-2019 were well above the target and held stable over time. While there does not seem to have been any significant growth in writing quality, student enthusiasm for our new methods seemed significantly higher than in previous years. We will therefore build on last year's change in our new consolidated course by keeping the most successful aspects, and attempting to respond to student concerns about other paper assignments in the following ways:

i. Using the paper-scaffolding techniques of AY 2018-2019 in both major writing assignment of the semester.
ii. Replacing the less-defined and more exploratory first writing assignment of 2018-2019 with a more defined question and a more standard five-paragraph essay format to allow students to feel more comfortable in their first college assignment.
iii. Reworking assignment sheets for greater clarity based on student requests in feedback.
iv. Actually implement the unfulfilled intention from 2018-2019 to adopt new templates student feedback that will allow faculty members to focus on the key aspects of the writing process and to emphasize the formative rather than summative aspects of the assignment (including a "what to do next" focus).

Timeline

Honors faculty will implement the action items listed above throughout AY 2019-2020.

Data for this assessment will be gathered and analyzed again during April – May, 2020.

Reporting

We have discussed this information during the May 2019 Foundation Sequence curriculum meeting and are disseminating this information in our May 2019 Honors staff meeting.