IDR Honors College

Learning Outcome 1: Define Problem

Start: 9/1/2016

End: 8/31/2017

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: 9/1/2016

End: 8/31/2017

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 will be used to assess Learning Outcome 1, second row of the Honors College Assessment rubric will be used to assess Learning Outcome 2, the third row of the Honors College Assessment rubric will be used to assess Learning Outcome 3, and the fourth row of the Honors College Assessment rubric will be used to assess Learning Outcome 4.

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

4. **Data Scoring:** Student work will be 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 will conduct an annual review of student performance on this assessment by May 15th each year.

Results

Average score on students' Define Problem from Fall 2016 – Winter 2017 is 3.21 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 2016 – Winter 2017 is 3.85 on the 4 point scale. This average substantially exceeds the target of 2.0 for this learning outcome.

Action

While the results from the assessment for Define Problem during AY 16– 17 were good, they were slightly down from the year before. Because of the significant turnover in personnel (5 of 8 senior lecturers were new in AY 16—17) the changes may be due to the different standards of new coders (though we try to work on inter-coder reliability). Restricting the assessment sample only to those senior lecturers who had also coded results in the previous two years yields a much smaller loss (-0.1) which represents a slight decline from the previous year (-0.1), returning to the levels of Fall 2014—Winter 2015.

Although the drop is small and the overall quality still very good, we hope to improve student performance on this indicator through the following adjustments:

i. Rework the initial diagnostic composition to allow students to propose more than one problem as a possible topic of group work and then to evaluate which of these is a more promising area for effort.

ii. Introduce new method of group formation that combines group placement of "on-the-fence" students through a "speed dating" process that requires groups to briefly formulate their initial ideas for a project.

iii. Encourage students at multiple points in the semester to explicitly revisit the problem definition.

Timeline

Honors faculty will implement the action items listed above throughout AY 2017-2018.

Data for this assessment will be gathered and analyzed again during April – May, 2018.

Reporting

We have already shared our assessment results with our Honors First Year faculty in May 2017 Course planning meeting. We plan to disseminate this information in our July 2017 staff meeting, with the Honors College Staff members. We also plan to post the results to our program website by August 2017.

Learning Outcome 2: Analyze Issues Critically and Comprehensively

Start: 9/1/2016

End: 8/31/2017

Progress: Completed

Learning Outcome Description:

Efficiently gather and critically analyze information necessary to identify and/or develop actual and potential solutions to the problem in a manner consistent with the problem/issue statement.

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

Start: 9/1/2016

End: 8/31/2017

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 will be used.

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

4.   Data Scoring: Student work will be 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 will 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 2016 – Winter 2017 is 3.26 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 2016 – Winter 2017 is 3.74 on the 4 point scale. This average substantially exceeds the target of 2.0 for this learning outcome.

Action

While the results from the assessment for Analyze Issues Critically and Comprehensively during AY 16 – 17 were good, we hope to improve student performance through the following adjustments:

i. Introduce an online pre-test on US government institutions to allow faculty members to understand the areas where student knowledge is deficient and areas where knowledge is satisfactory. This will allow better allocation of class time.

ii. Introduce new resources for understanding and using methods of critical thinking including brief specific texts.

iii. Help students understand their critical role as integrators of information from multiple sources (readings, lecture, discussion) and providing them with assistance in note-taking (including note-taking and thesis-writing exercises and examples from lecturers of their own note-taking skills)

iv. Rework the assignment schedule to allow senior lecturers more freedom in assigning weekly assignments as needed to deal with problems in issue analysis (including weekly journals, pre-reading questions and in-class problem solving)

v. Work with the Honors Librarian to help students critically analyze their choice of sources and develop a brief video for the second semester Honors PS1010 that revisits the use of sources and analysis of source quality.

      vi.   Revise the discussion of the "yourmorals.org" test (introduced in 2016-2017) to eliminate some unnecessary areas of controversy and deal openly with others.

      vii.   Introduce brief readings to explicitly address modes of civic engagement and "types of citizenship" to help students understand possible options for their own activity.

Timeline

Honors faculty will implement the action items listed above throughout AY 2017-2018.

Data for this assessment will be gathered and analyzed again during April – May, 2018.

Reporting

We have already shared our assessment results with our Honors First Year faculty in May 2017 Course planning meeting. We plan to disseminate this information in our July 2017 staff meeting, with the Honors College Staff members. We also plan to post the results to our program website by August 2017.

Learning Outcome 3: Evaluate Proposed Solutions/Hypotheses to Problems
Start: 9/1/2016

End: 8/31/2017

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: 9/1/2016

End: 8/31/2017

Assessment Method

3.   **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 will be used.

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

4.   **Data Scoring:** Student work will be 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 will 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 2016 – Winter 2017 is 3.15 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 2016 – Winter 2017 is 3.53 on the 4 point scale. This average substantially exceeds the target of 2.0 for this learning outcome.

Action

While the results from the assessment for Evaluate Proposed Solutions/Hypotheses to Problems during AY 16 – 17 were good, we hope to improve student performance through the following adjustments:

i.   Work with the Honors Librarian to develop principles for students to evaluate the quality and partisanship of think-tank research

ii.   Reintroduce readings on social policy (Floors, Safety Nets and Platforms) that were removed in 2015 and compensate by removal of redundant readings on policy (planned for in 2016-2017 but delayed by introduction of new textbook).

iii.   Link students to new policy resources with access to topic-specific policy guides from recently published textbooks.

iv.   Significantly expand the emphasis on policymakers in the following ways:
- Provide additional examples of students as effective advocates in policy questions
- Further develop procedures (introduced in 2016-2017) for encouraging students to reach out to elected officials and assisting them in using their direct experiences to enrich their group paper.
- Continue to work with the university administration to integrate the Honors College with student advocacy trips to Lansing.

v.   Work before class on lecture narrative arc to ensure that key concepts get presented before class time begins to run out.

vi.   Help students understand that class assignments are integrated and cumulative and that lessons learned for early assignments can (and should) be incorporated into subsequent assignments.

vii.   Rework the final section of the course to retitle it "What Would It Take?" (from the current "What Wins?") and emphasize tradeoffs among potential kinds of solutions, culminating in reworded question for the final group paper that would help students assess the most feasible mode of solving the problem (directly comparing solutions with one another).

Timeline

Honors faculty will implement the action items listed above throughout AY 2017-2018.

Data for this assessment will be gathered and analyzed again during April – May, 2018.

Reporting

We have already shared our assessment results with our Honors First Year faculty in May 2017 Course planning meeting. We plan to disseminate this information in our July 2017 staff meeting, with the Honors College Staff members. We also plan to post the results to our program website by August 2017.

Learning Outcome 4: Compose Effective Written Arguments
    Start: 9/1/2016

End: 8/31/2017

Progress: Completed

Learning Outcome Description:

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

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

Start: 9/1/2016

End: 8/31/2017

Assessment Method

4. **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 will be used.

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

4. **Data Scoring:** Student work will be 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 will 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 2016 – Winter 2017 is 3.03 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 2016 – Winter 2017 is 3.79 on the 4 point scale. This average substantially exceeds the target of 2.0 for this learning outcome.

Action

While the results from the assessment for Evaluate Proposed Solutions/Hypotheses to Problems during AY 16 – 17 were well above the target, they were the lowest of the four assessment scores and have shown a slight decline over time. We will therefore take the following significant steps to improve student writing performance:

i. Replace the current papers in both Honors 1000 and Honors PS1010 with a multi-step writing assignment designed to use high-impact practices in the teaching of writing through greater feedback and focus on formative rather than summative assessment of written work. The new process will stretch over 5 weeks for each paper and include:
   a. A brief, one-paragraph assignment in which students choose a topic and a position and explain why.
   b. An annotated bibliography assignment supplemented with an in-class discussion of sources to help students to conduct their research well.
   c. An outline and thesis assignment supplemented with in-class discussion of organizational techniques to help students move forward on their research and formulate their research into coherent argument.
   d. A peer-review exercise supplemented with in-class discussion of review techniques to help students see how peers view their work and to benefit from the experience of reviewing the work of others.
   e. A self-review exercise that builds on the experience of reviewing the texts of others.
   f. A rewriting exercise with in-class discussion of the process of revision to help students understand the need for and benefit from substantial revision (an understanding that is currently lacking).

ii. Provide in both classes improved assignment materials including more comprehensive and refined assignment sheets and a video introduction of each major writing assignment by the instructor.

iii. Provide in both classes improved methods of student feedback that will allow students to be able to calculate where they stand in the course, how much work is done (and at what level of quality) and how much remains.

Timeline

Honors faculty will implement the action items listed above throughout AY 2017-2018.

Data for this assessment will be gathered and analyzed again during April – May, 2018.

Reporting

We have already shared our assessment results with our Honors First Year faculty in May 2017 Course planning meeting. We plan to disseminate this information in our July 2017 staff meeting, with the Honors College Staff members. We also plan to post the results to our program website by August 2017.