Student Learning Outcomes Assessment Summary

Alaska Native Studies, BA
College of Rural and Community Development
AY 2015-16

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1. Assessment information collected
The Alaska Native Studies BA degree moved from the College of Liberal Arts to the College of Rural and Community Development and was integrated into the Rural Development Department in AY 2010/2011. The program has undergone major curricular changes and additional major changes are planned for AY 2016/17 in conjunction with the development of the new Communications Plan. The program is small, but growing, and had two graduates in AY 2016/17.

A. Impressionistic Histories: Impressionistic Histories (form attached) were collected for students in all ANS Core courses for AY 2015/2016. The form collects scores and comments on writing skills, oral skills, cultural communication/human relations skills, quality of work, and critical thinking abilities.

B. Alaska Native Studies Senior Thesis: Currently, ANS students take RD 475 Rural Development Senior Project instead of ANS 478 Senior Thesis because there are not enough students to offer the class. A committee of three faculty reviewed the senior projects and papers produced in RD 475 Rural Development Senior Project, including ANS students enrolled in the course, and assessed them using attached rubric (revised for ANS students).

C. Post Graduate employment survey: Not collected.

2. Conclusions drawn from the information summarized above
A. Impressionistic Histories: Eleven Impressionistic Histories were submitted by faculty teaching ANS Core courses for eight individual students. Scores: 1 – poorest, 2 – poor, 3 – average, 4 – better, 5 – best.

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<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Writing Skills</th>
<th>Oral Skills</th>
<th>Cultural Communications/Human Relations Skills</th>
<th>Quality of Work</th>
<th>Critical Thinking Abilities</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Average across all students assessed</td>
<td>3.7</td>
<td>3.9</td>
<td>4.2</td>
<td>3.8</td>
<td>4.2</td>
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All students evaluated had an overall average score of 3 (average) or better. Fifty percent of students evaluated had an overall average score of 4 (better) or better.

Discussion: This is the first year we have used the Impressionistic History form. While the form was useful for gaining an overall impression of student skills, it was unwieldy and imprecise, as no definition of the scores were provided. While it does not appear that there were large differences in the scales each faculty employed, a new form is being developed that will define each score for each category as well as providing a menu of comment options based on the comments provided this year. For example, some variation of “difficulty following instructions” and “missed deadlines” were common comments for students with low scores. By streamlining the comment process with common problems we will be able to more easily identify areas students need assistance with. We also plan to include an N/A option for use when a class does not cover a particular skill.

B. Alaska Native Studies Senior Thesis: As noted above, ANS students currently take RD 475 Senior Project in lieu of ANS 478 Senior Thesis. RD 475 has a thesis option. Thirteen total senior projects/thesis were assessed by a group of three faculty. The faculty member teaching RD 475 did not use the assessment tool, but participated in discussion. Two students were Alaska Native Studies students. Due to the small number of students aggregate information is not provided. Both ANS students scored acceptable or better on their senior theses.

Discussion: With the small number of ANS majors evaluated it is difficult to identify any trends. Overall, three themes stood out in the assessment of senior projects/thesis: writing issues, subject area issues, and financial understanding issues. Only the writing issue applied to ANS students.

Writing: While the majority of students wrote quite well, many of them do not take the time to edit and proof-read their work. RD 475 was restructured Spring 2015 to include a series of checkpoints as well as more rigorous writing requirements and, anecdotally, it appears that the senior projects were overall of a higher quality this year. The faculty responsible for RD 475 can confirm that students who took the time to meet all project/paper checkpoints through the semester received higher scores in the assessment.

C. Post Graduate employment survey: Not collected. The Graduate survey will be removed from the SLOA Plan. Instead, DANSRD will conduct alumni surveys every three years. This survey will be utilized for program review to demonstrate how the ANS BA graduates are using their degrees, but will not be used to assess student learning outcomes.

3. Curricular changes resulting from conclusions drawn above
As noted above, ANS is undergoing significant revisions at this time. These revisions are not based on the current SLOA report although issues such as writing are being addressed in the new Communications
Plan and associated curriculum. A new SLOA plan for Alaska Native Studies will be developed along with the revisions in the fall of 2016.

4. **Identify the faculty members involved in reaching the conclusions drawn above and agreeing upon the curricular changes resulting**

Jennifer L.L. Carroll, DANSRD Co-Chair  
Catherine Brooks, DANSRD Co-Chair  
Jenny Bell Jones, DANSRD Faculty  
Patricia Sekaquaptewa, DANSRD Faculty