**Institute for the Study of the Environment Assessment Plan/Report**

**\*\*\*UPDATED Nov 3, 2009**

**Step 1: Department/Program Mission**

The Albion College Institute for the Study of the Environment provides students opportunities to develop a breadth of talents leading to rewarding careers and sustainable lifestyles.  By bringing theory to practice and taking the broadest view of the interplay of natural and societal systems, we enrich and expand on traditional liberal arts majors and strive to prepare our students to be effective stewards of the planet.

**Step 2: List goals/outcomes**

Our overarching goal is for students in the program to gain a both a broad understanding of the interdisciplinary nature of environmental issues and a set of knowledge and skills enabling a specific career working to better the Earth’s environment. Specifically we work to:

1)     Help student members identify rewarding environmental careers that utilize their skills and satisfy their ambitions (done through advising,            exploratory course work, seminar, & field trips)

2)     Prepare member students to begin these careers directly or to succeed in appropriate graduate programs. Our goal is for each graduate to          have:

a)     A depth of knowledge appropriate for career of choice (done through course work, especially in major)

b)     An interdisciplinary perspective on the environment (done through course work, especially in the concentration, specific courses (ENVN         201,206, 220), the  E-House, speakers in seminar, & Field trips)

c)      An opportunity to develop leadership and group skills (done through co-curricular projects, field trips, and E-house)

3)     The Institute also strives to enhance the understanding of the environment and human impact on it by all members of the college community        (done through fairs and faculty and student faculty involvement in campus governance)

**Step 3: Identify program components**

The EI Program components consist of the following:

 An academic concentration in either Environmental Studies or Environmental Sciences. These concentrations consist of six courses selected from menus of approved courses to further the individual career objectives.

An internship or research experience

 A bi-weekly seminar

 Research and service projects

 ENVN courses:

* ENVN 102 Introduction to the Environment. Required by studies concentration
* ENVN 201 Field trip seminar "Ecology and Environmental Issues." Not required, a popular option
* ENVN 206 0.5 units Sustainable Living. Required of E-house residents; open to other students.  Not required
* ENVN 220  Economics, Ethics, and Environmental Issues. Required in both Studies and Science concentration

E-House

**Step 4: Select methods/data sources and instruments**

*...that you will use to gather information about whether expected outcomes and learning objective are being achieved. NOTE: You do not need to collect data from the same sources every year. Rather, some kind of assessment rotation will be sufficient (e.g., Years1 & 3, collect data from graduating seniors, Years 2 & 4 collect data from employers and alumni, etc.).*

The following table summarizes our assessment methods and data sources

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| *Goals* | *Where we do it* | *How we assess it* |
|  |  |  |
| *1. Identify Careers* | *Advising*  *Concentration courses*  *Field Trips*  *Seminar*  *Internship* | *Survey*  *Survey*  *Survey and trip journal*  *Survey*  *Survey* |
| *2a. Depth of knowledge* | *Academic major, concentration,*        *field trips (Case studies)* | *Graduate school acceptance, employment*  *(because career goals vary so widely, one standardized test is inappropriate); question on senior survey*      *Journal* |
| *2b. Interdisciplinary Perspective* | *Field trips*  *Projects*  *E-House*  *Internship*  *ENVN 102*  *ENVN 220*    *Sum of all experiences* | *Journal, reading responses*  *None at present*  *Reading responses*  *Paper submitted; seminar presentation*  *In development*  *In development*    *Essay in senior assessment* |
|  |  |  |
| *2c. Development of group skills* | *Projects*  *Field trip* | *Survey of seniors*  *Survey of faculty on trip*  *Student course evaluations* |
| *2c Development of leadership skills* | *Projects* | *Senior survey*  *Student success in extra-campus endeavors* |
| *Education of College Community at large* | *Projects (Fairs)*  *E-House* | *In development* |

Specific instruments include:

 Senior Survey (see below)

Underclass survey (see below)

Courses-specific direct measures:

ENVN 206 Journal evaluation

Others to be developed

**Step 5: Analyze and interpret the data**

See evaluation of ENVN 206 (2009 EI Summary of Assessment).

**Step 6: How will the data collected be used for decision-making, strategic planning, etc.**

*NOTE: You will need to submit a summary report of your findings to the Assessment Committee for review. In that report, please include details of how the data will be used, any program changes that will be made (or not made). Questions to ask yourself/to include in the report are as follows:*

·       *How, exactly, will your data be used to help with program planning and improvement?*

·       *Will your program form a committee to review assessment findings, and make recommendations for change or improvement in a timely manner?*

·       *Will your entire department convene to discuss assessment results and program changes?*

·       *Who will make formal recommendations for curricular or other changes—the chair/head? The committee?*

The Director and associate Director of the institute have been responsible for developing these instruments.  The instruments and outcomes to date have been shared with the advisory committee of the Institute, which presently consists of Wesley Dick, Nels Christensen, Julia Medina, Christopher VandeVen, Tim Lincoln (Institute Director), and Douglas White (Associate Director).  Decisions related to individual classes (ENVN 206) will be made by instructors in those classes.  Decisions to alter the whole program (such as requirements) will be made by the advisory Committee.

***Environmental Institute Assessment Senior Survey***

Name:                                           Major:                           Concentration:  Science/ studies

**General Questions:**

Upon graduation, what is your next step?

What is your ultimate career goal?

What in the Institute did you find valuable, and how did it help you?  Please be as specific about program elements as possible.

What would have improved the E.I experience for you?

Describe in one or two paragraphs any involvement you have had in E.I projects (e-house, highway cleanups, green day fairs, off campus environmental groups, brit-bikes, CERATE etc).  Please include the following:

* How you became involved
* What your role was
* Roughly how much time you spent on activities related to this project
* What you learned by participation

*Scoring rubric:*

*# of projects;# of hours.*

*Evaluation of role in projects. Students ranked as sole leader, co-leader, significant participant, , minor participatant.*

*Our expectation is that roughly 1/3 of students will have played a leadership role in at least one project…(This is what we tell prospective students)*

 Pick one environmental issue that is important to you and to which you were exposed while in the program.  Explain it in the following terms:

* What is the problem, and why is it a problem?
* What are possible solutions?
* What is needed to make them happen?
* Where, if anywhere, do you see yourself fitting in?
* What Albion experiences prepared you understand these dimensions

*Scoring rubric:*

*To what extent does the statement show a real understanding of a significant problem?*

*Is the student aware of the solutions that have been suggested?*

*Does the student understand the ways things are made to happen?*

*Has the student formulated a career plan, and connected to this issue as a professional or a concerned citizen?*

*The last question provides further evidence as to which components of our program affect students the most.*

**How important was the environmental Institute to you in…**

1. choosing to attend Albion College

 \_\_\_ very important;   \_\_ somewhat important;    \_\_\_minor importance;   \_\_ none at all

 2. shaping your goals

\_\_\_ very important;   \_\_ somewhat important;    \_\_\_minor importance;   \_\_ none at all

 3. teaching you about environmental issues

  \_\_\_ very important;   \_\_ somewhat important;    \_\_\_minor importance;   \_\_ none at all

 4. meeting students and faculty with similar values

 \_\_\_ very important;   \_\_ somewhat important;    \_\_\_minor importance;   \_\_ none at all

  Goals of the Institute are to help you identify and prepare for a meaningful career by giving you both a depth of knowledge in your field, group and leadership skills, and an interdisciplinary perspective on environmental issues.  Please help us understand how the following programs contributed to these goals in your case

**Academic major(s)**

*Helped clarify career goals*

\_\_\_ very important;   \_\_ somewhat important;    \_\_\_minor importance;   \_\_ none at all

*Gave depth of knowledge and skills for career*

\_\_\_ very important;   \_\_ somewhat important;    \_\_\_minor importance;   \_\_ none at all

*Gave interdisciplinary understanding*

\_\_\_ very important;   \_\_ somewhat important;    \_\_\_minor importance;   \_\_ none at all

*Gave group and leadership skills*

\_\_\_ very important;   \_\_ somewhat important;    \_\_\_minor importance;   \_\_ none at all

**Environmental concentration (Science of studies)**

*Helped clarify career goals*

\_\_\_ very important;   \_\_ somewhat important;    \_\_\_minor importance;   \_\_ none at all

*Gave depth of knowledge and skills for career*

\_\_\_ very important;   \_\_ somewhat important;    \_\_\_minor importance;   \_\_ none at all

*Gave interdisciplinary understanding*

\_\_\_ very important;   \_\_ somewhat important;    \_\_\_minor importance;   \_\_ none at all

*Gave group and leadership skills*

\_\_\_ very important;   \_\_ somewhat important;    \_\_\_minor importance;   \_\_ none at all

**ENVN 102, 220 (circle ones taken)**

*Helped clarify career goals*

\_\_\_ very important;   \_\_ somewhat important;    \_\_\_minor importance;   \_\_ none at all

*Gave depth of knowledge and skills for career*

\_\_\_ very important;   \_\_ somewhat important;    \_\_\_minor importance;   \_\_ none at all

*Gave interdisciplinary understanding*

\_\_\_ very important;   \_\_ somewhat important;    \_\_\_minor importance;   \_\_ none at all

*Gave group and leadership skills*

\_\_\_ very important;   \_\_ somewhat important;    \_\_\_minor importance;   \_\_ none at all

1a. How many field trips did you participate in?

**ENVN 201 field trips**

*Helped clarify career goals*

\_\_\_ very important;   \_\_ somewhat important;    \_\_\_minor importance;   \_\_ none at all

*Gave depth of knowledge and skills for career*

\_\_\_ very important;   \_\_ somewhat important;    \_\_\_minor importance;   \_\_ none at all

*Gave interdisciplinary understanding*

\_\_\_ very important;   \_\_ somewhat important;    \_\_\_minor importance;   \_\_ none at all

*Gave group and leadership skills*

\_\_\_ very important;   \_\_ somewhat important;    \_\_\_minor importance;   \_\_ none at all

**Involvement in EI co-curricular programs**

*Helped clarify career goals*

\_\_\_ very important;   \_\_ somewhat important;    \_\_\_minor importance;   \_\_ none at all

*Gave depth of knowledge and skills for career*

\_\_\_ very important;   \_\_ somewhat important;    \_\_\_minor importance;   \_\_ none at all

*Gave interdisciplinary understanding*

\_\_\_ very important;   \_\_ somewhat important;    \_\_\_minor importance;   \_\_ none at all

*Gave group and leadership skills*

\_\_\_ very important;   \_\_ somewhat important;    \_\_\_minor importance;   \_\_ none at all

**Internship/research experience**

*Helped clarify career goals*

\_\_\_ very important;   \_\_ somewhat important;    \_\_\_minor importance;   \_\_ none at all

*Gave depth of knowledge and skills for career*

\_\_\_ very important;   \_\_ somewhat important;    \_\_\_minor importance;   \_\_ none at all

*Gave interdisciplinary understanding*

\_\_\_ very important;   \_\_ somewhat important;    \_\_\_minor importance;   \_\_ none at all

*Gave group and leadership skills*

\_\_\_ very important;   \_\_ somewhat important;    \_\_\_minor importance;   \_\_ none at all

**Academic Advising in major department**

*Helped clarify career goals*

\_\_\_ very important;   \_\_ somewhat important;    \_\_\_minor importance;   \_\_ none at all

*Gave depth of knowledge and skills for career*

\_\_\_ very important;   \_\_ somewhat important;    \_\_\_minor importance;   \_\_ none at all

*Gave interdisciplinary understanding*

\_\_\_ very important;   \_\_ somewhat important;    \_\_\_minor importance;   \_\_ none at all

*Gave group and leadership skills*

\_\_\_ very important;   \_\_ somewhat important;    \_\_\_minor importance;   \_\_ none at all

**Academic advising from EI**

*Helped clarify career goals*

\_\_\_ very important;   \_\_ somewhat important;    \_\_\_minor importance;   \_\_ none at all

*Gave depth of knowledge and skills for career*

\_\_\_ very important;   \_\_ somewhat important;    \_\_\_minor importance;   \_\_ none at all

*Gave interdisciplinary understanding*

\_\_\_ very important;   \_\_ somewhat important;    \_\_\_minor importance;   \_\_ none at all

*Gave group and leadership skills*

\_\_\_ very important;   \_\_ somewhat important;    \_\_\_minor importance;   \_\_ none at all

**Compared to other programs at Albion, how important was the Institute to you**:

  \_\_\_ very important;   \_\_ somewhat important;    \_\_\_minor importance;   \_\_ none at all

***Environmental Institute Assessment Survey all Students***

Name:                                           Major:

 Year:  first    sophomore   junior   senior    Concentration: (Science or Studies)

**General Questions:**

What are your educational objectives and career goals?  (Tell us where you stand, and any uncertainties you may have.  If you are deciding among options, briefly describe what these are)

*Scoring rubric:*

*Responses are scored by level of specificity.*

*We expect to see students become more specific throughout their four years*

*We also expect to see that 90% will have specific career or graduate degree plans upon graduation*

In order to clarify or achieve these goals, what do you presently see as your biggest needs?

*Scoring:*

*This question is intended to guide us in developing responses to any problems we identify with the measure above.  It will not be scored.*

What in the Environmental Institute do you find valuable, and how does it help you? Please be as specific about program elements as possible.

*Scoring:*

*This is an open ended question intended to show how students perceive our program elements.  We believe that it will be a valuable indirect measure of the extent to which these program elements meet the goals as outlined above. Elements not receiving significant mention in these responses will be scrutinized and modified to better achieve their intended purpose.*

What would improve the E.I experience for you?

*Scoring;*

*This is another question intended to guide us rather than to evaluate specific elements.  It is one way assessment could lead us to new programs, rather than just evaluate existing programs.*

**How important is the environmental Institute to you in…**

1. choosing to attend Albion College

 \_\_\_ very important;   \_\_ somewhat important;    \_\_\_minor importance;   \_\_ none at all

 2. shaping your goals

\_\_\_ very important;   \_\_ somewhat important;    \_\_\_minor importance;   \_\_ none at all

 3. teaching you about environmental issues

  \_\_\_ very important;   \_\_ somewhat important;    \_\_\_minor importance;   \_\_ none at all

4. meeting students and faculty with similar values

 \_\_\_ very important;   \_\_ somewhat important;    \_\_\_minor importance;   \_\_ none at all

**Compared to other programs at Albion, how important is the Institute to you**:

  \_\_\_ very important;   \_\_ somewhat important;    \_\_\_minor importance;   \_\_ none at all

**Please complete the following table, telling us what parts of the EI program mean to you.**

 If you have not yet participated in some of the elements, please check the first column.

For elements you have experience with rank as follows:

1 little or no importance

2 somewhat important, other factors more important

3 important, one of several co-equal factors

4 very important

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | I have not yet participated significantly in this | Helped me select my career | Taught me career specific skills | Showed me the interdisciplinary nature of environmental  issues | Developed my group skills | Developed my leadership skills | Taught me elements of a sustainable lifestyle |
| Major courses |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Advising in major |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Concentration courses |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Advising in EI |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| EI Field trips |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| EI seminar |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Envn 102/220 |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Internship/ research |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| EI Projects |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| E-House |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |