

AY20 Academic Program Improvement Report: Civic Engagement

Composite Report

AY20

n = 86

AY19 Recommendation for Improvement: Programs were asked to follow through on improvements identified in the AY19 AP Assessment: Civic Engagement. Improvement Reports were submitted for six classes, in five disciplines, from three colleges, with a student n of 86: The College of Arts, Humanities, and Social Sciences—IS 401 (n = 14), MUS 445 (n = 3), SOC 403 (n = 16); the College of Science, Technology, Mathematics, and Health Sciences—BIOL 320 (n = 14); College of Business—EMSA 314 (n = 17) and EMSA 415 (n = 22). Improvement Reports for 4 courses assessed in AY19 were not available because the courses were not offered this year—EOU has a two-year rota for many upper division courses. The n of 86 students from across the disciplines and 3 of 4 EOU colleges constitutes a solid sampling.

The EOU Academic Program Learning Outcomes benchmark is a median of 100% of students scoring a 2 or 3 on a 3-point scale for the total number of students being assessed. The AY19 AP Assessment for Civic Engagement reported a 97% median. While not technically meeting the benchmark, most students met the benchmark in the original assessment, which is not uncommon at EOU. Faculty conducting the AY19 assessments nonetheless identified areas to improve, insofar as it is possible for all students to score a 2 or 3. However, the improvements are not easily quantified since they are usually conceptual or procedural in nature. As a result, the reports are qualitative or narrative in form rather than the having the quantitative focus of the original assessments.

Improvements

In the AY20 AP Improvement Reports for Civic Engagement, faculty focused on procedural improvements to increase the number of students performing at the Proficient and Satisfactory levels (scoring 2s or 3s) in order to improve learning. In IS 401, the faculty member increased feedback to students during the drafting process to help them see more clearly how their research needed to include an explicit focus on a “real world” problems in their communities. The approach improved overall focus on Civic Engagement in the students’ capstone research. In MUS 445, the faculty member focused on improving vocal leadership styles insofar as it is possible to do so in the digital environment required by COVID-19 restrictions Spring term. In SOC 403, the faculty member focused on significant reconceptualization necessitated by trying to accomplish authentic Civic Engagement Spring term,

restrained as it was by COVID-19 restrictions for distance learning. Students were able, with the professor's guidance, to connect with managers of local community action agencies themselves focused on responding to the pandemic, thereby giving students a true immersion in an extraordinarily challenging real-world problem. In BIOL 320, the faculty member was not able to have students complete their Civic Engagement assignment, which historically included working with grade school children on ornithology. However, the faculty member worked on a rubric with BIOL and BOT faculty to create a Civic Engagement rubric to be used in the future, which in itself constituted an important conceptual improvement. In EMSA 315 and 415, the instructor focused on assignment design in order to improve the development of student responses to the Civic Engagement assignments, effectively guiding students to more thoroughly analytic and thoughtful explorations. In each of these cases, the participating faculty shared the results of the assessments with program faculty in order to support continual improvements to teaching and learning at the program level. In addition, these are precisely the kinds of procedural and conceptual changes that make for important improvements in teaching and learning.

Program Civic Engagement Verticality

Civic Engagement must be reinforced throughout each program's upper division curriculum after the lower division General Education foundations are established, if it is going to be effectively strengthened for student proficiency and, indeed, mastery. It is important for deans to see how their programs map continuous learning in Civic Engagement in order to focus on areas of improvement or to highlight best practices for other programs needing a model. Integrative Studies (IS) has civic Engagement as central to its mission, an essential component of the students' capstones. Music is by its very nature committed to Civic Engagement, reinforced in every performance-based course. The same may be said for Sociology in terms of its commitment to experiential learning. Political Science and Economics identifies 3 upper division courses that taken together build on the lower division Civic Engagement foundation in order to immerse students in experiential learning related to state and local government, public policy, and legislative politics. Biology likewise builds on its lower division Civic Engagement foundation in its upper division courses in Ornithology and Forest Ecology, with a heavy emphasis on experiential learning as well. Emergency Medical Services and Administration's (EMSA's) mission is coterminous with Civic Engagement. In each case, these academic programs, which have Civic Engagement as a Program Learning Outcome, demonstrate thoughtful design in constructing curricula that demonstrate for students the centrality of Civic Engagement to their disciplines. They build student proficiency through improvements targeted by assessments of Program Learning Outcomes.