

**Cornell College**  
**Departmental / Program Assessment Plan**  
Assessment Project Outline

Department / Program:	Environmental Studies
Person Submitting this Form:	Denniston
Date:	10/13/2011

Outcome(s) Being Assessed:

Understand the complexity of environmental issues. Recognize the historical context through which environmental issues arise, and recognize the cultural context through which we understand environmental issues. Recognize and articulate environmental issues at both broad and refined levels. Nurture an appreciation of the natural world and our connection to it.

Assessment Question(s):

*Given the outcome(s) being assessed, what do we want to find out? What information will be useful to us?*

Given how many students learn something about environmental studies either in high school or through external sources, we would like to know whether our program added significant depth, breadth, or passion to their understanding.

Intended Uses of the Assessment:

*How will the results of the assessment be used? How can we ensure the information will be useful to us?*

Chair of the ENV program (Denniston) will evaluate data and then disseminate among ENV faculty. Particular attention will be paid to questions from ENV science series courses by the faculty teaching those classes (Denniston, McCollum, Teague, Nowak-Thompson) in a meeting arranged by Denniston.

Gathering and Analyzing Evidence:

What is the best way to get the information we need? What evidence already exists? From whom do we need to collect information? Use the grid below – or one of your own making – to outline your plan for collecting and analyzing evidence.

Method to Collect Evidence	Method to Analyze Evidence	Assessment Question Addressed	Timeline
* one method per row	<p>A sample of final exams will be reviewed by the faculty responsible for teaching the ENV science series (Denniston, McCollum, Nowak-Thompson, and Teague).</p> <p>A rubrik will be created by these faculty for evaluating these exams.</p>	<p>To evaluate the understanding of scientific issues, faculty teaching ENV science series will scan final exams from their courses (<i>Environmental Biology, Environmental Chemistry, and Environmental Geology</i>).</p> <p>The following question will be included in all natural science ENV course final exams: “How has your understanding of and appreciation for environmental issues evolved due to your ENV major? Please include reference to specific classes and experience you’ve taken.”</p>	<p>Since Environmental Chemistry was not offered until 2011, this review will not be initiated until 2012.</p>
	<p>Chair of the ENV program (Denniston) will evaluate data and then disseminate among ENV faculty.</p>	<p>Senior survey posing the question “How has your understanding of and appreciation for environmental issues evolved due to your ENV major? Please include reference to specific classes and experiences you’ve taken.” Students will also be asked to map out the evolution of their knowledge of and appreciation for environmental studies.</p>	<p>Will begin in April or May of 2012.</p>

*Method to Collect Evidence: brief description of what will be collected, how, by whom.*

*Method to Analyze Evidence: brief description of how evidence will be analyzed, by whom.*

*Assessment Question Addressed: specify which outcome / question is being addressed.*

*Timeline: when will data be collected and analyzed.*

Interpreting Evidence:

What strategy will we use to make meaning of the results? How will we ensure we use the information? Our plan for interpreting the results and using them to inform our practice is:

In part, how we proceed is predicated on what we find. We will begin by collecting, analyzing and discussing the data and then decide on a future course of action. At this point, because of the wide array of disciplines, experiences, courses, and faculty involved in ENV, it is difficult to anticipate how this might go.

Involvement:

*Who will be involved in this assessment project? What role will each of us play?*

Spread-headed by Denniston (Chair of ENV) but involving all regularly contributing members of the ENV committee.