

Biosciences Report SLOAC Review Comments

Thanks for filing an assessment plan with the SLOAC. We have the following comments for you to consider:

- This department is to be commended for how it examines and uses results. They looked at the results and attempted to identify problem areas (like unclear wording). The pilot survey is a good idea and pointed out potential problems with the rubrics.
- We question if asking students in which classes specific topic areas were covered reflects if they actually learned them or not. Maybe this is a discussion that we should have had when the plan was submitted. We see that the department is also having that discussion. Maybe you could see how performance on this rubric correlates with final grades. If you can establish that connection, it would add validity to this assessment measure.
- For learning outcomes 2 and 6, on the form it says that no proposed action will be taken since it was a pilot survey. However, you indicated earlier that you are looking at revising these rubrics to clarify the wording on some questions. These revisions would qualify as a “proposed action.”
- The Major Presentation Rubric needs some work. Most of the categories have multiple elements in the rubric. For example, the first item, “Contact and planning with advisor” has four elements in it: whether the student met with their advisor, was on time, was prepared, and whether the advisor’s evaluation form was completed. A student could have done some of these but not all. Or, they could have done everything right, but the advisor got busy and didn’t hand in the form. Almost all of the items have these multiple elements. What might help is just to connect the elements with “or.” The rubric author did this on a few of them. I think that would solve the problem. (Except for that one where the student is being judged for what their advisor does or doesn’t do.)
- Your idea of applying for an Instructional improvement grant seems valid. We have worked with IT to put several rubrics on line. They do not charge for doing this service, but there is some time that has to be dedicated to supervise and test the rubric once it’s online.

We do not need anything more from you for this year.

Your next report will be due on October 31, 2008.

If you wish to apply for an Instructional Improvement Grant, the deadline is January 31, 2008. Complete details are available at www.mnstate.edu/assess, click on Grants.

If you have questions, please contact Dr. Jean Sando at sandoje@mnstate.edu.