

**BIENNIAL PROGRAM STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES ASSESSMENT REPORT FORM –
ASSESSMENT COMPLETED IN AY2023-2024 (Due to the dean on November 15)**

Submission date: 11/4/2024

Assessment Plan covered in this report: Conservation Ecology OEC

College: College of Arts and Sciences

Campuses where the program(s) is delivered: Anchorage KOD KPC MSC PWSC

Submitted by: Deborah Boege Tobin, Professor of Biological Sciences, ddtobin@alaska.edu

- 1. Please list and number the Program Student Learning Outcomes your program assessed in the past academic year. For each outcome, indicate one of the following: Exceeded faculty expectations, Met faculty expectations, or Did not meet faculty expectations.**

We assessed PSLOs 1, 3 & 5 in Sp23, and 2, 4 & 6 in Sp24.

1. Describe and apply basic tenants of conservation ecology and climate change - Met faculty expectations.
2. Design and implement a research project to examine applied ecology in the field - Exceeded faculty expectations.
3. Describe current issues associated with ecological conservation in Alaska - Met faculty expectations.
4. Demonstrate common field and lab skills used by conservation ecologists, as well as ways to communicate science across diverse audiences, including ecologists - Met faculty expectations.
5. Describe effective ways to convey scientific information to a variety of audiences - Met faculty expectations.
6. Demonstrate effective ways to share science across written, audio, and video platforms, both online and in person. - Met faculty expectations.

- 2. Describe what your assessment process was last year for these Program Student Learning Outcomes, including the collection of data, analysis of data, and faculty (and other, e.g., advisory board) conversations around the findings. (1000 words or less)**

To assess PLSO 1, 3 & 5, Semester by the Bay (SBB) program staff provided entrance statements from each student, and program faculty collected artifacts from BIOL A483/484 and grade data from BIOL A446, A473, and ENGL A278 (only in Sp24 when this ENGL course was first added). The entrance statements, grade data, and artifacts were reviewed and discussed by program faculty and staff as a group. The entrance statements were reviewed by the Biological Sciences Assessment faculty.

For PSLO 2, 4 & 6, presentations and artifacts were collected from a few different courses including BIOL A484, A495A, BIOL A492A (in Sp23), and ENGL A278/A278L (in Sp24). These deliverables were reviewed and discussed by program faculty as a group.

3. What are the findings and what do they tell the faculty about student learning in your program? (1000 words or less)

All students in Sp23 and Sp24 SBB OEC Conservation Ecology programs took most of the BIOL and ENGL courses. In Sp23, of the 7 students enrolled in OEC courses, 4 took all of the program courses and earned the OEC; 3 students only enrolled in some of the courses required to earn the OEC, and therefore did not apply for graduation. However, all students successfully completed the courses in which they were enrolled that are a part of this OEC, and the GPA for all students in all courses, whether or not they earned the OEC, was just below 4.0. In Sp24, 9 students were in the program, with 7 earning this OEC (GPA just below 4.0); one student did not apply for graduation and failed one course (ENGL A278L), and another took several Incomplete Grades after leaving Homer before Spring Break due to personal reasons. From reviewing the artifacts from BIOL A446, BIOL A473, BIOL A483, and ENGL A278/L and presentations from BIOL A484, BIOL A495A and ENGL A278/L it is evident that students are achieving the PSLOs for this OEC. For example, the pass rates for BIOL A473 has been 100% with a class GPA of 3.85, and the pass rates for BIOL A484 (minus the one Incomplete) has been 100% with a class GPA of 3.84. The findings indicate to the faculty that students who come to Homer to enroll in the SBB program and enroll in the Conservation Ecology Occupational Endorsement Certificate are well prepared and perform well.

4. Based on the findings, did the faculty make any recommendations for changes to improve student achievement of the Program Student Learning Outcomes? Yes

- i. Please describe the recommended action(s), what improvements in student learning the program hopes to see, the proposed timeline, and how the program will know if the change(s) has worked. If no recommendations for changes were made, please explain that decision. (1000 words or less)**

In using the new biennial cycle, we opted to assess the past two years rather than assessing year one and making improvements in year two because this is only the second-year reporting cycle for this OEC and using the assessment plan and we assessed all of the PSLOs both times, we now notice some areas for improvement in the assessment process. First, program faculty are creating specific program level rubrics rather than course specific rubrics to assess the PSLOs. The improvement in student learning outcomes is more about alignment of objectives to assessment. We will condense the 6 PSLOs into 3 or 4 PSLOs before Spring 2025. Especially now that we replaced BIOL A492A (Undergraduate Seminar) with ENGL A278/A278L (Sharing Science with Diverse Audiences), PSLOs can be streamlined. Also, the changes that we are proposing are to get a more global sense of the student achievement of the PSLOs, and as such we don't expect student learning to deviate, instead we anticipate a better lens to view the student experience.

5. In the past academic year, how did your program use the results of previous assessment cycles to make changes intended to improve student achievement of the Program Student Learning Outcomes? Please check all that apply.

- Course curriculum changes
- Course prerequisite changes
- Changes in teaching methods
- Changes in advising
- Degree requirement changes
- Degree course sequencing
- Course enrollment changes (e.g., course capacity, grading structure [pass/fail, A-F])
- Changes in program policies/procedures
- Changes to Program Student Learning Outcomes (PSLOs)
- College-wide initiatives (e.g., High-Impact Practices)
- Faculty, staff, student development
- Other
- No changes were implemented last year. *(If no options above were selected)*

If you checked "Other" above, please describe. (100 words or less)

6. Do you have any information about how well these or other past improvements are working? Are they achieving their intended goals? Please include any data or assessment results that help you demonstrate this. (1000 words or less)

The changes noted in #4 improved the alignment between PSLOs and the assessment process. Changes in Sp24 with BIOL A492A (Undergraduate Seminar) replaced by ENGL A278/A278L, provided additional changes which we hope will further improve alignment in Sp25. Program faculty modified course assignment scheduling to align with EL experiences, reporting and presentations which permitted students to more fully engage in all course work with less overlap, especially when in the field and lab for the four-credit EL and one-credit ENGL A278L, and engaged in their internships. Program faculty continue to discuss ways we can improve the OEC to achieve goals as outlined in the PSLOs.

DEAN SECTION (Due to the program on January 15)

- 1. Based on the program's responses above, what guidance and support do you have for the program moving forward? (200 words or less)**

The program is encouraged to make the changes to the program and the assessment process as described above.

- 2. Discuss what the program is doing particularly well in terms of its processes for the assessment and improvement of student learning, for example, the use of a common rubric or prompt, a signature assignment, etc. (200 words or less)**

The program is commended for its yearly assessment and rotation of SLOs assessed each year.

Dean's signature:

Jenny McNulty

Date: 1/13/2025