2012-2013 Assessment Report  
Program: Biological Sciences, MSNT

College of Sciences & Mathematics

Biological Sciences

Biological Sciences, MSNT

Expected Outcome 1: MS-NT Level of Performance in Biology
Auburn MS-non-thesis graduates will demonstrate an advanced understanding of the fundamental aspects of a discipline within Biological Sciences.

Assessment Method 1: Understanding of discipline  
Assessment Method Description
Auburn MS-non-thesis graduates will demonstrate an advanced understanding of the fundamental aspects of a discipline within Biological Sciences as determined by passing a final oral exam given by their advisory committee as well as sponsor survey.

Findings
100% of MS-NT graduates in 2012-2013 (n=7) displayed an acceptable or higher knowledge of their sub-discipline as indicated by successfully passing their final oral exam as certified by the advisory committee and from assessment from major professor surveys. Including the last 4 reports (2009-2013) with the current data, 28 of 28 MS-NT students have successfully passed their final oral exam.

We were going to use a new rubric for MS-NT final oral exams similar to the one used for MS-T students but without the questions assessing conducted. We will begin the use of rubrics by the assessing committee members this Spring Semester.

How did you use findings for improvement?
A summary of these results are presented to the faculty annually. The degree program was discussed at a Faculty retreat Spring 2010 to determine if a name change for the degree was necessary. Based on the continued success of the program (in terms of our graduates successfully applying to professional and graduate schools), it was voted viable by the faculty. The newest data were presented to the faculty in a retreat in Spring 2013. The degree is doing well and there did not seem to be much impetus to change the name.
Additional Comments

None

Assessment Method 2: Application of scientific training

Assessment Method Description
MS NT graduates will demonstrate a MS- NT level proficiency to such a degree as to be successful in obtaining employment within their chosen field of study or emphasis area, or be able to enter a post-graduate program to pursue a higher degree within their research area within 2 years of graduation. This goal will be determined by an exit survey by the graduate and her/his sponsor and by annual survey of faculty mentors.

Findings
According to exit surveys of graduates and mentors, 57% of MS NT graduates in 2012-2013 (n=4 of 7) are continuing their education in a professional school or are employed in the biological field. Two are in Veterinary School, one is teaching high school, one is employed in the biological field, two are looking for work, and one is opted to be a stay at home mother.

In the past two years, 47% (N=17) are continuing in some aspects of biology or biological education or instruction.

How did you use findings for improvement?
The percentage over the last 2 years of fate of our graduates is lower than in previous years when they have previously averaged 87% of MS-NT graduates continuing on in their field by either being employed or seeking higher education. Fate of MS-NT graduates are reported annually to the faculty and we continue to try to track alumni. The Graduate Program Office has changed secretaries twice in 2 years and we will try to track and communicate more with students as they are about to graduate as to their future careers.

Additional Comments
We had lost our new Graduate Secretary last year but she has now been replaced (by our former Graduate Secretary) and we have reinstituted our tracking records and follow-up.
Assessment Method 3: Quality Educational Experience

Assessment Method Description

Students will undergo quality educational experiences within a discipline of Biological Sciences through formal lecture settings, seminars, laboratory based instruction, and/or individual research experiences. Graduates will be surveyed and asked to score their academic program on the extent it met or exceeded their expectations.

Findings

5 of the 7 MS-NT graduates completed an exit survey. All 5 of the students who completed the form indicated that their training and course work "Exceeded Expectations"

How did you use the findings for improvement?
It seems as though we are doing a good job providing a Quality Educational Experience.

We will try to be better in insuring MS-NT graduates fill out their exit survey to provide us feedback.

Additional Comments