

Rob King Taking Time for Teaching Seminar Notes
April 14, 2017

Observing classes, Canvas sites—getting the experience of the students and seeing what is going on in the classes.

Alignment between stated learner outcomes in the majors and what is in the courses. So far, see that the alignment is pretty good. Here, we can talk about what the learner outcomes are, are they the right ones, and how to assess that on an ongoing basis (which the university requires!)

OSU history of recognizing that scholarship is important, but that's not all we do (going back to Bud Weiser). People around the country know that OSU has a history of dedication to educational goals for students.

- Introduction slide—see it in
 - Bacc Core requirements
 - Individual Course Proposals—learner outcomes
 - Majors—Annual learning outcomes assessment process

How appropriate are the stated learner outcomes for the ABM and EEP majors?

- Handout of learner outcomes for our majors, some others for comparison, competing programs such as Colorado State and others
- Be aware of them—of think strategically about teaching, these are the mission or vision and required for accreditation—10 year review coming up in 2018
- ABM Outcomes
 - What does it mean to explain micro at intermediate level?
 - What does it mean to explain macro at principles level?
 - Same comments about law in EEP
- EEP Outcomes
 - Explaining micro & macro discussion here too.
 - Emphasis on legal system is unique compared to other programs—not in their learning objectives, not as many courses
 - Law person common in the past, but some other places in the country have tenure-track professors specifically in ag law, others
- Compare to Economics at OSU—4 outcomes (compared to 8 for us)
 - As a faculty, we should talk about what these mean, think about who communicating to, understand what we are intended to do
 - OSU Econ undergrad program has expanded a lot in recent years
- Compare to OSU Majors:
 - Political Science at OSU—3 outcomes
 - Fisheries and Wildlife—6 outcomes, very long descriptions—600 majors there, think some could be better served in EEP
 - Focus on communication, leadership, etc. good.

- Business majors—a whole (20?) learner outcomes, all long descriptions—seems to do with accreditation requirements, maps to core courses or specialization
- Ag Sciences—only 4 outcomes, very broad major
- Compare to Colorado State—3 but wordy, same outcomes for both ABM and EEP because written very generically
 - Rob thinks that it's good to have distinctions between our majors, and what the distinctions are is pretty clear for us

ABM and EEP outcome questions:

- Are they too detailed? Drop any?
 - Macro
 - Can't be too broad—some of the very general ones are so vague that you could use anything to show that they are being met. Ours are specific enough to demonstrate with detail.
 - If they are broad, then the faculty has a more detailed idea/guidance about what exactly they mean—but that is not viewable by outsiders (university, student, etc.)
- Do they adequately communicate what we are trying to accomplish:
 - Across University?
 - To prospective or current students?
 - Rob thinks we could have more majors and certainly more minors
 - To employers?
 - These as “value proposition” that tell others what we are going to do—why they should buy into our “product” as a major, or an employer looking at our majors.
 - James—maybe too vague for that, and not as effective as they could be
 - ABM: How much is it an econ major, and how much is it a business major? Minnesota went econ and tried to sell it as differentiating, because business classes tend to be broad and not deep in econ
- Are they the basis for a strategy that will make it possible to grow majors?
 - ABM: Size seems to work
 - Idea of how to attract very good ag sciences students, because would want the good ones—and to grab the rest as minors
 - EEP seems too small based on core class enrollment; the service classes work
 - Dave and James talking about 250/251 as recruitment classes; Dave thinking about honors college 250 to get the good students hooked in EEP
 - Rob: 250 is fantastic, 253 is good, 351 is great, but we aren't seeming to capture them as majors
 - James: Many of the transfer students are taking principles classes at Linn-Benton, so they don't get 250 or 251 here and we don't get a chance at them
 - Ask question of students about why they choose the major—no one seems to be doing that.

- Hypothesis from the 121 Discovering AEC class—we lose them as sophomore and juniors, seems like the math or challenge comes midway and they are not rewarded topically until later, and they leave.
 - Common in engineering—but maybe it’s harder to see the employment opportunities in our majors versus in engineering, especially with EEP
 - Community building with majors—lunch time, and space to open up and provide a comfortable space for students to gather
- Is there a shared understanding among faculty about what each outcome “means” in practice? How do we know if we have done it?

Assessment process—link learning activities and archive student work to show that students are meeting the learning outcomes for a class, and for the major. Take existing activities like problem sets, tests, etc.—if students are doing well on those things, then we are meeting our outcomes.

How well do required and elective course offerings help students achieve stated outcomes?

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Courses do support the learner outcomes, but students don’t seem to see how the course objectives relate to learner outcomes for the majors

- They seem to forget concepts and have to re-learn each time—so review in the following classes with more sophistication, but are they really getting it?
- What is mastery of micro, and what does that look like for *applied* econ students? Different from econ student?
- Math and data “literacy” are perceived as a problem by both students and faculty.
 - How to communicate about quantitative information—building those skills for our students—could be done intentionally
- From the handout on the elasticities questions—
 - Idea of sharing these around the department so that you can ask a question that they saw in an earlier class to make sure that they can do that and remember it, then build on it later

Assessment of learner outcomes—5-year rotation to assess a learner outcome

- Has been indirect assessments—if students pass a key class like 311, then have met particular learner outcome
- Direct assessment—learner activities instead of a whole course—pick a question on a test and connect it to a learner outcome, and set a benchmark, such as 80% of students pass the particular question
 - Is the question a good question?
 - What other questions do we have to look at? How many?
 - Courses that are later in the program, a few courses per major outcome, report every 3 years...
 - Handout of elasticities questions from different courses as examples

- Does it really capture what we want students to know?
- What is the benchmark?