

## EWU Programmatic SLO Assessment

AY 2015-16 and “Closing the Loop” for AY 2014-15

Degree: Bachelor of Arts in Urban and Regional Planning

Major/Option: Urban and Regional Planning

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### Part I – Program SLO Assessment Report for 2015-16

**Part I – for the 2015-16 academic year:** Because Deans have been asked to create College-Level Synthesis Reports annually, the template has been slightly modified for a) clarity for Chairs and Directors, and b) a closer fit with what the Deans and Associate Deans are being asked to report.

1. **Student Learning Outcome:** The student performance or learning outcome as published either in the catalog or elsewhere in your department literature.

The key focus for the last three years has been in response to the Planning Program self-study process and development and move to implement a new strategic plan. The BA Urban and Regional Planning SLO includes “... **possesses the skills needed to practice planning in a variety of venues in ways consistent with planning ethics.**”

The first component of this SLO is that students must gain proficiency in the skills needed to practice planning in a *variety of venues*. The faculty identified Plan Making as a critical framework for the skills needed for planning practice, and that our program needed to refocus on the basic processes and skills of plan making, the core of our profession. A Strategic Plan was adopted by the faculty in Spring, 2015, centered on the basic skills and application of professional planning practice for local communities.

**Mission: The mission of the Urban and Regional Planning Programs at EWU is to provide quality professional planning education, research, and community service with an emphasis on problem solving at the local level.**

**Goal 1. Provide a quality applied professional planning education for both graduate and undergraduate students that emphasizes planning action at the local and regional level.**

During AY 2014-15 following our successful PAB reaccreditation, we continued to restructure our program with an emphasis on the Draft Strategic Plan, and identified Plan Making, the application of professional level planning practices and techniques, as a renewed focus for the EWU Planning Programs. For 2015-16 faculty identified a need to continue to address this key SLO and continue curricula improvement and assessment around Plan Making.

The previous AY adoption of a common text across eight classes produced positive response (Berke, P.R., Godschalk, D.R., Kaiser, J.K. and D.A, Rodriguez. (2006). *Urban Land Use Planning, Fifth Edition*. Urbana: University of Chicago Press).

2. **Overall evaluation of progress on outcome:** Indicate whether or not the SLO has been met, and if met, to what level.

- \_\_\_\_ SLO is met after changes resulting from ongoing assessments, referencing assessment results from the previous year to highlight revisions;
- XX SLO is met, but with changes forthcoming;
- \_\_\_\_ SLO is met without change required

3. **Strategies and methods:** Description of assessment method and choices, why they were used and how they were implemented.

a. Assessment of selected classes based on quality of student group project and faculty assessment of student competencies related to Plan Making are:

- i. PLAN 261 Community Development. Expand and add design graphic component into this class. Measurement: Quality of Graphic Presentation in Planning Application Project and percentage of students demonstrating competency.
- ii. PLAN 300 Expanded Planning Graphics to incorporate research/presentation project. Quality of final presentation project and percentage of students demonstrating competency in presentation skills.
- iii. PLAN 301 Expanded GIS application incorporated into Demographic, Social and Economic methods research. Measurement: percentage of students demonstrating competency in skills of analysis of integrated spatial data and GIS with data analysis methods.
- iv. PLAN 440 Land Use Planning Expanded GIS applications for text based hypothetical city assessment in relation to critical factors for growth including sustainability, the environment, and the economy. Measurement: Quality of final product and percentage of students with competency.
- v. PLAN 490 Capstone/Planning Studio. Improvement to studio process and plan/presentation product. Measurement: Quality of final product and percentage of students with competency.

4. **Observations gathered from data:** Include findings and analyses based on the strategies and methods identified in item #3.

a. Findings. Assessment of selected classes based on quality of student group project and faculty assessment of student competencies related to Plan Making are:

- i. PLAN 261 Community Development. Approximately 15 hours of class time was dedicated to Plan Making and mapping/presentation skills. Students gained basic skills and produced individual and group maps and plans. Quality of final products was greatly improved from the previous years and students became aware of design components in Plan Making.
  - o Assessment of competency for students showed percentages of Excellent 20%, Good 30%, Fair 50%, and Poor 0%.
- ii. PLAN 300 Expanded Planning Graphics to incorporate research/presentation project. Quality of final presentation project and % of students demonstrating competency in presentation skills.

- o Assessment of competency for students showed percentages of Excellent 37.5%, Good 50%, Fair 0%, and Poor 12.5%.
  - iii. PLAN 301 Expanded GIS application incorporated into Demographic, Social and Economic methods research. Measurement: % of students demonstrating competency in skills of analysis of integrated spatial data and GIS with data analysis methods.
    - o Assessment of competency for students showed percentages of Excellent 23%, Good 69.3%, Fair 7.6%, and Poor 0%.
  - iv. PLAN 440 Land Use Planning Expanded GIS applications for text based hypothetical city assessment in relation to presenting and analyzing critical factors for growth including sustainability, the environment, and the economy. Measurement: Quality of final product and percentage of students with competency
    - o Assessment of competency for students showed percentages of Excellent 50%, Good 50%, Fair 0%, and Poor 0%.
  - v. PLAN 490 Capstone/Planning Studio. Improvement to studio process and plan/presentation product. Measurement: Quality of final product and percentage of students with competency.
    - o Assessment of competency for students showed percentages of No Data.
- b. Analysis of findings
- i. Expansion of course focus and activities around Plan Making was successful in both quality of student work and percentage of students who demonstrated competencies with Plan Making skills for the design/methods classes PLAN 300, 301, and for PLAN 440.
  - ii. PLAN 490 has missing data, and it is not clear if the participating faculty covered the Plan Making changes fully, or employed the agreed-upon textbook.
  - iii. In addition, for PLAN 261, the integration of this material was done through involvement of a second faculty, and this provided some distraction for student learning. Graphic and Plan Making skills were enhanced compared to prior years, but future consideration will be given to a separate offering for plan making separate from PLAN 261.
  - iv. Good progress in Plan Making was noted in the PLAN 440 course. As this is a Spring term course, this may in part be the result of efforts in the previous quarters.

**5. What program changes will be made based on the assessment results?**

- a. Describe plans to improve student learning based on assessment findings (e.g., course content, course sequencing, curriculum revision, learning environment or student advising).

- i. We will continue to expand our efforts in the coming year to fully integrate Plan Making across our curriculum. There is a need for a basic Plan Making project application in the first quarter for undergraduate learning. We will explore the options for a new class or changing the order of offerings to create Plan Making earlier in the curriculum.
  - ii. We will continue to maintain Plan Making and spatial analysis with GIS in PLAN 300 and PLAN 301.
  - iii. We will continue to use PLAN 440 as the integrative first application of the textbook around land use analysis using GIS and presentation graphics.
  - iv. We will fully integrate Plan Making processes and the textbook (Berk et al, 2006) as central to PLAN 490. We will continue assessment in these classes during AY 2016/17.
  - v. In addition, we will add PLAN 430 Environmental Planning as part of the initiative for Plan Making through a faculty change that will lead to integration of the textbook integrative applications (theory and practice) and GIS analysis of data.
- b. Provide a broad timeline of how and when identified changes will be addressed in the upcoming year.
- i. We have continued to expand our focus on Plan Making across the curriculum. Assessment of these efforts demonstrates improvement in the quality of planning products in specific classes and an increase in students able to demonstrate competencies in Plan Making.
  - ii. We will continue this effort at least one more year with the addition of Plan 430 and the possible creation of a separate undergraduate class on Plan Making during the first Fall quarter students are enrolled in the program.
  - iii. We anticipate two new faculty hires and we will seek candidates with skills and ability to teach Plan Making and the technologies considered state of the art including GIS and Presentation Graphics software.
  - iv. Our long term direction is to provide our undergraduate students with outstanding competencies in the tools and skills needed in Plan Making as the strength of our undergraduate BA in Urban and Regional Planning.

**6. Description of revisions to the assessment process the results suggest are needed and an evaluation of the assessment plan/process itself.**

- a. Following our PAB Accreditation Self Study (2013-4) our program has developed a Strategic Plan with Vision, Mission and Goals, and we continue to expand our assessment for the program.

- b. In addition to the efforts identified here, all faculty meet together at the end of each year to assess all students in the program according to the areas of knowledge and skills identified by our accrediting agency. A summary of this assessment is posted on our website.
- c. We will continue to work with the Planning Accreditation Board to expand assessment of student learning and all aspects of our program with annual reporting and our annual PAC review.
- d. We continue to examine assessment tools to better create data that can be integrated into an annual report to our Professional Advisory Committee (PAC) and posted on our website.
- e. Our PAC meets four hours with faculty, two hours with students, and completes an annual assessment/review presented back to the faculty along with strategies and actions for improvement around our Strategic Plan.

**NEW: PART II – CLOSING THE LOOP**  
**FOLLOW-UP FROM THE 2014-15 PROGRAM ASSESSMENT REPORT**

In response to the university's accrediting body, the [Northwest Commission on Colleges and Universities](#), this section has been added. This should be viewed as a follow up to the previous year's findings. In other words, begin with findings from 2014-15, and then describe actions taken during 2015-16 to improve student learning along, provide a brief summary of findings, and describe possible next steps.

**PLEASE NOTE:** The university also requests that Deans complete a College-Level Synthesis report, which synthesizes which programs/certificates have demonstrated “closing-the-loop” assessments and findings based on the previous year's assessment report.

**Working definition for closing the loop:** *Using assessment results to improve student learning as well as pedagogical practices. This is an essential step in the continuous cycle of assessing student learning. It is the collaborative process through which programs use evidence of student learning to gauge the efficacy of collective educational practices, and to identify and implement strategies for improving student learning.”* Adapted 8.21.13 from <http://www.hamline.edu/learning-outcomes/closing-loop.html>.

1. **Student Learning Outcome(s) assessed for 2014-15**
  - a. The BA Urban and Regional Planning SLO includes “**possesses the skills needed to practice planning in a variety of venues in ways consistent with planning ethics.**” The key focus for the last three years has been the first component of this SLO, students gaining proficiency in the skills needed to practice planning in a variety of venues...”
  - b. The faculty identified Plan Making as a critical framework for the skills needed for planning practice, and that our program needed to refocus on the basic processes and skills of plan making, the core of our profession.
2. **Strategies implemented during 2015-16 to improve student learning, based on findings of the 2014-15 assessment activities.**
  - a. Two classes were selected to continue to revise and update the curriculum to upgrade professional level reports (PLAN 301 Planning Research Methods) and to produce professional level graphics presentation of projects in poster representation of planning maps, data, and results (PLAN 300 Planning Presentation Techniques). Major revisions for these classes were implemented in the previous year.
  - b. Three classes were selected to incorporate expanded Plan Making linked to the textbook, PLAN 261 Community Development, PLAN 440 Land Use Planning, and PLAN 490 Capstone Planning Studio.

3. **Summary of results (may include comparative data or narrative; description of changes made to curriculum, pedagogy, mode of delivery, etc.). Describe the effect of the changes towards improving student learning and/or the learning environment.**
- a. In 2015-2016, we attempted to offer a separate undergraduate plan-making course; however, scheduling issues made it infeasible. We compensated for this issue by hiring a part-time instructor to supplement PLAN 261. However, that instructor failed to deliver that material adequately. In Fall 2016 we will incorporate some plan making material instead into PLAN 271, and of course continue to incorporate Plan Making into the Winter PLAN 300 course.
  - b. Additional GIS material was added to PLAN 301; this effort will continue into the future. Similarly, GIS analysis is a critical Plan Making skill for Land Use planning and efforts will continue to broaden the use of GIS in that course (PLAN 440).
  - c. A new faculty will teach PLAN 490 in Spring 2017, and will be strongly encouraged and helped to incorporate the full suite of Plan Making techniques into this capstone experience.
  - d. We are happy to note general improvement in Plan Making skills across our curriculum. Our students display greater confidence in their “real-world” planning skills as a result, and definitely are capable of producing professional level work.
4. **What further changes to curriculum, pedagogy, mode of delivery, etc. are projected based on closing-the-loop data, findings and analysis?**
- a. Incorporation of GIS as a technical Plan Making skill into other courses, specifically PLAN 430 Environmental Planning.
  - b. Development of a new course in service of the new EWU Sustainability degree – Environmental Management. This course will be centered on Plan Making concepts in service of this important new degree option.

## References

- Berke, P.R.; Godschalk, D.R.; Kaiser, J.K. (2006) *Urban Land Use Planning, Fifth Edition*. Urbana: University of Chicago Press.
- Jepson, E.J., Jr., & Weitz, J. (2016). *Fundamentals of Plan Making: Methods and Techniques*. NY: Routledge.

### Definitions:

1. **Student Learning Outcome:** The student performance or learning objective as published either in the catalog or elsewhere in your department literature.
2. **Overall evaluation of progress on outcome:** This checklist informs the reader whether or not the SLO has been met, and if met, to what level.
3. **Strategies and methods used to gather student performance data,** including assessment instruments used, and a description of how and when the assessments were conducted. Examples of strategies/methods: embedded test questions in a course or courses, portfolios, in-class activities, standardized test scores, case studies, analysis of written projects, etc. Additional information could describe the use of rubrics, etc. as part of the assessment process.
4. **Observations gathered from data:** This section includes findings and analyses based on the above strategies and methods, and provides data to substantiate the distinction made in #2. For that reason this section has been divided into parts (a) and (b) to provide space for both the findings and the analysis of findings.
5. **Program changes based on the assessment results:** This section is where the program lists plans to improve student learning, based on assessment findings, and provides a broad timeline of how and when identified changes will be addressed in the upcoming year. Programs often find assessment is part of an ongoing process of continual improvement.
6. **Description of revisions to the assessment process the results suggest are needed.** Evaluation of the assessment plan and process itself: what worked in the assessment planning and process, what did not, and why.

*Some elements of this document have been drawn or adapted from the University of Massachusetts' assessment handbook, "Program-Based Review and Assessment: Tools and Techniques for Program Improvement" (2001). Retrieved from [http://www.umass.edu/oapa/oapa/publications/online\\_handbooks/program\\_based.pdf](http://www.umass.edu/oapa/oapa/publications/online_handbooks/program_based.pdf)*