Environmental Science and Policy | 2016-2017 Assessment Report

1. Please give a brief overview of the assessment data you collected this year.

   This assessment looked at learning outcome #1 which addresses a student's ability to "identify and analyze policy-relevant problems of major importance". This is an outcome specific to the Environmental Policy and Administration emphasis of the ES&P graduate program.

   In the Spring 2017 offering of Natural Resources Law, Policy, and Administration (PU EN AF 379/579), enrollment included three graduate students and 14 undergraduate students. For this assessment, a semester-long research paper was used. The assignment's description is as follows:

   Choose a section or sub-section of any environmental law/topic/problem we have studied. Choose a local, state, or federal agency, governmental body, business, or non-governmental organization affected by, interested in or charged with implementation of environmental law. Write a full analysis to the "decision-maker" of the organization you choose (i.e. the director/organization president/politician or whoever the boss is) describing the content of the statute, regulatory targets and any options, relevant case law interpretations of the statute, any history with or how it affects the decision-maker, what things the decision-maker can/must do to ensure compliance with the law (or avoid it), what position the decision-maker should expect to hear from other parties, Congress, agencies or the courts. Your analysis must be typed, 12 point Garamond font, one-inch margins, double-spaced, only one space after each period, include page numbers, properly document all outside sources using Chicago endnote formatting, and be no less than nine full pages and no more than twelve full pages (not including references) for POL 379 or no less than thirteen full pages and no more than sixteen full pages (not including references) for POL 579 students.

   For this assignment, the three graduate students each selected a contemporary natural resources topic to evaluate from a legal and policy perspective. Only one of the three students plans to complete the Environmental Policy concentration in the graduate program while the other two plan to do either the Ecosystems or Environmental Technology concentrations.

   Based on evaluation of the research papers, each student successfully achieved learning outcome 1 to "identify and analyze policy-relevant problems of major importance". The graduate students chose an environmental law/problem related to natural resources, discussed both the science and relevant laws/policies, and provided clear and persuasive recommendations. One student received an A for the work, one a B, and the third a BC. All three papers were well written, but the two lower grades were due to papers significantly

short of the required minimum length and the students chose to not do the optional rewrite for a higher grade.

2. How will you use what you've learned from the data that was collected?

The results from this assessment demonstrate the effectiveness of the assignment in guiding students toward achieving the learning outcome. It allows students in all three concentrations to incorporate their research interests and apply them to an area of law and policy. No changes will be made to the assignment and based on the collected data; Professor Wheat will continue to use the research paper in the course.