



UMass Amherst's Educational Effectiveness Plan (EEP) provides departments with an ongoing structure for conducting systematic inquiry into the effectiveness of their efforts to support student success. Departments initially developed and submitted their EEP inquiry plans and evidence gathering strategies in spring 2018 and are asked to provide updates on their progress on a regular basis. EEP activity is also incorporated into the University's strategic planning process – with departments including their EEP progress and findings into their 2021 Strategic Planning Refresh. What follows is the department's most current reporting, as synthesized by the Office of Academic Planning and Assessment (OAPA).

Nutrition EEP

Identify the evidence you currently use (beyond GPA) to determine that your undergraduates have achieved the objectives you have for them.

Students are asked via questionnaire in their senior year and two years after graduation if we have provided a good scientific basis for the nutrition profession. Graduates are also asked if we have prepared them for graduate school. We monitor course grades and individual assignments to ensure that students are meeting the learning objectives.

Please describe the focus of your inquiry and explain why this inquiry is important to your department right now.

Line of Inquiry 2018: We are currently examining our Learning Objective # 6: Students will master effective professional oral and written communication (including presentation of a professional level seminar in a small class setting). This is an ACEND (Accreditation Council of Education for Nutritionists and Dietitians) Learning Outcome which we believe can be taught in a less labor intensive way while still maintaining the integrity of the goal. Currently this class has a maximum of 15 students because of the time it takes for each student to present. But, due to instructional personnel constraints, we are looking at our program to find ways to reduce the teaching burden on the remaining faculty. We are also examining our Learning Outcome #7: Students describe the health disparities in nutrition-related diseases within the U.S. and globally, demonstrate an understanding of principles of equity and inclusion, and an understanding of cultural competence/sensitivity. Although taught in Nutrition 577, 578, 572, and 597K, the outcome is not fully integrated into the curriculum. To achieve a more thorough and consistent integration of the course would require the successful application for funding to fulfill department faculty training in this area.

Progress your department has made toward addressing your line of inquiry, and the types of evidence that you have collected to inform your inquiry.

In fall 2018, we hired a 50% lecturer. Twenty five percent of her time is devoted to acting as a coordinator of experiential learning. The lecturer has been establishing relationships with

professionals working in a variety of capacities in the Western Massachusetts area in order to provide on-going opportunities for nutrition students and create community partnerships. She developed and maintains a Moodle page that provides students with potential opportunities and contact information for field experiences according to their year, track and career goals. She is also in contact with alumni regarding field experience opportunities and facilitates current students' access to field experience opportunities. She is also setting up practicum courses to begin fall 2020, which students will use to gain credit for field experiences. In this way, we have accomplished the goal of hiring a Coordinator of Experiential Learning Opportunities for Nutrition Students.

In an effort to increase recruitment and retention of Underrepresented Minorities and First Generation Students in all three UG Tracks, we have been working closely with our Center for Student Success to streamline the advising at community colleges so that when students arrive at UMass from community colleges they have completed the courses needed for a smooth transition to the UMass Nutrition Department. SPHHS CSS is also working with CMass on initiatives, which they will be sharing with departments. In the 2018 EEP report we expressed concern about the faculty cost of teaching Learning Objective # 6 "Students will master effective professional oral and written communication." At that time this LO was met with a class that had a maximum of 15 students. We reviewed SRTIs and carried out focus groups with students. Based on these data, a decision was made that this LO could be adequately taught in another class. In summary, the data we collected from students show that although of benefit, the course objectives could be met in a different class.

What are your department's next steps regarding your continuing and/or upcoming EEP line of inquiry?

We feel that the fieldwork coordinator position has met our goals in this line of inquiry. We are also satisfied that the student success in meeting our outcome regarding professional presentation has not been compromised by switching it to another class. We have identified our future inquiries regarding our Education Evaluation Plan. We have chosen four areas that are in need of further inquiry. 1. Our students have a lower rate of practicum experience but a higher rate of volunteer work than other students in the UMass community. In spring 2020 (see below) we started the process of understanding why this is the situation and to explore ways in which we can have students report their experiences more clearly in the senior survey. 2. Our students have a lower rate of research experience as compared to students in other departments across UMass. We would like to increase the number of nutrition students who actively engage in research. We plan on introducing our students to research faculty in a systematic way and streamlining the research application process. 3. Our IE reviews have been very variable. Because of this, we would like to review and potentially redesign the department's IE options to better address IE and departmental learning objectives and facilitate students' ability to connect their learning experiences and better understand how their UMass

Amherst education has helped prepare them for life after college. 4. Although we are working to streamline the academic success of our minority and first-generation students that come from community colleges, our faculty are aware that we need to do more to meet the needs of all of our first-generation and minority students. In the past, we have had a seminar (HANDS) for these students, which at one time had a scholarship. We would like to work with the Center for Student Success in the SPHHS to see what can be done to support students in all of the SPHHS majors together. In this way, first-generation and minority students in our department can identify with a larger student body and be supported by a larger community.

Activities for Fall 2020: 1. Introduce practicum courses and enroll students. Define the criteria for the successful completion of a practicum course. 2. Have all research clusters present with all research faculty to our sophomore career class. We hope this will increase the visibility of the ongoing research not only in our department but researchers in other departments with whom our research faculty collaborate. 3. Do an in-depth examination of all departmental syllabi. Note: This will be carried out over the summer as part of a TEval grant.

Activities for Spring 2021: 1. Develop streamlined policies and procedures for students who are interested in engaging in research. This could perhaps be coordinated with the Center for Student Success in SPHHS so that our students can see the research possibilities in other SPHHS departments. 2. Introduce a reflection and integration assignment into the IE that asks students to identify their experiences as not just volunteer work but as practica, research, and field work experiences and identify how their experiences contributed to their learning and development in the major. This way we can define student experiences more exactly.

Activities for Fall 2021: 1. Review IE scores to see if faculty have been able to consistently improve and maintain Nutrition Department IE scores. In fall 2019 we reviewed the IE scores over the past four semesters and found that they were very variable. We believe these variable reports are the result of faculty stress. We will review the IE scores from fall 2020 and spring 2021 to see if this course is producing positive IE student reports more consistently. If not we will consider developing other options for the IE course for our majors.

What are the Student Learning Objectives for your department or program(s)?

Nutrition, B.S.

- Students will have a firm understanding of the physical and biological science foundation of Nutrition science.
- Students will have an understanding of the physiologic, biochemical, and nutritional complexities of major diet-related diseases.
- Students will understand food science and food systems, techniques of food preparation and the development, modification and evaluation of recipes, menus, and food products acceptable to diverse populations.

- Students use current technologies to locate and apply evidence-based guidelines and protocols (including Evidence Analysis Libraries).
- Students will understand changing nutritional issues across the lifespan.
- Students will master effective professional oral and written communication (including presentation of a professional level seminar in a small class setting).
- Students will describe the health disparities in nutrition related diseases within the US and globally and will demonstrate an understanding of principles of equity and inclusion and of cultural competence/sensitivity.

Experiential Goals

Nutrition 572 (Community Nutrition) is a university-designated service learning course and the only full-semester experiential learning course in the undergraduate curriculum. In this course, students learn skills in planning, needs assessment, communication with stakeholders, implicit bias in nutrition and health services, health disparities, developing goals and objectives, logical frameworks, implementation of a nutrition education intervention, and evaluation. Student teams present a needs assessment oral presentation as well as final project oral presentation. The teams submit a formal report which is shared with stakeholders. Many of our students are low or middle-income, with heavy course loads coupled with 20-40 hours of employment. As such, they have few opportunities to gain internship, apprenticeship, and volunteer experiences to supplement their academic education. Experiential learning is a form of learning applied in NUTR 572 that provides students with first-hand field experiences with intense faculty mentoring, as well as community guidance. They gain knowledge, work skills, professional etiquette, communication skills, and community experiences that complement and accentuate in-class biomedically-oriented nutrition courses. As such they are well-prepared for the health workforce.