



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. For the first phase of EEP, departments answered a series of prompts about their current educational effectiveness efforts, and their inquiry plans. Here we provide an edited version of this department's responses.

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.

What changes has the department made in its undergraduate program(s) and offerings based on the results of the evidence described in the previous section, over the last few years?

In spring of 2014 instructors of Nutrition 572, Community Nutrition, developed a service learning community-engaged course which puts students into the community in real life nutrition intervention. This course meets UMA's stringent criteria for a service learning course. We also instituted a 4+1 and developed an experimental course, Nutrition 597M, Special Topics in Medical Nutrition Therapy, which is a one-credit NCP supplemental course designed to support students in Nutrition 580 MNT.

We hope to increase recruitment and retention of underrepresented minorities and first-generation students in all three undergraduate tracks and to hire a Coordinator of Experiential Learning Opportunities for nutrition students.

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

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. This is becoming difficult as we have lost two faculty members which have not been replaced. We are

facing two retiring faculty in the next year or two with no guarantee of replacement so 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.

What evidence do you plan to use to inform your inquiry focus? And, what are your initial thoughts on how you will collect this information?

In terms of SLO #6, we have reviewed the course SRTIs for the past few years. We have collected survey responses from students and from faculty to decide if this course is valued by the students in terms of meeting this SLO over and above other courses. Once this information has been selected and reviewed by faculty we will decide whether or not to cancel this senior seminar class which is currently taught by faculty. SLO #7 was recently added and is not a part of the ACEND's accreditation requirements. This SLO is more complicated and will require faculty training and help to modify our curricula. Currently we are wondering, what is the long-term impact of this experience?

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.