



Sustainable Plant Systems

Bachelor of Science

Program Overview

Sustainable Plant Systems involves providing the world with plants for food, pleasure and recreation, and environmental improvement. As the population continues to expand, there is an increasing need to limit our reliance on imports while preventing further damage to the environment. Students have the opportunity to specialize in the following areas: Agronomy, Horticulture, Landscape Design and Management, and Turfgrass Science.

The Agronomy specialization focuses on the application of biological, chemical, and physical principles to crops and cropping systems to increase their efficiency in converting light and supplemental resources into food, feed, fiber, or fuel. Students will take classes in plant biology, crop production, grain crops and forages, soil science, plant pathology, and entomology.

Possible career opportunities for graduates in the Agronomy specialization include: breeding and genetics researcher, chemical sales manager, crop consultant, and seed sales representatives.

The Horticulture specialization focuses on the application of scientific principles (to grow vegetables, fruits, and ornamental plants) as well as business principles to sell the commodities. Students will take classes in biology, greenhouse and nursery management, fruit and vegetable production, and pest management.

Possible career opportunities for graduates in the Horticulture specialization include: florists, garden center managers, landscape designer, and plant breeder.

Program Learning Goals & Outcomes

Goal 1.0

Be competent in critical thinking and research

Outcome 1.1

Acquire information and/or data

Outcome 1.2

Analyze information and/or data

Outcome 1.3

Interpret information and/or data

Goal 2.0

Understand the concept of sustainability and be able to use sustainable practices in horticulture and crop science

Outcome 2.1

Understand the concept of sustainability

Outcome 2.2

Apply the concept of sustainability to a managed plant ecosystem

Goal 3.0

Have the ability to integrate the fundamentals of physical and biological sciences with the principles of plant science to develop and maintain sustainable plant systems

Outcome 3.1

Calculate discipline-related quantitative measurements

Outcome 3.2

Assess the effect of environmental conditions on plant grows

Goal 4.0

Be able to disseminate information effectively through all forms of communication (oral, electronic, written, visual, etc.) at a professional level

Outcome 4.1

Prepare information and/or data for a written report

Outcome 4.2

Prepare information and/or data for a presentation

Outcome 4.3

Develop projects utilizing digital communication technologies

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THE OHIO STATE UNIVERSITY

COLLEGE OF FOOD, AGRICULTURAL,
AND ENVIRONMENTAL SCIENCES

Assessment Fundamentals

What is assessment?

While there are certainly many answers to this question, in the context of the CFAES academic community, assessment is the practice of evaluating the manner or degree to which students in academic programs in our College are learning. Academic units and programs within CFAES have developed student learning outcomes, which are statements of the key indicators of student learning in specific programs. Assessment is designed to compare actual student performance to these predetermined student learning outcomes.

Assessment is used to respond to at least two concerns:

1) Are students learning what they are supposed to be learning? and 2) How can educators document that students are learning what they are supposed to be learning? While these two concerns are intertwined, they also fulfill separate functions. Concern one is primarily a question of academics: Are our teaching methods effective? Are our students learning what they should and as well as they should? What can we do to improve student learning? Concern one is aligned with continued improvement of teaching and learning. Concern two is aligned more with the issue of accountability. Education is increasingly being asked and even required to document that students know and can do what we say they can do and simple completion of course, program, and graduation requirements is not enough. Accountability requires that educators show that students can actually demonstrate what they know and can do and merely one grade on a test, a paper, or in a course is not sufficient. Accountability should flow naturally from the focus on teaching and learning.

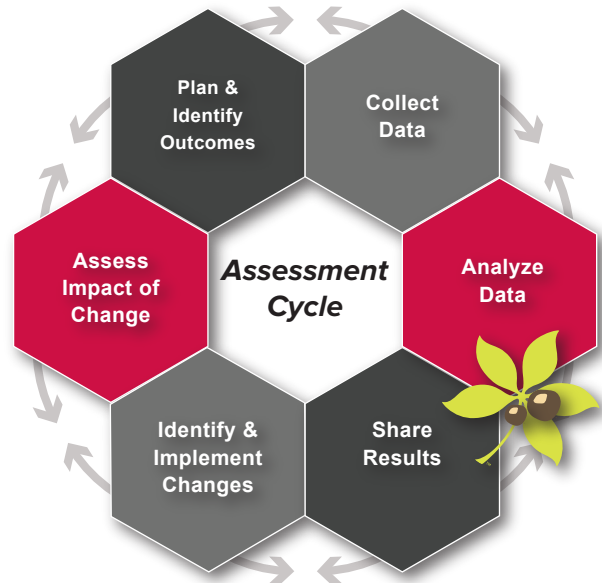
Why do assessment?

Assessment needs to take place for at least two reasons:

- 1) Assessment is designed to function as continued improvement for teaching and learning.
 - ♦ Assessment helps educators improve the manner and degree to which students learn what they are supposed to be learning.
 - ♦ Assessment provides information that allows educators to make good decisions based on quality information about student learning.
 - ♦ Assessment encourages educators to look at what they do in the classroom, how their classroom practices affect student learning, and what changes could be made in teaching methods or materials to enhance student learning.
- 2) We need to do assessment to remain accountable to the publics we serve.
 - ♦ Students and their families should be able to see what we do in teaching and learning, and what we expect of students;
 - ♦ Accrediting agencies need to know that we are effective in our teaching and learning;
 - ♦ Legislative and executive governmental bodies provide funding and need to know that these funds are accomplishing their intended purposes.

Assessment Cycle

The assessment cycle considers collection and review of data on an ongoing basis to formulate recommendations for incremental programmatic change. Accumulative findings for all program goals based on the contributing outcomes are used as the cornerstones for programmatic review. Assessment provides essential information for making strategic adjustments to the academic program, which assures continuous quality improvement with the intent of improving teaching and learning.



The language of assessment . . .

Goals: Student Learning Goals are stated in terms of achievement resulting from student learning. Goals provide a broad description identifying the foundations, concepts, theories, abstractions, principles, knowledge base, and/or skills, which are the products of what students are to be able to do, know, and care about upon the completion of the program. Learning goals are frequently stated using the verbiage of: understand; appreciate; know about; become familiar with; learn about; or become aware of. Reoccurring learning goal concepts/themes for CFAES programs are Critical Thinking, Communications, Academic and Professional Integrity, Diversity, and Knowledge.

The stated learning goals of the programs within CFAES have the inferred prefix of, “*Students will . . .*”

Outcomes: Student Learning Outcomes (SLO’s) (also commonly referred to as Expected Learning Outcomes (ELO’s) or “objectives”) are statements indicating changes in knowledge, skills, behaviors, attitudes, or values relative to a desired goal as a result of a specific activity, such as completion or participation in a program, activity, course, or project. Cognitive learning outcomes can most effectively be stated using verbs aligned with one of the six domains of the Bloom’s Taxonomy of Educational Objectives (Remembering, Understanding, Applying, Analyzing, Evaluating, or Creating). Appropriately structured outcomes serve as the supportive methods/means of measuring student attainment of the associated learning goal.

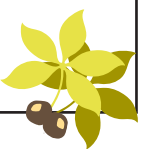
The stated expected learning outcomes of the programs within CFAES have the inferred prefix of, “*Students will have the ability to . . .*”



Assessment & Curriculum Connection

Assessment results are used in concurrence with the program curricular map to form the underpinning for informing curricular decisions and to further enhance student learning. Curricular mapping demonstrates the opportunities for students to be introduced to knowledge (beginning), opportunities for reinforcement of knowledge (intermediate), and opportunities for students to demonstrate mastery of knowledge (advanced) relative to the stated programmatic learning goals.

Courses	Program Learning Goals B=Beginning, I=Intermediate, A=Advanced							
	Be competent in critical thinking and research	Understand the concept of sustainability and be able to use sustainable practices in horticulture and crop science	Have the ability to integrate the fundamentals of physical and biological sciences with the scientific principles of plant science to develop and maintain sustainable plant systems	Be able to disseminate information effectively through all forms of communication (oral, electronic, written, visual, etc.) at a professional level				
HCS 2201 <i>Ecology of Managed Plant Systems</i>	A 1.1 Develop skills used to acquire information and/or data	A 2.1 Understand the concept of sustainability					I 8.1 Understand properly citing source information	
HCS 2202 <i>Form and Function in Cultivated Plants</i>			A 3.2 Assess the effect of environmental conditions on plant growth					
HCS 2260 <i>Data Analysis and Interpretation for Decision Making</i>	I 1.2 Develop skills used to analyze information and/or data 1.3 Develop skills used to interpret information and/or data							
HCS 2306 <i>Sustainable Vegetable Production Practicum: Planning, Growing and Marketing</i>							I 8.3 Demonstrate a positive work ethic	
HCS 3320 <i>Plant Propagation: The Manipulation of Plant Reproduction</i>				A 4.1 Prepare information and/or data for a written report				
HCS 3420 <i>Seed Science</i>	I 1.3 Develop skills used to interpret information and/or data							
HCS 3470 <i>Principles of Turfgrass Selection and Management</i>					I 5.3 Apply best practices for horticulture and crop enterprises			



Assessment & Curriculum Connection Continued on Back . . .

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	Be competent in critical thinking and research	Understand the concept of sustainability and be able to use sustainable practices in horticulture and crop science	Have the ability to integrate the fundamentals of physical and biological sciences with the scientific principles of plant science to develop and maintain sustainable plant systems	Be able to disseminate information effectively through all forms of communication (oral, electronic, written, visual, etc.) at a professional level		Understand the fundamentals of management of horticulture and crop science enterprises	Have the appreciation for life-long learning through self-awareness and evaluation, seeking knowledge, and using evaluation and synthesizing skills	Have developed an appreciation of and respect for diversity	Develop the skills to act in a responsible and ethical way
HCS 4191.01 <i>Sustainable Plant Systems Major Internship</i>				A 4.1 Prepare information and/or data for a written report					
HCS 4411 <i>Grain, Oilseed, and Fiber Crops</i>			A 3.2 Assess the effect of environmental conditions on plant growth						
HCS 4560 <i>Creating a Virtual Perspective</i>				A 4.4 Develop projects utilizing digital communication technologies					
HCS 4600 <i>Capstone</i>					B, I 5.1 Establish goals 5.2 Appraise strategies for accomplishing established goals		I 8.2 Exhibit the skills required to perform effectively as a contributing team member		
HCS 5601 <i>Managing a Virtual Portfolio</i>				A 4.4 Develop projects utilizing digital communication technologies		A 6.2 Critique one's own performance through self-evaluation			
HCS 5521 <i>Advanced Greenhouse Production</i>			I, A 3.1 Calculate discipline-related quantitative measurements 3.2 Assess the effect of environmental conditions on plant growth						
HCS 5422 <i>Principles of Weed Ecology and Management</i>		I 2.2 Apply the concept of sustainability to a managed plant ecosystem							
HCS 5670 <i>Golf Courses and the Environment</i>		I 2.2 Apply the concept of sustainability to a managed plant ecosystem							

Assessment Methods

Achievement of program learning goals are assessed systematically utilizing the identified means for the aligned learning outcomes via direct and indirect measures that serve as authentic assessment methods.

Direct

Direct assessment methods are means of assessment that measure students' performance directly, are authentic, and minimize mitigating or intervening factors. In general, direct assessment methods are assessment tools that measure student learning by having students create or perform directly based on their learning. Direct methods are the direct evaluation of aggregate student achievement on specific learning outcomes.

Indirect

Indirect assessment methods are means of assessment that are steps removed from direct methods and are based upon perception of student learning from various constituents. In general indirect assessment methods infer whether learning has taken place by asking for perception of learning, typically from students, but also from those with whom they have worked. Indirect methods are tools that enable us to infer actual student achievement, very often from student self-reports of their perception of their learning.

Within the Sustainable Plant Systems program's assessment plan, the following methods have been identified as means of assessing student attainment of state learning outcomes:

Direct
Laboratory Report A report generated after the student completes designated experiment, process, research, or other laboratory procedure. The report should outline steps taken, materials used, methods, and results. This shows a student's comprehension of laboratory procedures and methods and ability to implement learned methods.
Embedded Testing Student work in designated courses is collected and assessed in relation to the program learning outcomes, not just for the course grade. The assessment may be conducted at specific points in a program and the products of student work need to be considered in light of the multiple dimensions of the learning outcomes.
Other Classroom Assessment Method Provide samples of student work, such as student papers and projects, from a variety of courses that are evaluated to see how well students are applying knowledge and skills to meet program goals.
Portfolio A systematic and organized collection of a student's work that exhibits to others the direct evidence of a student's efforts, achievements, and progress over a period of time. The collection should involve the student in selection of its contents, and should include information about the performance criteria, the rubric or criteria for judging merit, and evidence of student self-reflection or evaluation.

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Scaffolding to Support Learning Outcomes Assessment

The primary purpose of program learning outcomes assessment is to assure that all students have the opportunity to learn what is truly valued by the program. It is not enough to simply collect data for the programmatic learning outcome assessment; these data must be used to reflect and examine whether learning expectations are being obtained and when weaknesses are discovered, needed changes are determined. Educators must remember that the foremost purpose of learning outcomes assessment is for programs to continually be improving the quality of the teaching and learning experiences that enable significant learning.

To assure that all students have the opportunity to learn what is truly valued by the program, the program must engage all faculty and instructional staff at some level of the assessment process. To be successful a program must also have leadership and a supportive scaffolding structure in place to facilitate its assessment efforts.

Overview

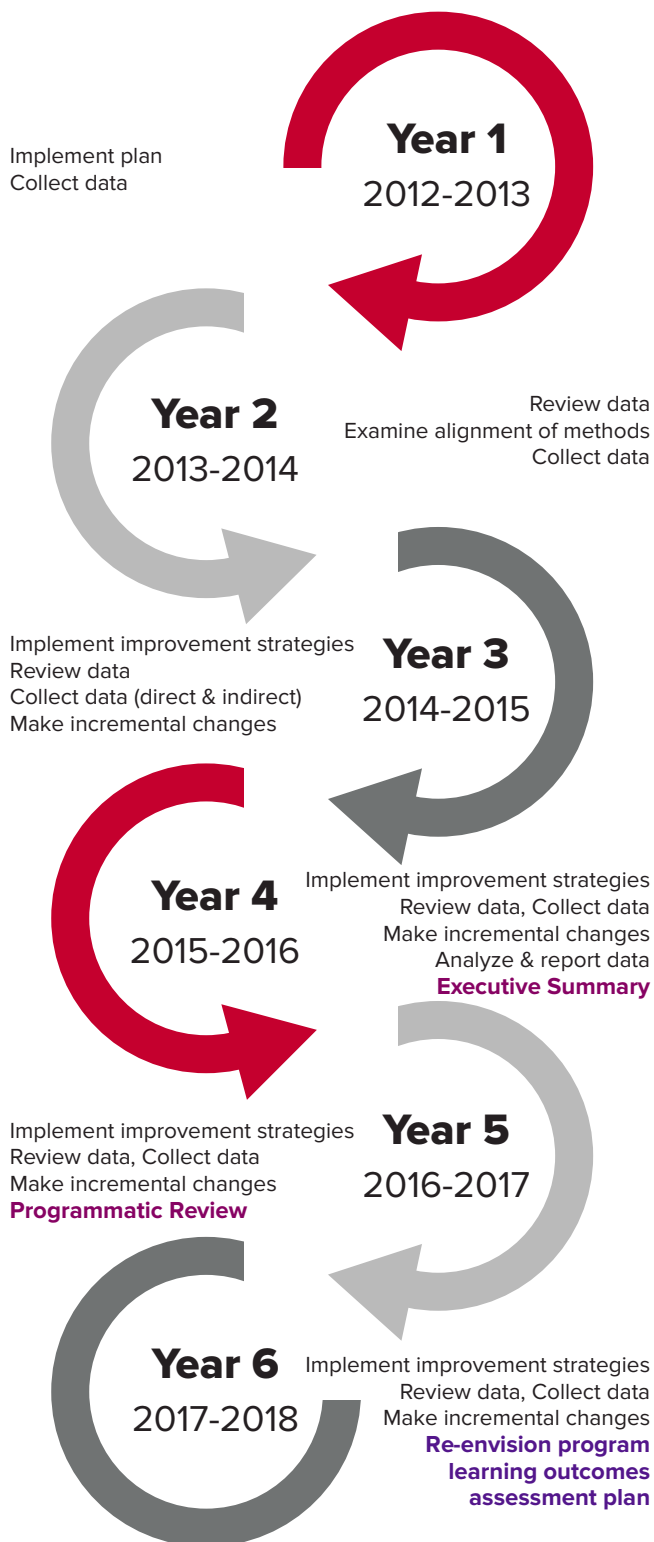
The 2012 *Sustainable Plant Systems - BS* program assessment plan was crafted under the leadership of the unit assessment contact(s) for Sustainable Plant Systems located on the Ohio State Columbus campus. The CFAES Office for Teaching, Learning, and Assessment coached the program's learning outcomes assessment plan development team through the process by: 1) Elucidating program learning goals and developing measurable contributing outcomes; 2) Identifying the means and methods by which the embedded assessment of learning outcomes will be achieved; 3) Defining programmatic criteria for student achievement of each identified outcome; and 4) Planning for the use and implementation in the process of generating the comprehensive program learning outcomes assessment plan.

Commitment

Development, implementation, documentation and reporting associated with the 2012 *Sustainable Plant Systems - BS program learning outcomes assessment plan* are coordinated through academic unit's assessment contact(s) with adherence oversight and support provided by the CFAES Office for Teaching, Learning, and Assessment. Data collection is a collaborative endeavor between the unit's assessment contact(s), course instructors and academic advisors, and students. The assessment contact(s) partners with the CFAES Office for Teaching, Learning, and Assessment to collect, report, and review results on the basis of the Ohio State's annual assessment reporting cycle. The assessment contact(s), Sustainable Plant Systems program, the Horticulture and Crop Science Division, and course instructors are to review the program, its supporting coursework, and the related assessment results annually, on an ongoing basis, to formulate recommendations for incremental programmatic change to the unit's Academic Affairs Committee. With the goal of improving learning, instruction, and curriculum, indicators from a summary report of the findings are to be used to plan the incorporation of needed modifications. Accumulative findings for all program goals based on the contributing outcomes will be used as the cornerstone in the programmatic review cycle, providing essential information for making strategic adjustments to this academic program, assuring continuous quality improvement.



Implementation – Six-Year Schedule



The data collection for the identified direct methods of the supporting learning outcomes is conducted annually (or each semester the affiliated course(s) or activities are conducted) starting Au2012. In adherence to the CFAES Academic Program Assessment Plan Revision Cycle (presented and adopted at the December 01, 2011 meeting of the CFAES Committee on Academic Affairs) this program will go through a comprehensive outcomes assessment review every six years.

During the first year of implementation of a new (or re-envisioned) program assessment plan, focused attention will be given to refining the measures used for assessing achievement to assure alignment of identified assignments with outcomes. During the initial year of the plan, the program will collect and report supporting data for half of the documented learning goals.

In year two, focused efforts will explore and reexamine alignment of methods with specific program learning outcomes along with data collection and reporting on the remainder of the program learning goals (those not addressed previously).

During the third year, in addition to collecting and reporting data for all program learning goals, the program will explore conducting faculty facilitated student, alumni, and/or stakeholder focus groups and/or surveys to aid in assessing success of learning outcomes.

For year four of the cycle, supporting data will continue to be collected and reported for all program learning goals. Upon conclusion of the academic year, the academic unit, with the assistance of the CFAES Office for Teaching, Learning, and Assessment, will craft and submit to the College's Academic Affairs Committee. An executive summary of findings for the programs based on the four years of Program Assessment Plan data collected.

In the fifth year of the cycle the program will continue collecting and reporting data for all program learning goals and the program coordinator will review the stated set of program learning goals to determine if modifications should be made in the forthcoming rendition of the program assessment plan.

During year six, data collection and reporting for all program learning goals will continue. In addition, the unit, upon notification from the CFAES Office for Teaching, Learning, and Assessment will work with the academic unit's assessment contact(s) to assemble and convene a formal programmatic assessment review team, comprised of faculty, staff, students, alumni, and stakeholders, to do the following program evaluation: 1) Review the accumulated findings from the assessment review cycle; 2) Appraise the achievement and success of the program; 3) Examine alignment of program learning goals and outcomes; and 4) Produce a summary of recommendations for program modifications and enhancement. The efforts of the team's comprehensive review of the individual Program Assessment Plan in "year six" will produce a "re-envisioned" plan.



Assessment Findings

Reporting Synopsis

Data from identified methods (measures) were collected and reported as evidence of achievement of program learning goals via supporting outcomes (objectives) for the 2012-2016 assessment reporting cycles. Collectively in periodic meetings (review colloquy) the CFAES Office for Teaching, Learning, and Assessment and the assessment contact for the Sustainable Plant Systems program elaborated upon the process by which the program was going to review and use evidence (findings/ results). They also discussed the procedure which was going to be followed for taking future actions and examined the approach for future planning for the program. One of the primary topics of discussion at these meetings was exploring how the information gathered about student learning was to be shared with the division's faculty, instructional staff, and leadership, and how to use it for improvement of learning outcomes.

This document, the *Assessment Executive Summary* which is a collaborative report compiled from the information submitted by the academic unit's assessment contact(s) to the Office for Teaching, Learning, and Assessment, is to serve as a mechanism for sharing the status of the program's assessment activities and results with the program faculty and instructional staff, unit and college leadership, stakeholders, the unit's Committee on Academic Affairs, the college's Assessment Committee and CFAES Committee on Academic Affairs.

This summary covers 22 of the 25 identified methods for the 19 supporting outcomes of the 8 program learning goals of this program learning outcomes assessment plan were reviewed during the 2012-2016 assessment reporting cycle.

Use of Assessment Findings

Use and Actions Taken

Any changes and/or modifications to this program and/or its learning outcomes assessment plan resulting from these assessment results were explored while reflecting upon collected and reported assessment data during the annual Autumn semester review colloquy. Resulting desired adjustments were then enacted during the following assessment reporting cycle.

The program's coordinator, assessment contact, the CFAES Office for Teaching, Learning, and Assessment, and other faculty and instructional staff has examined the program, its supporting course work, and the related assessment findings on an ongoing basis to formulate recommendations for incremental change.

Areas for which assessment data has and will be used include:

- Analyzing and discussing trends with the unit's faculty
- Analyzing and reporting to college/school
- Making improvements in curricular requirements
- Making improvements in course content
- Making improvements in course delivery and learning activities within courses
- Making improvements in learning facilities, laboratories, and/or equipment
- Periodically confirming that current curriculum and courses are facilitating student attainment of program goals

Program Learning Goals & Outcomes (Continued)

Goal 5.0

Apply the fundamentals of management to horticulture and crop science enterprises

Outcome 5.1

Establish goals

Outcome 5.2

Appraise strategies for accomplishing established goals

Outcome 5.3

Apply best practices for horticulture and crop enterprises

Goal 6.0

Have the appreciation for life-long learning through self-awareness and evaluation, seeking knowledge, and using evaluation and synthesizing skills

Outcome 6.1

Participate in extracurricular educational opportunities

Outcome 6.2

Critique one's own performance through self-evaluations

Goal 7.0

Have developed an appreciation of and respect for diversity

Outcome 7.0

Demonstrate knowledge or range of cultures, values, and political perspectives relevant for living in a global community

Goal 8.0

Act in a responsible and ethical way

Outcome 8.1

Properly credit sources of information

Outcome 8.2

Perform effectively as a contributing team member

Outcome 8.3

Demonstrate a positive work ethic



Continued Assessment Methods Table . . .

Direct

Oral Presentation

A classroom presentation or showcasing of the results of a particular project that has been conducted by an individual student or by a group of students in fulfilling a course assignment. The presentation might take place in a classroom or over the web and would typically present the results of a course-based assignment.

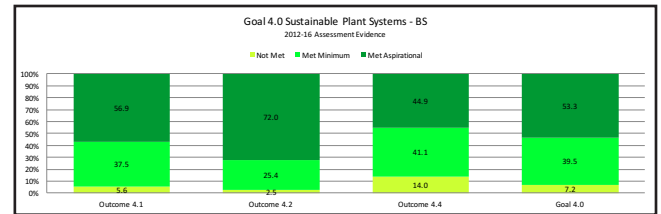
Other Direct Measure

Specific course assignments also serve as assessment methods for appraising students' ability to evaluate situations while collecting accurate information to make sound decisions and solve problems.

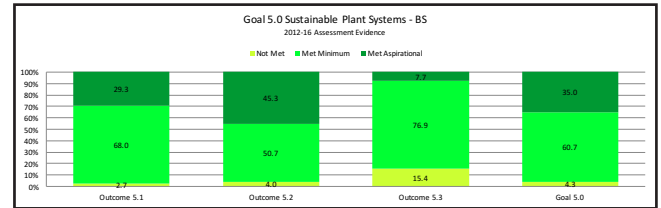
Indirect

Participation Levels

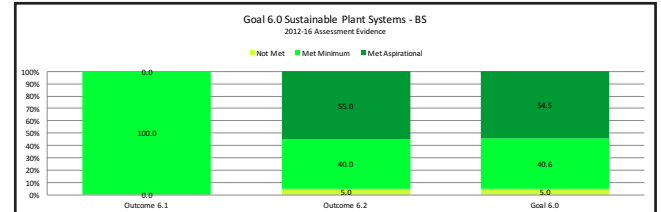
Assess students on their contribution to the class/group during lectures, discussions, projects, or other classroom experiences. Evaluates their ability to comprehend and vocalize the course material.



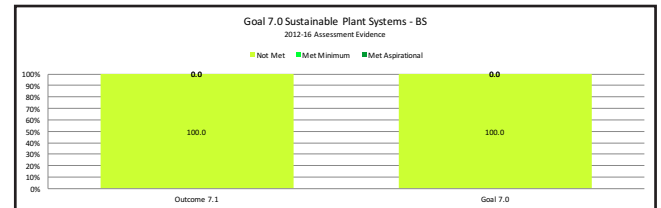
Learning Goal 4.0 has three established contributing/supporting *Learning Outcomes* for which student accomplishment is rated by using five assessment measures (student n = 104 for reported assessment methods data)



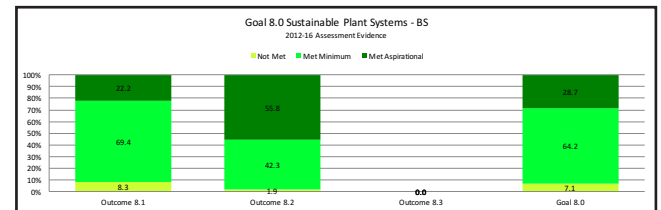
Learning Goal 5.0 has three established contributing/supporting *Learning Outcomes* for which student accomplishment is rated by using three assessment measures (student n = 50 for reported assessment methods data)



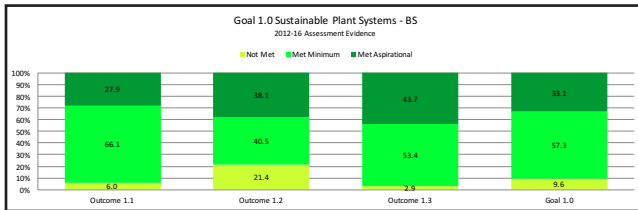
Learning Goal 6.0 has two established contributing/supporting *Learning Outcomes* for which student accomplishment is rated by using two assessment measures (student n = 30 for reported assessment methods data)



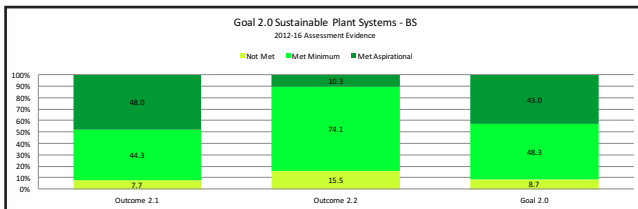
Learning Goal 7.0 has one established contributing/supporting *Learning Outcomes* for which student accomplishment is rated by using one assessment measures (student n = 0 for reported assessment methods data)



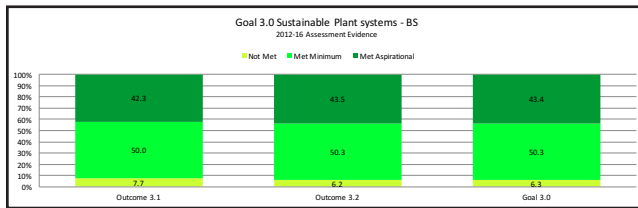
Learning Goal 8.0 has three established contributing/supporting *Learning Outcomes* for which student accomplishment is rated by using three assessment measures (student n = 0 for reported assessment methods data)



Learning Goal 1.0 has three identified unique contributing/supporting *Learning Outcomes* for which attainment is appraised via the use of four assessment methods (student n = 191 for reported assessment methods data)



Learning Goal 2.0 has two discerned contributing/supporting *Learning Outcomes* for which student achievement is gauged by the use of three assessment methods (student n = 112 for reported assessment methods data)



Learning Goal 3.0 has two defined contributing/supporting *Learning Outcome* for which student performance is assessed by using four assessment methods (student n = 89 for reported assessment methods data)

