**General Education Annual Course Assessment Form**

Course Number/Title: **METR 100W**  
**GE Area:**  **Z**

Results reported for: **AY 11-12**  
# of sections: **1**  
# of instructors: **1**

Course Coordinator: **Alison Bridger (as dept chair)**  
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Department Chair: **Alison Bridger**  
**College:** Science

**Instructions:** Each year, the department will prepare a brief (two page maximum) report that documents the assessment of the course during the year. This report will be **electronically submitted**, by the department chair, to the Office of Undergraduate Studies, with an electronic copy to the home college by September 1 of the following academic year.

**Part 1**

To be completed by the course coordinator:

1. What SLO(s) were assessed for the course during the AY?

   **SLO#3:** “Organize and develop essays and documents for both professional and general audiences, including appropriate editorial standards for citing primary and secondary sources.” We offer one section of METR 100W per year. It is taught in Fall, per our roadmap. Raw data is stored in the office of the instructor (Leach).

2. What were the results of the assessment of this course? What were the lessons learned from the assessment?

   The students had weekly writing assignments. Some were completed during class time, there were also two term papers that totaled 20 pages in length. Many of the weekly assignments were written for a general audience with emphasis on a particular aspect of good writing. As examples, one week the assignment emphasized overall paper organization and structure, while another week we emphasized individual paragraph construction, and a third task emphasized noun-verb agreement and effective sentences. The prompt for the two term papers was that the students would write for a professional audience and the papers should be thought of as a thesis or a manuscript for submission to a professional journal.

   Ten students were enrolled in the class: eight from Meteorology and Climate Science, and one each from Geology and Chemistry. All were upper division in terms of number of credits taken. However, one had changed majors and another had transferred from community college. Both of these students were just beginning to take meteorology classes.

   In general, the students performed better on the weekly assignments than on the term papers. When asked to focus on a particular aspect of writing, they were able to grasp the concept and implement it into their writing. However, many had difficulty integrating (or maybe just remembering?) the concepts when constructing the longer term papers.
Most of the students showed improvement from the beginning of the semester to the end. One student in particular improved from being an admittedly poor writer during our first consultation, to one whose thesis should only need minimal editing (assuming she remembers what she learned!). However, another student actually regressed. She did exceptionally well on the weekly assignments and grasped the writing concepts well. But she was one of the transfers with little background in meteorology, and for her final assignment she chose a topic that was too difficult for her to grasp well enough to organize the concepts.

Below is a table documenting students’ improvement from the first half of the semester to the end. The “improvement” metric is defined so that a value of “1” indicates improvement of a half-letter grade (e.g. B to B+) etc.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Improvement</th>
<th>-1</th>
<th>0</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>No. of students</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Notes:
1) As noted above, one student actually showed reduced skill during the semester, but her technical writing skills were masked (caused?) by her lack of knowledge of meteorology. Three students showed no improvement. However, all three had very good technical writing skills at the beginning of the semester, and thus a result of no improvement is not a surprise! The remaining six students showed various degrees of improvement. Thus with one exception, all students who were not already good technical writers showed improvement during the semester.

2) The two students who demonstrated the most improvement (“4” column) included the one documented above (self-described “poor” at the start of the semester, great improvement), and another student who was very poor at the beginning (i.e. failing quality) to an acceptable level (“C”).

(3) What modifications to the course, or its assessment activities or schedule, are planned for the upcoming year? (If no modifications are planned, the course coordinator should indicate this.)

The “poor” student mentioned above had not completed the meteorology prerequisite (MET 60,61 series). Due to budget pressures and enrollment issues, we have opened the class up to non-meteorology majors, so this should not have been a problem. The experience with the one under-performing student suggests that we should pay closer attention to term paper topics (“degree of difficulty”) in future. Otherwise, no changes are planned.

Part 2

To be completed by the department chair (with input from course coordinator as appropriate):

(4) Are all sections of the course still aligned with the area Goals, Student Learning Objectives (SLOs), Content, Support, and Assessment? If they are not, what actions are planned?

The chair is satisfied that this course is being delivered with full and appropriate attention to all area “Z” goals, SLOs, content, support, and assessment. The chair is particularly satisfied that our 100W instructor (Dr. Marty Leach) is fully engaged and passionate about helping our students develop their technical writing skills. Dr. Leach continues to work in the Writing Center at their invitation – they would not continue to hire him if he were not an outstanding writing instructor.