Annual Assessment Report

Academic Year: 2016-2017
Department: Plant Sciences & Plant Pathology
Program(s): Environmental Horticulture Science

1. What Was Done
This year we evaluated learning outcomes 4 and 5.

4) Be able to communicate written and verbally effectively.

5) Be able to design a plant experiment and analyze data

2. What Data Were Collected
4) Two faculty evaluated student written proposals and research reports from HORT 486, the second semester of the Horticulture Capstone course. A ‘written communication skills’ rubric was utilized in this evaluation. Additionally, two faculty evaluated student oral research presentations in HORT 486, the second semester of the Horticulture Capstone course. An ‘oral presentation’ rubric was utilized in this evaluation.

5) Same as above, looking specifically at the ‘content’ rating from each rubric.

3. What Was Learned
4) The majority of students scored at a rating of 3 or higher on both the written paper and oral presentation.

5) The majority of students scored a rating of 3 or higher on the content knowledge of this assignment, indicating that most had acquired skills on designing and analyzing experiments to sufficiently draw accurate conclusions about their experiments.

4. How We Responded
Most of the students are receiving sufficient experience and skills in written and verbal communication during this program as well as designing a plant experiment and analyzing data. However, the burden of acquiring experimental design and data analysis is falling solely during the final capstone course. This may explain why not all students are completely prepared. We are looking to incorporate these elements earlier in the program. In addition, although most students received a rating of 3 or higher on their written research reports, this final report was the product of several rounds of revisions during the semester. The instructor believes that
early drafts reflected a general weakness in writing skills. Therefore, we are planning to change the program requirements to include a second required writing course.