

## NECHE Assessment E1A Form | Institution Name: Boston College

### General Information

1

Program Name: Environmental Studies Program

2

Program's Assessment Contact

Name: Tara Pisani Gareau

Email: tara.pisanigareau@bc.edu

3

Unit/Department/Program Attributes – *indicate with an "X"*

☒ X

Academic/curricular unit/department/program

☐

Co-curricular (student affairs-, mission and ministry-related) unit/department/program

☐

Competency-based education program

☐

Distance education program

☐

Program is managed by contractual arrangement

4

Date of last program review The Environmental Studies Program has not had an external review

5

Date of next expected program review: Unknown

6

Did your program engage in any assessment activities during academic year 2024-2025? – *indicate with an "X"*

☒ X

Yes

☐

No

7 Degree Level Being Assessed (if applicable) – *indicate with an “X”*

☐

Associate’s degree

☐

Certificate program

☒

Bachelor’s degree

☐

Master’s degree

☐

Doctoral degree

8 Where are the learning outcomes published? (mark all that apply) – *indicate with an “X”*

☐

Catalog

☐

Syllabus

☒

Website

☐

Curriculum map

9 Which learning outcome(s) was assessed during academic year 2024-25?

Students will be able to conduct scientific research, making use of mixed analytical methods

10 What type(s) of evidence were gathered to assess the outcome? (mark all that apply) – *indicate with an “X”*

- |                                     |   |
|-------------------------------------|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/>            | Artistic exhibition/performance   |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | Assignment/exam/paper completed as part of regular coursework (i.e., an embedded        |
| <input type="checkbox"/>            | Capstone course work product  |
| <input type="checkbox"/>            | Course evaluation question(s)   |
| <input type="checkbox"/>            | Exam created by an external organization (e.g., professional association for licensure) |
| <input type="checkbox"/>            | Exit exam created by the unit/program   |
| <input type="checkbox"/>            | Focus groups/interviews with alumni   |
| <input type="checkbox"/>            | Focus groups/interviews with current students   |
| <input type="checkbox"/>            | IRB-approved research project   |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | Oral performance (oral defense, oral presentation, conference presentation)             |
| <input type="checkbox"/>            | Portfolio of student work   |
| <input type="checkbox"/>            | Publication or grant proposal (prepared, not dependent upon acceptance)                 |
| <input type="checkbox"/>            | Qualifying or comprehensive exam (typically applicable to graduate level programs)      |
| <input type="checkbox"/>            | Reflection exercise engaged in by student (journal, assignment, discussion session)     |
| <input type="checkbox"/>            | Survey of alumni  |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | Survey of current students  |
| <input type="checkbox"/>            | Supervisor or employer evaluation of student performance outside of the classroom       |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | Thesis or dissertation  |
| <input type="checkbox"/>            | Other   |

11 How was the evidence reviewed/analyzed? (mark all that apply) – *indicate with an “X”*

☐

Compiled narrative results (e.g., interview, focus group, or open-ended data)

☒

Compiled survey results

☐

BC’s Institutional Research office analyzed and supplied the evidence

☐

External organization responsible for evidence (e.g., a licensing exam organization)

☒

Used a rubric or scoring guide

☒

Used professional judgment (i.e., no rubric or scoring guide was used)

☐

Review/analysis is pending

☐

Other

12 Who took part in assessing the evidence? (mark all that apply) – *indicate with an “X”*

☒

Full-time faculty

☐

Part-time/Adjunct faculty

☐

Current students

☐

Employers and/or Advisory Boards

☐

Deans/Associate Deans

☒

Unit/Program-based Curriculum Committee

☐

Unit/Program-based Assessment Committee

13 How will the assessment results/findings be used? (mark all that apply) – *indicate with an “X”*

☐

Assessment procedure changes (e.g., changes to learning outcomes, rubrics)

☐

Course changes (e.g., changes to course content, assignments, pedagogy)

☐

Program changes (e.g., structure of retreat or volunteer program)

☐

Program policy changes

☐

Students' out-of-class experience changes (e.g., changes to advising, career workshops)

☒

Assessment results indicate that no actions are needed because students attained the outcome

☐

Pending – we are not yet sure how the assessment results will be used

14 Please describe what was yielded from the assessment in terms of how students attained/achieved the learning outcome(s). That is, given the interpretation of the results/findings, what were the major takeaways regarding student learning?

- (1) **Senior Theses.** In 2024-25 we had one-third of the senior class (10 students) conduct a senior thesis. This demonstrates that students feel more confident in their abilities to conduct scientific research, making use of mixed analytical methods. Each thesis gets read by at least two ENVS faculty who evaluate the theses using a rubric. We also present a thesis award to the outstanding thesis of the year. In 2025, we presented two awards because the quality of the two theses merited it.
- (2) **Environmental Studies Undergraduate Research Symposium.** Seniors who conduct research in their senior year via ENVS4941-42 *Senior Research Seminar* and Senior Thesis present their project and main findings to the community in a two-hour poster session. This format helps students attain the learning outcome to be able to *communicate knowledge and ideas through critical writing, academic presentation, and constructive dialogue*. The format also provides an opportunity to see students' skills in using mixed analytical methods to address academic research questions. We have noticed that the quality of the research and the presentations are getting better each year.
- (3) **Exit survey results (2022–2024).** Graduating seniors indicated that they would have liked a more “comprehensive research methods class” as well as “statistics or just quantitative courses in general.” To strengthen training in mixed analytical methods (one of our learning outcomes), we added ENVS3370 *Geospatial Data Analysis for Sustainability* as an option to complete the research methods requirement or as an elective. This course provides training in Geographical Information Systems (GIS) and quantitative data analysis for testing the relationships between environmental and social variables. We also hired an environmental sociologist (Dr. Xiaorui Huang) who specializes in computational approaches for a joint tenure track position with the Department of Sociology. The new faculty who begins in January of 2026, will provide additional support and teaching in data analysis and statistics.