5. **Program Effectiveness – Outcomes Assessment**

5.1 **Learning outcomes assessment procedures**

5.1.1 **Outcomes**

EH graduates will be able to understand the historical development of environmental thought and be able to evaluate the major ideas associated with environmentalism (e.g., the anthropocene, conservation, preservation, sustainability, environmental racism, environmental justice). Students will have an informed, interdisciplinary perspective on environmental problems. Students will also encounter paths of environmental transformation and the constructive alternatives to environmental destruction. Our students can reflect critically and creatively on their roles as problem solvers. To this end, they are introduced to multiple methodologies, are encouraged to express themselves creatively, trained in academic discourse, come to understand public scholarship and practice close reading of multiple textual genres. In the end, students must communicate the results of their investigations using various types of writing, visual and electronic communication.

5.1.2 **Assessment**

Individual course requirements assess student writing and oral expression and research skills.

The capstone thesis or project is a culmination of these learning outcomes. Each student has a three-member committee that monitors quality and progress.

Each student has a prospectus defense in semester two and a final defense in semester four, and these culminating moments assist them in seeing where they are in their learning while giving faculty an exhibition of their progress (and the chance to intervene where some component is wanting).
5.1.3 Problems—Solutions

Seminars -- EH, like many interdisciplinary programs, has had problems managing the level of courses our students take outside EH. Many times our students would sign up for cross-listed graduate courses in other departments only to find themselves the only graduate student in a body of 30 juniors. Sometimes this works thanks to diligent faculty but, more often, it does not push our students sufficiently or develop their skills. To emphasize rigor, we have worked hard to add faculty and a dedicated EH seminar each semester. Last year we moved a new curriculum through the curriculum committee and it requires each student take at least two of these EH seminars in order to graduate.

5.2 Outcomes assessment feedback

EH has had some difficulty graduating students within four semesters. For instance, you will see from the charts attached to this report that of the group scheduled to graduate in 2013 zero graduated. The year before that had trouble as well. To meet this problem and help our students we have started Orientation with a concise discussion of expectations and timeline; published a clear and comprehensible timeline; hired a dedicated Graduate Advisor for EH and housed her in our building; required that in their second semester students name a committee chair and at least one other member to their three-person committee; added our “Success Colloquium” for second-year students; require first-year students to finish their year with a “Letter of Good Standing”; and made clear that university policy will not allow us to fund students beyond four semesters.

Students had problems defining their capstone projects before their final year. Our push to name a committee chair in the second semester has accelerated this choosing and sharpening; our summertime
Ecology of Residency course assumes that students will arrive with a project underway; our Tertulia seminar obliges second year students to talk several times about their capstone process and progress; and Tertulia asks second semester students to work together on clarifying what they want to work on and with whom.

Finally, we encountered student anxiety over the prospectus and the final defense events. We have been careful to emphasize that these are learning environments and never spaces for ambush or surprises; we have urged students to attend other defenses and workshop their own in their cohorts; we have added the “Success Colloquium” that spotlights these two moments and manages expectations for them.

### 5.3 Degree completion data

**Table 5.1: Graduate Degree Completion/Attrition Data**

*Environmental Humanities Program 2010-2017*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Entering Student Cohort Academic Year</th>
<th>Number of students newly enrolled in master’s program</th>
<th>Number of students in cohort who left before completing master’s degree</th>
<th>Number of students in cohort who completed master’s degree</th>
<th>Average time to complete master’s degree</th>
<th>Number of students in cohort remaining in graduate programs</th>
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</thead>
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<td>8</td>
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<td>2</td>
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<td>2.6</td>
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</table>
5.4  Employment

Please see Appendix E for a table of employment projections for the types of work our graduates do.

5.4.1  Jobs for EH

Our students emerge with good training and marketable skills for a world that needs environmental thinkers. Each year between one and three of our graduates go on to professional school or PhD programs. One or two start their dream of freelance writing, art or (and!) activism. The majority move into roles with environmental non-profits or education. We offer career support, stay in touch with our graduates, write letters, and maintain an email list to tell them of job opportunities.

5.4.2  Representative Outcomes

Rob DeBirk (2013), Policy Director, Save Our Canyons
Jesse Peterson (2014), EH PhD candidate, KTH Institute, Stockholm
Anna Elza Brady (2015), Law School, University of Oregon for environmental law
Alisha Anderson (2015), Artist, Utah Diné Bikéyah Artist in Residence
Rachel Dewitt (2015), English PhD candidate, UC Davis, environmental literature
Michael McLane (2015), Director, Utah Center for the Book, Utah Humanities Council
Jack Stauss (2016), Grand Canyon Institute Office Manager
Josh Wennergren (2017) Educational Access Program Officer, Utah Humanities Council
Austin Luzbetak (2017) Sociology PhD candidate, Colorado State University