

Departmental and Program Assessment Annual Assessment Plan Report

Academic Year: 07-08

Academic Department or Program: American Studies

Chair: Alex Vernon

Assessment Plan

- Is there an assessment plan for your department or program? (It should be on the web at <http://www.hendrix.edu/academics/academics.aspx?id=7264>. If not, explain when one will be completed.)

No. This past year's major activity was the program's periodic review, which included the writing of a self-study; the hosting of an external consultant; and the writing of a response to the consultant report.

With this information for this relatively new program, we will now be able to spend next year revising the curriculum (for the first time since its inception) and creating an assessment plan. The two items, program curriculum and assessment, in a very real sense go hand-in-hand as they depend upon how we define desired student outcomes and structure the major accordingly.

- Does the assessment plan include stated student learning goals? (If so, then copy or attach them. Goals should be able to stand alone as a list without pages of explanatory commentary. If not, explain when a list of student learning goals will be available.)
- Does the assessment plan include a list of assessment data that are collected each year? (If so, then copy or attach the list. Assessment data lists should be able to stand alone as a list without pages of explanatory commentary. If not, explain when a list of assessments will be available. You do *not* need to submit any of your data, but it should be on file in your department.)
- Has your department or program done an assessment audit of your courses to determine how course goals match overall student learning goals? (This has not been required of departments, but it is a recommended exercise that was explained at the most recent chairs' assessment workshop. If you have done this, please report the results.)
- Are department or program student learning goals available to students? Are student learning goals included in course syllabi in your department or program?

Student Assessments

- Describe which *direct* assessments in your assessment plan have been collected for the year and which have not. [“Direct” refers to evaluated student work.]

Senior theses (capstone projects) have been collected and reviewed by two faculty members.

- Describe which indirect assessments in your assessment plan have been collected for the year and which have not. [“Indirect” refers to student surveys or opinions.]

Our external consultant talked with two students, and included their insights in her written consideration of the program. Additionally, the thesis instructor discussed American Studies and the program with the seniors as a matter of course in the thesis seminar, and his comments at our spring faculty meeting were informed by these conversations.

Assessment Planning

- How is information about student learning shared and used for department or program decision making? (Each department and program is expected to have discussions of at least two hours each academic year to discuss assessment. If you have met, briefly summarize the meeting. If you have not met, when do you plan to meet?)

The department met for an hour this spring, after the consultant’s visit, to discuss the program. We will reconvene in the fall.

- Describe any curricular or other programmatic changes that have been made that were based (at least in part) on the availability of your assessment data.
 - The requirement for a methods course from an appropriate discipline.
 - The decision to streamline/simplify program requirements (next year) in conjunction with student outcomes.
 - A general strengthening of the program—in terms of commitment to the link program, and to visibility and community.
- Describe any changes in the Assessment Plan that have been made during this academic year. (If changes have been made, please submit an electronic copy of the revised plan to Amanda Hurd.)
- Define at least one action item for your group that will be a goal of your assessment discussions next year?
 - Institute a plan.
 - Revise curriculum, to simplify it and to reflect to-be-developed student outcomes.