Departmental and Program Assessment
Annual Assessment Plan Report

Academic Year: 2009-10 Chair: Matthew Moran

Academic Department, Program, General Education Unit: Biology

Student Assessment Plan (SAP) – Basic Check-list – If your answers are "yes" a question in this section, no further explanation is necessary.

1. Is there a current assessment plan for your department, program, or general education component? Current implies that the department uses this SAP. It does not have to be rewritten unless your assessment plan has changed. It should be on the web at http://www.hendrix.edu/academics/academics.aspx?id=7264.

   X yes no

   If no, provide a timeline that will produce a plan by the end of the next academic year.

2. Does the current SAP include student learning goals? Departmental/programmatic/general education component student learning goals should be able to stand alone as a list without pages of explanatory commentary.

   X yes no

   If no, provide a timeline that will produce student learning goals by the end of the next academic year.

3. Does your SAP include a list of assessment data collected yearly? Assessment data lists should be able to stand alone without pages of explanatory commentary. Additionally, collected data should be of enough value to the department that it is read yearly. If not, it is probably not of sufficient use to collect.

   X yes no

   If no, provide a timeline that will produce an assessment data list by the end of the next academic year.

4. Are student learning goals available to students on the web on the departmental/programmatic page(s)?

   X yes no

   If no, provide a timeline that will produce student access to the learning goals by the end of the next academic year.

5. Are student learning goals, appropriate for each course, included in the course syllabi in your department or program?

   X yes no

   If no, provide a timeline that will produce student learning goals by the end of the next academic year.

6. Does your SAP include direct assessments? "Direct" refers to evaluated student work.

   X yes no

   If no, provide a timeline that will produce a direct student assessment tool by the end of the next academic year.

7. Describe which indirect assessments in your assessment plan have been collected for the year and which have not. "Indirect" refers to student surveys, interviews, or opinions.

   X yes no

   We collect student survey from graduates each year
   If no, provide a timeline that will produce an indirect student assessment tool by the end of the next academic year.

Student Assessment Plan Development - Departments and programs who have a complete and current SAP should consider the next step in SAP development. *This could easily be the annual action item for your department or program (next section #5).*

1. As a next step in SAP development, departments/programs are encouraged begin working on an assessment audit to determine how student learning goals fit across the courses in the major. This could be as complicated as a full grid of student learning goals, or a single learning goal, across the courses in the major. (This has not been required of departments, but it is a recommended next step when the SAP is up to date.)

   yes X no

   If yes, please provide the results in either in prose or as a table.

Yearly Assessment Report – each department or program is expected to have assessment discussions for at least two hours each academic year. **Help is available from David Sutherland, just call or email.**

1. What was your planned action item identified in your last report?

   Overenrollment in core courses: addressed by new faculty requests for next year and adjustment of number of section offerings.

2. Briefly summarize the topics discussed in your annual assessment meeting. (If you have not met this year, why not and when do you plan to meet?)

   In conjunction with our 10-year outside assessment, we discussed several topics regarding student learning including:
   a. Student skills (statistics, scientific paper writing, experimental design)
   b. Expanding student research needs

3. What was the conclusion of your assessment discussion and how did the collected assessment data inform your conclusion? Specifically describe any curricular or programmatic changes that have been made that were based, at least in part, on the data in your SAP.

   Students often expressed concerns about some of their scientific skills through our senior surveys and communicated to us informally. Basically students feel that we do a very good job teaching them biological knowledge, but not as well with scientific skills, such as statistics. They also desire more research opportunities. Regarding scientific skills, we have a proposal in development to be submitted to the curriculum committee next year. In terms of research, we are continuing to apply for grants (internal and external) and this summer we have allocated more resources from our indirect funds into direct funding of student research.

4. What are the plans for improving student learning in your unit?

   See #3

5. Define at least one new action item for your unit that will be a goal of your assessment discussions next year?

   Improving our senior survey (content and response rate)

   (This action item could be to work on the SAP or on the assessment audit to correlate student learning goals with specific courses, described above. It can (and perhaps should) be a very limited item.)