

**Departmental and Program Assessment
Annual Assessment Plan Report**

Academic Year: 2009-10 Chair: Alex Vernon

Academic Department, Program, General Education Unit: English

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

The current plan includes the expectations for the senior thesis, the capstone project which brings together the skills and knowledge we expect of our graduating majors. We will, however, review our “learning goals” during the department’s August retreat as we create a “scaffolding” that articulates how the goals are to be met throughout the major.

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)?

yes X no

If no, provide a timeline that will produce student access to the learning goals by the end of the next academic year.
Once we have finalized this, we will put it on the web.

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

yes no For some, though not all, courses.

If no, provide a timeline that will produce student learning goals by the end of the next academic year. After creating our scaffolding, we will ensure the courses and syllabi integrate the goals..

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

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.

yes no Senior written program evaluations; senior exit interviews; annual major’s meeting; faculty experience as instructors and advisors.

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 no We will be working on such a “scaffolding” during our August retreat.

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?

▪ From last year’s report: “Our first major task is to restructure the major to accommodate film studies and creative writing students. We will then begin a review each course ‘type’ to specify department goals and standards.”

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?)

- Discussion of direct and indirect measures: senior theses (we all read multiple theses); course enrollments; senior written program evaluation; senior exit interview data (conducted by thesis seminar instructor, Dr. Stuber); on individual faculty experiences as instructors and advisors.

- Topics: senior thesis and seminar; revised curriculum; community life; extracurricular events (Murphy & Drake) in support of curriculum.

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.

- The major change was an overhaul of the English major, now with emphases in Literary Studies (LS), Film Studies (FS), and Creative Writing (CW). This overhaul occurred largely due to student interest, as gained through direct measures of course enrollments and through indirect measures of student expressed interest. Adding a Literary Theory requirement to the LS emphasis was a result of our assessment of the senior theses and the need for such intellectual rigor and methodologies as a theory course provides. We also eased the distribution requirements where students routinely had difficulty meeting them.

- We confirmed that we are offering the right number of the various kinds of courses. We committed to sustaining our efforts at community development; to repeating the thesis oral defenses; and to linking the thesis students with the lower-level courses. This year, for example, we invited juniors to discuss the experience with the seniors at the end of the experience; we mentioned the thesis in the annual majors/minors meeting; and we decided to require all ENGL 280 students purchase the MLA handbook beginning AY 2010-2011.

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

- Monitor the new major; refine as necessary.

- Create goals or outcomes for each course type.

- Create a student outcome “scaffolding” through all levels of the major.

- Continue purposeful integration of lower-level coursework toward the senior thesis.

- Create a network folder, accessible to the department members, for relevant documents.

- Participate in campus-wide discussion of the Collegiate Center (and Odyssey 2.0), especially as it pertains to the Writing Program and inquiry-based learning

- Sustain community development

- Further integration of thesis experience into lower levels, perhaps in 280, perhaps in other courses.

- Update website

- Investigate reviving Sigma Tau Delta chapter

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

- Create goals or outcomes for each course type.

- Create a student outcome “scaffolding” through all levels of the major.

(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.)