Departmental and Program Assessment
Annual Assessment Plan Report

Academic Year: 2009-10 Chair: Carl Burch

Academic Department, Program, General Education Unit: Natural Sciences

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?

   yes X no

   If no, provide a timeline that will produce student learning goals by the end of the next academic year. Most faculty were doing this already; the others have been asked to start in Fall 2010. We have started collecting syllabi, which will allow this to be monitored.

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 – senior exit interviews yes X – alumni surveys (not intended to be annual) no

   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.)

   X yes no

   If yes, please provide the results in either in prose or as a table. We do not have a simple answer to this question, but it appears in the self-evaluation reports completed in November 2009 for our 2009-10 program review. For computer science, this is Section 4 of its self-evaluation document, while for mathematics, it is Section 3.

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.**

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

"As part of our program review, we will document explicitly how our major requirements mesh with our revised learning goals. We will also discuss what actions we will take based on lessons learned from the program review process."

1. 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?)

   We developed the self-evaluation documents over several meetings in Fall 2009, which easily exceeded an hour in overall length. This self-evaluation document included the discussion of "how our major requirements mesh with our revised learning goals." Also, we met for 1 hour on Wednesday, March 31. The March 31 discussion centered on our response to the program review consultants' report, and in particular what steps to take in composing the departmental response and any preliminary steps we would like to take immediately.

2. 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.

   In the fall, we succeeded in completing a report with a substantive reflection on how learning goals fit within our curriculum. In March, we decided that the mathematics response should be deferred to Fall 2010 to accommodate a new faculty member, but we would target completion of a computer science report this semester. Also, we decided to offer two separate sections of Senior Seminar starting in 2010-11. This was based on the consultants' recommendations.

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

   We will discuss this Tuesday, May 4.

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

   Compose a response to the consultants' recommendations. In some short discussions with colleagues, I anticipate that there will be some notable curricular changes to the major requirements.

(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.)