

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

Academic Year: 2009-10 Chair: Wright

Academic Department, Program, General Education Unit: Physics

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>.

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.

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.

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 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 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.

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

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

- **course syllabi are maintained for all courses offered**
- **samples of final examinations, laboratory reports, and student papers**
- **grades assigned to students,**
- **student evaluations of course content and value,**
- **senior comprehensive examination,**
- **student presentations at national meetings,**
- **Exit interviews**
- **success of graduates in obtaining graduate school acceptances, assistantships, or employment.**
- **student performance on standardized tests such as MCATs and GRE Physics Test**

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

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.**

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

- We plan to submit a request for adequate faculty teaching coverage during Wright and Dunn's upcoming sabbaticals, plus long-term plans for Dunn's retirement. Having a new faculty member will allow us to keep class sizes small, to offer Topics courses, and offer more research experiences.
- We plan to examine the course goals and content for PHYS 305 Waves and Vibrations.
- We plan to examine the course emphasis and content for PHYS 315 Modern Physics.
- We plan to revise the exit interview process.
- We plan to examine the senior capstone experience.

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?)

The department met for our annual assessment meeting on May 18, 2010. The following items were discussed:

- We revised the request for a fifth department faculty member. The request was submitted on May 20, 2010.
- We discussed a strategy to cover our teaching load during the sabbaticals of Bob Dunn and Ann Wright. We submitted a request for a three-year non-tenure-track position on May 20, 2010. We also planned the sabbatical requests to eliminate a time when both Bob and Ann are on sabbatical.
- We discussed the search for a new Lab Manager. The search will take place over the summer of 2010.
- We discussed changes to the capstone experience. Specifically, we have eliminated the words "oral exam" in the catalog, so that we have the option of giving a written exam. We will search out appropriate tests that may serve this purpose.
- We noticed that we have an increased number of students taking the physics GRE test and a nice increase in the scores. Drs. Spayde and Tinsley have worked hard to encourage and prepare the students for the GRE test and the test results demonstrate that their efforts are working.
- Dr. Tinsley agreed to conduct the exit survey this year. The department discussed the appropriate questions for the survey.

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.

See information in above list.

3. What are the plans for improving student learning in your unit?
 - Identify a written senior capstone exam.
 - Conduct a search for additional faculty in the department if granted permission.
4. Define at least one new action item for your unit that will be a goal of your assessment discussions next year?
 - Evaluate the changes to the senior capstone.
 - 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 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.)