Departmental and Program Assessment
Annual Assessment Plan Report

Academic Year: 2008-2009

Academic Unit: Psychology Department

Chair: Jennifer Peszka

Assessment Plan

- Is there an assessment plan for your department, program, or general education component? (It should be on the web at http://www.hendrix.edu/academics/academics.aspx?id=7264. If not, provide a timeline that will produce a plan by the end of the next academic year.)

We have an assessment plan on file, and it is currently updated on the website indicated above.

- Does the assessment plan include stated student learning goals? (Goals should be able to stand alone as a list without pages of explanatory commentary. If not, provide a timeline that will produce goals by the end of the next academic year.)

Yes, the plan begins with an explicit set of learning objectives that stand alone with no explanatory commentary necessary.

- Does the assessment plan include a list of assessment data that are collected each year? (Assessment data lists should be able to stand alone as a list without pages of explanatory commentary. If not, provide a timeline that will produce a list by the end of the next academic year. You do ***not*** need to submit any of your data, but it should be on file in your department.)

Yes, the plan includes a list of assessment data that are collected each year. The data have been collected and are on file in our 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. If you have done this, please report the results.)

This year as part of our 10-year assessment the department produced a summary of the way the Hendrix College Department of Psychology is meeting the guidelines set forth by the American Psychological Association (2007)* for an undergraduate psychology major. Each member of the faculty contributed to a document that addresses how each course meets the learning goals listed in this updated document.

The new APA document includes 10 goals and numerous subgoals. This assessment provides us with the requested information above as well as thoughtful ideas about how our current learning goals stated in the Assessment Plan may need to be revised.

****American Psychological Association. (2007). APA guidelines for the undergraduate psychology major: Washington, DC: Author. Retrieved from www.apa.org/ed/resources.html.***

- Are student learning goals available to students? Are student learning goals included in course syllabi in your department or program?

The departmental learning goals are available to students. They are listed first on the official college Psychology department website: http://www.hendrix.edu/psychology/ .

The learning goals meant to be addressed by each course are now contained on every departmental syllabus. There is some work to be done to explicitly match all learning goals for each class with a specific departmental goal, but the course goals are listed and good progress has been made.

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.]

All assessment data as laid out in the assessment plan were collected. The Major Field Test in Psychology was given to all graduating senior majors. The numbers of professional presentations, in-class oral presentations, writing-intensive credits, internships, and Psi Chi initiates for the 2008-2009 academic year have been collected. Representative good papers were collected. Our newest component of assessment includes collecting experiential learning projects. To accomplish this goal, the Odyssey office provided the department with an itemized list of all completed experiential projects supervised by Psychology Department faculty. Additionally, syllabi from classes were collected and bound for students to access.

- 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.]

All indirect assessment data (the senior survey) has been collected. The survey data is currently being compiled into a report for distribution to the departmental faculty to serve as the topic of our assessment meeting in the fall.

Assessment Planning

- How is information about student learning shared and used for department, program, or general education component decision making? (Each unit is 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?)

Each fall, we meet with our indirect and direct assessment information, discuss this information and choose points to work on for the coming year. This year our focus was on the impact a developing neuroscience program would have on the psychology department mission, goals, and education for our students.

Because we had our 10-year evaluation external reviewer visit this semester, we met far more than 2-hours to discuss assessment. Our department prepared a thoughtful self-study document covering our ability to meet the purposes of the college, our ability to meet the APA guidelines for undergraduate psychology departments, how we have met or not met the suggestions set forth in the last 10-year evaluation, and our needs for the future.

- 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.

This year we focused on assessing the department rather than making changes and will await the feedback from our external reviewer before undertaking any change.

- 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.)

No changes to the Assessment Plan were made this year.

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

This year we focused on assessing the department rather than making changes and will await the feedback from our external reviewer before undertaking any change.

- Report on this year's action item for your unit.

Last year the action items we put forward in our annual assessment report included the following. 1) We will be conducting course-by-course audits to evaluate meeting our learning objectives. 2) We will begin gathering and evaluating the usefulness of new assessment data indicated above. 3) A document will be written as part of our self-assessment that will reflect on the state of the department in achieving our learning objectives as well as the progress made since the last self-assessment. We completed all three of these tasks this year. We completed an extensive review of the department's efforts to meet the learning objectives in the Assessment Plan. The department is satisfied that the learning goals set forth are being well covered at this

time. We have made the first collection of Odyssey data for our department and will discuss this data in the fall meeting along with our other assessment data to determine if this information helps us to understand better our department progress. We completed our self-assessment and hosted a visit from Dr. Charles Brewer, Furman College, who served as our external reviewer this year.

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

We expect a report from Dr. Brewer during the summer on his visit. We will meet throughout the year to identify problem areas identified by Dr. Brewer and action plans we wish to pursue.