

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

**Academic Year: 2010-11      Chair: Gabriel Ferrer**

**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  no

*If no, provide a timeline that will produce student learning goals by the end of the next academic year.* As indicated in last year's report, we have begun collecting syllabi to monitor the inclusion of student learning goals in course syllabi. Examination of collected syllabi indicates that several departmental faculty have not complied. The Department Chair will work with each departmental faculty member to ensure that learning goals are present in each Fall 2011 and Spring 2012 syllabus.

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?

“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.”

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 met briefly at the end of Spring 2010 and extensively throughout Fall 2010 to compose responses to the consultants' recommendations. Major topics of discussion involved the structure of each major curriculum and the senior capstone experiences.

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.

Separate response documents for Computer Science and Mathematics were completed and submitted to the Office of Academic Affairs by the end of Fall 2010. In Computer Science, some alterations were made to course titles and prerequisite structures in response to the consultants' recommendations. In Mathematics, consensus has emerged that the goals of the major would be best served by replacing the Discrete Mathematics requirement with Linear Algebra. This curricular change will be submitted to the Curriculum Committee in Fall 2011. Extensive discussion has also occurred with regard to the Mathematics Senior Capstone experience. No consensus has yet emerged, however, in regard to that topic.

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

Once the learning goals have been incorporated into all departmental course syllabi, we will begin developing plans for improving student learning.

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

We will select two mathematics courses and two computer science courses for assessment audits. Our goals will be:

- To determine relationships between course learning goals and the program learning goals stated in the program assessment plans.
- To assess the degree to which the program learning goals in each SAP correspond to the practice of departmental faculty.
- To begin consideration of how we might conduct a more extensive assessment audit.

*(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.)*