Departmental and Program Assessment Annual Assessment Plan Report

Chair: Gabriel Ferrer

Academic Year: 2011-12

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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

yes X 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 2012 and Spring 2013 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?

"We will select two mathematics courses and two computer science courses for assessment audits. Our

- 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."
- 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 did not have an annual assessment meeting this year. The reason is that the department chair neglected to organize one. The department chair intends to convene such a meeting in August or September 2012.

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 spite of our lack of an assessment meeting this year, we did act upon the recommendation of our consultants that MATH 270 (Linear Algebra) be a requirement for the Mathematics major.

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

Based on the information gleaned from the exit interviews, the Department needs to have a discussion about whether it is time to award a course credit for the Mathematics Senior Thesis. This discussion should be a part of the annual assessment meeting.

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

Each instructor will select one course for an assessment audit. 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.

In addition, the Department will discuss the possibility of awarding a course credit for the Mathematics senior thesis, as is now the case with Computer Science.

(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.)