

**Departmental and Program Assessment  
Annual Assessment Plan Basic Update**

Academic Year: \_\_\_\_\_2012-13\_\_\_\_\_

Academic Unit: \_\_\_\_\_Politics and International Relations\_\_\_\_\_

Chair: \_\_\_\_\_Jay Barth\_\_\_\_\_

**Student Assessment Plan (SAP) – Basic Check-list**

1. Have any changes been made to your program's student assessment plan or student learning goals? Your recent version should be on the web at <http://www.hendrix.edu/academics/academics.aspx?id=7264>. If you have made changes, then attach a copy of the new plan or goals.  
 yes  no
  
2. Are student learning goals available to students on the web on the departmental/programmatic page(s)? If not, then this will be considered as an action plan for the coming year.  
 yes  no
  
3. Are student learning goals, appropriate for each course, included in the course syllabi in your department or program? If not, then this will be considered as an action plan for the coming year.  
 yes  no

**Student Assessment Plan Development** - Departments and programs who have a complete and current SAP should consider the next step in SAP development.

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. Sometimes the term “scaffolding” is used to describe this process. 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.) Has your program already done this?

yes  no *If yes, please provide any **new** results in either in prose or as a table. If no, then this could be the next annual action plan for your program.*

**Yearly Assessment Report** – each department or program is expected to have assessment discussions for at least two hours each academic year. If necessary, help is available from David Sutherland, just call.

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

Our last report focused on our goal of developing course evaluation forms both for other departmental courses (beyond POLI 100, which was previously completed) and also the implementation of a pre-test/post-test evaluation instrument for POLI 100. We remain stymied on development of common evaluation forms for courses above POLI 100 but will continue to discuss in our summer mini-retreat (July).

We noted that, although POLI 497 has been working well in recent years, that we needed to make better use of the first portion of the semester in the seminar course. We altered the course syllabus this year with an eye to that goal. We also altered the syllabus to have the final draft of the project due earlier than in the past (in mid-February rather than just before spring break). This seemed to work well.

At our summer retreat last year, we also discussed whether we needed to scaffold our IR major more thoughtfully as well as whether we needed to alter our “study abroad” requirement for that major. These changes were made through the curricular revision process this last academic year.

2. Briefly summarize the topics discussed in your annual assessment meeting.

We have taken to having two assessment meetings—one at the time of the grading of senior theses (in March) and a second mini-retreat in the summer (this year’s will take place in July). The March meeting focused on the things that seem to be working/need to be improved with our capstone. We seem to be in solid shape now but realize that we do need to discuss exactly how we want the public presentation of that Odyssey-worthy UR course to work. We also need to begin a discussion about whether the thesis should be the capstone experience for ALL of our students or whether some students might be offered a different, more applied capstone experience. Those topics will be on the agenda for the summer mini-retreat.

Also on the agenda for that mini-retreat:

- 1) A review of senior survey responses (which are tied to the student learning goals)
- 2) A review of our learning goals for both POLI 100 and the department as a whole (which are now dated especially in light of the tremendous turnover of faculty in our program) [After any alterations, these revised departmental learning goals will be posted on our departmental website.]
- 3) Tied to #2, a discussion of the “scaffolding” issue for our courses above POLI 100
- 4) A further review of the IR study abroad requirement
- 5) A discussion of the common readings for POLI 100

- 6) A discussion and, ideally, reaffirmation of the style manual used by our students (including Kindle and other electronic resources)
3. 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 above.

4. Define one new action item for your assessment discussions next year.

While we have several action items for the year, as noted on the agenda for the summer retreat, the primary action goal will be review/revision of our learning goals for the department and for POLI 100.