

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

Academic Year: _2013-2014_____

Academic Unit: _History Department_____

Chair: _Todd Berryman_____

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?

In last year’s report, we identified the following as our action item: “We are working on compiling our individual assignments into a shared resource through Dropbox. The resource will be intended for departmental use only, and not shared with students. Further, we plan to add a resource for students to our website with writing guidelines. Specifically, our students need more guidance for citing their sources properly.”

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

During this academic year, the History Department met on multiple occasions to discuss assessment. Many of those conversations were folded into broader discussions involving this year’s external review of our department. More specifically, however, one of our meetings in October was devoted to reviewing the most recent survey that our graduating seniors had completed and comparing its results to the previous year. Much of that conversation centered on our seniors’ indirect assessment of learning outcomes, particularly with respect to the skills components of our learning goals (*i.e.*, research skills, critical thinking skills, written communication skills, and oral communication skills). A second meeting, in late April, was devoted to beginning the process of reformulating our SAP in light of feedback we received during the external review process.

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.

The data that we analyzed from our senior survey strongly indicates that students perceive the department’s curriculum to have greatly contributed to their development of the skills noted above. However, during this second year of reviewing the survey data, there emerged a growing recognition among department faculty members that the data collected from this indirect assessment tool needs to be coupled with and analyzed against a more direct assessment mechanism.

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

The History Department is currently planning a retreat for June at which assessment will serve as one of the primary topics of discussion. Our intention is to revise our current SAP. Special attention will be devoted to devising an assessment plan that closes the circle between indirect and direct assessment, especially with respect to skills development. As part of this process, we also intend to create a “curriculum map” for all the courses offered within the department. History faculty will be asked to identify the emphasis each of their courses places on the above-noted skills (research, critical thinking, written communication, and oral communication). This will help us identify, department-wide, which skills are being emphasized at what level(s) of our curriculum. It is important for us to have that information as we begin to collect not only indirect assessment data on skills development, which we have done for the past several years, but also direct assessment data on skills development, which we intend to do in future years. With those items in place, the department will be better positioned to have our students’ indirect assessment, our faculty’s direct assessment, and our curriculum be in “dialogue” with one another for assessment purposes.