

Environmental Studies Program Assessment Plan 2015-2016

The Hendrix College Environmental Studies program is a program designed to help students effectively understand complex and multifaceted problems within environmental studies. The curriculum has been developed to help students:

- the structure and dynamics of the natural world,
- understand ways in which human beings are a part of and interact with the natural world,
- understand world views and values that guide humans as they interact with the natural world,
- explore forms of sustainable community life, and
- understand methods of data collection, synthesis, interpretation and analysis acquired from natural sciences, social sciences, and humanities.

These newly articulated learning goals are anticipated to evolve as the program sharpens its vision.

Assessment and Data Collection

As a relatively new educational unit, the Environmental Studies Program is actively collecting assessment information, formally and informally, and making changes as soon as a need is identified. It is expected that the fluid nature of this program will cause us to update this student assessment plan frequently, but we keep the posted materials as current as possible.

Formal Data Collection:

The quality of our majors is the primary focus of the program's formal assessment efforts. The quality of our seniors and the program is tracked by the data found in Table I. This data is collected and maintained by the program chair. These measures include:

- Number of majors. Although this seems an unusual assessment criterion, these numbers reflect the value students see in this major. A new program should grow with time unless the students find it invalid. Tracking this number is an important reflector of the health of the program.
- Internship locations and titles. Anecdotal evidence suggests that the internship experience opens doors to the first post-graduation experience. We need to track these to confirm this hypothesis.
- Copies of senior research papers and the quality of these. This internal measure is discussed yearly by the faculty as we set the threshold for honors. And finally,
- A list of the immediate professional plans of recent graduates.

Table I Data Assessing the Quality of Senior Majors

	Quality of Majors/ Program
<u>Direct</u>	Number of majors
	Internship locations and titles
	Papers and Grades from the Senior Research Papers
	Professional Plans of Recent Graduates
<u>Indirect</u>	Student Survey

We use a student survey as an indirect assessment measure. The fixed questions in this survey presently focus on the students' interest areas within the Environmental Studies program as well as their perceptions of their skills taught within the Environmental Studies. This survey also include an SII (Strengths, areas for Improvement and Insights) open response section. The SII method requests students reflect on the program strengths, areas for improvement, and what insights they had gained.