

## Odyssey Assessment Report 2015-16

Now that Odyssey learning goals are in place, assessment of the Odyssey Program continues under the leadership of the Associate Provost for Engaged Learning and the Director of the Odyssey Program. There are four main sources of assessment data.

### *Graduate Outcomes Survey and Young Alumni Survey*

In recent years, the Hendrix Office of Career Services surveyed all graduating students. One question in particular targets the Odyssey Program (focused on the second learning goal, vocational discovery):

- “One or more of my Odyssey experiences helped me identify the post-graduation plan BEST for me.”

	2012 Class	2013 Class	2014 Class	2015 Class
Strongly Agree	24%	22%	23%	32%
Agree	36%	34%	36%	30%
Neutral	23%	24%	24%	20%
Disagree	9%	13%	10%	11%
Strongly Disagree	8%	7%	7%	7%

The Class of 2015 is the first class of students for which more than sixty percent (62%) state that they “strongly agree” or “agree” with the statement; although there is more work to be done, the trend is moving in the right direction.

The Office of Career Services also surveys young alumni, two years after graduation. This survey asks three Odyssey-related questions.

- “One or more of my Odyssey experiences helped me identify the post-graduate plan that I am currently engaged in.”

	2010 Class	2011 Class	2012 Class	2013 Class
Highly agree	36%	35%	33%	25%
Moderately agree	16%	23%	28%	27%
Slightly agree	25%	18%	14%	31%
Not at all agree	23%	24%	25%	17%

- “One or more of my Odyssey experiences helped me identify the post-graduate plan that is best for me.”

	2010 Class	2011 Class	2012 Class	2013 Class
Highly related	34%	38%	33%	27%
Moderately related	21%	22%	28%	28%
Slightly related	19%	21%	13%	27%
Not at all related	26%	19%	26%	18%

- “One or more of my Odyssey experiences helped me develop attitudes, abilities and/or knowledge helpful to meeting my post-graduation challenges.”

	2010 Class	2011 Class	2012 Class	2013 Class
Highly related	47%	55%	48%	48%
Moderately related	30%	28%	34%	30%
Slightly related	18%	13%	7%	12%
Not at all related	5%	3%	11%	10%

Unfortunately, the trend in this case is in the negative direction, with the exception of the last question. We will pay close attention to the survey results next year to determine if the trend continues. If so, we need to spend more time developing strategies to help students link Odyssey experiences to vocational and skills discernment. However, it is important to note that these questions on the Young Alumni serve really only target one, or perhaps one and a half, of the Odyssey learning goals.

It is also worth examining individual, open-ended responses to the question, “Aside from Odyssey, which Hendrix-based extracurricular and/or co-curricular experiences helped you to identify the post-graduation plan that you have chosen?” Many students list such curricular and co-curricular activities as undergraduate research, Miller Center mission trip, study abroad, and senior thesis seminar. Very often students engaged in these activities earn Odyssey credit and therefore undertake the critical reflection required by the program.

#### *Senior Dinners*

During the spring of 2011, random groups of seniors were invited to three dinners. Faculty members and Odyssey staff facilitated discussion concerning the effect of the Odyssey program on students. The analytic inputs provided by these dinners were used to help develop the overall Odyssey learning goals.

During the spring semesters of 2013, 2014, 2015, and 2016, the Associate Provost for Engaged Learning and the Director of Odyssey continued this practice to ascertain how well the established learning goals are being met by students. Random sampling was used to invite graduating seniors to the catered meals. At each dinner, the students were broken into two groups (ranging in size from three to ten students). Faculty pairs facilitated discussion by asking probing questions related to the learning goals. Importantly, faculty facilitators – who were trained before the dinners – did not simply list learning goals and ask if the students achieved them. Rather, the facilitators asked open-ended questions inviting students to describe what they gained from their Odyssey experiences and from the challenge of the requirement to earn three credits from three different categories.

The faculty pairings:

- A: Peg Falls-Corbitt/David Sutherland – April 18, 2013
- B: Peter Gess/Nancy Fleming – April 18, 2013
- C: Danny Grace/Kiril Kolev – April 7, 2014
- D: George Harper/Jennifer Penner- April 7, 2014
- E: Peg Falls-Corbitt/ Allison Shutt – April 15, 2014
- F: Peter Gess/Jane Harris – April 15, 2014
- G: Allison Shutt/Matt Moran – April 9, 2015

- H: Peg Falls-Corbitt/Liz Gron – April 9, 2015
- I: Jane Harris/Daniel Whelan – April 13, 2015
- J: Peter Gess/Joyce Hardin – April 13, 2015
- K: Jennifer Penner/Peter Gess – March 8, 2016
- L: Daniel Whelan/Sasha Pfau – March 8, 2016
- M: Joyce Hardin/Anne Goldberg – March 16, 2016
- N: Jay Barth/Anne Muse – March 16, 2016

Shortly after the senior dinners, each faculty pair met to share notes, and to best judge the extent to which students in their group, on average, evidenced achievement of the learning goals. They employed a rubric (see Appendix B) to evaluate and discuss learning goal achievement. What follows is a visual representation of this assessment by the faculty pairs; the placement of the letters A through N correspond to the groups/dinners listed above.

### **Goal 1: Enhancement of learning (both what they know and how they come to know)**

	<b>No Evidence (no student's comments revealed the exercise of this capacity)</b>	<b>Evident (some students' comments revealed the exercise of this capacity)</b>	<b>Very Evident (a preponderance of students' comments revealed the exercise of this capacity)</b>
examination of ideas in new contexts	D	ABGFJKL	CEHMN
application of theories to practice	ADJ	BCGKMN	EFH
first-hand discovery of how things are in the world	DI	BFL	ACEHGJKLMN
exercise of, and reflection upon, powers of judgment in practical situations	BD	AEFGJK	CGHLMN

As one can see, there is considerable spread in achievement of Goal 1. Students in Group D were consistent: partial and intermittent evidence. However, the other thirteen groups centered on proficient and capstone levels of attainment (especially Groups M and N). Clearly, the undergraduate research and professional development (internships) categories stand out here; it is easier for students on these sorts of projects to make the explicit or implicit link to applying knowledge in new contexts and theory to practice. Of course students earning credits in other categories also witness an enhancement of learning.

### **Goal 2: Vocational Self-Discovery and Professional Development**

	<b>No Evidence (no student's comments revealed the</b>	<b>Evident (some students' comments</b>	<b>Very Evident (a preponderance of students' comments revealed the exercise of this capacity )</b>
--	--	---	---

	<b>exercise of this capacity)</b>	<b>revealed exercise of this capacity)</b>	
discovery of qualities and capacities they possess for acting effectively in the world	DEI	FG	ABCHJKLMN
exercise of resourcefulness and problem-solving abilities in new and complex situations	G	ABDFJK	CEHLMN
identification and exploration of vocational and a-vocational passions	I	BCF	ADEGHJKLMN
reflective delineation of values, life plans, graduation and career goals in light of hands-on experience	EI	CFLN	ABDGHJKM

Although a spread also occurs here, Goal 2 rose to prominence during most of the senior dinner discussions. Importantly, students are tapping into Odyssey to help clarify how they spend time at Hendrix (educational and co-educational pursuits) as well as future directions, whether it is employment, graduate education, or community engagement. In many cases, students learn from mistakes or learn what they do not want to do post-graduation. Likewise, students are clearly developing skills beyond what they can do in the classroom, such as confidence, problem-solving, independence and passion. According to the rubric, students are proficient to advanced on this goal, with perhaps more work to be done with the “discovery of qualities and capacities”.

### **Goal 3: Development of a Sense of Ownership over One’s Educational Pursuits and of the Habits Conducive to Life-Long Learning**

	<b>No Evidence (no student’s comments revealed the exercise of this capacity)</b>	<b>Evident (some students’ comments revealed exercise of this capacity)</b>	<b>Very Evident (a preponderance of students’ comments revealed the exercise of this capacity )</b>
independently structuring educational projects in accordance with self-selected learning goals	D	CEGJLMN	ABFHIK
applying previous learning to new	J	ACDFGILMN	BEHK

contexts in creative and novel ways			
discovering unforeseen connections between disciplines, schools of thought, or social practices	DEGKL	BCFIM	AHJN
learning from critical reflection upon both success and failure	EG	BCFI	ADHJKLMN

Students also claim Odyssey as a force for self-authorship and commitment to learning. Highlights here include the ability to try new things and to discover new passions. Telltale statements include, “I learned how to advocate for myself and fight for my passions” and “You never want to turn your brain off. Odyssey encourages a lifelong commitment to engagement”. Many students also celebrate the interdisciplinary nature of many courses, activities and projects. Although some students achieve only the basic levels—especially with “discovering unforeseen connections”—many are proficient and advanced on Goal 3.

**Goal 4: Increased Awareness of One’s Responsibility for Linking Action and Understanding in the Effort to Respond Effectively to the Social, Spiritual, and Ecological Needs of our Time**

	<b>No Evidence (no student’s comments revealed the exercise of this capacity)</b>	<b>Evident (some students’ revealed required the exercise of this capacity)</b>	<b>Very Evident (a preponderance of students’ comments revealed the exercise of this capacity )</b>
discovering one’s capacity to explore the world and act as an effective agent within it	BI	DFJN	CEGHKLM
becoming reflective and articulate about how one’s values and beliefs influence one’s actions and actions shape and reveal one’s values and beliefs	BEJ	CDFGKM	AHILN
gaining exposure to, and critically reflecting upon, previously unfamiliar avenues of response to	BGJ	ACDEFKLN	HIM

intellectual queries and social problems			
making conscious decisions in the selection or design of hands on projects responsive to local and/or global communities	BEJ	ACDFN	GHIKLM

Goal 4 was the least developed in the discussions with the graduating seniors. The students did not enumerate many instances of the expected outcomes under this goal, nor did there seem to be much awareness of this as a specific desired outcome. One student did state, "Engaged learning helps you grow and figure out what kind of person you want to be." All-in-all, at least with this group of students, Goal 4 is centered on proficient, although a few do achieve capstone/advanced. More work is needed to enhance this goal in the Odyssey program.

The process of facilitating senior dinners and applying the rubric provides an important development opportunity for the faculty members involved. Many participants value the opportunity to think more deeply about the goals of the Program, as well as how to more deeply engage the students they advise.

#### *Odyssey Exemplars*

The Odyssey Office continues to program the Exemplar series, which has students present their interesting and outstanding projects to the Hendrix community. Beginning with Fall 2013, a member of the Odyssey leadership team (and sometimes other members of the faculty) attend each Exemplar presentation, and use the rubric to assess learning goal achievement. As might be expected, students are quite spread on the Odyssey learning goals, especially considering that no single Odyssey project should meet all of the goals. Data collection through the Exemplar presentations is ongoing.