

## Odyssey Program 2018-19 Annual Assessment Report

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 several sources of assessment data, including a significant revision to two of them—the graduate outcomes survey and the Young Alumni Survey.

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

Since 2012, the Hendrix survey of all graduating students had included a question regarding Odyssey. This question focused on the second learning goal—vocational discovery. After Odyssey’s entirely falling off of the survey in 2017, we worked with the Director of Institutional Research to add a new set of questions that touched more of the program’s learning goals last year. Here are these questions and the spread of responses for spring 2019:

<b>One or more of my Odyssey experiences helped me to...</b>					
	(1) Strongly Disagree	(2) Disagree	(3) Agree	(4) Strongly Agree	Average
Plan my professional life after graduation.	18 (8%)	32 (14%)	109 (48%)	68 (30%)	3.00
Set my personal educational goals and make a plan for realizing them.	12 (5%)	25 (11%)	115 (51%)	75 (33%)	3.11
Think about how my values and beliefs influence my actions and goals.	11 (5%)	22(10%)	117 (52%)	76 (34%)	3.14
Examine ideas in new contexts and apply theories to practice.	10 (4%)	15 (7%)	116 (51%)	86 (38%)	3.22

This year’s results, showing that more than three-quarters of all seniors either “agree” or “strongly agree” that the program succeeded in achieving its four learning goals, mark a marginal improvement over 2018 excepting the first question which had the same average score as a year ago. Once again, particularly strong was the linkage of the classroom experiences to the world beyond with 89% of respondents providing favorable responses on this learning goal.

This survey of graduating seniors also included an opportunity for respondents to provide feedback regarding the Odyssey program. A wide range of responses are shown in this qualitative data. At one end of the spectrum, students report that the program was vital to their learning at Hendrix, pushing them to explore their limits personally and intellectually. Others argue that the Odyssey requirements added little

to their time at Hendrix and question whether the program should be required of all students.

These new questions will also serve as the foundation for the Young Alumni Survey that the Office of Institutional Research plans to carry out.

### *Senior Dinners*

As has taken place since 2013, in spring the Associate Provost for Engaged Learning and the Director of Odyssey continued the practice of conversations over dinner by sets of seniors 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 groups of approximately eight students (the size of the groups was made a bit smaller this year to facilitate vibrant conversations). Faculty 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. Another faculty member was at the table taking notes. (In one case, because of a late cancellation by a faculty member, three faculty were at one table.)

The five faculty groups for 2019 were:

#### **March 14**

- A) Ann Muse and Jennifer Peszka
- B) Andrew Schurko, Allison Shutt, and Dorian Stuber

#### **March 28**

- C) Brenda Houck and Lyle Rupert
- D) Lindsey Kennedy and John Krebs
- E) Carol West and Laura MacDonald

Shortly after the senior dinners, each faculty group 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 A) 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 E correspond to the groups/dinners listed above.

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

	No Evidence (no student's comments revealed)	Evident (some students' comments revealed)	Very Evident
--	--	--	--------------

	the exercise of this capacity)	the exercise of this capacity)	(a preponderance of students' comments revealed the exercise of this capacity)
examination of ideas in new contexts			ABCDE
application of theories to practice		AE	BCD
first-hand discovery of how things are in the world		B	ACDE
exercise of, and reflection upon, powers of judgment in practical situations	A	BD	CE

Compared to past years, we saw some strengthening in this learning goal, particularly in terms of the examination of ideas in new contexts. Two aspects of Goal 1 were also quite strong: application of theories to practice and first-hand discovery. The final aspect was somewhat more diluted, though there is still general agreement that there is evidence of this learning goal.

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

	No Evidence (no student's comments revealed the exercise of this capacity)	Evident (some students' comments revealed exercise of this capacity)	Very Evident (a preponderance of students' comments revealed the exercise of this capacity )
discovery of qualities and capacities they possess for acting effectively in the world		AB	CDE
exercise of resourcefulness and problem-solving abilities in new and complex situations		BCD	AE
identification and exploration of vocational and a-vocational passions			ABCDE
reflective delineation of values, life plans, graduation and career goals in light of hands-on experience			ABCDE

As in past years, Goal 2 remains strong, particularly with respect to vocational discovery and reflection upon future careers. Internships were often featured in

discussions around the dinner tables, but other projects from a variety of categories were also mentioned.

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

	No Evidence (no student's comments revealed the exercise of this capacity)	Evident (some students' comments revealed exercise of this capacity)	Very Evident (a preponderance of students' comments revealed the exercise of this capacity )
independently structuring educational projects in accordance with self- selected learning goals	E	D	ABC
applying previous learning to new contexts in creative and novel ways	A	BD	CE
discovering unforeseen connections between disciplines, schools of thought, or social practices	AB	DE	C
learning from critical reflection upon both success and failure		C	ABDE

Again, as shown by these scores, critical reflection remains a strength of the Odyssey Program. As in past years, there does appear to be room for improvement in this category as a whole, however.

### **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**

	No Evidence (no student's comments revealed the exercise of this capacity)	Evident (some students' revealed required the exercise of this capacity)	Very Evident (a preponderance of students' comments revealed the exercise of this capacity )
discovering one's capacity to explore the world and act as an effective agent within it		BC	ADE
becoming reflective and articulate about how one's values and beliefs influence one's	A	BE	CD

actions and actions shape and reveal one's values and beliefs			
gaining exposure to, and critically reflecting upon, previously unfamiliar avenues of response to intellectual queries and social problems	A	BE	CD
making conscious decisions in the selection or design of hands on projects responsive to local and/or global communities	B	ACD	E

Compared to the past, we saw slight improvement with Goal 4, although there remained a spread of outcomes in all four aspects of the learning goal.

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. At this point, we are no longer formally assessing these events with the rubric that was developed for them several years ago. The key reasons for our moving away from assessing these events is because of the tremendous variance in the faculty/staff members who attend the presentations and because they only reflect a single Odyssey experience rather than the totality of Odyssey experiences, which is the focus of our assessment of student learning regarding Odyssey. Therefore, it is appropriate to see this as no longer a component of our multifaceted assessment plan.

### *Odyssey Distinction*

While the Distinction in Odyssey program was not originally envisioned as a component of our assessment program, having had the opportunity to visit with those students who have so fully immersed in the program made us realize that these interviews do provide a way for us to understand our best students' ability to achieve the learning goals of the program. As was the case last year, we were genuinely wowed by the articulation of the learning goals of the program, typically with almost no prodding. Based on the conversations with the Director and Associate Director of the

program, there was no doubt that the 16 students who had completed (or would soon complete) experiences in the six Odyssey categories were distinctive in their Odyssey work. The program is a truly a transformative experience for those students who take full advantage of it.

## Appendix A

### Odyssey Learning Goals – Assessment Rubrics

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

	<b>Basic</b> (partial, intermittent evidence)	<b>Proficient</b> (awareness of evidence)	<b>Capstone/Advanced</b> (analysis of evidence)
examination of ideas in new contexts	evidence of application of knowledge acquired traditionally (such as in the classroom)	critically tests/ deconstructs those ideas while applying them to new context	creates new hypotheses built on ideas and tests them in new environment
Comments/Score:			
application of theories to practice	evidence of application of theories in new environment/context	enumerates theories that have been applied	tests, deconstructs and synthesizes theories in practice (perhaps creating new theories)
Comments/Score:			
first-hand discovery of how things are in the world	evidence of such discovery through engagement	enumerates new discoveries through the engagement	describes how specific first-hand discoveries advance learning beyond the classroom
Comments/Score:			
exercise of, and reflection upon, powers of judgment in practical situations	evidence of application of such judgment	enumerates instances of applying powers of judgment during engagement	demonstrates thorough understanding of importance and development of judgment in enumerated instances
Comments/Score:			

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

	<b>Basic</b> (partial, intermittent evidence)	<b>Proficient</b> (awareness of evidence)	<b>Capstone/Advanced</b> (analysis of evidence)
discovery of qualities and capacities they possess for acting effectively in the world Comments/Score:	evidence of discovery of qualities and capacities	enumerates personal qualities and capacities discovered through engagement	links those qualities and capacities to effective acting; identifies personal limitations; leads to vocational discovery
exercise of resourcefulness and problem-solving abilities in new and complex situations Comments/Score:	evidence of execution of resourcefulness and problem-solving	enumerates circumstances when resourcefulness and problem-solving are applied	links resourcefulness and problem-solving to successful navigation of new and complex situations (understands the reality of complexities)
identification and exploration of vocational and a-vocational passions Comments/Score:	evidence of such exploration	enumerates passions created, identified, refined, cemented by engagement	articulates how engagement lead to such passions; commitment to following passions through future engagement
reflective delineation of values, life plans, graduation and career goals in light of hands-on experience Comments/Score:	evidence of delineation of values, plans, goals	enumerates way in which engagement brought focus to such values, plans, goals	articulates why engagement is important to such delineation, and articulates plan for future engagement to refine values and goals



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

	<b>Basic</b> (partial, intermittent evidence)	<b>Proficient</b> (awareness of evidence)	<b>Capstone/Advanced</b> (analysis of evidence)
independently structuring educational projects in accordance with self-selected learning goals Comments/Score:	evidence of congruence between designed projects and learning goals	enumerates links between goals and self-designed projects	articulates importance of such links; identifies ways planning for goal achievement will be used in future
applying previous learning to new contexts in creative and novel ways Comments/Score:	evidence of creative application of knowledge	discusses instances of application of learning in creative and novel ways	discusses importance of developing goals and plan for ownership and life-long learning
discovering unforeseen connections between disciplines, schools of thought, or social practices Comments/Score:	evidence of such new discoveries	provides examples of discovered connections	speaks of ways the discovery of connections advanced understanding, enhanced ownership and/or deepened commitment to life-long learning; values interdisciplinarity (multiple ways of knowing holds power)
learning to learn from critical reflection upon both success and failure Comments/Score:	evidence of critical reflection	enumerates instances of such critical reflection	specifies how critical reflection leads to enhanced learning; indicates commitment to critical and ongoing reflection

**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>Basic</b> (partial, intermittent evidence)	<b>Proficient</b> (awareness of evidence)	<b>Capstone/Advanced</b> (analysis of evidence)
discovering one's capacity to explore the world and act as an effective agent within it Comments/Score:	evidence of discovery of capacities	discusses examples of exploration and effective action	speaks of how such engagement increases understanding; how values affect effectiveness; and a commitment to action
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 Comments/Score:	evidence of reflection about links between values/ideas and actions	enumerates ways in which actions are shaped by values and ideas; in turn how values and beliefs are shaped by action	effectively articulates why such linkages are important; how they contribute to value refinement; and how they capacity-build for future engagement
gaining exposure to, and critically reflecting upon, previously unfamiliar avenues of response to intellectual queries and social problems Comments/Score:	evidence of exposure to and critical reflection upon unfamiliar avenues	enumerates exposures to, reflections on, and responses to local and global problems	understands how exposure and reflection has led to increased awareness of responsibility, value development, and capacity for community engagement
making conscious decisions in the selection or design of hands on projects responsive to local and/or global communities Comments/Score:	evidence of such decisions	articulates process of designing responsive projects and important characteristics of such projects	explains how such projects have led to value development/clarification and deeper understanding of one's capacity