

**Departmental and Program Assessment
Annual Assessment Plan Report**

Academic Year: 2012-2013

Academic Unit: American Studies

Chair: Jane Harris

Student Assessment Plan (SAP) – Basic Check-list – If your answers are “yes” a question in this section, no further explanation is necessary.

1. Is there a current assessment plan for your department, program, or general education component? Current implies that this SAP is used by the department. It does not have to be rewritten unless your assessment plan has changed. It should be on the web at <http://www.hendrix.edu/academics/academics.aspx?id=7264>.

☒ yes ☐ no *If no, provide a timeline that will produce a plan by the end of the next academic year.*

2. Does the current SAP include student learning goals? Departmental/programmatic/general education component student learning goals should be able to stand alone as a list without pages of explanatory commentary.

☒ yes ☐ no *If no, provide a timeline that will produce student learning goals by the end of the next academic year.*

3. Does your SAP include a list of assessment data collected yearly? Assessment data lists should be able to stand alone without pages of explanatory commentary. Additionally, collected data should be of enough value to the department that it is read yearly. If not, it is probably not of sufficient use to collect.

☐ yes ☒ no *If no, provide a timeline that will produce an assessment data list by the end of the next academic year.*

4. Are student learning goals available to students on the web on the departmental/programmatic page(s)?

☐ yes ☒ no *If no, provide a timeline that will produce student access to the learning goals by the end of the next academic year.*

Adding the learning goals to the web page for the American Studies Program will be completed during the 2013-2014 academic year.

5. Are student learning goals, appropriate for each course, included in the course syllabi in your department or program?

☐ yes ☐ no *If no, provide a timeline that will produce student learning goals by the end of the next academic year.*
Given the multiple disciplines that from the American Studies Program, there is not one set of learning goals supplied on each courses that counts toward the satisfaction of the American Studies major. However, I will remind affiliated faculty of the four goals that we have identified for the program and suggest, where appropriate, to include those on the syllabi of courses that qualify for the American Studies major.

6. Does your SAP include direct assessments? “Direct” refers to evaluated student work.

☐ yes ☐ no *If no, provide a timeline that will produce a direct student assessment tool by the end of the next academic year.*

7. Describe which indirect assessments in your assessment plan have been collected for the year and which have not. “Indirect” refers to student surveys, interviews, or opinions.

☐ yes ☐ no *If no, provide a timeline that will produce an indirect student assessment tool by the end of the next academic year.*

We had no graduating seniors during 2012-2013; therefore, we did not have senior theses to evaluate. We will have two senior majors during 2013-2014 and there are two sets of possible linked courses during 2013-2014, which will also yield materials appropriate for indirect assessment of the learning goals.

Student Assessment Plan Development - Departments and programs who have a complete and current SAP should consider the next step in SAP development. *This could easily be the annual action item for your department or program (next section #5).*

1. As a next step in SAP development, departments/programs are encouraged to begin working on an assessment audit to determine how student learning goals fit across the courses in the major. 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.)

☐ yes ☐ no *If yes, please provide the results in either in prose or as a table.*

This is a step that the affiliated faculty can pursue during 2013-2014, using the grids that have been developed to assess the learning domains.

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?
With the resignation of the previous American Studies chair during the summer of 2012, the program was left without an annual assessment report for 2011-2012. With the current chair's duties as the acting Humanities Area Chair during 2012-2013, the American Studies program has suffered from neglect during 2012-2013. That neglect will be remedied during 2013-2014, beginning with a fall meeting of affiliated faculty, which will include some newly arrived faculty members who have the potential to contribute substantially to the program.
2. Briefly summarize the topics discussed in your annual assessment meeting. (If you have not met this year, why not and when do you plan to meet?)
As stated above, the previous chair resigned suddenly during the summer of 2012, and the current chair added unexpectedly a significant responsibility as area chair, which led to the neglect of American Studies during the past year.
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 forthcoming academic year, 2013-2014, holds prospects for significant curricular changes with the addition of a newly hired faculty member in American History. In addition, we will need to discuss how to generate more interest among the student body in the American Studies program, which exciting new faculty members will certainly help to stimulate.
4. What are the plans for improving student learning in your unit?
This will be a topic for conversation as the faculty meet during the 2013-2014 academic year. We will want to consider the linked courses option and its effectiveness. We may want to discuss whether the senior thesis is the best capstone option for our students. Another topic to discuss is whether we are making the best use of the Odyssey program in helping our students gain experiences that will enhance their employment or graduate/professional school opportunities upon graduation.
5. Define at least one new action item for your unit that will be a goal of your assessment discussions next year?

(This action item could be to work on the SAP or on the assessment audit to correlate student learning goals with specific courses, described above.)

The affiliated faculty in American Studies will consider whether we are offering the best capstone experience for our majors in light of the emerging emphases on linking majors to outcomes for employment after college graduation.