

Departmental Assessment Meeting: Report

Please fill out this report based on your department's conversation and return via e-mail to Megan Leonard or Sasha Pfau by March 31, 2017.

Summary of past decisions

Please summarize up to three departmental changes made since the last HLC visit (08-09) the impetus for those changes and any changes to information gathering about student development.

Since 08-09, we have made a number of changes to our major. The most significant of these is our change to our capstone. In 08-09 we used a standardized exam as our capstone. In conversations with our majors we found that students felt under-prepared for the exam and (as we hired new colleagues) the assessment of student learning possible in a multiple choice exam did not match up well to our larger learning goals for the major. Instead, we chose to focus on student research and communication as the focus for our capstone. Initially we offered students two tracks for the capstone, a course focused on research and writing and a course focused on editing and presentation. However, through student feedback on our senior survey, faculty assessment of student performance, and the input of an external review, we determined that all students should enroll in the editing and presentation course, making the research course optional.

We added a number of new mechanisms for gathering information about our students. We developed a Senior Survey. We also revised our learning goals with a new emphasis on skills. We created a skills map for our curriculum to see which classes focused on the development of which skills so that we could better guide our students through their curricular choices. Finally, we developed a skills assessment form, where faculty evaluate the performance of our majors in their classes from the moment they declare until they graduate. We hope to use this to help us see the trajectory of our majors.

Looking forward

Please summarize your department's focus for student development and your evaluation methods.

We are interested in examining the scaffolding of skills in our courses. As noted above, this Fall we have started a process of evaluating majors in our classes using a skills evaluation form. We begin evaluating them from the moment that they declare until they graduate to trace how and where we can see improvement.

Achieving departmental goals for students

Please explain how your departmental curriculum achieves your student learning goals, being sure to include the Capstone. Feel free to attach a curricular map or other supporting documents. Summarize the ways your department provides guidance in the effective use of research and information resources.

In our meeting, we revised our learning goals to create three distinct areas: broad knowledge about the subject, the methodology of our field, and the development of a skill set (see the attached document). Our students achieve learning goal one through the distribution requirements of our major (2 American, 2 European, and 3 Global history courses). They achieve learning goal two through the required course

on Historiography. Finally, the skills in learning goal three are scaffolded throughout our major, culminating in the Capstone experience which asks students to use their critical thinking and reading skills to do historical research, then create an oral presentation and a written work. Our department works with the library in several classes, including Historiography and our Senior Thesis course to help provide guidance about information resources, but also several of our courses involve discussions of those resources.

Your department's role in achieving the college's shared goals for students

Please explain how your departmental learning goals contribute to the Vision for Student Learning Goals. Feel free to attach a map or other supporting documents.

See the attached map.

History Department Assessment 2017

Learning Goals:

The history department values the rich diversity of teaching styles within our department, and we all believe in the following core learning goals, which inform the courses we have developed individually and the pedagogical practices we bring to our respective classrooms. In achieving these goals, we hope that our majors will gain an understanding of why and how history is meaningful and attain skills and understanding they can utilize in their lives after college. Hendrix history majors will:

1. Develop broad empirical knowledge of diverse regions, time periods, and cultures.
2. Learn a variety of approaches to the practice of historical analysis.
3. Develop a set of skills that are central to the craft of history:
 - a. Critical thinking skills and intellectual depth fostered through reading and analyzing primary and secondary sources.
 - b. Identifying, locating, and accessing relevant historical sources for research purposes.
 - c. Expressing ideas orally in the presence of others.
 - d. Creating written arguments based upon the presentation of evidence and analysis.

Assessment Tools:

Appraising capstone projects and conference presentations for all seniors

Completing skills evaluation forms for all majors

Maintaining a curriculum skills map

Assigning grades for class assignments and courses

Administering an annual senior survey

Collecting data (*e.g.*, internships, study abroad, graduate school, *etc.*)

Exchanging and discussing course assignments

Hosting periodic department external reviews