

Departmental and Program Assessment Annual Assessment Plan Report

Academic Year: 2010-11

Academic Unit: Department of Sociology/Anthropology

Chair: Stella M. apek

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=47328>.

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.*

We plan to do this in the near future, as soon as we have a moment to give the webpage our fuller attention.

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.*

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.

Individual faculty have conducted student teaching evaluations. We have discussed the possibility of exit interviews, but this hasn't been realistic given our obligations and the end of the semester timetable. Evidence of community service and other possibilities are under consideration as we evaluate this component.

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

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 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.)

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

Ongoing discussion of this is in progress as our department changes. Work on this was begun in an earlier document (Department Evaluation, March 2007).

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?

From last year's report:

"we will have an in-depth discussion about how best to continue our task of integrating our joint department into a meaningful and creative assessment process...we will continue our departmental discussion about how best to update our SAP, integrating our newest faculty member into the process. Note: we will place special emphasis on our required capstone senior Advanced Research/Practicum class, which we have designed to a high standard, but which has such high enrollments that we cannot support our plan with our existing number of faculty. This is true of other core courses as well. Our departmental retreat will make it possible for us to discuss this and other essential issues that in turn relate to assessment."

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?)

Assessment was one of several key topics at our departmental retreat in August 2010. We discussed our vision for the evolution of our joint department, but we focused most of our attention on redesigning our overbooked senior capstone Advanced Research/Practicum course, which plays a key role in our departmental assessment process.

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.

We considered data on senior capstone courses at Hendrix and at similar institutions, and thoroughly discussed our departmental options and desired goals. The outcome was a proposal to redesign our senior Practicum course. Our proposal to divide our senior capstone class into two options was approved by the faculty during this past academic year. We now have two senior thesis options: Advanced Research/Practicum (SOC1 or ANTH 480) which involves students in the research program of a faculty member and the development of a related senior thesis; and Advanced Research and Writing (SOC1 or ANTH 497) which retains some of the functions of the previously taught Practicum class and requires students to refine an existing research project/paper into a senior thesis. The two classes offer more options for students and provide a better learning environment for them

while making their numbers more manageable for faculty. This is only a temporary solution until we have more full-time faculty.

4. What are the plans for improving student learning in your unit?
We need more full-time faculty to accommodate our very large number of majors, and we will continue to request faculty positions so that our classes can offer a student-faculty ratio consistent with what Hendrix College promises to students. In the meantime, the redesigned senior capstone class is an improvement using existing resources.
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.)

Our action items are the following:

1. We will look back at our original SAP document as well as the 2007 Departmental Assessment document (which includes a grid of specific courses and learning outcomes), and use these as a point of departure for discussing and evaluating our assessment criteria across the department and proposing any updates or needed changes. The original SAP document needs to be updated with language that includes anthropology.
2. We will post our learning goals on our website
3. We will continue to ask for new faculty positions, without which we cannot meet our goals (see 4, above)