

UNIVERSITY ASSESSMENT COMMITTEE
Feedback to Academic Departments on Assessment Activities Reported in _2009-10_ Annual Reports
UNDERGRADUATE PROGRAMS

DEPARTMENT Women Studies **DATE** March 21, 2011

COMMITTEE MEMBER(S) CONDUCTING REVIEW Joan Hawthorne, Barb Combs

1. STUDENT LEARNING GOALS

- | | | | |
|---------------------------------------|------------------------------|--|---|
| • Were any goals referenced? | YES <input type="checkbox"/> | NO <input type="checkbox"/> | QUALIFIED Y/N <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| • If so, were goals well articulated? | YES <input type="checkbox"/> | NO <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | QUALIFIED Y/N <input type="checkbox"/> |
| • Do goals address student learning? | YES <input type="checkbox"/> | NO <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | QUALIFIED Y/N <input type="checkbox"/> |

Comments:

The report comments on assessment related to Essential Studies revalidation, for which a single goal (diversity) is mentioned. There is no indication that this is also a program goal, and there seems to be no assessment plan posted for Women Studies. Although the program has technically been embedded within Interdisciplinary Studies (as is noted in the WS annual report), it is actually its own program and offers its own degree. The goals of IDS seem unlikely to be directly applicable to the Women Studies program, and the ES goals, similarly, are likely to have limited overlap with Women Studies goals.

In addition to the Departmental goals, please also consider UND's Institutional and Essential Studies goals for student learning (shown in alignment within parentheses). Use 'U' (undergraduate) to identify UND/Essential Studies goals which are similar to the referenced departmental goals.

- | | | |
|-------------------------------------|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | 1 | Communication – written or oral (“able to write and speak in various settings with a sense of purpose/audience”) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | 2 | Thinking and reasoning – critical thinking (or “be intellectually curious”; analyze, synthesize, evaluate) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | 3 | Thinking and reasoning – creative thinking (or “be intellectually creative”; explore, discover, engage) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | 4 | Thinking and reasoning – quantitative reasoning (“apply empirical data...analyze graphical information”) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | 5 | Information literacy (“be able to access and evaluate...for effective, efficient, and ethical use”) |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | 6 | Diversity (“demonstrate understanding of diversity and use that understanding...”) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | 7 | Lifelong learning (“commit themselves to lifelong learning”) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | 8 | Service/citizenship (“share responsibility both for their communities and for the world”) |

Comments regarding departmental goals and alignment of departmental goals with institutional and Essential Studies goals:

The course described in the annual report is an ES course currently undergoing revalidation – and it currently qualifies for a special emphasis designation in the area of diversity.

2. ASSESSMENT METHODS

- | | | | |
|--|------------------------------|--|---|
| Were any specific assessment methods referenced? | YES <input type="checkbox"/> | NO <input type="checkbox"/> | QUALIFIED Y/N <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| • If so, were specifically chosen assessment methods appropriately aligned with individual goals? | YES <input type="checkbox"/> | NO <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | QUALIFIED Y/N <input type="checkbox"/> |
| • Were both direct and indirect assessment methods used as components of a “multiple measures” approach? | YES <input type="checkbox"/> | NO <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | QUALIFIED Y/N <input type="checkbox"/> |

Comments:

ES revalidation requires both direct and indirect assessment. Perhaps because of that, the Women Studies curriculum committee reviewed papers from the class (whether by using a rubric or in some other way is unclear) along with course exams. Reviewers were looking specifically for evidence regarding the ES diversity goal, which may not be an intended learning outcome at the program level – so it is difficult to know if the ES assessment is in relationship to goals which would speak to programmatic outcomes.

3. ASSESSMENT RESULTS

Were any assessment results reported? YES___ NO___ QUALIFIED Y/N _X___

- If so, were the results clear in terms of how they specifically affirm achievement of goals? YES___ NO__X___ QUALIFIED Y/N ___
- If so, were the results clear in terms of how they indicate need for improvement? YES___ NO__X___ QUALIFIED Y/N ___
- Were the results tied to goals for student learning? YES___ NO__X___ QUALIFIED Y/N ___

Comments:

The report indicates that faculty were happy that students in the ES class seem to be gaining some understanding of diversity, but also concerned that the degree of learning in this area may not be as strong as is desired. As noted above, the results on which this finding is based are not detailed in the annual report, leaving readers uncertain as to the kind of information (scores on a rubric? an impressionistic “teacherly reading” of an assortment of papers? a systematically conducted narrative analysis?) was discussed.

Also as noted, the goal in question clearly applies to one class but may not be relevant to programmatic outcomes. In any case, it would be important to look at evidence of learning produced across the students’ program. It seems that assessment is currently being conducted at the sophomore level only. It is important to also assess seniors in order to reach generalizations that might be useful for making decisions about the program overall.

In addition to departmental goals, some assessment results may be applicable to institutional and Essential Studies goals. Use ‘U’ (undergraduate) to identify those results which are applicable to institutional/Essential Studies goal achievement. For indicated items, please describe findings in the appropriate section below. .

- _____ 1 Communication – written or oral (“able to write and speak in various settings with a sense of purpose/audience”)
- _____ 2 Thinking and reasoning – critical thinking (or “be intellectually curious”; analyze, synthesize, evaluate)
- _____ 3 Thinking and reasoning – creative thinking (or “be intellectually creative”; explore, discover, engage)
- _____ 4 Thinking and reasoning – quantitative reasoning (“apply empirical data...analyze graphical information”)
- _____ 5 Information literacy (“be able to access and evaluate...for effective, efficient, and ethical use”)
- _X_ 6 Diversity (“demonstrate understanding of diversity and use that understanding...”)
- _____ 7 Lifelong learning (“commit themselves to lifelong learning”)
- _____ 8 Service/citizenship (“share responsibility both for their communities and for the world”)

Comments regarding results and the application of results to departmental, institutional and Essential Studies goals:

The report indicates that the diversity goal is met, although not as fully as was hoped, in the ES class in question.

4. CLOSING THE LOOP

Were any actions taken on the basis of assessment results reported? YES_____ NO__X___ QUALIFIED Y/N ___

- If so, do curricular or other improvements/ changes arising from assessment results directly address goals for student learning? YES_____ NO__X___ QUALIFIED Y/N ___

Comments:

The writer of the annual report indicates that a curriculum retreat is planned for Spring 2011, and issues related to the major will be addressed in that context.

SUMMARY

Strengths

- ☐ A specific plan for assessment is in place.
- ☐ Student learning goals are well-articulated.
- ☐ Assessment methods are clearly described.
- ☐ Assessment methods are appropriately selected.
- ☐ Assessment methods are well-implemented.
- ☐ Direct and indirect methods are implemented.
- ☐ Results are reported.
- ☐ Results are tied to closing the loop.
(Decision-making is tied to evidence.)

Areas for Improvement

- ☒ No specific plan for assessment is in place.
- ☐ Student learning goals are not well-articulated.
- ☐ Assessment methods are not clearly described.
- ☐ Assessment methods are not appropriately selected.
- ☐ Assessment methods are not well-implemented.
- ☐ A single type of assessment methods predominates.
- ☐ No results are reported.
- ☐ Results are not clearly tied to closing the loop.
(Decision-making is not directly tied to evidence.)

OVERALL SUMMARY AND RECOMMENDATIONS:

We recognize the challenges of managing a curriculum – and conducting assessment – for a program that spans several departments and has a relatively low number of core requirements. And we know that Women Studies in particular has experienced other challenges, some of which caused the program to miss participating in the last scheduled review of reported assessment activities.

However, it is also important that faculty responsible for degree programs across the university articulate learning outcomes for those programs and develop plans for regular assessment related to those outcomes. It appears from the report that Women Studies faculty are attempting to re-energize and, perhaps, reconstruct the program, and we encourage them to include planning of assessment strategies as part of their work. Once a clear plan is in place, that plan should be posted on the Assessment Committee's website (and kept up to date as changes occur). Please contact anyone from the Assessment Committee or the Office of Institutional Research (or either of us identified below) for information or assistance.

MATERIALS REVIEWED

- ☒ Annual report
- ☐ Appendices (cited in annual report)
- ☐ Other (please describe)
- ☐ Assessment plan (as posted)
- ☒ Previous assessment review

Reviewer(s):	Name	Joan Hawthorne	Barbara Combs
	Department	Academic Affairs	Teaching & Learning
	Phone Number	701-777-4684	701-777-2862
	e-mail	joan.hawthorne@email.und.edu	barbaracombs@mail.und.nodak.edu

Section 1: ☐N_____ Section 2: ☐N_____ Section 3: ☐N_____ Section 4: ☐N_____

Coding Key:

- Y = yes, this is done appropriately and well
- N = no, this is not done at all, or it is not done in relationship to student learning
- NA = no information available
- ? = action or progress is apparent; however, evidence is lacking that this is completely and appropriately done