**September, 2009 Assessment Committee Feedback: History**

**Assessment Committee Contact Person: Beth Lincoln**

**Plan also reviewed by: Dean McCurdy**

Thank you for the hard work that went into your assessment plan. As we carefully reviewed your Steps, it became clear just how much thought and effort went into your work. There were some real strengths in your work, and we celebrate these with you!

In general, there were a few themes that the Assessment Committee noticed in many of the submitted plans. First, it is most helpful when the progression from Step 2 to Step 3 and Step 3 to Step 4 are clear. That is, after you have articulated your learning goals, the clearest proposals are explicit in how the courses/experiences in Step 3 directly support the learning goals. And Step 4 should take full advantage of all of the places in Step 3 where data might be collected. Second, make strategic use of both direct and indirect measures[[1]](https://docs.google.com/a/albion.edu/Doc?docid=0AUaAHaCO2ORDZGh0bWJ0NXJfM2dyN3I4eGRm&hl=en" \l "_ftn1" \o "), and think about whether data can be collected at the beginning, during the program of study, and at the end. This gives a richer sense of where and when your work contributes strongly to learning goals and where improvements might be made. Third, make your plan manageable! All data need not be collected annually; some can be done every other year. And you may choose not to measure for all of your learning goals right now. Make claims that you can (a) intellectually, ethically stand behind and (b) find resources to measure.

Please feel free to contact either of us with questions about your feedback. We want to help your assessment plan be successful in collecting relevant data to inform your work! We will be happy to work with you toward timely completion revisions to the first four steps, submission of preliminary findings, and/or completion of this iteration of data collection.

 Comments specific to your plan:
-All of assessment is supposed to flow from your mission, so it is difficult to evaluate the appropriateness of your learning outcomes without knowing what you see your mission to be.

-The department needs to link the program components (Step 3) to specific learning outcomes described in Step 2.

-You've done a good job describing how you will track students through a course sequence. This should be able to assess progress toward various outcomes for students who are majors as well as those who take fewer courses (a useful exercise since ultimately assessment should include minors and students who take fewer courses).

-There appears to be a good mix of direct and indirect measures of assessment, although it would be helpful to have more information about the faculty assessment form that will be used (is it a summary of assessment or a tool for direct assessment as well?).

-Will the student papers that are used to assess student learning be used in each of the three content areas covered by the department? A bit of additional detail here would help (maybe a rubric that will be used to assess the papers or a description of a plan for covering the learning outcomes in Step 2 through the specific courses described in Step 3).

 [[1]](https://docs.google.com/a/albion.edu/Doc?docid=0AUaAHaCO2ORDZGh0bWJ0NXJfM2dyN3I4eGRm&hl=en" \l "_ftnref1" \o ") *In assessing student learning, there are direct and indirect sources of evidence. Direct evidence is clear and convincing information about student learning, such as: tests, examinations, papers, projects, assignments, field experience assessments, and portfolios. These are particularly strong sources of evidence especially when accompanied by articulated standards (such as a rubric). On the other hand, with indirect evidence there is room for other factors to affect the outcomes either positively or negatively. Examples of indirect evidence include: retention, graduation, and placement rates (may be impacted by economic conditions or college policies); surveys of students and alumni (may indicate feelings about college experience); grades (standards and even content may differ across instructors and institutions).*

**Next Steps:**

 In coordination with your Assessment Committee reviewers and their written and verbal feedback, please observe the following deadlines for your assessment cycle:

* September 15:  Revisions to Steps 1-4 due (if necessary)
* October 1: Completion of Steps 5 & 6 using preliminary data
* November 2: Final Fall 2009 plans due