

Office of Academic Program Assessment, Office of Academic Affairs The 2012-2013 ANNUAL ASSESSMENT REPORT TEMPLATE

All annual assessment reports should be submitted by the academic unit (College/Department/Program) to the College Dean for review and onward transmittal to Academic Affairs. Reports are due in Academic Affairs no later than **July 1 each year** in electronic format.

Please directly answer the following questions and make sure the answers to each question are written in a way that is easy for the general public and for the students, faculty, staff, and administrators **to understand and to use**. To ensure that the various readers have enough information to **evaluate all parts of the report** -- the learning outcomes, the methods/data, the criteria/standards of performance, the interpretations, and the conclusions -- please make sure you provide explicit information including how you have selected your sample (e.g. students or their work) and how you have analyzed and interpreted the data. There is no specific length expectation, although conciseness should be the goal.

- 1. As a result of last year's assessment effort, have you implemented any changes for your assessment including learning outcomes, assessment plan, assessment tools (methods, rubrics, curriculum map, or key assignment etc.), and/or the university baccalaureate learning goals?**
- a. If so, what are those changes? How did you implement those changes?**
 - b. How do you know if these changes have achieved the desired results?**
 - c. If no, why not?**

During the last assessment the Department of Women's Studies had decided to use the same Learning Outcomes, Assessment Plan and tool for this academic year also. There were two changes made in this year's assessment: the Grading Rubric, which was found to be too wordy and complex last year, was simplified and, a series of mini Writing Workshops were offered to improve student essay writing. There is significant improvement in student performance in all three categories assessed, especially category 3) Written Communication.

- 2. As a result of last year's assessment effort, have you implemented any other changes at the department, the college or the university, including advising, co-curriculum, budgeting and planning?**
- a. If so, what are those changes? How did you implement those changes?**
 - b. How do you know if these changes have achieved the desired results?**
 - c. If no, why not?**

No. The previous assessment had been conducted under circumstances very different from the normal circumstances under which the capstone seminar, the course which is used for assessment, is taught (the main course instructor /assessment coordinator had been away on leave and a temporary faculty had stepped in to run the seminar). The department decided to conduct assessment the following year under normal circumstances to determine learning outcomes. Hence, there was no need to implement any new changes.

- 3. What PROGRAM (not course) learning outcome(s) have you assessed this academic year?**

The Department of Women's Studies assessed students' strength in the following areas: 1) Scholarship & Critical Analysis; 2) Application of feminist perspectives to social issues; and, 3) Effective written communication.

4. What method(s)/measure(s) have you used to collect the data?

The 3 main categories were assessed through one direct measure: the final research paper for the capstone seminar in Women's studies: **WOMS 180: Seminar in Feminist Theory**. All Women's Studies majors enrolled in the Seminar were assessed. The Assessment Prompt which was also the prompt for the final research paper (see attached Appendix 1) was prepared after consultation with students and after taking into consideration the department learning goals and objectives, synthesized in the above 3 criteria. The Grading Rubric generated for assessment was made available to all students. After consulting students, a more simplified version of the rubric was introduced, which was discussed at length with the students (See attached Appendix 2). Students were encouraged to develop their own topics for the assignment based on specific instructions provided in the prompt.

5. What are the criteria and/or standards of performance for the program learning outcome?

Women's Studies Majors who were enrolled in the capstone seminar were assessed on a scale of 4 to 1, where 4 = Highly Competent, 3= Mostly Competent; 2 = Slightly competent, and 1 = Barely competent in each of the three categories assessed.

6. What data have you collected? What are the results and findings, including the percentage of students who meet each standard?

- a. In what areas are students doing well and achieving the expectations?
- b. In what areas do students need improvement?

A total of 12 Women's Studies Majors who were enrolled in the course were assessed based on the 3 main categories on a scale of 4 to 1, where 4 = Highly Competent, 3.5= Mostly Competent; 3 = Competent; 2.5-2 = Approaching Competence, and 1 = Barely competent.

Following is a table based on our findings:

Categories	4	3.5	3	2.5	2	1
Scholarship & Critical Analysis	4 students	0	5 students	1 student	2 students	0
Application of Feminist Perspectives	3 students	0	5 students	4 students	0	0
Effective Written Communication	2 students	4 students	5 students	1 student	0	0

Following are the averages based on our direct assessment: In category 1) Feminist Scholarship and Critical Analysis: 75% of our majors were either at or above competence, and 25% were approaching competence. In category 2) Application of Feminist Perspectives to Social Issues/Institutions/Organizations: 66.6% of our majors were at or above competence, while 33%

were at or approaching competence. In category 3) Written Communication, almost all our students (92%) are at and above competence, while only 8% are approaching competence.

The results of our previous assessment conducted in Academic Year 2010-11 are as follows: In categories 1) and 2) 67% of majors were at and above competence. On the other hand, in category 3) Written Communication, only 33% of our majors were at or above the level of competence, while 67% of the students were only slightly competent. This year in comparison, Women's Studies Majors have shown improvement in all areas, especially Written Communication.

We attribute this improvement to continued efforts made in the form of Writing Workshops, peer reviews and draft preparations in all required courses for the major. All course assignments require critical engagement with feminist scholarship, comparative analysis and evaluation of course materials. The department assessment coordinator conducted mini writing workshops throughout Spring semester to prepare students adequately for writing effective research papers.

Although students performed well in all areas, the one area where we can see further improvement is Category 2) Application of Feminist Theory to Social Issues/Institution or Organization. Although on the one hand, Women's Studies majors have a considerable grasp of feminist approaches and perspectives, and on the other hand, they are able to recognize the relations of power structuring specific social institutions or organizations, they need further improvement in effective *application* of feminist concepts to particular social issues and institutions. Specific efforts can be made in this area for further improvement. This issue will be discussed at the next Department meeting which will be held at the beginning of Fall 2013.

7. As a result of this year's assessment effort, do you anticipate or propose any changes for your program (e.g. structures, content, or learning outcomes)?

a. If so, what changes do you anticipate? How do you plan to implement those changes?

b. How do you know if these changes will achieve the desired results?

Following the recommendations of the Director of Office of Academic Program Review and Assessment, we will assess the same 3 categories next year also, combine the results of this year and next year in order to arrive at specific conclusions regarding the performance of our majors. Meanwhile, we will continue to offer writing workshops, peer revisions and review of drafts and emphasizing the significance of effective written communication for college graduation. Next year also we will use the new simplified Grading Rubric we developed this year. Based on the results of next year's assessment, we will take steps to assess and/or alter our pedagogic approach, if necessary, in order to better prepare our majors for the future.

8. Which program learning outcome(s) do you plan to assess next year? How?

1) Scholarship & Critical Analysis; 2) Application of feminist perspectives to social issues; and, 3) Effective written communication.

We will be using the same direct measure, the final assignment for the capstone seminar in Women's studies: WOMS 180: Seminar in Feminist Theory.