

**Analysis of Assessment Results:  
History and Social Science Programs**

Procedure:

Evidence was collected from all of the History and Social Science graduating seniors for the purpose of conducting summative assessments. Faculty collected papers and exams from these students in both the fall and spring semesters. In 2011-2012 we had four graduating seniors. We are taking three main steps to compensate for the limited reliability of such a small sample size: 1) we collect multiple pieces of evidence for each student; 2) we assess all three Program Learning Outcomes each year; 3) the assessment results from each year will be added together every third year in order to create a larger sample size and should enable the HPS faculty to make a more reliable judgment about what program changes are needed.

The faculty used analytic rubrics to assess the evidence gathered from the graduating seniors. For each of the rubric criteria, the goal is to have a minimum group average of 2.75 out of 4.

TABLE 1

PLO 1: Conduct historical research, including analyzing primary and secondary sources, using appropriate citation methods, and constructing historical arguments.			
Rubric Criteria	Types of Evidence Assessed	No. of pieces of evidence assessed	Group Average (out of 4)
Argument	research papers; historiographical essays; book reviews	11	2.8
Structure & Writing Style	research papers; historiographical essays; book reviews	11	2.8
Citations	research papers; historiographical essays; book reviews	11	2.5
Analysis of Sources	research papers; historiographical essays; book reviews	11	2.75
Use of Sources (research papers only)	research papers	5	3

Analysis of Results for Table 1:

The graduating seniors were proficient in most of the criteria for PLO 1, which involves various components of conducting and writing about historical research. However, these results made us aware of one key area in which students were not consistently proficient: citations. The 2.5 average for citations fell below our minimum goal of 2.75. As a result, we plan to begin placing a greater emphasis on proper historical citation methods in our upper division classes.

TABLE 2

PLO 2: Identify and analyze change over time in various regions of the world.			
Rubric Criteria	Types of Evidence Assessed	No. of pieces of evidence assessed	Group Average (out of 4)
Identification	research papers; historiographical essays; exams	6	2.58
Analysis	research papers; historiographical essays; exams	6	2.58
Focus	research papers; historiographical essays; exams	6	2.75
Evidence	research papers; historiographical essays; exams	6	2.5
Structure & Writing Style (written work only)	research papers; historiographical essays; exams	4	2.88

Analysis of Results for Table 2:

The graduating seniors were not as proficient in the criteria for PLO 2 as they were for PLOs 1 and 3. The group average fell below our goal of 2.75 in three of the five categories: Identification, Analysis, and Evidence. This may, in part, be a result of the relatively small sample size. We will continue to watch these results in the next two years to see if that is a consistent trend, and to reach some recommendations about what to do to improve these results.

TABLE 3

PLO 3: Critically evaluate systems around the world in their historical context.			
Rubric Criteria	Types of Evidence Assessed	No. of pieces of evidence assessed	Group Average (out of 4)
Critically Evaluates	research papers; historiographical essays; exams	7	2.46
Context	research papers; historiographical essays; exams	7	2.77
Focus	research papers; historiographical essays; exams	7	2.85
Evidence	research papers; historiographical essays; exams	7	2.77
Structure & Writing Style (written work only)	research papers; historiographical essays; exams	7	2.67

Analysis of Results for Table 3:

The graduating seniors were proficient or very near proficient in most of the categories for PLO 3. The one area in which the average fell significantly below the minimum of 2.75 was the “Critically Evaluates” category. That suggests that we need to find ways to increase critical thinking and the articulation of that critical thinking and analysis in students’ work. As with PLO 2, we will continue to watch this and see if it is a result of the small sample size or if it warrants recommending changes to our program.