

2016-17 Department Student Success Plan Assessment Report

History

Please answer the following questions in two pages and submit to your Dean by October 2. Your Dean will offer you feedback by Oct. 16 and advance final version¹ to Academic Affairs by October 20. This report will inform your 2017-18 Student Success Plan update that will be due to your Dean by Nov. 3. Previous report and plans can be found at this website: <http://irt2.indstate.edu/cms7/sp16/index.cfm/department-plans/>.

Person Primarily Responsible for Preparing this Report: Steven Stofferahn (Interim Chairperson)

1. **Specific accomplishments/achievements this past year** (*briefly explain using bullet points, noting any changed/adapted*):

- 4-year graduation rate (by latest department): Last year's Annual Update plan called for achieving incremental gains in this core metric, citing a 20% target rate for the Fall 2013 cohort. Ours exceeded that goal, with a rate of 29.41% for that cohort.
- Assessment: Our Assessment Committee completed its work on both our undergraduate and graduate cohorts, reviewing student portfolios in accordance with our standard assessment rubric. We will be incorporating the Assessment and Accreditation Coordinator's feedback into this year's work.
- Curriculum: We continued to make progress on a number of important curricular fronts during the 2016-2017 academic year. Carrying over from the previous year was the ongoing transformation of HIST 113 to HIST 213, with concomitant changes in its slightly later timing in student degree maps. It is currently under review by Foundational Studies, and will hopefully make its way through the rest of the review process this year, as will HIST 110, a general introductory elective course geared toward first-year students. A broader ongoing curricular overhaul is discussed below.
- Alumni database and survey: We successfully built a comprehensive database on HIST/AFRI/SSE alumni by fusing information from the Office of Registration and Records and the Alumni Office with our own independent departmental newsletter mailing list. With support from the Division of Engagement, we then distributed a qualtrics survey highlighting several career-related questions to the approximately 1300 alumni for whom we had an e-mail address. We are currently processing the results, with an eye toward being able to give our current students an accurate idea of what our graduates have gone on to do with their careers, as well as to connect graduating students with alumni in particular fields of interest. The College of Arts and Sciences will be pursuing this same goal at the college level, so this should continue to be a fruitful endeavor going forward.
- Advising: All departmental academic advisors participated in this fall's Undergraduate Academic Advisor Institute, and two of them have been attending further sessions in order to be certified as Master Advisors.
- Recruitment: A fruitful joint venture between our HIST 300 class and Sycamore Media last year yielded high-quality videos of five of our faculty members discussing their academic background, research interests, and approaches to teaching. These are now posted on our website, in order to give current and potential students a clearer idea of who our faculty are, and what they might be like in the classroom.
- Student Organization: We have re-launched the History Students Association (HSA), an organization for undergraduate majors in HIST, AFRI, and SSE. Its officers and members work with the faculty advisor and departmental Chairperson to plan and coordinate programming of interest, particularly regarding career options, field trips, and alumni visits.

¹ Dean will request a refinement to the report if it is not suitably addressing the questions. Report will be shared with Trustees.

2. Objective/Actions Not Achieved (*briefly explain using bullet points*):

- Audit: The comprehensive three-year audit of past graduates referred to in past plans was ultimately not pursued. Instead, a more targeted Deep Data Dive project focusing on HIST 300 is currently nearing completion, as discussed below.
- AFRI Curriculum: A much-needed curricular overhaul of AFRI (along with a targeted assessment of program-specific student portfolios) was postponed to this year, since we are welcoming a new colleague to the faculty this semester.
- Minors: The plan to regularly communicate with our minors was not explicitly implemented, aside from apprising them of HSA-related activities and general announcements. Since growth in the minor is a priority, we hope to focus on this more intently this year.

3. Attention areas going forward as informed by 2016-17 retention, completion, course completion ratio, credit hour productivity, and D/F/drop rate data provided as well as other Blue Report or departmental data (*briefly explain using bullet points*).

- DF/Drop Rates and Credit Hour Production: Our numbers in both of these metrics remain fairly stable, with slightly lower rates for the spring semester. Our credit hour production drop has not been precipitous, but it would obviously be nice to see it heading in the opposite direction. With an eye toward identifying best-practices, we might profitably look to PSCI, which features numbers not too different from our own, to see whether any intentional strategies account for their generally more positive trends.
- Retention and Recruitment: The retention data from Blue Reports tells a similar story to DF rates, in that our rates fluctuate but remain overall stable, whereas here, too, PSCI has managed to bend the curve in the right direction. With regard to recruitment, we have seen a modest but encouraging reversal of recent drop-offs in the number of undergraduate majors (Fall 2014=80; Fall 2015=69; Fall 2016=45; Fall 2017=51), but this remains a core concern. Interestingly, the departmental migration report does not show any significant in- or out-migration between HIST and PSCI, so it should make for a viable parallel case study as we try to identify future strategies.
- 4-Year Graduation: Despite meeting the above-mentioned target for the most recent graduating cohort, the relatively low rates in this key metric remain perplexing, given the modest size of the major (42 credit hours). The fact that many students “find” us partially explains this, and Blue Reports’ helpful migration chart shows that some find us quite late in their college careers. Still, we are keen to identify other “best practices” to help our students finish their degrees on-time.
- Curriculum: As part of a larger effort to update the major to include a specific culminating experience (capstone), as well as to integrate meaningful career-readiness-related benchmarks into our students’ course of study, our Curriculum Committee is currently reading relevant proposals for departmental consideration. This effort was aided by three separate but inter-related initiatives. First, the Chairperson worked with the Associate Vice President for Student Success and the Associate Director of Institutional Research on a “Deep Data Dive” during the summer term to identify potential curricular roadblocks to timely graduation, focusing on our methods course in particular. The results of that study are forthcoming, and should help the Curriculum Committee make further determinations on how we might either alter the timing of that course, or split it into two different courses. Second, four professors worked on a Career Readiness team during the summer, identifying discipline-specific ways to integrate selected career readiness goals into the curriculum. And third, an all-day departmental retreat in mid-August provided a forum in which colleagues could discuss these and other strategic goals, thereby giving standing committees (like Curriculum) a clear direction and mandate as we headed into the academic year.