

2016-17 Department Student Success Plan Assessment Report

[Social Studies Education]

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: Daniel A. Clark

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

- Enrollment overall has rebounded and plateaued from its modern low-point (owing to the “teacher wars” in Indiana and the budget/hiring issues of 2012-2013). Currently there are 77 SSE majors. Program revisions from c. 2013 that dropped the required number of specializations for an SSE major from 3 to 2 and the continued success of University College (along with other retention initiatives) no doubt has contributed to both the popularity of our major, solid retention and graduation numbers. After reviewing the numbers on retention, graduation, etc., I think they look pretty decent (with a drop this past year that I will address below). Retention has certainly looked stable (in the 60% range) at every level.
- The SSE program continues to employ good advising practices—a freshman “orientation” meeting in October of each year, an audit of students at (or around) 60 hours (the midway point), and a late student-career audit at (or around) 90 hours begun two years ago. This latter practice has the benefit of identifying any issues occurring late in a student’s career. It has helped in identifying potential problems, although this past year it did not seem to help motivate the students.

2. Objective/Actions Not Achieved (*briefly explain using bullet points*): I still have yet to initiate a social media presence.

- With regard to coordinating with departments that provide the SSE content courses, last year the Coordinator liaised with the Chair of Psychology to rework the SSE specialization in Psychology, owing to that department’s decision the year previous to drop the teaching of a required course in the SSE Psychology specialization. This kind of action needs to take place with the Sociology faculty. Mostly this is my fault as the Coordinator. For years there were so few (if any) Sociology majors and the situation with Sociology courses was so chaotic, that the Coordinator did not address the issue, since it rarely came up. Now, however, we have several majors specializing in Sociology and they are having to cobble together Sociology courses through their relationships with individual Sociology faculty. There was an attempt made two years ago to identify a Sociology faculty member to take the Pearson licensing test in that content area in order to ascertain what courses would be optimal, but our meetings failed to yield any results. The coordinator will need to make this a priority this year to investigate whether a Sociology field of specialization is even viable given the retirement of Chuck Norman and the relatively small amount of Sociology courses offered on the campus.

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*).

- The 4-year graduation rate (by latest) had ticked decidedly upward from long term trends over the past two years (cohorts of FA ’10 at 24% and FA ’11 at 33%) , but this past year took a dive

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

with the FA '12 cohort at 16%. A one year “blip” hopefully is an anomaly; we will have to see. With small numbers of students two students can make a difference, and I know of two students directly who ran into trouble despite my personal intervention ahead of time and that of other faculty (with regard the second student). One had an issue with transferred courses not showing up before her graduation, thus delaying it, while the other simply suffered from an academic backslide. Comparing the 4-year graduation rate “by latest” to the “by original,” also might yield an interesting comparison. While the FA -12 “by latest” stood at 16%, the FA '12 “by original” was at 32%, which might indicate an issue in that cohort with those transferring into the major and/or ISU, as the one example noted above would support. One would expect those “originals” to graduate in a more efficient fashion owing to less friction in the change of major or transfer process (i.e. lost credit hours). The coordinator can try to be more proactive in dealing with transfer and change of majors. In the case of the student noted above, who failed to graduate owing wholly to her inability to transfer courses in a timely fashion, I'm not sure what more can be done. The “late audit” caught the problem in mid-spring (and her advisor had been telling her to account for these courses), but repeated email contact with the student even into the summer failed to yield the desired result.

- The SSE program will continue the course already set with regard to advising and actions already noted for orientation and auditing of timely passage through the program. An added point of concern since the reduction of required specializations, however, is for advisors to keep an eye on students acquiring enough 300-400 level credit hours, which had never been a problem. Now if the right combination of specializations is selected it could be a major problem that blindsides students late in their academic careers and could impact a timely graduation. I do not see a need to aggressively market the major. The numbers seem reasonable to me (70-80 majors). Frankly when we enrolled 130-140 majors, I thought this unwise. Plus, if the state follows through with plans to support some kind of scholarship for future teachers in order to address the current “teacher shortage,” then the number of our majors will go up.
- As I have stated in previous reports, while we will continue to implement the actions already noted to help our students navigate the program, the bigger concern is the quality of the program. In concert with the Department of History (and as previously noted in past reports) we have taken aggressive steps to protect the integrity and rigor of the History specialization. Such steps might also need to be undertaken in other content areas, particularly in light of sub-par licensing test results in all areas save Government in recent years. To refresh any memories, the IDOE about three years ago transitioned to a new testing vendor (Pearson Publishing). Prior to this our passage rates in content exams were exemplary. The Pearson tests have proven to be a problem. For example, statewide passage rates in history are in the 40% range for 2015. Our program passage rates certainly beat the statewide rates, but there clearly is a problem with the test. While still yet too early to sound a general alarm due to recalibration of the tests last year, preliminary results are enough to cause worry and to set the program director to the task of working with some affiliated departments to revamp the courses within the various content specializations.
- Finally, given that the university push to stress career readiness, I feel obligated to point out that our major is already geared toward producing graduates ready to step into the teaching profession. The student teaching semester is a trial-by-fire like few other undergraduate experiences, and the program also supports other clinical teaching experiences (two separate placements in fact) to prepare students for student teaching. Additionally our SS 306 class contains a week/module on “getting a job” and professionalism. The only experiences that I think might prove beneficial would be to integrate attendance at an education conference (an Indiana Social Studies education conference does occur in the fall each year) and mock interviews coordinated through the career center as part of the SS 306 class.