Department/Program: Honors
Academic Year of Report: 2012-2013
Date Submitted: December 17
Report author: Erik Stern

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  Phone: X6186
  Email: estern@weber.edu
A. Brief Introductory Statement:
Please review the Introductory Statement and contact information for your department displayed on the assessment site: 
http://www.weber.edu/portfolio/departments.html - if this information is current, please indicate as much. No further information is needed. We will indicate “Last Reviewed: [current date]” on the page.
If the information is not current, please provide an update:

The Honors brief introductory statement on the assessment site is current. Checked December 6, 2012

B. Mission Statement
Please review the Mission Statement for your department displayed on the assessment site: 
http://www.weber.edu/portfolio/departments.html - if it is current, please indicate as much; we will mark the web page as “Last Reviewed [current date]”. No further information is needed.
If the information is not current, please provide an update:

The Honors Mission Statement on the assessment site is current. Checked December 3, 2012

C. Student Learning Outcomes
Please review the Student Learning Outcomes for your department displayed on the assessment site: 
http://www.weber.edu/portfolio/departments.html - if they are current, please indicate as much; we will mark the web page as “Last Reviewed [current date]”. No further information is needed.
If they are not current, please provide an update:

The Honors Student Learning Outcomes on the assessment site are current. Checked December 3, 2012
D. Curriculum
Please review the Curriculum Grid for your department displayed on the assessment site:
http://www.weber.edu/portfolio/departments.html - if it is current, please indicate as much; we will mark the web page as “Last Reviewed: [current data]”. No further information is needed.
If the curriculum grid is not current, please provide an update:

The Honors Program Curriculum Grid is current. Checked December 5, 2012

E. Assessment Plan
Please review the Assessment Plan for your department displayed on the assessment site:
http://www.weber.edu/portfolio/departments.html - if the plan current, please indicate as much; we will mark the web page as “Last Reviewed [current date]”. No further information is needed.
If the plan is not current, please provide an update:

The site should contain an up-to-date assessment plan with planning going out a minimum of three years beyond the current year. Please review the plan displayed for your department at the above site. The plan should include a list of courses from which data will be gathered and the schedule, as well as an overview of the assessment strategy the department is using (for example, portfolios, or a combination of Chi assessment data and student survey information, or industry certification exams, etc.).

The Assessment Plan for Honors is current on the website. Some explanation on our annual assessment is necessary. The Honors Program differs from other departments and colleges in several key and far-reaching ways; therefore our assessment must reflect that unique nature in order to be effective and improve instruction (the primary goal for university-wide assessment).

1) We offer courses in all five Gen Ed areas: Humanities, Social Sciences, Life Sciences, Physical Sciences & Creative Arts

2) Course headings allow for variable titles; hence, not only are we addressing five areas: each faculty member has some flexibility in terms of emphasis of outcomes.
3) Our courses are often interdisciplinary and, as our Mission and Learning Outcomes show, focus on communication, critical thinking, open inquiry and an understanding of the world’s range of viewpoints. Often courses are answering a question, as opposed to sticking strictly to a single discipline. This does not prevent, however, the courses from addressing Gen Ed Learning Outcomes.

4) We draw our faculty from many different colleges and rotate frequently.

5) Our interest in emerging ideas and special topics serves to allow faculty to branch out and explore along with students.

Although these aforementioned differences are challenging, the Honors Program does assess them. Our methods include:

1) New faculty orientations that make clear to professors they are required to: give pre- and post-course evaluations to assess Learning Outcomes; and prominently include the Learning Outcomes (including Gen Ed where applicable) in their syllabi, identifying the assignments that teach and assess specific outcomes.

2) Every student and every faculty member fills out an evaluation form each semester. Students answer numeric questions that are phrased clearly and get at the overarching Honors goals, as well as a narrative section. Each faculty member answers questions about where the course was successful and where it fell short. Students also evaluate the Honors Program.

3) Each course requires at least one Signature Assignment. These assignments serve many assessment aspects: course Learning Outcomes, and Honors outcomes such as communication skills, critical thinking, open-minded inquiry and awareness of diverse points of view. Signature Assignments (and our small class size) allow faculty to evaluate along multiple parameters of learning and engagement.

It is difficult to overstate the value of the evaluations that all Honors students and faculty receive. They provide the needed information for the assessment of each course. Furthermore, the Honors Director sends a letter to each faculty member each semester outlining the faculty’s work. These evaluations play a major role in decisions whether a given course should be updated, repeated or discontinued.

Although the assessment plan has been in place, the illness of Director Judy Elsley for almost all of last academic year understandably interrupted the ongoing implementation of the plan. As to an exact course-by-course assessment plan for the next three years, it is difficult to be as specific as other departments. Our courses and course schedules are dependent on
variables: emerging ideas that faculty present to us and how long it takes to go from the planning stages to a strong, viable course; discussions with faculty and their departments as to when it is convenient for all parties to offer the course; being open to other developments, such as trying to re-offer or adapt very successful courses, or adapting an Honors Eccles Fellow course to a Gen Ed course.

These variables do not allow a set schedule of courses even three semesters in advance, much less 3-5 years. Nonetheless, the Honors Program will be evaluating at least one course from each of the five Gen Ed areas every three years, beginning this year.

In the past three years, preliminary assessment for the following three Honors courses have begun by gathering artifacts:

- Ryan Thomas’ (fall 2009) *Great Ideas of the East: The History and Culture of the Silk Road* (HNRS HU & SS 2130)
- Karen Nakaoke’s (fall 2012) *Perspectives in Life Sciences: Forgotten People, Forgotten Diseases* (HNRS LS 1510)

Receiving the post of Director just before this semester began, the priorities were: making sure the schedule and classes this academic year were taken care of; re-establishing contact with the faculty, many of whom had not been given necessary information about the Honors Program; beginning research as to the needs of Honors students and faculty as a way to solicit and nurture ideas for upcoming courses; attending to administration needs; and picking up the curriculum development that has been interrupted.

Once these considerable tasks were in place, attention was turned to assessment. Next semester, the professors of the three courses being assessed will be submitting “Interpretation of Findings” and “Action Plan/Use of Results” which can then be used to complete the grids provided below. If needed, the grids for these three courses can be submitted before summer 2013.

The courses we plan to assess next academic year are *Introduction to Honors* (HNRS 1110), taught by Adam Johnston and Carl Porter fall 2013, and our new Physical Science Gen Ed offering *Key Concepts in the Physical Sciences: Are we alone? The science of Astrobiology* (HNRS PS 2030) taught by Stacy Palen fall 2013.

F. Report of assessment results for the most previous academic year:
There are a variety of ways in which departments can choose to show evidence of learning. This is one example. The critical pieces to include are 1) what learning outcome is being assessed, 2) what method of measurement was used, 3) what the threshold for ‘acceptable performance’ is for that measurement, 4) what the actual results of the assessment were, 5) how those findings are interpreted, and 6) what is the course of action to be taken based upon the interpretation.

a. **Evidence of Learning: Courses within the Major**
(duplicate this page as needed)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Measurable Learning Outcome</th>
<th>Method of Measurement</th>
<th>Threshold for Evidence of Student Learning</th>
<th>Findings Linked to Learning Outcomes</th>
<th>Interpretation of Findings</th>
<th>Action Plan/Use of Results</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Students will...</td>
<td>Direct and Indirect Measures*</td>
<td>Measure 1: (Ex. A set of 10 multiple choice questions from Exam 1)</td>
<td>Measure 1: (Ex. 85% of students will score 80% or better on 10 questions)</td>
<td>Measure 1: (Ex. 93% of students scored 80% or better on 10 questions)</td>
<td>Measure 1: (Ex. Students successfully demonstrated interpretation skills)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Learning Outcome 1:</td>
<td>Measure 2:</td>
<td>Measure 1:</td>
<td>Measure 2:</td>
<td>Measure 2:</td>
<td>Measure 2:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Measure 2:</td>
<td></td>
<td>Measure 2:</td>
<td>Measure 2:</td>
<td>Measure 2:</td>
<td>Measure 2:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Learning Outcome 2:</td>
<td>Measure 1:</td>
<td>Measure 1:</td>
<td>Measure 2:</td>
<td>Measure 2:</td>
<td>Measure 2:</td>
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<tr>
<td>Measure 2:</td>
<td></td>
<td>Measure 2:</td>
<td>Measure 2:</td>
<td>Measure 2:</td>
<td>Measure 2:</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*At least one measure per objective must be a direct measure; indirect measures may be used to supplement direct measure(s).
b. Evidence of Learning: High Impact or Service Learning
(duplicate this page as needed)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Measurable Learning Outcome</th>
<th>Method of Measurement</th>
<th>Threshold for Evidence of Student Learning</th>
<th>Findings Linked to Learning Outcomes</th>
<th>Interpretation of Findings</th>
<th>Action Plan/Use of Results</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Students will...</td>
<td></td>
<td>Direct and Indirect Measures*</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Learning Outcome 1:**
- Measure 1: (Ex. A set of 10 multiple choice questions from Exam 1)
- Measure 1: (Ex. 85% of students will score 80% or better on 10 questions)
- Findings Linked to Learning Outcomes: Measure 1: (Ex. 93% of students scored 80% or better on 10 questions)
- Interpretation of Findings: Measure 1: (Ex. Students successfully demonstrated interpretation skills)
- Action Plan/Use of Results: Measure 1: (Ex. No curricular or pedagogical changes needed at this time)

**Learning Outcome 2:**
- Measure 1: (Ex. Results of standardized test)
- Measure 1: (Ex. 85% of students will score at or above the national average)
- Findings Linked to Learning Outcomes: Measure 1: (Ex. 90% of students scored above national average)
- Interpretation of Findings: Measure 1: (Ex. Students successfully demonstrated competence; lowest average score was in transfer of knowledge, where only 69% of questions were answered correctly)
- Action Plan/Use of Results: Measure 1: (Ex. Faculty agree to include review of transfer in all related courses; this outcome will be reassessed during next review)

* At least one measure per objective must be a direct measure; indirect measures may be used to supplement direct measure(s).

Additional Information (if needed)
c. Evidence of Learning: General Education Courses  
(duplicate this page as needed or delete if department does not offer GE courses)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Evidence of Learning: Courses of Gen Ed</th>
<th>HNRS 2130 Great Ideas</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Measurable Learning Outcome</td>
<td>Students will...</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Students will...</td>
<td>Method of Measurement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Threshold for Evidence of Student Learning (Expectation)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Interpretation of Findings</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Learning Outcome 1: Critical Thinking</td>
<td>Measure 1: Signature Assignment – paper</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Measure 2: Student Evaluations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Learning Outcome 2:</td>
<td>Measure 1: (Ex. Results of standardized test)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Measure 1: (Ex. Results of standardized test)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Measure 1: (Ex. Results of standardized test)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Measurable Learning Outcome</td>
<td>Method of Measurement</td>
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<tr>
<td>----------------------------</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Students will...</td>
<td>Direct and Indirect Measures*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Measure 2:</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*At least one measure per objective must be a direct measure; indirect measures may be used to supplement direct measure(s).
G. Summary of Artifact Collection Procedure

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Artifact</th>
<th>Learning Outcome Measured</th>
<th>When/How Collected?</th>
<th>Where Stored?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Signature Assignments for two sections HNRS 2130</td>
<td>Multiple outcomes measured</td>
<td>End of semester</td>
<td>Electronic copies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Signature Assignments for HNRS 1510</td>
<td>Multiple outcomes measured</td>
<td>End of semester</td>
<td>To be determined</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Summary Information (as needed)

Please respond to the following questions.

1) Reflecting on this year’s assessment(s), how does the evidence of student learning impact your faculty’s confidence in the program being reviewed; how does that analysis change when compared with previous assessment evidence?

To answer this question, compare evidence from prior years to the evidence from the current year. Discuss trends of evidence that increases your confidence in the strengths of the program. Also discuss trends of concern (e.g. students struggling to achieve particular student outcomes).

The impact of our evaluations sent to all students and faculty is great. We review the information, write evaluations of faculty each semester, and use it to update, repeat or discontinue a course. In addition, we learn what students are more and less interested in, and receive suggestions for improvement and for new directions for the Honors Program.

Student assessment based on artifacts and learning outcomes is still in progress. Having read the artifact Ryan Thomas has submitted, much has been gained from the process. After results are written, we will be able to better reflect on the assessment.

2) With whom did you share the results of the year’s assessment efforts?
They will be shared with Associate Provost Ryan Thomas, with Honors staff and the Honors Steering Committee. The results are also shared, though not in its totality, with our faculty as part of the evaluative letters each receives each semester.

3) Based on your program’s assessment findings, what subsequent action will your program take?

We will continue to give direct and particular feedback to each teacher each semester. We will continue to use this to evaluate courses. We will be more direct and specific about the particular nature of the Signature Assignment and how it needs to address both the Learning Outcomes of a particular area (i.e. Humanities, etc.) and Honors Outcomes.