

INDIAN STUDIES DEPARTMENT ASSESSMENT SUMMARY

I. PROGRAM GOALS FOR STUDENT LEARNING/DEVELOPMENT

The graduate from Indian Studies

1. Understands variability within and between tribal groups.
2. Demonstrates knowledge and understanding of the relationship between the federal and state governments and Indian tribes.
3. Has an awareness of social justice issues facing Native Americans and techniques used to address them.
4. Recognizes stereotypes, ethnocentrism and racism and acts in culturally appropriate ways to counteract them.
5. Locates and evaluates relevant material.
6. Communicates in a professional manner orally and in writing.
7. Incorporates facts and ideas from Indian history and culture into professional activities.

II. UNIVERSITY STUDENT GOALS BEING ADDRESSED AT DEPARTMENT LEVEL.

1. Critical thinking
2. Communication.
3. Recognizing relationships.
4. Recognizing and evaluating choices.

III. MEANS BY WHICH EACH GOAL WILL BE ASSESSED.

It should be pointed out that Indian Studies classes are assessed at least once a year by means of standard class evaluation forms distributed by the Office of Institutional Research. The results of these evaluations are sent to the instructor and to the department where they provide immediate feedback concerning the success of instruction.

1. The first four program goals will be assessed by means of entrance and exit essays. Students who decide to major in Indian Studies will write a short essays describing some aspect (s) of their knowledge of Indian history and culture. Since most students major in Indian Studies after taking the Introduction to Indian Studies and other courses this essay will help to serve as an immediate assessment of current teaching.

Students graduating with a degree in Indian Studies will write a final essay designed to elicit information indicating the depth and breadth of their knowledge
Concerning variability between and within tribal groups, understanding of the relationship between federal and state governments and Indian tribes, and social justice issues, and recognizing stereotypes, ethnocentrism and racism and acting in appropriate ways to counteract them.

2. Program goals 5 and 6 will be assessed by means of student portfolios. Following the completion of the entrance essay, each student will be instructed concerning the development of a portfolio. At the end of each semester, majors in Indian Studies will select a paper that represents their achievement for the semester.

3. Program goal 7 will be assessed by a questionnaire to be sent one year after graduation and at subsequent regular intervals to graduates of the program. This questionnaire will ask how students are using their Indian Studies degree and what suggestions they might have for changes or additions to the curriculum.

IV. HOW THE RESULTS WILL BE USED TO IMPROVE STUDENT LEARNING/DEVELOPMENT

There is an ongoing evaluation of student learning through regular class exams and student evaluation of teaching. The additional assessment techniques proposed herein will serve to highlight specific areas that necessitate further attention.

The entrance and exit essays will be used in two ways. The entrance essay will give a basic idea of where students are in achieving the department goals. These essays can be compared to each other to determine whether the results are indicative of an individual student situation or whether they indicate success or failure on the part of a particular teaching situation. Specific student needs will be met on an individual basis, by suggesting specific courses or intense individual independent study. Indications of successful accomplishment of teaching goals may mean that instead of repeating coverage of certain ideas and issues we can redesign courses to focus on other issues. Failure to accomplish expected goals will necessitate a similar redesign of courses.

The exit essays will provide important information concerning individual student accomplishment. As with the entrance essays, indications of success or failure will be considered in developing or modifying the curriculum.

The student portfolios will be used to monitor student development in research and communication. A student who does not appear to be acquiring the appropriate skills can be counseled and tutored.

The answers to questionnaires concerning graduates will provide information concerning two different factors. One factor concerns the various ways in which an Indian Studies degree may be applied. This information can be used in recruiting and advising students about Indian Studies majors. Indian Studies does not prepare students to know how an Indian Studies degree may be used. The second factor to be considered is to what degree the respondent feels that Indian Studies has enhanced her/his life and how changes in the program might increase student involvement in Indian Studies ideas and issues.