

Annual Assessment Report to the College 2011-12

College: Social and Behavioral Sciences

Department: Pan African Studies

Program: _____

Note: Please submit report to your department chair or program coordinator, the assessment office and to the Associate Dean of your College by September 28, 2012. You may submit a separate report for each program which conducted assessment activities.

Liaison: Anthony Ratcliff and Marquita Pellerin

1. Overview of Annual Assessment Project(s) (optional)

1a. **Assessment Process Overview:** Provide a brief overview of the assessment plan and process this year.

The majority of courses offered in the Pan African Studies Department focus on the historical, cultural, and economic realities of Africana people with very little qualitative or quantitative methods of research. Even more noteworthy is the lack of methodology content and research analyses within the courses offered. The purpose of academic courses on research methodologies in Pan African Studies is to introduce students to the research paradigms and techniques when researching Africana phenomenon. Within the discipline of Africana Studies, these courses prepare students to formulate data-driven, reliable conclusions about the genuine problems and challenges faced by people of African descent. Therefore it is imperative that students of Africana Studies receive data-driven research training to prepare them to produce empirical research. Correcting the general underrepresentation of research methods and statistics will help Pan African Studies to produce more effective and well-prepared social scientists and scholar activists of the African experience.

2. **Student Learning Outcome Assessment Project:** Answer questions according to the individual SLO assessed this year. If you assessed an additional SLO, report in the next chart below.

2a. Which Student Learning Outcome was measured this year?

SLO3: Develop appropriate skills in research design and methodology used to examine the various interdisciplinary areas of the Pan African Studies Department curriculum.

2b. Does this learning outcome align with one of the following University Fundamental Learning Competencies? (check any which apply)

Critical Thinking YES

Oral Communication _____ YES _____
Written Communication _____ YES _____
Quantitative Literacy _____ YES _____
Information Literacy _____ YES _____
Other (which?) _____ Methodological Literacy _____

2c. What direct and indirect instrument(s) were used to measure this SLO?

Critical response papers were used to assess the students' ability to critically analyze research describing the African American experience.

Debate Presentations were used to measure students' skills in researching and analyzing data on African American families. Students were required to research critical topics affecting the Black community and develop evidenced based arguments to support their claims.

Quantitative Research projects were used to assess students' research skills in:

1. Research Paradigm Selection
2. Research Design
3. Survey Construction
4. Survey Administration
5. Data Collection
6. Data Analyses
7. Reporting of Results
8. Discussion of Implications

Literature reviews were used to examine students' ability to critically engage, challenge, and contribute to contemporary research on the African American experience.

2d. Describe the assessment design methodology: For example, was this SLO assessed longitudinally (same students at different points) or was a cross-sectional comparison used (comparing freshmen with seniors)? If so, describe the assessment points used.

The assessment design was longitudinal by comparing the same students over three projects: critical response papers, debate presentations, and research project and literature at three different points during the semester. This allowed us to examine the level of understanding that these students gained about the tools of research design and culturally appropriate methodology in researching the African American family.

2e. Assessment Results & Analysis of this SLO: Provide a summary of how the evidence was analyzed and highlight important findings from collected evidence.

In order to assess the PAS 322 course students' critical response papers were used as a baseline assessment of students' knowledge in the beginning to the class. These responses were then compared to the critical arguments developed in students' debate presentations to examine the growth in students' research review and analyses skills. Finally, students' research project design and implementation were assessed to examine students' research skills. These project designs were analyzed in comparison to student's final literature review to determine students' knowledge of culturally appropriate research paradigms, designs, and methods.

Results from the assessment revealed that:

Over the course of the semester students gained basic empirical skills needed to properly study the African American experience. Students were able to:

1. Identify and explain the cultural and historical foundational, through contemporary theories and research, of the social realities of the African American family.
2. Explain the difference between culturally appropriate research paradigms and non-appropriate approaches to examining the causes and solutions to the contemporary and historical reality of the African American family.
3. Demonstrate the research skills to critically debate contemporary issues affecting the African American family, along with the ability to create culturally compatible research projects that examine the African American experience.

2f. Use of Assessment Results of this SLO: Were assessment results from previous years or from this year used to make program changes in this reporting year?

Type of change:

changes to course content/topics covered The addition of research methods in PAS 322
course sequence _____

addition/deletion of courses in program YES (2 new research methods courses have been proposed to further develop student's methodological knowledge and research skills)

describe other academic programmatic changes The proposed revision of the entire course curriculum, with the merging of two options: Literature & Humanities and Cultural Studies into one option: Literature, Humanities & Cultural Studies (the EPC is currently reviewing our proposed changes).

student support services _____

revisions to program SLOs Based upon our meeting with Bonnie Paller last year, the Assessment Committee has revised the SLOs to more clearly articulate what we expect our students to learn in our courses. Moreover, we also added a proposed writing SLO based upon the important work the PAS Writing Program has been doing. While the SLOs were brought to the full faculty, they decided that we should develop them a bit further. This will be one of the primary goals of the Assessment Committee this academic year.

assessment instruments _____

describe other assessment plan changes _____

Have any previous changes led to documented improvements in student learning? (describe)

This upcoming academic year we will focus more intently on this question. Over the past two years, our assessment program has primarily concentrated on assessing the effectiveness of PAS 100—our gateway course. Those two assessment reports demonstrated that although students in a couple sections had learned important information about Black culture, there remained serious inconsistencies between sections in what was being taught. Therefore, the faculty decided that we needed to revise the course curriculum to insure that students in all sections would receive similar information and to “close the assessment loop.” The proposed PAS 100 curriculum changes include an introduction to the discipline of Pan African/Black Studies, in addition to clearer objectives that we expect all instructors to cover who teach the course. Once the EPC

approves the changes (Fall 2012) and we introduce the faculty to the new curriculum, we will be able to assess the whether there have been any improvements in student learning at that time (Spring 2013).

Some programs assess multiple SLOs each year. If your program assessed an additional SLO, report the process for that individual SLO below. If you need additional SLO charts, please cut & paste the empty chart as many times as needed. If you did NOT assess another SLO, skip this section.

3. How do your assessment activities connect with your program's strategic plan and/or 5-yr assessment plan?

The majority of courses offered in the Pan African Studies Department focus on the historical, cultural, and economic realities of Africana people with very little qualitative or quantitative methods of research. Even more noteworthy is the lack of data-analysis content and preparation within the courses offered. The purpose of academic courses on statistical research methods in Pan African Studies is to introduce students to the data analysis tools and techniques when researching Africana phenomenon. Within the discipline of Africana Studies, these courses prepare students to formulate data-driven, reliable conclusions about the genuine problems and challenges faced by people of African descent. Therefore it is imperative that students of Africana Studies receive statistical training to prepare them to produce empirical research. Correcting the general underrepresentation of research methods and statistics will help Pan African Studies to produce more effective and well-prepared social scientists and scholar activists of the African experience.

4. Other information, assessment or reflective activities or processes not captured above.

N/A

5. Has someone in your program completed, submitted or published a manuscript, which uses or describes assessment activities in your program? Please provide citation or discuss.

Although we haven't used the assessment information gathered in a manuscript as of yet, a couple faculty members have discussed possibly writing something about our assessment activities of PAS 100. However, that will have to occur after we implement the new curriculum so we can evaluate whether the changes have resulted in improved learning outcomes for our students.