**Assessment Committee Feedback (August, 2009): Ethnic Studies**

**Assessment Committee Contact Person:  Drew Dunham**

First, thank you for all of the work that your department put into the development of this assessment plan.  You've done some great work and the department will benefit from it.

  In general, there were a few themes that the Assessment Committee noticed. First, it is most helpful when the progression from Step 2 to Step 3 and Step 3 to Step 4 are clear. That is, after you have articulated your learning goals, the clearest proposals are explicit in how the courses/experiences in Step 3 directly support the learning goals. And Step 4 should take full advantage of all of the places in Step 3 where data might be collected. Second, make strategic use of both direct and indirect measures[[1]](https://docs.google.com/a/albion.edu/Doc?docid=0AfwoCz4UuHKzZGY4NGtmOTlfM2h4a3ZqZ2Y&hl=en" \l "_ftn1" \o "), and think about whether data can be collected at the beginning, during the program of study, and at the end. This gives a richer sense of where and when your work contributes strongly to learning goals and where improvements might be made. Third, make your plan manageable! All data need not be collected annually; some can be done every other year. And you may choose not to measure for all of your learning goals right now. Make claims that you can (a) intellectually, ethically stand behind and (b) find resources to measure.

Please don't hesistate to contact any of us about any of the comments that we provided below.  The Assessment Committee wants to make this a successful process for you.  We will be happy to work with you on revisions or development of the next steps.

Comments specific to your plan:

Step 1: (Mission)

Comments:  Looks good and covers student learning.

Step 2: (Goals & Outcomes):

Comments:  Excellent outline of the four learning objectives.  They are directly related to the departmental mission statement.  We were a little confused by the last line : "These learning goals reflect the course objectives on our syllabi and overlap with those listed in the ???????on assessment plans for ethnic studies majors?"  We assume you are in the process of developing individual plans for students in the Ethnic Studies major, which is a very good idea.

Step 3: (Identify Program Components):

Comments:  As with other programs that rely on multiple departments to deliver content for the major and minor, it will be very important for the Ethnic Studies Department to develop a clear map of how each one of the courses approved for the degree programs link to the student learning objectives outlined in Step 2.  It will be important to have a method in place to periodically review the courses that are listed to make sure that they are still covering material appropriate to the learning outcomes for the Ethnic Studies major.

Step 4: (Select methods/data sources and instruments):

"To assess our learning goals, the department will be submitting a mandatory 90-minute short essay exit exam, to be taken by graduating seniors in the spring semester.  Students will not need to obtain a particular grade on the exam (see attached sample questions) measuring the respective learning goals above.  Ethnic Studies Committee faculty will grade the exams, assess student learning, and then adjust course syllabi to address any objectives that are not being met. "

Comments:  The adoption of a senior exit exam can be a good assessment tool for the department.  We would like to also suggest that while the exam is comprehensive in nature and includes questions addressing each of the four departmental learning goals, the department should assess the learning goals individually through the courses you mentioned in Step 3 above as well.   This will give the department and the course instructor more immediate feedback on how well the student's understand and meet the learning objectives while the senior assessment will give the department an overall assessment of student learning over time.

"The department also assesses student learning through less formal qualitative methods, including students’ performance in research projects (FURSCA, theses, directed studies, research assistants), as well as post-graduation success:  getting into graduate schools and securing desired employment."

Comments:  These are some good indirect measures of student learning to compliment the direct evidence that you will be collecting.

**Next Steps:**

In coordination with your Assessment Committee reviewers and their feedback, please observe the following deadlines for your assessment cycle:

·       September 15: Revisions to Steps 1-4 due (if necessary)

·       October 1: Completion of Steps 5 & 6 using preliminary data

·       November 2: Final Fall 2009 plans due