**Gerstacker Institute Assessment Feedback: Fall 2011**

**Department Liaison and Primary Reader:** Jeremy Osborn

**Secondary Readers:** Drew Dunham, Cheryl Blackwell

**Summary**: The Gerstacker Institute submitted a full assessment plan in 2009 that contained a strong set of well-defined learning goals and a variety of curricular and co-curricular components linked to those goals. Indicators utilized include internship evaluations, exit surveys, focus groups with multiple constituencies, employer and alumni surveys, and statistics on job placement, study abroad, etc. The assessment committee’s primary recommendation was for GI to supplement this excellent set of indirect measures with direct measures of the learning outcomes as well. For the past two years, Gerstacker has been in a state of transition, with multiple leadership changes and an ongoing curriculum revision designed to address problems discussed in the 2009 report. As a result of these changes, Gerstacker was unable to submit a 2010 assessment update. The 2011 update focuses on assessment of internships and discusses the need to create an expanded assessment plan following the implementation of curricular changes scheduled to occur in Spring 2012.

**Observations:** The committee recognizes that the changes that have occurred and continue to occur in the GI have hampered assessment efforts somewhat over the past two years. Fortunately, the Institute has a strong plan in place and many of the elements of that plan should still be applicable following the adoption of the new curriculum next year.

**Recommendations:** Going forward, it is clear that the primary concern for the Gerstacker Institute is finalizing the curricular changes that are currently underway. Once these changes are in place, you should revisit your 2009 plan and examine the new core competencies in terms of their consistency with your stated learning goals. In addition, we encourage you to explore ways to supplement your existing indirect measures with new direct measures of the learning outcomes. The assessment guidelines posted on the “W” drive may provide some ideas you can use to develop these measures. We also encourage you to continue your excellent work assessing internships, job placements, student perceptions, etc. In spite of the changes, the Institute has a strong assessment plan in place and we look forward to seeing how that plan evolves as the Institute evolves. Do not hesitate to contact us if you have assessment questions as you work through the transitions.

Our thanks to the Gerstacker faculty, students, and staff for the time, energy, and collaborative labor that went into assessment efforts within the program. Thank you especially to Vicki Baker and Emily Nolan for their efforts in compiling the 2011 update in such a short period of time.

Please contact your Assessment Committee liaison Jeremy Osborn if you have follow-up questions, comments, or concerns.