To: Greg Saltzman  
From: Michael Dixon  
Re: Assessment for Public Policy  
Date: October 21, 2011

Hello,

I am the representative on the Assessment Committee that will be assisting you this year with your Assessment Plan. I am the painting and drawing faculty in the Art Department. If you would like or need to, I would love the opportunity to sit down with you in person to help with your 2011 Assessment Plan, answer any questions, or brainstorm ideas. I know that advising week is coming up, but any time after advising week we can sit down and have a coffee or two. Below I have included Lisa Lewis’s comments of your 2010 Report.

I have reviewed both your 2010 Plan and 2011 Report to get me up to speed. I am going to defer to Lisa Lewis’s comments because I think she left some great feedback, which I agree with, and support. I think Lisa’s feedback is great place for you to start with the 2011 Assessment Plan. Great job so far. I would love to help in any way I can so please let me know what I can do for you.

**Step1 – Mission Statement**

**Step2 – Learning Outcomes, “Students will learn…”**

**Step3 – Where are these outcomes measured?**

**Step4 – How are these outcomes measured?**

**Step5 – Analysis, How are you using the data to make improvements? What are you going to change or not change?**

*Comments specific to your plan:*

*Step 1: (Mission)*

*Looks good; it incorporates broad student learning goals.*

*Step 2: (Goals & Outcomes):*

*Comments: Very good outline of the five major learning outcomes. Generally, we recommend the use of measurable active verbs in defining goals and outcomes.*

*Step 3: (Identify Program Components):*

*Comments: The mapping of the specific courses offered by the department to the five learning outcomes is excellent. Public Policy majors have a variety of course choices in fulfilling their requirements. The challenge here is to make sure that each course is still assessing student learning tied to the programmatic learning goal. If you would like some examples of how other interdisciplinary programs are meeting this challenge, we recommend that you review the assessment plans for the Ford Institute and/or the Center for Sustainability and the Environment.*

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

*Comments: Your plan to survey your four students to assess their perception on the extent to which the major helped them to achieve the learning objectives is a good indirect measure of student learning. We ask that you consider ways to obtain direct measures of student learning to compliment your indirect measures.*

*In assessing student learning, there are direct and indirect sources of evidence. Direct evidence is clear and convincing information about student learning, such as: tests, examinations, papers, projects, assignments, field experience assessments, and portfolios. These are particularly strong sources of evidence especially when accompanied by articulated standards (such as a rubric). On the other hand, with indirect evidence there is room for other factors to affect the outcomes either positively or negatively. Examples of indirect evidence include: retention, graduation, and placement rates (may be impacted by economic conditions or college policies); surveys of students and alumni (may indicate feelings about college experience); grades (standards and even content may differ across instructors and institutions).*

*For your next round of assessment plans and reports, please consider the comments, suggestions, and recommendations above, and incorporate these as feasible and appropriate. Overall, a good start toward developing and presenting an effective assessment plan for the program.*