

Annual/Biennial Program Assessment Report

Academic Year Assessed: 2022-2023
College: Honors College
Department: Interdepartmental
Submitted by: Steven Davis, Director

Undergraduate Assessment reports are to be submitted annually. The report deadline is October 15th – November 15th.

Graduate Assessment reports are to be submitted biennially. The report deadline is October 15th.

Program(s) Assessed

List all majors (including each option), minors, and certificates that are included in this assessment:

Directed Interdisciplinary Studies (DIS) B.A.

Directed Interdisciplinary Studies (DIS) B.S.

1. Past Assessment Summary. Briefly summarize the findings from the last assessment report conducted related to the PLOs being assessed this year. Include any findings that influenced this cycle’s assessment approach. Alternatively, reflect on the program assessment conducted last year, and explain how that impacted or informed any changes made to this cycle’s assessment plan.

Aligned with the Program Assessment plan outlined in the Year 0 Report and following the external review last year, the DIS director collected and analyzed the artifacts (DIS theses defense and FAC assessment via Qualtrics). Note: because the program is small, the data was proposed to be submitted every other year in a Program Assessment Report by the DIS director (see Year 0 Report). The Faculty Advisory Committee for each DIS student consists of three faculty members in three different disciplines who completed the evaluation for each thesis defense. Feedback from the Internal Assessment & Outcomes Committee commended the assessment plan despite the variability of the student coursework and degree plans, and the obstacles of developing a plan in such a “non-traditional” program. The feedback included minor changes to the rubric for PLO 1 & 2 which were updated, accordingly.

2. Action Research Question. What question are you seeking to answer in this cycle’s assessment?
Can DIS students demonstrate the ability to propose, engage (and adapt, if necessary) in interdisciplinary course work?

3. Assessment Plan, Schedule, and Data Source(s).

a) Please provide a multi-year assessment schedule that will show when all program learning outcomes will be assessed, and by what criteria (data).

ASSESSMENT PLANNING SCHEDULE CHART					
PROGRAM LEARNING OUTCOME	COURSES MAPPED TO PLOs	2021-2022	2022-2023	2023-2024	2024-2025
1. Propose and engage in interdisciplinary coursework	D.I.S. proposal and public defense	X	X	X	X
2. Demonstrate the ability to recognize and apply multi- and inter-disciplinary approaches to research and creative questions	HONR490R: Undergraduate Research/Thesis and public defense	X	X	X	X
3. Demonstrate leadership skills and sustained community engagement	D.I.S. public defense	X	X	X	X

b) What are the threshold values for which your program demonstrates student achievement?

Threshold Values		
PROGRAM LEARNING OUTCOME	Threshold Value	Data Source(s)*
1. Propose and engage in interdisciplinary coursework	80% of students will meet or exceed Level 3 competency - see rubrics below	D.I.S. proposal and public defense
2. Demonstrate the ability to recognize and apply multi- and inter-disciplinary approaches to research and creative questions	80% of students will meet or exceed Level 3 competency – see rubrics below	HONR490R: Undergraduate Research/Thesis and public defense
3. Demonstrate leadership skills and sustained community engagement	80% of students will meet or exceed Level 3 competency - see rubrics below	D.I.S. public defense

4. What Was Done.

- a) Was the completed assessment consistent with the program's assessment plan? If not, please explain the adjustments that were made.



Yes



No

- b) How were data collected and analyzed and by whom? Please include method of collection and sample size.

Last year, there was a limited data set (n=2) as only two DIS students defended their thesis via public defense in the Spring of 2023 and graduated with the B.S. option. The data was collected by the DIS director at each of the student's defense then sent out for review, comment, and signature by each student's 3 faculty advisory committee members via DocuSign. For comparison, the prior year's graduating class consisted of three graduates (n=3) in Spring of 2022 who completed two B.A. options, and one B.S. option, respectively. As summarized in the rubrics below, 100% of the students met or exceeded the threshold values in AY 2022-2023.

- c) Please provide a rubric that demonstrates how your data were evaluated.

PLO #1: Propose and engage in interdisciplinary coursework					Threshold Values
Indicators	Level 1	Level2	Level 3	Level 4	80% of students will meet or exceed Level 3 competency
Completion of course plan upon graduation	Unable to complete the task	Completed task, but with major modifications	Completed task with minor modifications	Completed task with few (<3) course revisions	100% met or exceeded level 3 competency
Connected coursework relevance with project	Student's courses were not directly linked to project	Some courses were linked to project, but many were not connected	Most courses were linked to project, but a few were not connected	Nearly all courses were directly applicable and valuable to project outcome	100% met or exceeded level 3 competency
Established a team of supportive advisors from three academic disciplines	Student had little connection with faculty	Student was primarily involved with one faculty advisor	Student worked with some advisors, but neglected a valuable component	Student worked with all faculty advisors in a synergistic way	100% met or exceeded level 3 competency

PLO #2: Demonstrate the ability to recognize and apply multi- and inter-disciplinary approaches to research and creative questions					Threshold Values
Indicators	Level 1	Level2	Level 3	Level 4	
					80% of students will meet or exceed Level 3 competency
Completion of thesis/deliverable	Unable to complete the thesis upon defense	Completed thesis, but it included only one approach to the research and creative question	Thesis and presentation showed most, but not all the impact from different disciplines	Thesis and presentation showed important impact from different disciplines	100% met or exceeded level 3 competency
Synthesis of multi- and inter-disciplinary approaches in public presentation	At defense, student did not discuss how different disciplines contributed	At defense, student alluded to approaches, but did not show value.	At defense, student showed how some, but not all disciplines contributed to project.	Student discussed how all disciplines contributed to their success	100% met or exceeded level 3 competency

PLO #3: Demonstrate leadership skills and sustained community engagement					Threshold Values
Indicators	Level 1	Level2	Level 3	Level 4	
					80% of students will meet or exceed Level 3 competency
Led the planning of a public defense	Unable to complete the task	Required help in organizing a public defense, which was poorly attended	With assistance, organized a public defense that was well attended	Independently arranged a public defense that was well attended	100% met or exceeded level 3 competency
Demonstrates public engagement throughout their program	Student had no public engagement	Student had some public engagement with their scholarly work	Student had moderate public engagement with their scholarly work	Student demonstrated robust public engagement with their scholarly work	100% met or exceeded level 3 competency
Describes the value of their project to the greater public in an understandable way	Student description of project value was esoteric	Student described the value to a select audience	Student described the value of their work in a manner understood by some in attendance	All attendees and committee members understood the value of the student work	100% met or exceeded level 3 competency

5. What Was Learned.

- a) Based on the analysis of the data, and compared to the threshold values established, what was learned from the assessment?
Considering analysis of the data compared to the established threshold values, the Program Learning Outcomes and Evaluation Rubrics as currently written indicate the course proposal, theses, and public thesis defenses demonstrated sufficient student competency.
- b) What areas of strength in the program were identified from this assessment process?
As originally outlined in the BOR proposal (2014) and commended by the recent seven-year assessment (2015-2021), the DIS degree is for highly motivated independent learners, prepared to embark on unique and rigorous undergraduate research and creative activities. The level of responsibility of the student will be equal to that expected of our graduate students in terms of rigor of research/ creative projects, thesis preparation and defense (8 credits) followed by a public presentation of the student's senior research/creative project.
- c) What areas were identified that either need improvement or could be improved in a different way from this assessment process? At the next DIS Oversight Committee meeting (Fall 2023) the research question above will be presented and discussed.

6. How We Responded.

- a) Describe how "What Was Learned" was communicated to the department, or program faculty. How did faculty discussions re-imagine new ways program assessment might contribute to program growth/improvement/innovation beyond the bare minimum of achieving program learning objectives through assessment activities conducted at the course level?
There are no official faculty or course offerings within the D.I.S. program, although there is a DIS Oversight Board consisting of eight members representing all the academic colleges. At the annual committee meeting, the DIS Director is responsible for sharing the assessment with the Oversight Board, who will provide recommendations to the DIS Director and the Dean of the Honors College.
- b) How are the results of this assessment informing changes to enhance student learning in the program?
Threshold value data will be compared to past assessments to inform changes and improvements and will be discussed with the D.I.S. Oversight Board and the Dean of the Honors College.
- c) If information outside of this assessment is informing programmatic change, please describe that.
Based on the analysis of the DIS degree from the recent seven year (2015-2021) External Review, the external assessment committee made the following recommendations to strengthen the Directed Interdisciplinary Studies program. The DIS Oversight Board Meeting (Fall 2023) discussed the following recommendations in addition to strategies on how to best increase the interest and enrollment in this competitive degree offering:

- Compensation or service recognition for faculty advisory committee members.
- Allowing students some flexibility in designing their three-year course plan by including a series of course options as a way to overcome curricular changes due to unanticipated scheduling issues.
- Guaranteeing students in the degree the ability to take courses across the campus in any Department.
- Hiring a director for the program whose time allocation is at least 50% towards the DIS degree

7. Closing the Loop(s). Reflect on the program learning outcomes, how they were assessed in the previous cycle (refer to #1 of the report), and what was learned in this cycle. What action will be taken to improve student learning objectives going forward?

- a) In reviewing the last report that assessed the PLO(s) in this assessment cycle, what changes proposed were implemented and will be measured in future assessment reports?

Last spring, the DIS Coursework Planning Requirements were updated to 1) require several course options across the three disciplines, and 2) adjust the required number of credits in each upper division discipline from 18cr to 15cr to allow students more flexibility in designing their course plans – esp. when changes to course offerings and/or scheduled conflicts occurred after the creation of the DIS course worksheet.

- b) Have you seen a change in student learning based on other program adjustments made in the past? Please describe the adjustments made and subsequent changes in student learning. The DIS Coursework Planning Requirements changes above were not assessed in the students who recently completed their defense in Spring 2023; however, students who are planning to graduate Spring 2024 are making updates to their current coursework planning requirements – i.e. several are leveraging the flexibility that the new requirements offer since there were classes in their course plan that are no longer available.