

2015-2016 Yearly Assessment Report for



Name of Program: B.A. in Performing Arts and Social Justice

Type of Program: Major

Division: College of Arts and Sciences, Arts

Submitter: Christine Young, Performing Arts Dept. chair
cyoung8@usfca.edu

Submitted: August 30th, 2016

MISSION STATEMENT

Our Department offers the unique Performing Arts and Social Justice major, with concentrations in dance, music, and theater. The faculty and staff are committed to providing coursework, activities, and productions that acknowledge and study the performing arts' role as an agent of creative and social change. We strive to achieve academic and artistic excellence in the classroom, on stage, and in the community, offering students professional preparation for a variety of careers in the performing arts, as well as for further study, while working towards a more humane and just society.

This mission statement was approved by department faculty in January 2014.

PROGRAM GOALS

1. Students will gain a **historical foundation** of the Performing Arts (Dance, Music, and Theater) and associated performance theories, through a lens of cultural diversity, social context, and community engagement.
2. Students will develop **technical and conceptual skills** related to the practice of their craft, while engaging in both individual and collaborative creative processes.
3. Students will gain a foundation in the theory and practical skills involved in **community based artistic work** and artistic engagements that contribute to a more inclusive and just society.

These program goals were approved by department faculty in January 2014.

PROGRAM LEARNING OUTCOMES

Our department is currently operating without a well defined and mutually agreed upon set of Program Learning Outcomes. We also recognize that our existing Program Goals are overly complex and reside somewhere between Program Goals and Program Learning Outcomes. It will be a department project in the 2016-2017 academic year to develop and adopt a clearly defined and succinct set of Program Learning Outcomes that can be used more effectively for curricular assessment. Alexandra Amati-Camperi and Christine Young will lead this effort.

BRIEF SUMMARY OF MOST RECENT PROGRAM ASSESSMENT PLAN

The most recent assessment plan was submitted to the Associate Dean for Academic Effectiveness in December 2015. Our plan, first developed in 2012, included:

- Direct assessment of PASJ majors through the PASJ Assessment Test (given to new majors and graduating majors)
- Indirect assessment of PASJ majors including evaluation of capstone projects and one-on-one exit interviews with graduating majors
- Developing an instrument to assess students' technical proficiency in the disciplines of dance, music, and theater

We received feedback from Dean Clausen and Jack Lendvay about ways to make our plan stronger including: attending assessment workshops at USF, developing true Program Learning Outcomes, and considering whether we want to continue measuring growth (by assessing students both when they enter and exit our program) or whether it might be more efficient to shift to only measuring outcomes.

Several faculty members did attend assessment workshops during the 2015-2016 academic year, and two faculty members attended the day-long WASC Assessment 101 course. We have yet to implement the other recommendations for improving our plan, but intend to do so during the 2016-2017 academic year..

ACADEMIC PROGRAM REVIEW

The most recent Academic Program Review for the Performing Arts and Social Justice major was conducted during the 2015-2016 year. Faculty engagement with the APR process was one of the factors that drew attention away from assessment efforts during this year. The full faculty recently met for a half-day retreat to review the External Reviewers' report and recommendations. During the 2016-2017 year, the faculty will develop an Action Plan that reflects our priorities for program improvements (including assessment) in response to the External Reviewer's recommendations.

While the External Reviewers rated our department's assessment efforts as "extremely comprehensive", our faculty agrees that improvements are still needed. In particular, we need a clearer mechanism for incorporating assessment results into the curriculum review process ("closing the loop"), and we are also interested in finding ways to embed assessment directly into majors classes, rather than requiring students to take a separate assessment test. One of the chief recommendations that the faculty is prioritizing in the 2016-2017 academic year is a revision of the PASJ major curriculum. A review of current assessment data will be a significant component of the revision process.

METHODS

The PASJ Assessment Test (direct measure) was developed collectively by faculty to assess Program Learning Goal 1 (historic foundation) and Program Learning Goal 3 (community engagement). We have yet to develop an instrument by which to assess Program Learning Goal 2 (technical proficiency in artistic discipline.) Again, it is noted that the Program Learning Goals need to evolve into Program Learning Outcomes.

The PASJ Assessment Test has been administered annually for the past four years new majors in September and graduating majors in April during special testing sessions (outside of regular classes.) Test answers have usually scored by multiple faculty members using a standardized rubric, and composite results reviewed by the full faculty. However, during the 2015-2016 academic year, no test scoring occurred, most likely because extensive faculty time was devoted to the Academic Program Review. It will be a goal for the 2016-2017 academic year to complete all back scoring. Test questions include:

Question 1: Identify two important artists or groups from different traditions/schools and time periods in your discipline. For each, define:

- Primary style or form, and its key features
- Their social, political, and economic environment (e.g. who and what influenced them)
- After situating them within their own social and cultural context, describe at least one influence they had on subsequent artistic and/or social movements

Question 2: Read the scenario and answer the points below in relation to the case presented.

Scenario: You have been approached by "Habitat for Humanity" to create a performance, in your discipline, with a group of individuals displaced by a hurricane in the Gulf Coast. The performance is to address their current situation.

- What do you need to know about the affected community in order to engage them in a sensitive and respectful manner?
- What do they need to know about you and why?
- Describe at least two exercises (from beginning to end) that you believe would be central to the creative process, and why.
- Describe how the performance merges your own and the community's creativity and expertise, while addressing the circumstances that brought you together.

Senior Capstone Project (direct measure): for the past four years, every PASJ senior has completed a creative research project that is designed to demonstrate the learning they have achieved in the PASJ major. Projects are evaluated verbally by faculty several times through their development during work-in-progress showings and through feedback from one-on-one mentors.

Senior Exit Interviews (indirect measure): for the past two years, every PASJ senior was interviewed one-on-one for 20 minutes by a full-time faculty member outside their discipline. Aggregated (rather than personal) narrative responses were recorded. Interview questions included:

- What have been the department's greatest strengths/assets for you?
- What have been the department's greatest weaknesses/drawbacks for you?
- In what ways do you feel the PASJ major curriculum and PASJ faculty best served you in your artistic growth?

- How aware were you of the experiences of PASJ majors in other concentrations? Did you attend their performances? Know of the course-content/homework load?
- Did you find the university, outside the PASJ major, supportive of your personal, artistic, and academic growth? If so, how? If not, why?
- What experiences did you have that best prepared you to work in the community?
- Graduating from college and shifting from the structured environment of school into the unstructured environment of 'life' is a big transition. In what ways has PASJ prepared you to make this transition?
- How aware are you of what PASJ alums are currently doing?
- Were there faculty or staff members who provided career counseling for post-graduate options? If yes, who/what was most helpful? If not, what could we have done differently?
- If you have suggestions for the Department to better prepare you, please let us know.

RESULTS

PASJ Assessment Test

As noted, results for the 2015-2016 year were collected but not evaluated. However, we did analyze results from the three prior years as part of our APR preparation. Results were scored on a 5-point scale (1 Insufficient – 5 Exemplary). Some trends that emerged:

- Question #1
 - 40-60% of new students scored a Level 3 (Acceptable) or above and 10-30% scored a Level 4 (Exemplary) or above
 - 60-80% of graduating students scored Level 3 (Acceptable) or above and 30-40% scored a Level 4 (Exemplary) or above
- Question #3
 - 48-61% of new students scored a Level 3 (Acceptable) or above and 7-14% scored a Level 4 (Exemplary) or above
 - 79% of graduating students scored Level 3 (Acceptable) or above and 39-64% scored a Level 4 (Exemplary) or above

Given that we are artists (rather than statisticians!), our faculty has had to work hard to interpret this data and to determine in what way it is meaningful for our program! One challenge is that we do not yet have a clear benchmark for what level we are expecting PASJ majors to achieve – are we hoping that 75% of our graduating majors are at an Acceptable learning level? Or do we want 75% to be at a Level 4 (past Acceptable and on their way to Exemplary.) We need to develop consensus about what targets we hope to achieve.

One surprising thing about the data is that many students appear to already be an Acceptable level when they arrive in our major. This may be because we are attracting students who already have some knowledge of the discipline or it may reflect the fact that we are scoring inconsistently or even using the wrong type of measurement tool. Despite this concern, we can see students clearly do learn in our program, particularly when we consider the shift between new and graduating students scoring at Level 4 (Exemplary) or above. We can also see that the most dramatic growth in student learning in our program occurred in the area described by Program Learning Goal 3 (students will gain a foundation in the theory and practical skills involved in **community based artistic work** and artistic engagements that contribute to a more inclusive and just society), which we consider to be one of the most unique and important aspects of our program.

Composite PASJ Assessment Test Data

New PASJ Majors

		QUESTION #1									
		# OF STUDENTS			57		% OF STUDENTS				
		Exemplary	Acceptable	Insufficient			Exemplary	Acceptable	Insufficient		
Averaged Score of all fac earned:		5	4	3	2	1 or 0	5	4	3	2	1 or 0
Knowledgeable enough about his/her conc. to pick 2 artists from diff. historical periods & cultural backgrounds		1	16	20	6	12	2%	28%	35%	11%	21%
Can articulate each artists or group's style or form in its wider context		0	9	24	15	7	0%	16%	42%	26%	12%
Able to identify the influences upon the artist or group and in turn their subsequent influence on others		0	5	16	22	12	0%	9%	28%	39%	21%

		QUESTION #2									
		# OF STUDENTS			56		% OF STUDENTS				
		Exemplary	Acceptable	Insufficient			Exemplary	Acceptable	Insufficient		
Averaged Score of all fac earned:		5	4	3	2	1 or 0	5	4	3	2	1 or 0
Can formulate at least 2 relevant Qs to foster better understanding btw student & the individuals they are working with, as well as the impact of the catalyzing event on the creation of this community		1	7	26	17	4	2%	12%	46%	30%	7%
Can describe activities that allow the community members' experiences to be utilized in the creative process		0	6	24	8	17	0%	11%	42%	14%	30%
Demos his/her ability and interest in researching the events that have formed this community		0	4	23	16	12	0%	7%	40%	28%	21%

Graduating PASJ Majors

		QUESTION #1									
		# OF STUDENTS			28		% OF STUDENTS				
		Exemplary	Acceptable	Insufficient			Exemplary	Acceptable	Insufficient		
Averaged Score of all fac earned:		5	4	3	2	1 or 0	5	4	3	2	1 or 0
Knowledgeable enough about his/her conc. to pick 2 artists from diff. historical periods & cultural backgrounds		4	8	9	4	1	14%	29%	32%	14%	4%
Can articulate each artists or group's style or form in its wider context		3	7	11	4	1	11%	25%	39%	14%	4%
Able to identify the influences upon the artist or group and in turn their subsequent influence on others		1	7	9	8	1	4%	25%	32%	29%	4%

QUESTION #2	# OF STUDENTS					28	% OF STUDENTS				
	Exemplary	Acceptable	Insufficient				Exemplary	Acceptable	Insufficient		
Averaged Score of all fac earned:	5	4	3	2	1 or 0		5	4	3	2	1 or 0
Can formulate at least 2 relevant Qs to foster better understanding btw student & the individuals they are working with, as well as the impact of the catalyzing event on the creation of this community	5	11	6	3	1		18%	39%	21%	11%	4%
Can describe activities that allow the community members' experiences to be utilized in the creative process	9	9	4	2	2		32%	32%	14%	7%	7%
Demos his/her ability and interest in researching the events that have formed this community	3	8	11	2	2		11%	29%	39%	7%	7%

Senior Capstone Project & Senior Exit Interviews

While we are not currently using a rubric to evaluate senior creative research projects, we do know that 59 students have successfully completed capstone projects and graduated from the PASJ major over the past 4 years.

We also have a wealth of qualitative data from two years of Senior Exit Interviews that we are still sorting through, but overall the responses reflect a high degree of satisfaction with the PASJ major and that students feel well-prepared by their training in the PASJ major to enter the Performing Arts field professionally.

CLOSING THE LOOP

In the 2016-2017 academic year, PASJ faculty will work to build a more coherent and sustainable assessment model by reviewing existing assessment results, discussing their implications in more detail, and using this information to inform our curriculum revision process. We will also develop and adopt Program Learning Outcomes (PLOs), review our assessment methodology and consider new strategies for assessment that may be more effective for measuring our newly defined PLOs, and work to incorporate assessment more directly into existing course assignments so that we can capture more data with less effort.