



ASSESSMENT CYCLES: LAIS UPPER-DIVISION CURRICULUM



These continuous improvement cycles chronicle the assessment inputs, responses, and effects for the LAIS upper-division undergraduate curriculum—that is, non-core courses at the 300 and 400 level—between 2000 and 2006.

Time/Info Source	Concern	Response	Effect
Spring 2000/ LAIS Division Director (DD) and LAIS Faculty	In the process of surveying more specific aspects of the LAIS curriculum during Spring 2000, the Division wanted a baseline measurement of more general student perceptions of the LAIS curriculum.	Focus Group, Conducted by Ruth Streveler, Director of Academic Services, Office of Student Development and Academic Services. Number of participants: 7 Students were asked for comments on: student needs; total amount of credit-hours required; strengths; weaknesses; ways to improve.	Both McBride Honors and non-McBride Honors students participated. Students expressed strong interests in courses that exposed them to literature, art, religion, and politics/current events.
Spring 2000/ LAIS DD and Faculty	LAIS needs to establish a baseline measurement of student perceptions of how well their upper-division courses in LAIS are meeting the Division's stated goals.	Survey of students in LIHU and LISS senior seminars; 59% response rate (179 of 305).	Overall, the survey results suggest that students think LAIS is meeting its stated goals. However, results may be somewhat inconclusive because we surveyed students from both the old and new curricula, the latter of which went into effect in Fall 1998. Resurvey later.
Fall 2000- Fall 2003 /LAIS Division Director and LAIS Faculty	A need to act on student input from the Spring 2000 Focus Group.	--A 1-hour painting studio course was offered. --An LAIS curriculum-wide approach was taken to address the interest in current and global events.	--Student enrollment in the painting course was high. --In addition to adding more current events material in LAIS 100, <i>Nature and Human Values</i> , eight 3-hour courses have since been added to the LAIS curriculum.
Fall 2002/ LAIS Faculty	Need to gauge student interest in a master's program in International Political Economy (IPE).	Surveyed 331 CSM undergraduates enrolled in LAIS courses.	Survey results suggest a strong interest in an IPE program among students from a wide range of majors.
Spring 2004 / LAIS Assessment Committee Chair	To ensure continuous improvement in LAIS courses, the LAIS faculty unanimously approved the idea of including Faculty Teaching Reflections in a Course Assessment Notebook. In AY2004-05,	After teaching any course (including a core course), LAIS faculty are to reflect in a one-page (maximum document on 1) the revisions to be made in each course along with 2)	The nature of revisions varies widely and includes changes in texts, assignments, theoretical/conceptual frameworks, course format, interrelationship among course units, and more.

Laura Pang
Associate Professor and Division Director
303-273-3595
lpang@mines.edu

	LAIS then faculty voted unanimously to also include the Teaching Reflections in the teaching section of the annual Faculty Data Reports that are submitted to the LAIS Division Director. The LAIS Assessment Committee will review the Teaching Reflections periodically.	the drivers for change (new research, student evaluations, etc.).	Many faculty do not turn in their Teaching Reflections, rendering impossible a comprehensive review. The Teaching Reflections will be re-examined by the AC in Fall 2006 to jettison or fine-tune the process.
Fall 2004/ LAIS DD	Need to document our continuous assessment efforts and engage in new ones.	Jon Leydens asked to reconstitute and (continue to) chair the LAIS Assessment Committee (AC).	Committee reconstituted, originally with three members, later with five; LAIS AC now includes members from both humanities and social sciences.
Fall 2004/ LAIS DD, Under-graduate Advisor	In re-evaluating cluster course offerings, it is noticed that the four clusters could be collapsed into three.	LAIS faculty discusses and approves this move.	Four clusters become three: International Studies, Humanities (formerly Humankind and Values), and Public Policy (formerly Society & Decisions, and Environment, Resources, Science & Technology).
Fall 2004/ LAIS Under-graduate Advisor	Too few senior seminars offered; seniors are having difficulty finding open classes in appropriate cluster.	An inquiry tells us that the increase in numbers of single majors in Economics has significantly contributed to this issue; Econ. majors are required to take three upper-division courses in LAIS, and in Spring 2002, there were 46 single majors in economics; as of Spring 2006 that had grown to 74.	Hired more faculty, especially adjuncts and use lecturers to deliver more 400-level courses. In Spring 2002, LAIS delivered 1007 credit hours at the 400 level, and 994 at the 300 level. By Spring 2006, LAIS delivered 1171 credit hours at the 400 level, and 471 at the 300 level. Analysis needs to be completed to examine what factors are causing the increased pressure on 400 level courses, particularly in the Public Policy cluster, and the drop in 300 level enrollments.
Fall 2004/ Under-graduate Advisor	With increased numbers of transfer students, many were repeating coursework in taking LAIS100.	LAIS101 (NHV Short Form) introduced to cover NHV content with less emphasis on composition.	LAIS101 alleviates some of the enrollment demand for LAIS100.
Spring 2005/ LAIS DD and LAIS AC	Need to better understand student perceptions of the clusters.	AC designs survey instrument and conducts survey.	Clusters Survey results generally indicate that students are for the most part satisfied with the clusters. See Clusters Survey Report .
Spring 2005 / LAIS DD	Need for consistent, rigorous requirements across senior seminars.	LAIS DD requests examples of best and worst seminar papers.	Analysis to be completed.

Fall 2005/ LAIS DD, Under- graduate Advisor	In response to an examination of common practices at peer institutions and our own internal discussions, course renumbering is proposed to improve transfer credit and other issues.	Humanities and Social Science courses were often artificially, given their interdisciplinary nature, distinguished from each other by the -HU and -SS extensions.	LAIS renumbers all its courses and eliminates LIHU (Humanities) and LISS (Social Sciences) in favor of a single numbering system (e.g., LAIS100, etc.). The Division continues to retain the -CM (Communication) and -FL (Foreign Languages) extensions, however.
Fall 2005/ LAIS AC	Need to disseminate the results of the Spring 2005 Clusters Survey.	The LAIS AC Chair pens the Clusters Survey Report, and portions are presented at the LAIS Faculty Retreat.	Faculty have a chance to discuss the Clusters Survey results and reflect on the overall efficacy of the clusters.
Fall 2005/ LAIS Faculty	LAIS had applied for a Master's Degree Program in International Political Economy of Resources (MIPER).	The degree program had cleared the LAIS and CSM faculties and awaited CCHE approval.	The MIPER Program was approved by CCHE. Students can obtain this master's degree by adding a year or more to their time working on their BS degree in economics/business, engineering or applied science.
Fall 2005/ LAIS DD	CSM Administration needs departments and divisions to pen a Self-Study Document for ABET.	LAIS DD pens report with help some LAIS faculty members; LAIS AC was not consulted.	Self-Study Report given to administration in early Spring 2006 for ABET preparation.
Spring 2006/ LAIS DD, Under- graduate Advisor, and Faculty	Students often take cluster courses based on what fits their schedule rather than a coherent focus; given this and the fact that a coherent focus may not be possible given only nine post-core credits, we need to revisit the efficacy of the clusters.	Discussions begin regarding ways to improve the clusters.	LAIS Faculty will continue to discuss ways to improve the cluster system.
Fall 2005 and Spring 2006/ LAIS AC, DD	Need to better understand how much humanities and social science knowledge students possess when they <i>begin</i> their senior design experiences.	Surveys discussed with all department heads, sent to all departments with a senior design course; surveys completed by four departments.	Results indicate variation among four majors; some students appear to have a greater understanding of non-technical constraints than others. See Senior Design Report .
Spring 2006 / LAIS DD, LAIS Faculty	LAIS has of late seen some remarkably creative student achievements and lacks any mechanism to recognize such work.	The Blackwell Award in Creative Expression is created to recognize the works of such students.	The first-ever Blackwell Award for Creative Expression is given; this will be an annual award.