1. Executive Summary:

The American Studies interdisciplinary minor at Loyola University was approved in early 1990; however, no funds were provided for the program, so all students who signed up as minors did so because they heard about the program from their advisors, or because of a real interest in American Studies that they learned about through individual classes at the university.

The program slowly built up a small cadre of minors, but records of the numbers are sketchy because advisors for students in minor programs are not given administrative clearance to keep track of head counts. However, there was, before Katrina a real interest, especially among history, English, and political science majors, in the interdisciplinary minor. After Katrina we lost most of our American Studies minors either through graduation or transfers.

The program seeks to give students a methodology for studying American culture, history, literature, politics and sociology; courses in all of those disciplines are included in the minor (see brochure in appendix). Furthermore, the minor provides students with the opportunity to explore the rich diversity of ethnic, racial, religious, and class groups in the U.S. than can be provided by any single discipline. Disciplines participating in the minor include English, history, music, sociology, religion, and visual arts. At one time the program also had a philosophy component, but it no longer does. Students in American Studies come to understand the nature and the significance of both elite and popular culture and are trained to think critically about all aspects of American life.
2. Unit Identification Profile:

2.1. Official name of the unit: American Studies Minor.

2.2. General statement and descriptive information: American Studies is an interdisciplinary academic minor that seeks to give students the opportunity to observe America through a multi-facet lens. Students are encouraged also to integrate and think critically about how different disciplines study America.

2.2.1. The only staff available is the administrative assistant in history. In the past, the administrative assistant in English also devoted time to the program.

2.2.2. Faculty members teach their courses in their own departments. American Studies students enroll in the classes, but the faculty members are not designated as American Studies faculty. There are no full-time faculty assigned exclusively to American Studies. Mary McCay in English and David Moore in history act as advisors for the minor.

2.2.3. We have recruited two minors to the program in 2011-2012. We advertised the minor in the English department advising meetings, and continue to advertise in American Lit classes. We need a more comprehensive way of advertising the minor.

2.2.4. NA

2.2.5. NA

2.2.6. NA

3. Assessment:

3.1. Assessment for the unit has been conducted in the past through focus groups and exit interviews. This year Mary McCay spoke with both minor to get their impression of the offerings, the need for more offerings, and their satisfaction with the minor.

3.2. Program goals for 2011-2012 included:

- Notifying all students with nine or more hours in courses that count for an American Studies minor. Kathy Gros gave us a list of students with American studies courses, and Mary McCay notified them of the minor.
• The minor advisors have made a flyer and a brochure available to students in various departments with courses in the minor and in the HNS dean’s office.

3.3-3.6. This year’s assessment took place in interviews with minors and with students in American Masterworks. The two minors are happy with course offerings, but required courses must be offered on a regular rotation. That specifically applies to American Masterworks.

4. **Summary of Achievements:** It is difficult to admit that the American Studies program had no real achievements during the past year.

4.1. Unit as a whole:

• All students with 9 hours in courses in the minor were invited to join the program.
• Brochures and flyers continue to be disseminated around campus.
• Web site for the program is updated by Annie Goldman.
• Faculty teaching in the minor gave papers at national conferences in the field of American literature, American history, and American Studies.

5. **Budget for Previous and Upcoming Year.**
The minor received $1,500.00 budget. There were no expenses this year, but, if the money can be escrowed for fall 2012, the advisors would like to attend the National American Studies convention in San Juan in November 2012 in order to meet with the directors and advisors of other American Studies programs in the U.S. We would also like to take some of our minors to a future convention.

6. **Planning and Goals for Upcoming Year:**

6.1. The minor needs to create a steering committee of faculty involved in teaching courses that are applicable for the minor. That group will have to create a strategic plan that focuses on the following:

• Enlisting and retaining minors for the program
• Evaluating all the classes currently in the minor
• Assessing courses outside the minor for their appropriateness for the program.
• Working with faculty to create an interdisciplinary, team-taught Introduction to American Studies.

• Working with other area colleges to assess their courses appropriate for our minor.

6.2. While we are working on a strategic plan that fits the new issues important to the college and the university, it is possible to say that the interdisciplinary nature of the program, the recognition that American students must work for a more just world, and the liberal arts focus of the program fits the university’s strategic plan.

6.3. Getting minors to join the program must be our top priority. Given that, we must plan a clearly formulated campaign to help students see the educational and career advantages of understanding the varied disciplines in the minor.

6.4. Student learning outcomes must include a broad understanding of several disciplines as they deal with America, a clear ability to think critically about issues that are central to the wellbeing of our country, and the ability to act justly when injustice is perceived in the community, the state, and the nation.

6.5. Involvement in the community already takes place in many of the courses that are in the minor. American writers, historians, politicians, and religious leaders visit the campus frequently and can be incorporated into activities in many of our courses (in fact we are already doing that).

6.6. The greatest resource is money. As this report shows, we have no budget; we cannot invite speakers, attend conferences, plan or organize activities for our students. A program without money is a program without any credibility.

6.7. Assessment Plan for upcoming year's goals:

• Continue to track students taking applicable American courses.

• Create a focus group of those students to help us develop important plans for the minor.

• Work with faculty teaching courses applicable to the minor to assess the program and make suggestions for changes and improvement.

7. Appendices: Strategic Plan for the American Studies Program.