

## **2012-2013 Annual Program Assessment Report**

Please submit report to your department chair or program coordinator, the Associate Dean of your College and the assessment office by Monday, September 30, 2013. You may submit a separate report for each program which conducted assessment activities.

**College: Social and Behavioral Sciences**

**Department: Sociology**

**Program:**

**Assessment liaison: Victor Shawn**

- 1. Overview of Annual Assessment Project(s).** Provide a brief overview of this year's assessment plan and process.

The Sociology Department's assessment plan for Fall 2012 – Spring 2013 was to use a direct embedded assessment of student learning of (a) general sociological knowledge, (b) statistical knowledge, (c) knowledge of classical and contemporary theory, and (d) research methods knowledge. Because all sociology majors are required to complete two courses in theory, one course in statistics and one course in research methods, we feel that assessing student knowledge of these four core competencies is essential. The assessment plan was to use a quantitative survey that assessed these competencies (i.e., a multiple choice test). Our plan was to conduct a cohort analysis whereby an incoming cohort of students and an outgoing cohort of students were assessed on the four competencies. The survey was conducted during Spring 2013 and the data were analyzed during Fall 2013.

In addition to the core competencies noted above, we planned to use a direct embedded assessment of student knowledge of content related to their option. The Sociology Department has four options in which students can concentrate their coursework (general sociology, criminology, social welfare, and work and society). A quantitative survey was used to assess knowledge of the student's option (i.e., a multiple choice test). Thus, students in the criminology option were assessed regarding their knowledge of criminology. This assessment knowledge about the option used the same cohorts under study in the core competencies above.

**Finally, the assessment committee discussed whether and how the graduate program should be assessed. No decision about how to conduct this assessment was made. The assessment committee will gather ideas for how to assess graduate student learning next year, and develop a clear assessment plan of the graduate program.**

2. **Assessment Buy-In.** Describe how your chair and faculty were involved in assessment related activities. Did department meetings include discussion of student learning assessment in a manner that included the department faculty as a whole?

Assessment was a standard agenda item in all department meetings. More than one third of the faculty members were directly involved in assessment planning and activities. The department faculty as a whole was timely informed of assessment plans, progresses, and results conducted at both course and program levels.

In particular, members of the faculty are encouraged to (1) hold the spirit of assessment by thinking about student learning objectives in every course they teach; (2) keep the practice of assessment by using effective measurements for student learning outcomes in every class assignment they design and make; and (3) stay in tune with assessment debates and developments on campus.

3. **Student Learning Outcome Assessment Project.** Answer items a-f for each SLO assessed this year. If you assessed an additional SLO, copy and paste items a-f below, BEFORE you answer them here, to provide additional reporting space.

**3a. Which Student Learning Outcome was measured this year?**

**The Sociology Department assessed student learning of 4 SLOs. Students were given a 40-item multiple choice test that evaluated their knowledge of sociological concepts, theory, statistics, and research methods. Below, in section 3d, I describe how each SLO was assessed and explain in greater detail about the instrument used.**

SLO1: “Recall and comprehend concepts, principles, theories, and knowledge in the field of Sociology as it relates to their option.”

SLO2: “Recall and interpret common statistics used in Sociology.”

SLO4: “Demonstrate the ability to collect, process, and interpret research data.”

**3b. Does this learning outcome align with one or more of the university’s Big 5 Competencies? (Delete any which do not apply)**

- Critical Thinking, Yes
- Written Communication, Yes
- Quantitative Literacy, Yes
- Information Literacy, Yes

**3c. Does this learning outcome align with University’s commitment to supporting diversity through the cultivation and exchange of a wide variety of ideas and points of view? In what ways did the assessed SLO incorporate diverse perspectives related to race, ethnic/cultural identity/cultural orientations, religion, sexual orientation, gender/gender identity, disability, socio-economic status, veteran status, national origin, age, language, and employment rank?**

**We have a direct embedded assessment of student knowledge of several concepts related to racial-ethnic diversity, gender, and oppression. The items that assess student knowledge of diverse perspectives include questions related to ethnocentrism, gender role socialization, double-consciousness, and the experience of multiple oppressions (by race, nation, gender, and sexuality). Additionally, numerous courses within the Sociology Department focus on racial-ethnic diversity, gender, social class/socioeconomic status, immigration/national origin, sexuality, sexual identity and culture.**

### **3d. What direct and/or indirect instrument(s) were used to measure this SLO?**

SLO1: "Recall and comprehend concepts, principles, theories, and knowledge in the field of Sociology as it relates to their option."

**The instrument used for SLO1 was a quantitative survey of general sociological knowledge (i.e., concepts, principles and knowledge of sociology). A 10-item quantitative survey assessed general sociological knowledge. The items included on this multiple choice test covered knowledge of the following concepts: norms, deviance, ethnocentrism, socialization, the looking-glass self, structural functionalism, countercultures, and the sociological imagination.**

**The instrument used to assess knowledge of *theories* of sociology (another aspect of SLO1) was a 12-item quantitative survey that assessed student understanding of classical and contemporary sociological theories. This multiple choice test covered the following theoretical concepts: alienation, collective conscience, the Protestant work ethic, double-consciousness, the generalized other, steering mechanisms, the bifurcation of consciousness, power, cultural capital, and intersecting oppressions of race, class, gender, sexuality and nation.**

SLO2: "Recall and interpret common statistics used in Sociology."

**The instrument used for SLO2 was a 7-item quantitative survey of statistical knowledge as it is used in sociology. The items included on this test assessed student knowledge of the following statistical concepts: level of measurement, measures of central tendency, sampling, correlation, significance levels and hypothesis testing.**

SLO4: "Demonstrate the ability to collect, process, and interpret research data."

**The instrument assessing student knowledge of SLO4 was an 11-item test of knowledge of research methodology. The test covered topics such as: exploratory research, the creation of survey questions, independent and dependent variables, research and null hypotheses, different types of sampling, primary and secondary data analysis.**

SLO1: "Recall and comprehend concepts, principles, theories, and knowledge in the field of Sociology as it relates to their option."

In addition to general knowledge of sociology, students were assessed regarding their understanding of concepts, principles and knowledge of the option in which their coursework is concentrated (i.e., general sociology option, criminology option, social welfare option, and work & society option). A supplemental test of ten questions is added to make each option-specific exam.

**3e. Describe the assessment design methodology:** For example, was this SLO assessed longitudinally (same students at different points) or was a cross-sectional comparison used (Comparing freshmen with seniors)? If so, describe the assessment points used.

**The methodology used for this year's assessment was a cross-sectional study comparing two cohorts. We assessed students in an incoming cohort (N=62) and an outgoing cohort (N=88). We examined student learning across the two cohorts by comparing the mean scores and standard deviations of the incoming cohort to the outgoing cohort. Additionally, we examined the distribution of scores in the following percentage categories: 90-100%, 80-89%, 70-79%, 60-69%, 50-59%, 40-49% and 0-39%.**

**3f. Assessment Results & Analysis of this SLO:** Provide a summary of how the results were analyzed and highlight findings from the collected evidence.

In consultation with individual option coordinators, an exit or near-exit class that most students take until the end of their major was selected for each of the four sociology options. Students in the selected class took a comprehensive exam measuring their mastery of fundamental knowledge and skills in the general discipline of sociology as well as in the specialized area of their chosen option. A popular course that many majors take in their beginning years was used as a baseline to compare how much progress students have made in learning as they move toward the end of their chosen option.

It is a surprise that no noticeable improvement was recorded between exiting and incoming classes or cohorts. Across all four options, the latter actually scored an average of 1.99 points higher than the former on a scale of 100 points. In specific categories, the exiting cohort maintained only 0.69 points higher in general sociology, 0.68 points higher in theory, and 0.28 points higher in research methods, compared to the incoming cohort. In statistics and option-related knowledge and skills, the exiting cohort scored even 8.28 points and 6.28 points lower respectively than the incoming cohort.

In general observation, sociology students are able to retain core concepts, theories, and sociological concepts learned in their classes. They exit the major with more knowledge than they come into the major. The surprising results from the 2012-2013 assessment exams alert the sociology faculty about a few important things in programing, instruction, and student learning in the coming years.

**3g. Use of Assessment Results of this SLO:** Describe how assessment results were used to improve student learning. Were assessment results from previous years or from this year used to make program changes in this reporting year? (Possible changes include: changes to course content/topics covered, changes to course sequence, additions/deletions of courses in program, changes in pedagogy, changes to student advisement, changes to student support services, revisions to program SLOs, new or revised assessment instruments, other academic programmatic changes, and changes to the assessment plan.)

***Changes to course content/topics covered:*** Input from assessments is timely incorporated in course contents and pedagogical processes. For example, course SLOs and ways to measure them through course activities were revised for SOC496J upon assessment recommendations.

***Course sequence:*** The overall course sequence in sociology appears appropriate and functional. Small adjustments are made from time to time to help students better retain knowledge and skills on the basis of assessment and other measurement.

***Addition/deletion of courses in program:*** Assessment is vital to the department in its effort to eliminate bottlenecks and facilitate student graduation. Assessment of three experimental courses in 2011, for instance, lent strong support for course addition and offering of alternative courses for internship.

***Student support services:*** With assessment outcomes in sight, faculty and staff are better informed to provide best possible information and advice for students to navigate the educational process of their major in sociology.

***Revisions to program SLOs:*** The department has started discussion on program SLOs and its possible revision. Momentum for change is being built with more evidence gathered from assessment.

***Assessment instruments:*** No change was made in assessment instruments in 2012-2013. A major change, retrofitting all four sets of assessment exams for online administration, was successfully done in 2011-2012. With online administration, use of class time is avoided, participation by students is increased, and analysis of data is enhanced.

***Assessment plan changes:*** The department has a well thought-out plan for assessment. Graduate assessment was initially planned for Spring, 2013. It has been postponed to the 2013-2014 academic year because of a collective realization of the more time needed for the preparation of such a complex endeavor.

***Academic programmatic changes:*** The department is in the process of revising its curriculum to meet the needs of the students in response to the reduction of “S” factor courses and the increase of majors. Assessment has been critical and will remain essential in the department curriculum change.

4. **Assessment of Previous Changes:** Present documentation that demonstrates how the previous changes in the program resulted in improved student learning.

Assessment activities have been taken place in accordance with the department's strategic plans for improving student learning outcomes and increasing graduation rates:

Core courses, such as methods and theory, are offered in sufficient numbers to better sequence courses for students and reduce bottlenecks.

Fundamental skills, including reading, presenting, and writing skills, are emphasized in all courses. Students are given the opportunity to learn and improve those skills gradually from course to course as they navigate the program.

A capstone or capstone-equivalent course is offered in each option to allow students to synthesize knowledge and skills as well as theory and method.

Option Coordinators and Committees keep active discussion about basic content/concepts/skills that should be covered in certain courses. Recommendations are communicated timely to both the full-time and part-time faculty teaching in each option.

5. **Changes to SLOs?** Please attach an updated course alignment matrix if any changes were made. (Refer to the Curriculum Alignment Matrix Template, [http://www.csun.edu/assessment/forms\\_guides.html](http://www.csun.edu/assessment/forms_guides.html).)

No change was made in 2012-2013.

6. **Assessment Plan:** Evaluate the effectiveness of your 5 year assessment plan. How well did it inform and guide your assessment work this academic year? What process is used to develop/update the 5 year assessment plan? Please attach an updated 5 year assessment plan for 2013-2018. (Refer to Five Year Planning Template, plan B or C, [http://www.csun.edu/assessment/forms\\_guides.html](http://www.csun.edu/assessment/forms_guides.html).)

A copy of the updated five-year assessment plan for 2013-2018 is enclosed.

**7. Has someone in your program completed, submitted or published a manuscript which uses or describes assessment activities in your program?** Please provide citation or discuss.

No.

**8. Other information, assessment or reflective activities or processes not captured above.**