

**Texas A&M International University
Annual Institutional Effectiveness Review (AIER)
for Academic Programs**

Program: Bachelor of Arts in Sociology

Assessment Period Covered: January 1, 2009 to January 31, 2010

Program Coordinator (Preparer of Report) John Kilburn

List Other Program Faculty:

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Reviewed by Chair: Name _____ **Date** _____

Reviewed by Dean: Name _____ **Date** _____

The Annual Institutional Effectiveness Review for Academic Programs is directed at Goal 1: Academics of the Texas A&M International University 2006-2010 Strategic Plan:

Develop, maintain, assess, and improve academic programs, administrative/educational support services and student services, to admit, retain, and graduate students who achieve established learning outcomes designed to prepare them for success in their chosen careers.

Institutional Mission

Texas A&M International University, a Member of The Texas A&M University System, prepares students for leadership roles in their chosen profession in an increasingly complex, culturally diverse state, national, and global society ... Through instruction, faculty and student research, and public service, Texas A&M International University embodies a strategic point of delivery for well-defined programs and services that improve the quality of life for citizens of the border region, the State of Texas, and national and international communities.

Academic Program Mission

The Bachelor of Arts in Sociology is designed to support the mission of the university by

- 1) increasing our students ability to communicate through the use of the written and spoken word;
- 2) develop their appreciation of culture and social integration;
- 3) develop their sense of self-realization.

The program addresses the College (COAS) goal of preparing students for a variety of professions and roles by providing a broad-based liberal arts education.

Provide summary of the last cycle's use of results and changes implemented

Program faculty should evaluate the former cycle. This statement should specify if the outcomes addressed were a continuation of previous ones, new outcomes, or modified versions of previous outcomes. In addition, the statement should include a concise analysis of the assessment data collected during the previous year, a brief explanation of actions taken to address specific outcomes, an evaluation

of how these actions contributed to the improvement of the program, and any recommendations formulated. Assessment data—including actual samples of student work—must be viewed and discussed by program faculty during this process.

All student papers from last year scored a “pass” on the general rubric assessing: a) Writing, b) Organization & Development, c) Focus and Content, and d) Citations. The students are demonstrated improving writing skills but they are not yet to the point where they demonstrate use of the professional literature. Our students need more experience understanding the professional literature. We noted significant weakness in the students’ review of literature sections. Before beginning a research study, it is pro forma to conduct a literature review. The purpose is to locate and define a research question which will provide new knowledge. These students were writing from freshman-sophomore level factual research papers which, in some cases were below their capability. We decided that students could learn more about writing by attempting to write publishable research papers.

Selected list of program-level intended student learning outcomes (*It is recommended that programs rotate through their entire set of outcomes over a multi-year period. Programs may focus on one or two outcomes each year, as deemed appropriate*).

1. Students will demonstrate the ability to write a comprehensive and well-synthesized literature review.
2. Students will demonstrate understanding of ethical principles in the research process.
3. Students will demonstrate the ability to design testable hypotheses.
4. Students will demonstrate competency in data analysis fitting the research question.
5. Students will demonstrate an understanding of all components of a publishable peer-reviewed research article or strong research proposal.

Section I: Planning and Implementation

Outcome(s)

Identify the outcome(s) that will be focused upon this year.

Students will demonstrate an understanding of all components of a publishable peer-reviewed research article or strong research proposal.

Please indicate if the outcome(s) is (are) related to writing (QEP).

Methods of assessment to be used: *The explanation should identify and describe the type of assessment(s) that will be used (e.g., survey, questionnaire, observation instrument, test, rubric to evaluate performance, standardized examination, action research, interviews, etc.), who will provide the information, and how the data will be obtained.*

In the final paper for Senior Proseminar (SOCI 4380), students will complete a research paper that follows all of the components of a publishable paper. We will use a checklist to see that all required components are addressed: (as listed below)

- 1) Abstract
- 2) Introduction
- 3) Statement of the Problem (including objectives of the study, significance, and limitations)
- 4) Literature Review
- 5) Theoretical Framework
- 6) Research Design & Methods (including sampling, measurement, and analytical strategy)
- 7) Findings
- 8) Discussion
- 9) Conclusion
- 10) References
- 11) Letter of Submission to the Journal Editor

Indicate when assessment(s) will take place:

January 2010 review of the Fall 2009 Senior Seminar research papers.

Criteria/Benchmark(s): *[Specify, if deemed appropriate to assess outcome(s). Criteria/ benchmark(s) may be optional, especially if qualitative measures are used for data collection.]*

All Sociology students passing SOCI 4380 will complete a paper with all the components of the check list.

Section II: Analysis of Results

What were the results attained?

Describe the primary results or findings from your analysis of the information collected. This section should include an explanation of any strength(s) or weakness(es) of the program suggested by the results.

All (10) students complied with requirements 1-10. However, 15 students started the course and five withdrew. The students withdrawing reported that they fell behind and the workload was too much for them.

What were the conclusions reached?

Should include a brief description of the procedure used for reaching the conclusion(s) based on the evidence collected and describe the process used to disseminate the information to other individuals. For example, if the discussion took place during the annual spring retreat, include a summary from those deliberations using the Meeting Minutes template found on the Project Integrate web page at <http://www.tamtu.edu/integrate/docs/Minutes-Template.doc>. Once completed, submit the minutes to assessment@tamtu.edu.

The primary conclusion is that our students can do quality work but many of them struggle with the workload of a comprehensive course. We have noticed that some of the students that struggled had not yet completed the Sociological Theory and/or Research Methods course. This is a problem because as a small program, we can only offer Senior Proseminar once per year.

Describe the action plan formulated. (The plan may be multi-year in nature.)

Based on the conclusion(s), describe the action plan to be implemented to improve or maintain student learning, including a timeline for implementation.

We are currently discussing curriculum changes so that Sociological Theory and Research Methods will be prerequisites for Senior Proseminar. This means that we will have to be more proactive in advising students so that they do not wait to take these courses. We do not plan to change the requirements for Senior Proseminar. However, this Fall we will focus on hypothesis development in the Research Methods course. This may facilitate the development of Senior Proseminar papers.

Section III: Resources

Resource(s) to implement action plan:

Describe the resources that will be needed to implement the action plan. Also indicate if the resources are currently available, or if additional funds will be needed to obtain these resources.

Funding

- New Resources Required
- Reallocation of current funds

Physical

- New or reallocated space

Other

- Primarily faculty/staff time
- University/rule procedure change only

Provide a narrative description and justification for requested resources (include linkage to Strategic Plan)

No new resources are required. The new outcomes will be assessed in the Research Methods and Senior Proseminar class.

Identify proposed outcomes for the next assessment cycle:

Continuation of present outcome(s) – (Indicate reason for continuation):

Enter text here

New Outcome(s) – (List outcomes below):

Students will demonstrate the ability to design testable hypotheses.

Modification of present outcome(s) – (Indicate reason for modification):

Enter text here

Date Completed: March 11, 2010

Submit completed form to integrate@tamiu.edu.

Updated 09/03/2009