

**Texas A&M International University**  
**Annual Institutional Effectiveness Review (AIER)**  
(Transition Period)

**Date Submitted** December 21, 2005

**Assessment Period Covered (FY 2005)**

**Budget Period Covered (FY 2005)**

**Academic Program/AES Unit** Bachelor of Arts in Sociology

**Person Preparing Review** Kimberly A. Folse

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

Faculty emphasized application of sociological concepts to understanding social policy issues in an effort to give students practice in this deficiency area. The data are quite variable from semester to semester in terms of sub-area performance and are influenced by the number of students taking the assessment (averages can be misleading). One student did not take the assessment despite repeated attempts to collect the data from her. The essay performance is still of concern. We have implemented the proseminar for three credits instead of one and we expect to reinforce the writing and research skills as well as general discipline knowledge in that course. We changed the employment follow-up survey (back-end) because of extremely poor results, to an employment skills identification instrument/quick survey (front-end). We want to apprise students of these skills to raise awareness and assess how they value them. Enter text here

**Provide summary of budget decisions and their impact on your program/division.**

We did not make any specific budget changes.

Section I: Planning and Implementation

**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/Administrative/Educational Support Unit Mission**

The Bachelor of Arts in Sociology is designed to support the mission of the university by 1) increasing student's ability to communicate through the use of the written and spoken word; 2) develop their appreciation of culture and social integration and 3) develop their sense of self-realization. This program addresses the College (COAS) goal of preparing students for a variety of professions and roles by providing a broad-based liberal arts education.

## **Identify outcomes and relationship to Strategic Plan**

### **Outcome 1**

Students completing the B.A. in Sociology will demonstrate knowledge of the key components of sociology including sociological theory, urban sociology, race, social conditions, sociologically based reasoning skills, and application of sociological knowledge to the evaluation of social policies or practical social service situations.

### **Identify Strategic Plan Goal related to Outcome 1**

Goal 2 Academic

### **Identify Strategic Plan Objective and Strategy related to Outcome 1 (Appendix A – Strategic Goals)**

Implement an Institutional Effectiveness plan to evaluate academic and educational/administrative support units and track the use of results used to improve programs.

### **Methods of assessment**

Graduating seniors will take an exit objective and essay exam at the end of the semester to document knowledge of key concepts of the core of ideas in the field of sociology. This assessment, developed locally by the sociology faculty, covers 8 core areas. The essay portion of the exam, to measure critical thinking and application, will be graded by all faculty using a rubric of competency. The rubric was adapted from Cappell & Kamens (2002, Teaching Sociology (30), pp. 467-494) and addresses the following areas: usage of sociological concepts and theories; accuracy of specific knowledge of social conditions; sociologically based reasoning skills; application of sociological knowledge to the evaluation of social policies or practical social service situations; ability to express ideas clearly in written English. The rubric scores are as follows: 1 indicates weak quality; 2, marginal quality; 3, adequate quality; 4, mastery; 5, excellence. Undergraduate sociology major graduate results are compared to Introductory Sociology students who are primarily freshmen. Graduating seniors are compared to introductory sociology students on the objective portion of the assessment.

### **Frequency of administration**

Every Semester

### **Criteria/Benchmark**

We expect an average passing rate of 75% and no less than a 70% passing rate for any of the 8 subparts of the exam.

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### **Outcome 2**

Alumni will agree that the sociology program prepares them for employment.

### **Identify Strategic Plan Goal related to Outcome 2**

Goal 2 Academic

**Identify Strategic Plan Objective and Strategy related to Outcome 2 (Appendix A – Strategic Goals)**

Implement an Institutional Effectiveness plan to evaluate academic and educational/administrative support units and track the use of results used to improve programs.

**Methods of assessment**

Fall 2004: Students will be contacted (for three years after graduation) to determine if they have secured employment. A survey/structured interview is used to document employment. Spring 2005: Identification and assessment of the value of employment-related skills taught in the major (using a Quick Survey). These skills are: written communication, oral communication, problem solving, report writing, decision-making and, data entry and analysis (statistics).

**Frequency of administration**

Every Semester

**Criteria/Benchmark**

Fall 2004: We expect all students to have employment that utilizes their skills learned from the program. Spring 2005: We expect students to be honest in their assessment; a benchmark is not indicated in a perceptual survey.

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**Outcome 3**

Graduating seniors will be satisfied or very satisfied with the sociology program.

**Identify Strategic Plan Goal related to Outcome 3**

Goal 2 Academic

**Identify Strategic Plan Objective and Strategy related to Outcome 3 (Appendix A – Strategic Goals)**

Implement an Institutional Effectiveness plan to evaluate academic and educational/administrative support units and track the use of results used to improve programs

**Methods of assessment**

Graduating seniors will complete a 4 page survey assessing: (I) Their background; (II) Post-Graduate Work and Expectations; (III) Intellectual Development (41 questions), and (IV) Overall Satisfaction with Curriculum.

**Frequency of administration**

The instrument is used every semester for graduating seniors.

**Criteria/Benchmark**

At a minimum we expect students to be "satisfied" with the program.

## Section II: Analysis of Results

### **When (term/date) was assessment conducted?**

#### **Outcome 1**

At a minimum we expect students to be "satisfied" with the program.

#### **Outcome 2**

At a minimum we expect students to be "satisfied" with the program.

#### **Outcome 3**

Fall 2004 (no graduating seniors in Spring 2005)

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### **What were the results attained (raw data)?**

#### **Outcome 1**

Data collected was for 114 undergraduates—mostly freshmen in Introduction to Sociology and Social Problems in Fall 04 (N=49) and Spring of 2005 (N=73). We had 4 graduating seniors in the Fall of 2004 and no graduating seniors the Spring of 2005. We now have cumulative data from the Spring of 2003 for comparison purposes. See Table 1. Objective Assessment.

The overall results of the graduating seniors for Fall 2004 is comparable to previous years, but we found that scores in theory, urban sociology had declined over previous years; both of these are below the expected minimum of 70%. The graduates were then compared with the introductory class students. The undergraduates actually did better than the graduates in two areas: Urban Sociology and Social Problems. Our freshmen scores for Spring 2005 have improved in 6 out of 8 areas over Fall of 2004 and over Spring and Fall of 2003.

Essay: 4 of the 5 graduating seniors wrote the essay. The overall average score ranged from 1.08 (weak) to 3 (adequate). The overall average was 2.37 (less than adequate). When we compare that to Spring of 2004, our students did not perform as well, overall. We had only one student's score, however, in Spring. Writing continues to be a weak area. Students do poorly on application of knowledge.

#### **Outcome 2**

Employment results. Out of 43 surveys sent to undergrads in the Fall of 2004, we were able to get 4 back on time, despite calls and mail. The survey takes a lot of faculty time. The results indicate that the former students consider what they learned in their degree, they use on the job (3 out of 4). We determined that the survey, while it is improved, is not very efficient in getting the information we would like. We turned the process around for Spring 2005; instead of finding out what they use from sociology, we seek to illustrate what skills our degree teaches and their perceptions of the values of those skills. We had 47 returned surveys. Assessment of skills on a scale of 1-4, with 1 considered least important and 4 considered most important. The following is the ranking from most to least important: Oral Communication (3.8); Decision-making (3.7); Problem-solving (3.6); Written-communication (3.5); Report writing (3.4); Data gathering research (3.3); Data entry & analysis and statistics (3.1).

### **Outcome 3**

Three graduating seniors in the Fall of 2004 took the exit survey. Fifty-eight percent were satisfied or very satisfied (38%) with the program. Five percent were dissatisfied. Their areas of dissatisfaction were how to use concepts in sociology, understanding ethics, using tables and graphs to interpret data, understanding sociological concepts to conduct research. These “deficiency” areas are not as "bad" as those in the previous assessment (we've improved?). The global questions regarding overall satisfaction with the curriculum and instruction was divided between very satisfied and satisfied.

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### **Who (specify names) conducted analysis of data?**

#### **Outcome 1**

Kimberly A. Folsie

#### **Outcome 2**

Kimberly A. Folsie

#### **Outcome 3**

Kimberly A. Folsie

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### **When were the results and analysis shared? With whom (department chair, supervisor, staff, external stakeholders)? Minutes with data analysis submitted to [assessment@tamiu.edu](mailto:assessment@tamiu.edu)? (Please use Minutes Template located on the Project INTEGRATE web page.)**

Partially. We did not have a department chair until Spring of 2004. Yes, minutes and data analysis was submitted. The raw data and results was directed to in the report. The data is in a folder (G: Drive) on the server for access to anyone who has access (faculty & Chair)

### **Has the assessment documentation (i.e., surveys, rubrics, course exams with embedded questions, etc.) been submitted to the Office of Institutional Effectiveness and Planning?**

Yes, expect for the "Quick Survey" on skills; substituted for the follow-up employment survey. It is submitted with this report.

### **Use of Results: Indicate what changes, if any, based on the data have been recommended?**

#### **Outcome 1**

We have proposed a change to the research methods listing in the catalog. Two members from Sociology, Kimberly Folsie and John Kilburn (Chair) met with the Social Science Chair, Bill Riggs and a Political Science faculty, Jim Norris, to discuss no longer cross listing under graduate research methods with Criminal Justice. This will make our classes smaller and enable us to be more focused on the skills we wish to develop. We all voted in favor; the change should

go through for Spring 2006 (Minutes of meeting 9/29/05) provided that it is submitted and approved by the College and University Curriculum Committees.

### **Outcome 2**

This outcome, related to employment is essentially the same as outcome 1, with respect to the need to emphasize the research methods skills in Sociology. Students valued some of these skills the least (statistics/data entry, gathering & analysis, and report writing). They also perceived their training in these skills (perceptual survey/Outcome 3) as less than satisfactory. Students did meet the minimum passing score in the research methods portion of the exit assessment of learning, however.

### **Outcome 3**

Students Perceptions/Satisfaction of their degree indicated that they need better understanding of research methods. As indicated in Outcome 1 and Outcome 2, this appears to be the common denominator. As indicated in Outcome 1, we have de-crosslisted our research methods course with Criminal Justice; this will make our course smaller in size and we can devote more time and attention to teaching research methods skills.

Section III: Programmatic Review

**What are the implications of the recommended changes?**

he implications are that we should be better able to enhance our students' ability to apply research methods skills (data gathering and analysis including report writing). By enhancing these skills it should make them more competitive in the job market as these skills are in high demand in business, education, and industry.

**Will resources be affected by the recommended changes?**  Yes  No

**If so, specify the anticipated effect(s) using the chart below:**

Funding	Physical	Other
<input type="checkbox"/> New resources required	<input type="checkbox"/> New or reallocated space	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Primarily faculty/staff time
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Reallocation of current funds		<input type="checkbox"/> University rule/procedure change only
		<input type="checkbox"/> Other: Enter text here

**Narrative description and justification for request including related strategy**

**(Attach Budget Request 'Form B' and/or 'Form C')**

Faculty in sociology will have to teach the research methods course more often, pulling faculty time away from teaching other courses. We are already short one faculty (she left and her line was not approved for filling).

**If funding, physical or other resources were requested, what is the impact of the budget decisions on program/division?**

Because of fewer faculty will have difficulty building our majors. Instead, we will be supporting sociology as a minor. It appears to be a "Catch 22"; we don't have enough majors to justify another faculty line, but our faculty are being used to support the minor, especially in Criminal Justice and Psychology, the two most popular majors on campus. Pretty soon, we will have a Public Administration Major, and that too, will create more competition for the Sociology Major.

**In the box below, provide information on the outcomes for the next assessment cycle:**

Outcomes for Next Assessment Cycle
Continuation of present outcome(s) - (Indicate reason for continuation): Yes for the learning assesement; it has been able to identify strong and weak areas. Yes for the perceptual survey as it has been the best at identifying the weakest area, research methods. Undecided as how to use the results of the Quick Survey of Skills. It indicated that students do not necessarily value the research methods skills that are an assesst of the degree.
New Outcome(s) – (List outcomes below): Pending. Faculty will use the College retreat and Sociology faculty meetings to assess our goals and objectives and use data from our assesement as a basis for our discussion. We have some excellent resources from the American Sociolgoical Associaton and a matrix model from Georgia State University.

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

We have not changed outcomes as of yet, but I suspect we will add some and alter others based on assessment results.