

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

Program: Master 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:

Cecilia Garza
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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 Master 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.

This program addresses the mission of the College (COAS) by providing students the opportunity to obtain advanced knowledge in the core ideas of the field of Sociology. This carefully designed curriculum addresses students' ability to secure employment.

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.

There was only one active MA Sociology major in the program. Dr. Kilburn held a series of discussions with new graduate Sociology majors and determined that they wanted to develop skills that would improve their employability. We determined that courses such as quantitative methods and advanced writing skills should be developed in our curriculum. The goals should not be much different from the BA in Sociology but the expectations of quality should be substantially higher.

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 competency in data analysis fitting the research question.

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 Sociology of Education (SOE 5306), students will be asked to critically analyze a research question related to a contemporary school issue.

Indicate when assessment(s) will take place:

January 2010 review of the Fall 2009 Sociology of Education 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.]*

The paper will be assessed with the following scale:

3: Hypothesis is clearly addressed by the appropriate research method. Student clearly explains issues related to sampling and measurement. There is a clear understanding of limitations of data and how this affects the findings.

2: Hypothesis is addressed clearly by the appropriate research methods, but the student has not clearly explained issues regarding sampling and measurement that may bias the interpretation of findings.

1: Hypothesis is not clearly addressed by the selected research methodology.

All Sociology majors will demonstrate an understanding of using appropriate data to address their research questions at least at a level 2 on the scale.

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.

While the class had 11 students, only six of them were Sociology majors. Of the six Sociology majors, one failed to link hypotheses to the research methodology. However, the other five were rated as a 2. None of the students did an outstanding job at developing hypotheses and linking it to the methodology.

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.

All but one of the students were first semester graduate students so we may have set goals that are not realistic. We would hope that the second year graduate student would have done better but we understand that it takes time to go through the process of developing research hypotheses and designing methodology. Because so much of the first half of the semester covers theoretical content, we do not spend enough time on writing.

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.

Based on the small number of cases, we are continuing to monitor our students' writing. However, this course will be redesigned to spend more time on professional writing early in the semester. We plan to look at student writing in the other courses as well so that we may be able to judge how students progress over time.

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 requested.

Identify proposed outcomes for the next assessment cycle:

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

We will continue studying the same outcome but will advance this study to other courses in the graduate program. We will focus more on professional writing early in the semester.

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

Enter text here

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