

# ASSESSMENT REPORT FOR

Bachelor of Arts with a major in Sociology (BA)  
**Instructional Degree Program**

Fall 2003  
**Assessment Period Covered**

June 21, 2004  
**Date Submitted**

## **Expanded Statement of Institutional Purpose Linkage:**

### **Institutional Mission Reference:**

Texas A&M International University, a Member of The Texas A&M University System, is committed to the preparation of students for leadership roles in their chosen profession and 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 is 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.

### **College/University Goal(s) Supported:**

To increase "(1) students' ability to communicate through the use of the written and spoken word; (2) their knowledge and appreciation of culture, fine arts, social integration; and (3) self realization. The College [COAS] also prepares students for a variety of professions and roles by providing a broad-based liberal arts education."

## **Intended Educational (Student) Outcomes:**

- 1.** Students completing the program will demonstrate their knowledge of the core ideas of the field of sociology.
- 2.** Students completing the program will be able to secure employment.
- 3.** Students will be satisfied with the curriculum and instruction of the sociology program.

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## **Intended Educational (Student) Outcome:**

Students completing the program will demonstrate their knowledge of the core ideas of the field of sociology.

## **First Means of Assessment for Outcome Identified Above:**

### **\_\_\_\_\_ 1.a. Means of Program Assessment & Criteria for Success:**

Students will take an exit objective and essay exam to document knowledge of key concepts of the core of ideas in the field of sociology—8 core areas--as determined by the faculty. We expect an average passing rate of 75% and no less than a 70% passing for any subpart of the exam in 8 sub-content 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. Assessment is conducted at the end of the semester; thus, the comparison group has completed the introductory-level course when they take the exam. The exception is that introductory sociology course students are not administered the essay portion of the exam.

### **\_\_\_\_\_ 1.a. Summary of Assessment Data Collected:**

Data collected was for 3/3 Fall 2003 graduates, but 4 other students taking the professional seminar (cap-off/end of program professional course) but not graduating, were also tested, somewhat confounding our findings. Results are compared with the Introductory course (mostly freshmen) and the results of graduating seniors in the prior Spring 2003 term.

### Objective Assessment Results: Percent Correct

Area	Minimum Expected Score	Graduates Fall 2003 N=7	Freshmen Comparison N=57	Graduates Spring 2003 N=8
Introductory Qs	70%	57.0%	44%	57.0%
Sociological Theory	70%	80%	52%	54.8%
Research Methods	70%	77 %	32%	72.2%
Social Problems	70%	77.0%	16%	84.8%
Urban Sociology	70%	89%	80%	62.3%
Marriage & Family	70%	81.0%	40%	79.0%
Race	70%	100%	48%	92.6%
Social Inequality	70%	90%	73%	96.3%
Overall Average		79%	57.5%	73%

Our Fall graduates (including some who did not graduate Fall Semester but will graduate Spring semester) had an average score 6% points higher than the Spring graduates, 79% compared to 73%. Seven of eight areas improved. The two primary areas of attention in Spring 2003 were theory and urban sociology and both had significant increases from 62.3% to 89% and 54.8% to 80%, respectively. One area declined from Spring 2003; social problems declined from 84.8% correct to 77% correct this Fall 2003 assessment period. Intro questions results remain problematic, both semesters; the average is 57%. We suspect the questions themselves are the problem. Research methods and social problems appear to be two areas that freshmen/introductory students score the lowest on and the results of our majors clearly indicate that they have "learned something."

**Essay:** Six of seven students took the essay. The overall average score was 2.09 (or of marginal quality and lower than Spring 2003 results of 2.37). Two students performed adequately on use of theory, accuracy of specific knowledge of social conditions and sociological application. The remaining 4 students performed dismally on all areas. The last two areas, research methods and social policy were rated as either 1 or 0, weak or no demonstration of application of a sociological framework. We, again, are not pleased with the results, however they have to be put into perspective. The person administering the instrument was an adjunct professor and the seriousness of the assessment may not have been conveyed.

**\_\_\_\_\_1. a. Use of Results to Improve Instructional Program:**

We have decided to emphasize specific policies for the Spring 2004 assessment; all are covered in at least one course and most are covered in multiple courses: 1996 Welfare Reform Act; Affirmative Action; Child Health Insurance; Civil Rights Act of 1965, Federal, State and Local Taxation Policy; Food Stamps, Head Start, and, No Child Left Behind.

In addition, we believe it is important for core faculty rather than adjuncts to teach the professional seminar where the assessment takes place. We have also increased the credit hours from 1 to 3, to be implemented in the Fall of 2004. We will have one more semester with 1 credit hour and use of an adjunct.

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Students completing the program will be able to secure employment.

## **First Means of Assessment for Outcome Identified Above:**

### **\_\_\_\_\_ 2. a. Means of Program Assessment & Criteria for Success:**

Every Fall 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.

### **\_\_\_\_\_ 2. a. Summary of Assessment Data Collected:**

This is conducted in the Fall only and will be conducted in Fall 2004. There will be a base of 28 undergraduates (counting from Fall 2002)

### **\_\_\_\_\_ 2.a. Use of Results to Improve Instructional Program:**

Although we did not conduct or employment survey, the faculty have engaged in discussion of what employment skills are needed by employers. Computer skills are essential.

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Students will be satisfied with the curriculum and instruction of the sociology program.

**Third Means of Assessment for Outcome Identified Above:**

\_\_\_\_ **3.a.** Students will complete a 4 page survey assessing: (I) Their background; (II) Post-Graduate Work and Expectations; (III) Intellectual Development (41 questions)-- in the areas of General Skills, Critical Thinking, Understanding the Sociological perspective and Research Skills, and (IV) Overall Satisfaction with Curriculum.

\_\_\_\_ **3.a. Summary of Assessment Data Collected:**

We did not administer the perceptual survey, by oversight.

\_\_\_\_ **3.a. Use of Results to Improve Instructional Program:**

## SUPPORT DOCUMENTATION

<b>SOURCE</b>	<b>LOCATION/Special Instructions</b>
Assessment of Knowledge-Sociology	
Assessment of Knowledge-Sociology-Data	
Perceptual Survey-Sociology	
Employment Survey-Sociology	
Rubric for Grading Written Work	