

ASSESSMENT REPORT FOR

Master of Arts in Sociology (MA) (Thesis and Non-Thesis)
Instructional Degree Program

Spring 2004
Assessment Period Covered

June 28, 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 advanced knowledge of the core ideas of the field 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:

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

First Means of Assessment for Outcome Identified Above:

__1__ a. Means of Program Assessment & Criteria for Success:

Students will take an formal comprehensive essay exam to document knowledge of key concepts of the core of ideas in the field of sociology. Exam questions (2 in major and one in minor) are solicited from faculty whom have provided coursework for the student. We expect all students to pass. The sociology portion of the exam will be graded by all faculty using the rubric of competency developed by the faculty, adapted from Cappell & Kamens (2002, *Teaching Sociology* (30), pp. 467-494). The rubric 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 is scored from 1 to 5, with 1 being weak quality, 2 of marginal quality, 3 of adequate, 4 of mastery, and 5 of excellent quality.

__1__ a. Summary of Assessment Data Collected:

Three students majoring in sociology took the comprehensive exam (one graduated in May, the other will graduate this summer, and one had failed the minor area of psychology in Fall 2003 and retook that question). One MAIS (Masters of Arts Interdisciplinary Studies) student, who has sociology as a minor area, answered one question in sociology. Our majors are performing adequately/passing, but they are below 80% (4 or higher on the rubric).

Student-Major-#1: Average score: 3 (adequate)

Student-Major-#2: Average score: 3.9 (adequate/almost mastery)

Student-Major-#3: Pass by Psychology

Student-Minor-#4: Average score: 2 (Marginal/Fail). Student was given an oral by her faculty advisor in sociology and subsequently "passed."

We compared the assessment performance of our undergraduates and graduates and determined that the expectations for our undergraduates, with respect to the challenge-level of the questions, that is, to integrate knowledge is higher. Our graduate exam questions, we determined, are too specific/tied to specific courses. This specificity may be depressing the results/performance of our students (Minutes of Sociology Working Group, April 23, 2004).

_____a. Use of Results to Improve Instructional Program:

We are placing the rubric in our syllabi, explaining and using it as a guide for evaluating student's performance in written work.

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Students completing the program will be able to secure employment.

First Means of Assessment for Outcome Identified Above:

____ **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. We expect students to have employment that utilizes their skills learned from the program.

____ **a. Summary of Assessment Data Collected:**

Program faculty will conduct employment survey in the Fall of 2004.

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

First Means of Assessment for Outcome Identified Above:

_____a. Means of Program Assessment & Criteria for Success:

Students will complete a 4 page perceptual survey assessing: (I) Their background; (II) Post-graduate Work and expectations; (III) Intellectual Development (41 questions); (IV) Overall satisfaction with the curriculum.

_____a. Summary of Assessment Data Collected:

Three students (majors) took the exit survey. "Very satisfied" was indicated 2 to 1 over satisfied. Two areas were identified by both students as "just satisfied." These were: interviewing skills and understanding research design and writing research proposals. Personal comments on the program included: recognition of the value of theory, value of GIS (geographic information systems) and insight of the medicalization of society, value of social stratification and race and ethnic relations. Both students worked half time while attending graduate school. One is entering a PhD program in the Fall. One is finishing her last semester and plans on seeking employment in social services and may consider a PhD later. The third student would go for a PhD if it were offered locally.

_____a. Use of Results to Improve Instructional Program:

Research methods at the graduate level is a cross listed course and we generally do not teach it, which would improve students' ability to conceptualize and write a research proposal from a sociological perspective. The results on the exam are equally poor in Public Administration. As of Fall 2003, the disciplines involved have limited the course size to no more than 20 students. We anticipate having a team taught course in the Spring of 2005, between sociology and political science (including public administration), to provide a more applied course that incorporates perspectives from all disciplines.

SUPPORT DOCUMENTATION

SOURCE	LOCATION/Special Instructions
Comprehensive Exam: Student 1	
Comprehensive Exam: Student 2	
Comprehensive Exam Results	
Employment Survey	
MA Exit/Perceptual Survey	
MA Exit/Perceptual Survey Results	
Minutes of Sociology Working Group April 23, 2004	
Rubric for Grading Essays/Comps	