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# Meta-assessment Analysis Report for the College of Criminal Justice

Please return the completed report back to the Office of Assessment  
by **March 22, 2024.**

## Meta-assessment Analysis Report for the College of Criminal Justice

Assessment is an important best-practice in higher education that helps programs determine whether key objectives are being met, identify areas for improvement, and develop actions to improve program effectiveness. Additionally, meaningful and effective assessment is the corner stone of many discipline-specific accreditations, as well as our university's regional accrediting body, the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges (SACSCOC). Meta-assessment is an important tool for helping ensure that all programs at Sam Houston State University are engaging in a meaningful and effective continuous improvement assessment process.

Meta-assessment serves two important roles for the College and the University. First, it provides valuable feedback to units regarding ways in which they may continue to improve their annual assessment processes. Second, it provides College and University leaders with a way to observe the overall quality of assessment processes for their units. The purpose of this report is to detail the meta-assessment process utilized by the College of Criminal Justice, the College's plan for distributing the completed meta-assessment rubrics to their departments and programs, the assessment strengths observed within the reviewed assessment plans, the areas for improvement of assessment practices, the strategies for implementing those improvements, and the training or resources needed to implement those strategies.

### **Section 1: Description of Meta-assessment Methodology Employed by the College**

*Detail the College's meta-assessment methodology and process. Include a description of who was involved (e.g., a committee of senior faculty or college administrators), your methodology for evaluating unit-level assessment plans, steps for ensuring reliability, and your timeline.*

Five reviewers were selected from COCJ administration and assessment leaders. Reviewers for 2022-2023 were:

Dr. Mary Breaux (Director of Crime Victims' Institute – CVI)  
 Dr. Shelley Clevenger (Chair, Department of Victim Studies)  
 Dr. Eric Connolly (Director, Undergraduate Programs for the Department of CJC)  
 Dr. Magdalena Denham (Faculty, Department of Security Studies)  
 Ms. Lori Rodriguez (Associate Director of Assessment & Academic Support, College of Criminal Justice)

Meta-assessment reviews were conducted in late February-Early March. In late February, reviewers were given the meta-assessment rubric, their assigned units, and asked to complete their reviews by March 11<sup>th</sup>. This year's review consisted of four degree programs and one institute. The following units were selected for meta-assessment:

- BA/BS Criminal Justice
- MA Criminal Justice and Criminology
- Forensic Science minor
- PhD Forensic Science

- Institute for Homeland Security

Reviewers were assigned two assessment plans each. Once completed, the rubric were submitted to the Associate Director of Assessment & Academic Support (Rodriguez). They were then distributed to the assessment contacts for each reviewed unit.

## **Section 2: Plan for Distributing Completed Rubrics to Units**

*Detail the College's plan for sharing the completed meta-assessment rubrics with its departments and programs.*

Each year after all rubric are collected, copies and an overview of findings are sent to each assessment contact responsible for the reviewed units. They are then asked to review the feedback provided on the rubric and incorporate the findings/suggestions into the upcoming assessment cycle's plan. They are also encouraged to contact the Associate Director for Assessment & Academic Support if they have questions about the meta-assessment rubric or need assistance incorporating any suggestions into the existing plan.

## **Section 3: Observed Strengths within College Assessment Plans**

*Detail the general strengths identified by the College after reviewing its units' assessment plans. What general aspects of the annual assessment processes are units mastering? Are there any units that you would recommend serve as exemplary models?*

The 2022-2023 Meta-assessment rubric indicate that four assessment plan items tied in receiving the highest number of "exemplary" ratings by our reviewers. They are as follows: Goals, Criteria/Targets, Findings/Results, and Plans for Continuous Improvement. Much like last year, Goals and Findings/Results continue to receive a high number of "exemplary" ratings. A high number of exemplary" ratings for Criteria/Target and Plans for Continuous Improvement indicate that improvements are being made by our units in these areas. Based on reviewers' comments, this year's reviewed plans include Criteria/Targets that clearly align with the Indicators/KPI, are measurable and quantifiable, and include more detail. Improvement was also shown in Plans for Continuous Improvement as units are outlining actionable steps for the following year and even identifying collaborative efforts with other units such as the SAM Center and Career Services. This is an area that the College typically struggles with and was identified as an observed area for improvement in last year's Meta-assessment report. Indicators/KPI also scored highly as they received the highest number of "Good" ratings from our reviewers. Comments left by reviewers indicate that the level of detail and the alignment of Indicators/KPI to Objectives continues to be a strength for the College of Criminal Justice.

Among the units assessed this year, the Forensic Science PhD assessment plan scored the highest, receiving the most "exemplary" ratings of their assessment plan items. Reviewers' comments indicate that the Forensic Science PhD assessment plan's Goals addressed the full purpose of the unit and included both Learning Objectives and a Performance Objective to do so. Direct and Indirect methods of assessment were included, along with detailed and quantifiable

Criteria/Indicators. Findings/Results included supporting documentation, where applicable. The Forensic Science PhD assessment plan received two overall ratings of “exemplary” for its attention to detail and actionable data.

#### **Section 4: Observed Areas for Improvement within College Assessment Plans**

*Detail the general areas for improvement identified by the College after reviewing its units' assessment plans. What general aspects of the annual assessment process are units struggling with?*

The 2022-2023 Meta-assessment rubric indicate that the assessment plan item that received the lowest “exemplary” or “good” scores was Actions. This is surprising as our Plans for Continuous Improvement, which are typically derived from the assessment plan’s Action items, scored highly. Although the Plans for Continuous Improvement scored highly on the meta-assessment rubric, there seems to be a disconnect to the Action items in the assessment plans. This low scoring may be the result of only including one Action item in the assessment plan, instead of one Action item per Findings/Results. For example, one plan received a “minimally compliant” score for only listing one Action item instead of one Action item per Finding/Result. There may also be issues with linking Actions to Findings/Results.

#### **Section 5: Strategies Needed to Address Identified Areas for Improvement**

*Detail the College's strategies for addressing the general areas for improvement identified after reviewing its units' assessment plans.*

We will continue to distribute meta assessment rubric results to the assessment leaders responsible for each program/departments/institute and follow-up with individual meetings as needed, to discuss reviewer feedback and provide resources for improvement. Additionally, we will provide additional assistance with the units who did not score highly on Action items to suggest further training or assistance with correctly drafting and linking Action items to Findings/Results.

#### **Section 6: Training/Resources Needed to Implement the College's Improvement Strategy**

*Detail the types of training and resources that would assist the College with implementing its improvement strategies.*

Refresher training may be helpful to our assessment contacts. We encourage our assessment contacts to attend training as needed, but perhaps should collaborate with the Assessment office to schedule something specifically for our College.