Homeland Security Studies MS

G 1 Demonstrate Core Knowledge Competency

Goal Description:

Demonstrate that students are learning the core competency areas required in the field.

Providing Department: Homeland Security Studies MS

Progress: Ongoing

RELATED ITEMS/ELEMENTS -

RELATED ITEM LEVEL 1

L 1.1 Demonstrate Core Knowledge

Learning Objective Description:

Students graduating with a master's degree in Security Studies will demonstrate comprehensive knowledge of the major issues and principles associated with the field of Homeland Security.

Capstone topics will reflect students performing research across the relevant and current domains of Homeland Security such as:

1. Emergency Management
2. Terrorism
3. Border Security/Immigration
4. Cybersecurity
5. Media and HS
6. Intelligence
7. Organized Crime
8. Public Health/Pandemic and Environmental Security domains.

Attached Files

📄 Capstones 23 and 24.docx

RELATED ITEM LEVEL 2

ICF 1 Integrated Major Paper

Indicator Description:

The Capstone course, SCST 6388, for Security Studies graduate students requires substantial research and integration of theories and principles of completed coursework in the program. The culminating project in this course requires students to analyze a complex Homeland Security issue. This paper requires a comprehensive literature review, analysis of the issue in relation to national threat, explanation of how the issue was resolved, and how the issue may have been resolved differently. This project should demonstrate the capacity to gather and assess data, think and analyze critically, and produce an effective written product that qualifies either as an academic paper or a policy document.

Criterion Description:

The scoring of core competencies in the Capstone course consists of evaluating four areas; 1) problem statement, 2) review and analysis of the salient literature, 3) use of a relevant methodology with which to gather and analyze data, 4) conclusions based on data and analysis. Each student completing the capstone course will score 80% or higher.

Findings Description:

Students in graduate MS HSS demonstrated core program competencies receiving scores of 80% or higher on Capstone Research Paper

Action for ICF 1 Integrated Major Paper

Action Description:

Capstone Research Projects created by students reflect a wide range of topics germane to Homeland Security as well as novel topics such as AI in Emergency Management. For the 2023/2024 cycle the Graduate Program Director will assess feasibility of offering courses in Environmental Security within Homeland Security lens. Moreover, the department will continue exploring areas of the field in need of research linking with practitioners.

Performance Objective Item Demonstrate an Understanding of the Integration of Core Components

Performance Objective Description:

Demonstrate and understanding the complexity of the homeland security enterprise and the various interdependencies of core homeland security components.

Topics of Capstone Research Projects shall illustrate multi-dimensional understanding of the HSE environment.

KPI for Goal 1

KPI Description:

Key Performance Indicators for Goal 1 and Goal 2 are:

For Goal 1:

1. IDEA Evaluation progress on course objectives.
2. Successful scores (a minimum of 3.0 across all the courses and overall 80% at 4.0 or higher across all of the courses based on IDEA scores).
3. Completion of Capstone Research Paper at 80% or above; minimum 80% success rate in CRP completion.
4. Alignment of CRP topics/content areas with HSE strategic goals.

Target Description:

KPI 1 and 2 target 3.0 minimum on individual IDEA evaluations appraising progress on relevant objectives and minimum 80% of all evaluations scored 4.0 or higher

KPI 3 target is 80% or better score on Capstone Research Project

KPI 4 targets are topics inherent to Homeland Security missions as specified by Homeland Security Quadrennial Review reports

Results Description:

The variable measuring progress on relevant objectives was removed mid-year from student IDEA evaluations.

KPI 3 was achieved as all students scored 80% or higher in CRP projects

KPI 4 was fulfilled as topics reflect a range of strategic issues germane to Homeland Security such as migration, disasters, resiliency, domestic terrorism, border security, etc.

Attached Files
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Action for Goal 1 KPI

Action Description:

While graduate research at the department reflects field needs and current issues, IDEA evaluations are no longer a good indicator of students translating knowledge into practice as those items were removed from a new form. Therefore, better ways of assessment will be needed in 2024/2025 and the role of the new Program Director will be instrumental in exploring more diversified ways of assessment.

G 2 Knowledge into Action: Professional Application of Coursework

Goal Description:

Demonstrating the capacity to apply skills and knowledge gained in the classroom to the profession (whether in the public sector or private sector).

Providing Department: Homeland Security Studies MS

Progress: Ongoing

L 2.1 Apply Research Skills

Learning Objective Description:

Students completing the Master of Science degree in Security Studies will be able to conduct research and produce studies based on the generation and assessment of various sources of data.

Successful completion of Capstones at 80% or better underscores mastery of research and assessment of data.

Thesis track shall be encouraged for highly motivated students.

ICF 2 Successful Performance In Practical Exercises And Internship

Indicator Description:

Demonstrating the capacity to integrate conceptual frameworks to problem solving with practical analytical solutions is a primary indicator of the success of the program's learning objectives. Those students engaging in an internship routinely receive critiques and personal evaluations from both the faculty member monitoring the student (internship director) and the employer who supervises the student intern. In addition, students provide written progress reports during the internship process.

For students who do not follow the internship route, assignments in key courses require that students develop the skill to engage in policy, process, or project development and that they demonstrate this skill in the form of practical outcomes such as policy memos, exercise design, scenario development, or ACE (experiential learning) professional community service delivery.

Criterion Description:

Students following the Internship track will provide a measurable out-of-class outcome based on the nature and quality of their work with an outside agency/company. Students will score greater than 85% on these practical outcomes.

Students not engaging in internships will demonstrate learning based on their improvements in iterations of policy, process, or project development design resulting in policy memos, exercise design, scenario development, or ACE (experiential learning) professional community service delivery.

Findings Description:

There were no students enrolled in graduate internships

RELATED ITEM LEVEL 3

Action for ICF 2 Successful Performance In Practical Exercises And Internship

Action Description:

The Department has observed decline in interest in internships and fewer community engaged research and service by the students. The new graduate program director will work in 2024 and 2025 to rekindle internship interest working with the new Director for Internships at the College and seeking new ways to integrate community engagement in an online environment.

RELATED ITEM LEVEL 1

L 2.2 Critical Thinking and Problem Solving

Learning Objective Description:

Students completing the Master's degree will be able to think critically, and apply problem solving techniques to complex issues relating to the Homeland Security Enterprise.

RELATED ITEM LEVEL 1

Performance Objective Item 2

Performance Objective Description:

Internship participation and ACE Course offerings.

RELATED ITEM LEVEL 2

KPI for Goal 2

KPI Description:

For Goal 2:

1. Placement of graduate students in field-related internships. Satisfactory completion of tasks related to internship.
2. Integration of real life practical examples into academic courses (assessed by analysis of IDEA evaluations).
3. Certification of courses as Academic Community Engaged.
4. Engagement with community through ACE.
5. Scores on IDEA evaluations related to student applying knowledge

Target Description:

At least 4 students placed in graduate internships

80% of IDEA scores reflect 4.0 or higher on the item related content to real life scenarios

At least 1 course certified as ACE

At least one community partnership developed through ACE

80% of IDEA scores related to student applying knowledge at the level of 4.0 or better

Results Description:

There were no graduate students placed in graduate internships in 2023/2024

IDEA evaluations were modified and no longer reflect linking content knowledge to practical experiences in the field

One course EMI 1 was certified as ACE but no community partnerships were developed

IDEA evaluations no longer reflect applying knowledge

Action for Goal 2 KPI

Action Description:

Graduate students in MS HSS have not opted for internships in 02023/2024. This might be the result of courses migrating fully online. However, for new 2024/2025 the Graduate Program Director will seek avenues to support the Internship program especially because the COCJ selected a new Internship Director who will offer more strategic direction. In addition, there is relative little engagement in community projects at the Department. Given the motto of the University is The Measure of Life is Its Service, the Graduate Program Director will work with graduate faculty and the Center for Community Engagement to identify areas for community engagement and collaboration.

Performance Objective Item Demonstrate an Understanding of the Integration of Core Components

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Goal 3: Upskilling Students for Workforce

Goal Description:

This goal relates to equipping students with particular skillsets that they will be able to leverage in competitive entry into workplace

Providing Department: Homeland Security Studies MS

Progress: Ongoing

L 1.3: Upskilling Students

Learning Objective Description:

This objective is based on SHSU strategic goal of equipping students with marketable skills; the objective will be defined by professional certifications, memberships, or affiliations that link to those required in the professional field

ICF 3 - Upskilling Students

Indicator Description:

KPI 1- Courses will contain professional certificates, webinars, or self-study courses that link to professional contexts

KPI 2 - Students will attend professional webinars

KPI 3 - Students produce field-related genres of writing beyond academic writing

Criterion Description:

Criterion for KPI 1 would be at least 2 graduate courses offering built-in certifications

Criterion for KPI 2 would be attendance of at least 2 professional webinars by graduate students

Criterion for KPI 3 would be at least 2 different genres of writing that reflect professional genres used in the field

Findings Description:

KPI 1 - Emergency Management Integration 1 SCST 5320, Emergency Management Integration 2 , SCST 6320 and Leadership in Homeland Security and Emergency Management all include built-in certifications.

KPI 2 - Students in EMI 1 attended a graduated webinar on disaster mitigation by FEMA and students in EMI 2 attended a Webinar by Institute of Strategic Risk Management on Disaster Resiliency in Spring 2023

Students in EMI 1 created Public Information Officer (PIO) reports and students in Global Perspectives on Homeland Security created policy briefs

Action 3 - Upskilling Students

Action Description:

With respect to curricular offerings representing opportunities for student upskilling, the Department met standards set for 2023/2024. One area worth enhancing is to increase the number of webinars, certifications built into courses, and workshops in the upcoming 2024/2025. The new position of the graduate Director will significantly improve this focus.

Goal 4: Creating Graduate Level Leadership

Goal Description:

Create graduate-level academic administrative support to students and curriculum

Providing Department: Homeland Security Studies MS

Progress: Ongoing

RELATED ITEMS/ELEMENTS ---

RELATED ITEM LEVEL 1

Performance Objective Item

Performance Objective Description:

Performance objective for KPI's listed in plan relating to internship, graduate program leadership.

RELATED ITEM LEVEL 2

KPI for Goal 4: Create Graduate Level Leadership

KPI Description:

Work towards developing leadership and administrative capabilities of the faculty to be able to perform a graduate leadership function and work with the College to secure such position

Target Description:

Department will prepare faculty to assume the position of the Graduate Program Director and the Department will secure the position of the Graduate Program Director

Results Description:

The Department created in January of 2024 a position of Graduate Program Director - Dr, Nate Jones assumed this role

RELATED ITEM LEVEL 3

Action for Goal 4

Action Description:

The Department was successful in creating a new position of the Graduate Program Director.

Update to Previous Cycle's Plan for Continuous Improvement Item

Previous Cycle's Plan For Continuous Improvement (Do Not Modify):

Closing Summary

As the Department secured the position of the Graduate Program Director we are well aligned to conduct a robust assessment of the needs of the Master of Science in HSS program in 2023/2024 year. The new Director will work with the assessment to implement ways to align course objectives with content delivery in some of the courses. Also, he will seek ways to implement grant writing course that will be better suited for our graduate students. The Director will assess the feasibility of enhancing the number of face to face courses and conduct surveys with students about their interest and availability for various schedules. Because major tool for assessment are IDEA evaluations and those might be replaced ,we will work with the University on adopting potential assessment tools in the future. Our new faculty Dr. Haase will engage in creating new courses as well as be encouraged to offer ACE component due to his strong ties with

professionals in the field. We will seek opportunities to engage graduate students better in participating in conferences in the future. We will continue a strong working relationship with the Internship Director at the College to ensure good internship placement and potential career opportunities for graduate students. Dr. Haase will revise Law and Ethics in HS course to integrate more applicable content and to include legal genre writing.

Update of Progress to the Previous Cycle's PCI:

The efforts of the new Graduate Program Director focused in Spring 2024 on enrollment and the assessment of he needs of the Master of Science in HSS program will have to be prioritized in 2024/2025. IDEA evaluations underwent significant changes and no longer offer salient measure of practical skills and marketable competencies fostered by our faculty among the graduate students. The new Director convened meetings with graduate students to assess the feasibility of enhancing the number of face to face courses and continues to survey them about their interest and availability for various schedules. Regrettably, no graduate courses face to face offered made for Fall 2024. The Graduate Program Director we will work with the University on adopting alternative potential assessment tools in the future. Our new faculty Dr. Haase did not remain at the department due to lack of face t face offerings and accepted a new position at Texas A&M. The Internship Director at COCJ changed and we need to develop new relationships to ensure good internship placement and potential career opportunities for graduate students. Dr. Haase did revise Law and Ethics in HS course to integrate more applicable content and to included legal genre writing. His overall score for that course from students on IDEA evaluations was 5.0.

New Plan for Continuous Improvement Item

Closing Summary:

The Master of Science in Homeland Security Studies underwent significant enrollment drop from 67 students in Spring 2023 to 47 students in Spring 2024 and from 23 students in summer 2023 to 16 in summer 2024. While this drop is indicative of the overall decline in enrollment in graduate programs at SHSU, the Department will endeavor to focus on enrollment in 2024/2025. We are well positioned to do so for a number of reasons. First, the Department has been extremely successful in creating jointly with Computer Sciences and COBA, a new graduate program Master of Science in Business Security and Resilience. This major draws 1/3 of its curricular offerings from courses in emergency management, critical infrastructure protection, and risk assessment already offered at the Department of Security Studies. The new program has been approved and is slated to tentatively launch in January of 2025. Thus, the largest focus of the Department with respect to enrollment and recruitment will be on collaboration and coordination with other departments involved in this multi-disciplinary project. The Graduate Program Director will engage in activities that will allow for effective joint program delivery. Moreover, The Department will work with other involved departments to structure sound assessment methods for the new program. This will necessitate an overhaul of current assessment methods for our existing MS HSS program to replace the ones that are no longer available such as IDEA evaluation items. Moreover, the Program Director will continue efforts to explore deferred corporate reimbursement scheme that exists in programs competitive to ours to ensure opportunities for funding for graduate students. The COCJ hired a new Internship Director for Fall 2024 and we will work closely with her to make sure that our graduate internship becomes re-energized and attractive to our graduate students. The new Graduate Program Director will also work with the Director for Strategy and Innovation as well as the Institute for Homeland Security to identify ways in which community engagement can play a larger role in our graduate program. The newly created Office of Comparative and International Education and Leadership (OCIEL) might be a good partner to liaise with to explore opportunities to experiential learning of our graduate students such as exchanges and study abroad initiatives. Finally, the department will consider expanding special topics curriculum at the graduate program to include Environmental Security to ensure that faculty with expertise in this area could engage students more in capstone research and other academic research and to expand the thematic opportunities for graduate student research.