# Online Assessment Tracking Database

Sam Houston State University (SHSU) 2014 - 2015

Criminal Justice, Department Of Forensic Science

### Goal

### Forensic-Related Careers Or Advanced Graduate Studies P

This performance indicator is a measure of post-graduate success with respect to employment in the area of forensic science or the pursuit of research or an advanced graduate degree.

### Objective (P)

## Postgraduate Success P

Upon completion of the MS program, graduates will be employed in the area of forensic science or will pursue advanced graduate studies or research.

### KPI Performance Indicator

## Job Or Advanced Program Placement P

The number of MSFS graduates that are successfully employed in forensic careers or pursue advanced degrees or full time research within 12 months of graduation.

#### Result

### Postgraduate Success P

The employment status of forensic science graduates is surveyed within twelve months of graduation. In 2015, 94% of graduates were successfully employed or pursuing advanced degrees. Of theses, 73% pursued work in public or private sector laboratories, 20% pursued research and 7% pursued careers in teaching.

### Action

## Postgraduate Success P

MSFS graduates enjoy high rates of postgraduate success in terms of employment and the pursuit of advanced degrees. The extensive hands-on laboratory experience and FEPAC-accredited curriculum have been critical in terms of sustaining this high level of performance. The Department of Forensic Science must maintain current levels of laboratory instruction despite the high operational costs. Additionally, it must continue to invest in capital equipment to support instructional methods that are relevant to accredited forensic laboratories.

In the future we hope to retain graduates pursuing advanced degrees elsewhere to apply for the new PhD in Forensic Science (effective AY 2015-2016).

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## Goal

### Increase Enrollment P

To increase enrollment via recruitment and retention of qualified and motivated students.

#### Objective (P)

## Increase Enrollment P

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KPI Performance Indicator

### Graduate Research Assistantships P

Financial resources available to support graduate assistantships and scholarships.

### Result

## Assistantship Support 🎤

During this academic year, the department received assistantship support to fully-fund ten of the twenty-eight graduate students in forensic science at a rate of \$12,000/student (inclusive of scholarship).

### KPI Performance Indicator

### Enrollment And Retention &

Enrollment numbers and retention rates of students accepted into the Master of Science in Forensic Science annually.

#### Result

### Enrollment And Retention

During this academic year, the number of students enrolled in the Master of Science in Forensic Science remained steady at twenty-eight. A total of twelve students graduated during the spring semester and sixteen new students were accepted into the program.

#### Action

### Enrollment And Retention &

Due to the growing number of FEPAC-accredited programs throughout the United States, the department must continue to offer student assistantships and scholarships in order to remain competitive. It must also increase marketing efforts. It has become evident that in order to maintain enrollment at current levels, participation in student receptions at national meetings, such as the American Academy of Forensic Sciences, are now imperative.

## Goal

## Excellence In Teaching, Research And Service P

Sustained excellence in teaching, research and service at the department level.

## Objective (P)

#### FES 🎤

All faculty will engage in research, teaching, and service.

### KPI Performance Indicator

## Faculty Evaluation System 🛭 🖋 🎤

Faculty are evaluated per University guidelines on research, teaching, and service. Faculty must be actively engaged in sustained efforts that demonstrate effective research (evidenced by publications and supervision of student-directed research), teaching (evidenced by student evaluation scores on IDEA that meet department expectations), and service (evidenced by documented service activities to the department, college, university, and

academic community at large). 100% of faculty in the department will meet or exceed the minimum expectations in all three areas.

### Result

### Faculty Performance P

The standardized Faculty Evaluation System (FES) matrix utilized by the College of Criminal Justice showed that all faculty performed at or above the minimum expectations in terms of research, teaching and service.

During this academic year, two additional faculty members within the Department of Forensic Science received external funding from the National Institute of Justice, bringing the total number of faculty to four (six total).

#### Action

## Faculty Evaluation P

The department must continue its efforts to distribute graduate student researchers more evenly among faculty and more importantly, encourage participation in underrepresented disciplines. We will continue to encourage interaction between students and new faculty and in particular, faculty members located outside of the main campus location who interact with the student cohort on a limited basis. The addition of a new faculty member next year should help alleviate the burden associated with the large number of students supervised by some faculty members.

### Objective (P)

## Physical Facility And Scientific Resources

Maintain sufficient resources in terms of physical facility, laboratory space and scientific equipment, to support teaching and research.

### KPI Performance Indicator

### Physical Facility And Scientific Resources P

Resources in terms of physical facility and scientific (capital) equipment should be sufficient to meet current department needs and sustain future growth.

#### Result

### Physical Facility And Scientific Resources P

The department continues to struggle with inadequate physical space, particularly with respect to teaching and research laboratories. None of the tenure track faculty have research laboratories and this places significant pressure on faculty directing MS and doctoral-level research. The department received \$350,000 in capital equipment in support of the new doctoral program this year. However, there were delays receiving start-up funds for new faculty (\$20,000) and funds were not available for a second new faculty member due to budget shortfalls within the college. Additionally, the department continues to struggle with costs associated with the

repair/replacement of scientific equipment (which totalled \$79,000 in FY 15).

#### Action

## Physical Facility And Scientific Resources P

At present there are no plans to allocate the department additional space. It should be noted that the Chemistry Department, with whom we currently share a building, are also in need of additional space. The Department of Forensic Science is in need of a new building to support its current and future needs. The department relies heavily on Higher Education Assistance Funds (HEAF) to support its mission with respect to scientific (capital) equipment needs. More recently the department has been establishing partnerships with industry in an effort to offset some of those costs.

#### Goal

## Enhance And Develop Academic Program Quality P

Enhance and develop academic program quality and scope by implementing a new doctoral degree in forensic science.

### Objective (P)

## Doctoral Program Implementation 🎤

Implement the interdisciplinary doctoral program in forensic science.

### KPI Performance Indicator

## Doctoral Program Implementation # P



Effective implementation the doctoral degree in forensic science.

#### Result

#### PhD In Forensic Science P

The PhD in Forensic Science was approved in July 2014 by the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board (THECB) and five students advanced to doctoral candidacy during the Spring of 2015. Implementation of the program in such a short time frame was challenging, however, and was hampered by delays acquiring the necessary staff (administrative) support.

#### Action

## PhD In Forensic Science

Although the PhD in Forensic Science was implemented, the additional administrative staff member (anticipated Sept 1, 2014) was delayed until mid-January 2015 due to budgetary constraints. The THECB report acknowledged the heavy administrative burden of existing personnel within the department, SO although implementation was achieved, it was extremely challenging to do so.

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### Previous Cycle's "Plan for Continuous Improvement"

Administrative support for the Department of Forensic Science must be a priority during the upcoming cycle. These personnel shortfalls are felt not only within the department but were also documented in the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board's on-site visit for the doctoral program in May 2014. The department maintains a tight operating budget but institutional commitments to support the new doctoral degree are pending at this time. Outstanding action items following the Annual Quality Review will be addressed during the 2014 review, which is anticipated during September/October. Meanwhile the department will allocate resources to continue to support high quality laboratory instruction to maintain health with respect to postgraduate success, and financial support for graduate student assistantships to secure enrollment.

Please detail the elements of your previous "Plan for Continuous Improvement" that were implemented. If elements were not implemented please explain why, along with any contextual challenges you may have faced that prevented their implementation.

It was not possible to address the administrative support needs of the department in a timely fashion due to budgetary constraints. Although the THECB report highlighted the existing

administrative burden within the department, we were not able to appoint the new staff member to support the doctoral program until the Spring semester of 2015, at which point doctoral students were already advancing to candidacy.

Outstanding action items from the Annual Quality Review were addressed during the 2014 review. Although the Quality Review typically takes place in August, it was delayed until December 2014 due to administrative shortfalls and backlogs in data entry.

The department was able to allocate resources to support the existing MS program and support graduate assistantships. Although assistantship support was made available to support doctoral candidates, no funds were available to support their operational needs for scientific research. Income from the Institute for Forensic Research, Training and Innovation (IFRTI) was used to support doctoral students in light of this shortfall.

Plan for Continuous Improvement - Please detail your plan for improvement that you have developed based on what you learned from your 2014 - 2015 Cycle Findings.

Shortfalls in physical (laboratory) space for teaching and reseach must be addressed. Failure to do so will stifle enrollment, produce attrition among faculty and impede our ability to recruit tenure track faculty. During the upcoming year, we must place additional emphasis on budgeting and allocation of appropriate resources for capital equipment (repair, replacement, new purchases) to support the graduate programs at the MS and PhD level.