



Sam Houston
State University

2014-2015



**College of
Criminal Justice**

**Department of
Criminal Justice
and
Criminology**











Online Assessment Tracking Database

Sam Houston State University (SHSU)
2014 - 2015

Criminal Justice And Criminology MA

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Goal	Research Competence  Enhance and develop student's ability to conceptualize and deliver an original research paper.
Objective (L)	Competency In Conducting Original Criminal Justice And Criminological Research  Students will demonstrate integration of knowledge, skills and abilities needed to conduct original research in criminal justice and criminology.
Indicator	Conceptualization And Delivery Of The Thesis   Successful conceptualization and delivery of an original research study as demonstrated by the defense of a Thesis using a faculty-developed rubric. The rubric uses a 1 (insignificant) to 5 (critically significant) rating of specific criteria pertaining to conceptualization and delivery of an original research paper. These elements include: choice of problem, theoretical framework, written presentation, originality of idea and/or approach, and contribution to the field.
Criterion	Students Will Score At Least An 80% On Each Of The Related Elements Of The Thesis Rubric   Students will demonstrate their ability to conceptualize and write an original research study within the field of criminal justice or criminology by completing a thesis. Students will score at least an 80% on each of the related elements of the faculty-developed rubric.
Finding	Majority Of Students Scored 80% Or Above On The Conceptualization And Writing Elements Of The Thesis  Overall, students demonstrated competency in conducting original criminal justice and criminological research. When assessing the conceptualization and writing elements of the thesis, 1 students did not achieve the 80% threshold for "choice of problem". Furthermore, 50% (3/6), 67% (4/6), 50% (3/6), and 83% (5/6) of students scored a 4/5 (the minimum requirement) on the criteria of choice of problem, theoretical framework, written presentation, and contribution to the field, respectively. The area that students seem to excel at is originality of idea with 83% of the students scoring 5/5 on this element.
Action	Strengthen Student Ability To Conceptualize And Deliver Original Research  The Department will focus on strengthening students' abilities to conceptualize and write original research in criminal justice or criminology. This may be accomplished by 1. providing a workshop on how to identify criminological problems to study that make a significant contribution to

the field , 2. encouraging students to use the University's writing center, and 3. offering more theory-based elective courses to further develop their theoretical knowledge base.

Goal	Methodological And Statistical Competency  Enhance and develop student's methodological and statistical abilities.
Objective (L)	Competency In Employing Elements Of Qualitative And/or Quantitative Research Methods And Relevant Statistics  Competency in employing elements of qualitative and/or quantitative research methods and appropriate statistical analyses in a well designed scientific-based project in the field of criminal justice and criminology.
Indicator	Successful Execution Of Study And Statistics  Students will successfully execute the methodology and statistical analyses needed for their thesis. They will also recognize the assumptions and limitations underlying the research methods and statistical techniques used and accurately interpret the results.
Criterion	Score At Least 80% On The Methodological And Statistical Elements Of The Thesis   Students will score at least an 80% on each section of the methodological and statistical sections of the thesis rubric. These include 1. mode of inquiry, 2. execution of study, 3. interpretation of results, and 4. analysis.
Finding	Majority Of Students Scored An 80% Or Above On The 4 Criteria  Overall, the majority of students achieved a working mastery of social science research methods techniques including an understanding of statistics as measured by the 4 criteria outlined in the thesis rubric. The findings reveal that the area that most students (67%; 4/6) excel at is selecting their mode of inquiry. Only 1 student fell below the 80% benchmark in one category (execution of study). It is also important to note that 50% (3/6) and 67% (4/6) of the students scored a 4/5 (80%) on the interpretation of results and analysis section, respectively, which is the minimum standard.
Action	Enhance Methodological And Statistical Skills  In the upcoming year, the Department will focus on strengthening students' methodological and statistical skills. This will be accomplished by 1. providing a faculty led 1/2 day workshop on basic statistics and research methods the summer prior to starting the MA program, 2. offering a Statistics II elective course for 2nd year MA students who are beginning to work on their thesis, and 3. providing additional statistical and methodological workshops throughout the semester to further develop specific skills and abilities.

Previous Cycle's "Plan for Continuous Improvement"

For the 2014-2015 academic year, an emphasis will be placed on increasing student research skills. To accomplish this, we will seek to match students and faculty based on similar research interests both formally and informally. Furthermore, Statistics II will be offered as an elective to increase research and statistical skills to conduct original research projects. Students will also be encouraged to present their original research at University-sponsored events and/or national professional conferences.

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.

All MA students were introduced to faculty member(s) with similar research interests either formally through their assistantship or informally through conversations.

In AY14-15, 5 students enrolled in Statistics II as an elective. Of these students, 100% (5/5) scored an 80% or above.

8 MA students presented their research at the American Society of Criminology conference in San Diego, CA in November 2014 and 4 MA students presented their research at the Academy of Criminal Justice Sciences in Orlando, FL in March 2015.

7 MA students presented their research at SHSU's Graduate Research Exchange in February 2015 and 7 MA students presented their research at The Woodlands Center Research Symposium in April 2015.

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.

For the 2015-2016 academic year, continued emphasis will be placed on strengthening student research and statistical skills with an overall goal of preparing our MA students for the PhD program. This will be accomplished by 1. providing a workshop on how to identify criminological problems to study that have the potential to make a significant contribution to the field, 2. encouraging students to use the University's writing center, 3. offering more theory-based elective courses to further develop their theoretical knowledge base, 4. providing a faculty led 1/2 day workshop on basic statistics and research methods the summer prior to starting the MA program, 5. offering a Statistics II elective course for 2nd year MA students who are beginning to work on their thesis, and 6. providing additional statistical and methodological workshops throughout the semester to further develop specific skills and abilities.

Students will also be encouraged to publish their research findings in peer-reviewed journal articles with faculty assistance as well as present their research at national conferences and University-sponsored events.

The development of our MA students statistical and research skills is contingent on 1. access to the latest versions of various statistical software programs used in the social sciences (e.g., STATA, MPlus, HLM, etc.), 2. student travel and professional development funds, and 3. summer research scholarships.



Online Assessment Tracking Database

Sam Houston State University (SHSU)
2014 - 2015

Criminal Justice BA/BS

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Goal	<p>Promote And Support The Development And Delivery Of A Rigorous, Contemporary Curriculum. 🔑</p> <p>In support of a major goal of our department, we will collectively deliver a rigorous, contemporary curriculum to prepare our undergraduate students with the knowledge and skills to be a successful, and highly employable individual within the criminal justice workforce. Our students will demonstrate comprehensive both comprehensive knowledge and scientific skills as expected by the criminal justice workforce. Specifically, our curriculum will provide a foundation for students to build comprehensive knowledge of key criminal justice content areas as taught within traditional criminal justice and criminology programs. Through their coursework in our department, students should be able to demonstrate an ability to engage in scientific writing on criminal justice topics at a level that is expected by the criminal justice workforce.</p>
Objective (L)	<p>Exhibit Comprehensive Knowledge Of Criminal Justice Concepts 🔑 🔑</p> <p>As part of our department's primary objectives as stated in our Departmental strategic plan (see attached), we aim to "promote and support the development and delivery of a rigorous, contemporary curriculum." This goal directly aligns with the College of Criminal Justice goal of delivery a high quality education to our undergraduate students given that we are the only undergraduate program in the College as of this date. It follows that our students will have developed a sufficient level of substantive knowledge on various criminal justice topics. To assess our department's success in meeting this strategic goal, it is expected that graduating seniors will exhibit comprehensive knowledge of core criminal justice coursework.</p>
Indicator	<p>Senior Exit Exam 🔑</p> <p>Each semester, graduating seniors are asked to complete an online exit exam. This exam provides faculty a means of assessing students' comprehension and retention on key concepts taught during their educational experience. The 60-item exit exam, created by faculty, assesses learning in core areas of criminal justice content.</p>
Criterion	<p>70% Average Student Achievement Score On Exit Exam 🔑</p> <p>Graduating students will achieve an average of 70% on the exit survey. Last year this average was below 70% but our department will continue to strive toward this goal.</p>
Finding	<p>Student Participation In Exit Exam Declining, Achievement Levels Declined 🔑</p> <p>A senior exit knowledge survey was conducted with the 2014-2015 graduates using Survey Monkey in an online capacity. Last year, 40 percent of graduates (144 of 362 students) responded; this year, fewer graduates (23 percent, or 70 of 303 students) responded. Of the students participating in the exit exam, only 56 students completed at least half of the 60 question non-credit based exam. The number of graduates participating in the non-credit based</p>

assessment has continued to decline over the last few years despite additional encouragement from the Department. This year, we aimed to increase our response rate this year by incentivizing participation with an entry into a drawing for SHSU goods and sending multiple reminders to graduating students. It is concerning that the participation rate of graduates is declining as this sample is likely not representative of the larger graduating class.

During the last assessment cycle, we recognized the need to consider the extent to which our assessment survey aligns with the courses that were likely to have been completed at SHSU given the large number of transfer students served by our Department. Initially, we anticipated re-designing the survey to focus on measuring retention of upper level courses. Upon further deliberation, it was decided that it would be best to first determine how many of our respondents are students who transfer into SHSU from a community college, complete our BA or BS in Criminal Justice degree, AND respond to the Exit Exam. Results indicated that 32.61 percent of the respondents were transfer students. Our criterion for this objective was an achievement level of 70% across seven content areas. Results indicated the average student achievement levels failed to meet this goal.

Action

Examination Of Alignment Between Exit Exam Content And Current Coursework

A department level undergraduate program assessment committee has been developed to improve our assessment efforts. This committee will strategize a more effective approach in garnering an overview of the knowledge gained and retained by our students as well as increasing our student response rate.

The finding that approximately one third of our respondents are transfer students will serve to inform an outstanding concern from the prior assessment cycle. Specifically, it is apparent that the exit survey targets courses offered at the 200 level. Given that a proportion of our students complete these courses at the community college level, we may not be accurately assessing knowledge gained at SHSU. This year, the CJC Undergraduate Program Assessment Committee will consider a new approach that will target knowledge gained in 300 and 400 level courses thereby ensuring a more accurate assessment of our program.

Our failure to achieve our stated benchmark, it is evident that a two pronged approach is needed if we plan to continue on this same path of assessment. First, increased participation rates from our undergraduate students to an acceptable rate will be required for results to be valid. Second, a review of current course content and exit exam questions to ensure that question accurately reflect the most recent material provided in these core courses.

A more global consideration for next year's assessment is also needed. It is increasingly apparent that the exit survey targets courses offered at the 200 level. A reasonably large proportion of our students complete these courses at the community college level. Thus, we may not be measuring knowledge transfer occurring at SHSU. At minimum, we need to include questions on the exit survey that query whether the courses were completed within our Department or credit was transferred. It may also be more reasonable to include questions on the exit survey that target 300 and 400 level courses thereby ensuring a more accurate assessment of our program. The new undergraduate assessment committee has been tasked with a full review of these issues.

Objective (L)

Competence In Scientific Writing Skills

As the next generation of individuals are developed for the criminal justice workforce, it is increasingly apparent that employable candidates must be able to engage in scientific writing related to their field of study. In criminal justice, job candidates are expected to demonstrate skills and abilities that would allow them to research topic and provide scientific summaries of the knowledge gained during their research. While the specific aspects of any position will vary, our department will ensure that our students demonstrate competence in their scientific writing skills.

Indicator

Students Will Produce High Quality Scientific Writing On Contemporary Criminal Justice Topics

Undergraduate criminal justice students will demonstrate their scientific writing ability in their required Research Methods course (CRIJ 3378). Scientific writing skills will be scored by a common rubric agreed upon by a faculty committee. Each instructor will utilize this common rubric when grading the student's scientific writing. The following five domains of the student's scientific writing ability will be considered: Structure and Organization, Writing and Grammar, Appropriateness of the Proposed Methodology, Statement of Research Purpose, and Inclusion of Appropriate and Relevant Prior Research. The criteria used to assess this indicator is attached.

Criterion

The Majority Of Students Will Score At 75% Or Above On The Research Paper Proposal Scoring Rubric.

The majority of students will score at 75% or above on the scientific writing assessment scoring rubric.

Finding

Student Competence In Scientific Writing And Research Skills Surpasses Goal.

To assess the writing ability of undergraduate criminal justice majors, our department selected a common course within which instructors would utilize a common rubric to evaluate student writing ability and report out for assessment purposes. The CRIJ 3378 Research Methods course was selected as the class that would be used to assess student writing since this class is a

required course, and a course that students tend to complete toward the end of their matriculation despite its 300-level designation.

A group of faculty members and instructors who are typically responsible for teaching CRIJ 3378 met last academic year in conjunction with the department chair to discuss this assessment goal, the CRIJ 3378 course, revision of the common scoring rubric, as well as the common type of assignment that would be assigned and subsequently evaluated by the instructor. The group was aware that in addition to providing feedback to the instructors and the department, this information would be included as part of the departmental assessment efforts.

The working group ultimately developed a rubric that would assess the writing ability of students in five domains: Structure and Organization of the paper, Writing and Grammar, Appropriateness of the Proposed Methodology, Statement of Research Purpose, and Inclusion of Appropriate and Relevant Prior Research. Scores for each domain ranged from 1 (Poor) to 5 (Excellent). The domain scores were also averaged to determine the overall score achieved by this subset of criminal justice students. The initial goal set for this degree plan was that students would achieve an average score of 75 percent or higher on this writing assessment.

Three sections of CRIJ 3378 Research Methods were selected for assessment as an initial pilot test of this new instrument and assessment approach. The writing ability of the students from CRIJ 3378 Research Methods was assessed in three class sections using a common scoring rubric (see attached). Across the five domains, the average student scored 83 percent. This finding demonstrates that our students have met and exceeded our stated goal.

The domains titled "Structure and Organization of the paper" and "Statement of Research Purpose" garnered the highest student scores. The weakest student scores existed in the "Writing and Grammar" domain. Specifically, the following class averages were found for each domain in the rubric:

Structure and Organization of the paper (4.4, 4.8, 2.9)
 Writing and Grammar (3.2, 4.2, 3.0)
 Appropriateness of the Proposed Methodology (3.5, 4.8, 3.3)
 Statement of Research Purpose (4.6, 4.8, 2.9)
 Inclusion of Appropriate and Relevant Prior Research (3.9, 3.7, n/a)

In comparison to findings from the prior academic assessment cycle, all domains related to broader,

contextual skills improved; whereas, the writing and grammar score did not improve, but was relatively stable.

As noted in our prior Actions statement, we have continued to encourage all instructors to devote additional time and effort to writing assignments in the various lower division prerequisite courses.

Action

Development Of Scientific Writing Skills Through The Criminal Justice Curriculum Followed By Increased Depth And Breath Of Assessment Of Skills 🔑

Our future actions related to enhancing the scientific writing ability of our undergraduate criminal justice majors will focus on three aspects: [1] continued encouragement of scientific writing development in lower division courses, [2] increased breadth and depth of student scientific writing assessment, and [3] increased reliability of measuring our student's weakest area of scientific writing – "Writing and Grammar."

We will encourage instructors to assign scientific written assignments and projects throughout our courses in the Department of Criminal Justice and Criminology and specifically target our lower division classes for increased writing development. This systematic approach will better prepare the scientific writing skills of our students as they progress throughout our degree plans.

A significant modification in the approach to the Department of Criminal Justice and Criminology course scheduling will be undertaken for the 2015-2016 academic year. The CRIJ 3378 Research Methods course will increasingly be offered in smaller sections (30 students vs. 200 students) in future semesters. By scheduling fewer students in our course sections, we will be able to increase the depth and breadth of our student scientific writing assessment efforts. Instructors will also be able to engage students in a higher level of scientific writing enhanced approaches such as a greater number of assignments, assignments that build upon earlier drafts, and the inclusion of significant amounts of feedback, thereby increasing the depth of our assessment efforts. Next, this approach with smaller course sections will ensure quality scientific writing assignments are required as part of the course syllabi, and all students in those courses will be appropriately assessed on their scientific writing ability, thereby increasing our breadth of student assessment.

Our final action item for the next assessment cycle will focus on discussion of the reliability and validity of measuring the weakest area of our students scientific writing categorized as "writing and grammar". As demonstrated in the scores listed earlier, significant variation between instructors can occur on this measure. Given that it is the weakest skill, we will tackle this aspect in greater depth. Faculty will consider utilizing available electronic tools such as the grammar check feature in Turnitin.com to improve our consistency across instructors in measuring this concept. If all students were required to electronically submit their course assignments through turnitin.com, instructors could record

the grammar check score which is an automatic function within the program. Other alternatives will be discussed among instructors.

Goal	<p>Development Of Scientific Writing Skills Appropriate For Criminal Justice Workforce Candidates 🔑</p> <p>A key component of the Department of Criminal Justice and Criminology Strategic Plan is the goal in which we aim to collectively "Promote and support the development and delivery of a rigorous, contemporary curriculum." As a part of these efforts it is critical that our students development strong scientific writing skills over the course of their studies. As students near the completion of their undergraduate degree, common assessment of student writing abilities should find that the vast majority of our students are strong scientific writers.</p>
Objective (L)	<p>Competence In Scientific Writing Skills 🔑</p> <p>As the next generation of individuals are developed for the criminal justice workforce, it is increasingly apparent that employable candidates must be able to engage in scientific writing related to their field of study. In criminal justice, job candidates are expected to demonstrate skills and abilities that would allow them to research topic and provide scientific summaries of the knowledge gained during their research. While the specific aspects of any position will vary, our department will ensure that our students demonstrate competence in their scientific writing skills.</p>
Indicator	<p>Students Will Produce High Quality Scientific Writing On Contemporary Criminal Justice Topics 🔑🔑</p> <p>Undergraduate criminal justice students will demonstrate their scientific writing ability in their required Research Methods course (CRIJ 3378). Scientific writing skills will be scored by a common rubric agreed upon by a faculty committee. Each instructor will utilize this common rubric when grading the student's scientific writing. The following five domains of the student's scientific writing ability will be considered: Structure and Organization, Writing and Grammar, Appropriateness of the Proposed Methodology, Statement of Research Purpose, and Inclusion of Appropriate and Relevant Prior Research. The criteria used to assess this indicator is attached.</p>
Criterion	<p>The Majority Of Students Will Score At 75% Or Above On The Research Paper Proposal Scoring Rubric. 🔑🔑</p> <p>The majority of students will score at 75% or above on the scientific writing assessment scoring rubric.</p>
Finding	<p>Student Competence In Scientific Writing And Research Skills Surpasses Goal. 🔑</p> <p>To assess the writing ability of undergraduate criminal justice majors, our department selected a common course within which instructors would utilize a common rubric to evaluate student writing ability and report out for assessment</p>

purposes. The CRIJ 3378 Research Methods course was selected as the class that would be used to assess student writing since this class is a required course, and a course that students tend to complete toward the end of their matriculation despite its 300-level designation.

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In comparison to findings from the prior academic assessment cycle, all domains related to broader, contextual skills improved; whereas, the writing and grammar score did not improve, but was relatively stable.

As noted in our prior Actions statement, we have continued to encourage all instructors to devote additional time and effort to writing assignments in the various lower division prerequisite courses.

Action

Development Of Scientific Writing Skills Through The Criminal Justice Curriculum Followed By Increased Depth And Breath Of Assessment Of Skills 🔑

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A significant modification in the approach to the Department of Criminal Justice and Criminology course scheduling will be undertaken for the 2015-2016 academic year. The CRIJ 3378 Research Methods course will increasingly be offered in smaller sections (30 students vs. 200 students) in future semesters. By scheduling fewer students in our course sections, we will be able to increase the depth and breadth of our student scientific writing assessment efforts. Instructors will also be able to engage students in a higher level of scientific writing enhanced approaches such as a greater number of assignments, assignments that build upon earlier drafts, and the inclusion of significant amounts of feedback, thereby increasing the depth of our assessment efforts. Next, this approach with smaller course sections will ensure quality scientific writing assignments are required as part of the course syllabi, and all students in those courses will be appropriately assessed on their scientific writing ability, thereby increasing our breadth of student assessment.

Our final action item for the next assessment cycle will focus on discussion of the reliability and validity of measuring the weakest area of our students scientific writing categorized as "writing and grammar". As demonstrated in the scores listed earlier, significant variation between instructors can occur on this measure. Given that it is the weakest skill, we will tackle this aspect in greater depth. Faculty will consider utilizing available electronic tools such as the grammar check feature in Turnitin.com to improve our consistency

across instructors in measuring this concept. If all students were required to electronically submit their course assignments through turnitin.com, instructors could record the grammar check score which is an automatic function within the program. Other alternatives will be discussed among instructors.

Previous Cycle's "Plan for Continuous Improvement"

As indicated in detail in our findings on comprehensive knowledge, this assessment cycle our Departmental faculty will need to reexamine the undergraduate curriculum and its alignment with assessment protocol. We have been utilizing the same survey questions for a number of years and must update both our process of assessment and likely the content of our assessment materials. Regarding the assessment of writing and research skills, our primary goal will be to capture a greater number of research methods sections taught by our faculty to more fully assess student ability. These steps will provide us better data upon which we can improve our undergraduate program performance.

Certainly a first step is to determine a better approach to assessment that will include a large subset of our undergraduate students. The current sample size is small by comparison and limited to four sections of a course that used a common assessment rubric. Additional faculty "buy in" will be needed to achieve this goal. The Department Chair will accept the responsibility for strongly encouraging faculty utilize this common rubric (or a redesigned version of the rubric) to grade a research paper. Further, faculty will provide consideration if perhaps assessing papers in senior level writing enhanced classes will increase the validity of our efforts.

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.

We have continued to struggle with appropriate assessment of our objectives for the BA/BS in Criminal Justice using the current approach. The Department has continued to follow the approach that has been used by the College for several years making small modifications to the process that has been in place. With regard to the exit exam, a working group recognized potential misalignment of the exam content given the increasing number of transfer students who complete core criminal justice courses elsewhere. To measure the extent of this issue, we continued with the benchmark exam but included another indicator of transfer status. The information was an intermediate step required to further the suggestions of the previous cycle's plan for continuous improvement.

Additionally during this academic cycle, the department chair convened faculty and instructors who were primarily responsible for CRIJ 3378 Research Methods as part of a series of meetings to improve the department assessment of the goals stated as well as share feedback on our ongoing efforts.

The prior cycle's plan included a goal of obtaining a larger subset of undergraduate students who would participate in the writing assessment process. As this goal was discussed, the working group recognized an intermediate step of redesigning the assessment tool and course scheduling was a greater need than collecting a higher number of assessments. First and foremost, the group engaged in work to redesign and test an assessment instrument (i.e., common rubric) that could be used in a variety of CRIJ 3378 Research Methods sections regardless of the instructor. This instrument was finalized and disseminated to other instructors for comment. Once the common rubric was agreed upon, it was put into use for assessing student writing consistent with our goals.

The department chair also engaged in a series of individualized meetings regarding course scheduling to determine an alternative approach to offering the CRIJ 3378 Research Methods course. This course is an ideal assessment environment given the content geared toward scientific writing and potential for common assessment. Yet, holding large lecture sections (i.e., 200 students) was not ideal for the instructor to provide a consistent assignment that would also be expected in smaller, writing intensive sections of the course. The department chair determined that to facilitate both our efforts in improving our student's scientific writing ability as well as subsequent assessment efforts, smaller course sections should be scheduled. This change in administrative approach, informed by last year's assessment cycle knowledge, will be enacted for the Spring 2016 academic semester.

In summary, while the initial conclusion made during last cycle's plan for continuous improvement was to increase the number of data points collected, enhanced process that included intermediate steps was an agreed upon priority to enhance our assessment efforts.

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.

As the Department of Criminal Justice and Criminology begins its third year as a distinct department, it is increasingly evident that additional focus needs to be placed on the assessment plan. The first two years of assessment were relatively transitory as the organizational structure of both the College and the Department have occurred. Entering into the new academic year, a renewed emphasis on "doing something more" is underway but potentially not apparent as part of the documented assessment plan to date. First and foremost, to improve our assessment ability of the BA/BS in Criminal Justice, a working group/committee comprised of Department of CJC faculty members will be convened beginning in August 2016. For many years, the assessment of this degree plan existed at the College level which was then turned over to the department chair to perform in consultation with faculty. Enhanced inclusion of faculty in this process and diffusion of this responsibility will allow for the stimulation of both faculty "buy in" and new ideas for approaches to assessing student learning across the curriculum. The department has historically relied upon a post test only/ exit exam strategy with our graduating seniors as a major criteria for assessment in addition to assessing scientific writing. Additional efforts for assessment of student during their studies will be considered. It would behoove the department to have a number of approaches to ongoing feedback rather than relying on "end of the line" product assessment.

If the avenues of assessment are to continue, a key aspect for the improvement of our assessment efforts will include obtaining a large subset of our undergraduate students for the scientific writing assessment. The current sample size is small by comparison and limited to three sections of a course that used a common assessment rubric. Additional faculty and instructor "buy in" will be needed to achieve this goal. The Department Chair will accept the responsibility for strongly encouraging faculty utilize this redesigned rubric to grade a scientific writing assignment.

We will also provide specific feedback to all of our faculty and instructors regarding the strengths and weaknesses displayed by our students in their writing so that broad based efforts can be made by all faculty members to develop our student's scientific writing ability.

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Online Assessment Tracking Database

Sam Houston State University (SHSU)
2014 - 2015

Criminal Justice MS

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Goal	Integration Of Knowledge, Skills, And Abilities  
	<p>Students completing the Master of Science in Criminal Justice will demonstrate integration of knowledge, skills and abilities through a digital research portfolio.</p>
Objective (L)	Demonstrate Competency In Emergent Issues In Criminal Justice And Criminology 
	<p>As students prepare to graduate with a Master of Science in Criminal Justice, they will demonstrate the ability to integrate knowledge, skills, and other abilities by successfully completing a 5-part digital portfolio. These include a leadership philosophy statement and management statement, an academic integrative essay, professional development activities, and Myers-Briggs Indicator individual assessment.</p>
Indicator	Digital Portfolio  
	<p>A digital portfolio developed in the program's capstone course, CJ 6388, Emergent Issues in Criminal Justice Leadership, is reviewed using a predetermined set of criteria (see attachment).</p>
Criterion	Students Will Score An 80% Or Above On Each Criteria Of The Portfolio 
	<p>Students enrolled in CRIJ 6388 will score an 80% (B) or above on each of the 5 sections of the digital portfolio: leadership philosophy statement and management statement, an academic integrative essay, professional development activities, Myers-Briggs Indicator individual assessment, and the final portfolio.</p>
Finding	Students Scored 80% Or Above On Each Of The Criteria Of The Portfolio 
	<p>100% (7/7) of students enrolled in CRIJ 6388 in AY14-15 received an 80% or above on each of the five sections of the digital portfolio. The professor indicated that while students scored above an 80% on each of the five sections, the area that students struggle with the most is the Professional Development Activities, Applications, and Points. Students can show evidence of the activities however when designating what each actively is worth they have a hard time with personal assessment. The goal is to help the student understand the importance of leadership development opportunities and to decide what each element is worth (points). This element tends to be challenging for students as they don't know what point(s) to assign. The element is also designed to learn how to evaluate and assess credentials of others. Students currently work in the field, or will be put in future situations where they decide on someone's credentials or experience. What better way to learn than to start with self-assessment.</p>

Action	<p>Self-Assessment Of Academic And Professional Development 🔑</p> <p>The feedback from the CRIJ 6388 professor suggests that students tend to struggle most with the Professional Development Activities, Applications, and Points section of the digital portfolio. As such, more of an effort will be placed on teaching students how to self-assess their own academic and professional development in their respective areas of interest. This may be accomplished by the students self-evaluating their own work using a developed rubric as well as providing students with more information as to how and why self-assessment is important.</p> <p>*****</p>
Goal	<p>Develop Specific Knowledge Base 🔑</p> <p>Students will develop specific knowledge base in emergent issues in criminal justice and criminology to prepare graduates for positions in the field.</p>
Objective (L)	<p>Master Of Science Students Will Be Able To Write A Professionally Oriented Paper To Demonstrate Workforce Preparedness 🔑</p> <p>Students completing the M.S. program will demonstrate the necessary knowledge to produce an empirically based review of the academic literature on an emerging criminal justice issue relevant to their area of interest in the criminal justice workforce.</p>
Indicator	<p>Rubric Evaluating A Selected Element Submitted As Part Of The Digital Portfolio 🔑🔑</p> <p>An academic integrative essay developed in the program's capstone course CRIJ 6388 Emerging Issues in Criminal Justice Leadership is considered a post-test writing assignment from an initial writing assignment developed in CRIJ 6333 Seminar in Organization and Administration. Having completed all of the required courses for the program, students enrolled in CRIJ 6388 are now to reflect on their initial writing assignment from CRIJ 6333 and either defend or change their position by integrating the knowledge base developed throughout the program.</p>
Criterion	<p>3 Required Elements Will Be Developed In The Academic Integrative Essay 🔑</p> <p>Three required elements should be developed in the students' academic integrative essay: 1. identify the emergent issue in criminal justice and criminology, 2. discuss your academic development pertaining to this issue, and 3. theoretical applications of the paper. Each element is assessed using the attached rubric.</p>
Finding	<p>Students Scored 80% Or Above On The Integrative Essay 🔑</p> <p>100% (7/7) students in CRIJ 6388 in AY14-15 received an 80% or above determined by the</p>

rubric containing the requirements for the integrative academic essay. In order to assess the development of knowledge base over time, it has been suggested to compare the original essays from CRIJ 6388 to the integrative essays CRIJ 6888 using a pre-test/post-test rubric.

Action

Pre-test/Post-test

For the upcoming year, the Department will create a pre-test/post-test writing rubric to compare the initial writing assignment from CRIJ 6388 to the integrative essay developed in CRIJ 6888 to assess the development of knowledge over time.

Previous Cycle's "Plan for Continuous Improvement"

As this program is still relatively new, one of the goals for the 2014-2015 academic year is to continue to increase student enrollment through marketing efforts. Another goal is to increase our retention rates by encouraging students to take advantage of the services offered by the department and university that are geared towards online education. A review of the current curriculum is also needed to ensure that the required and elective courses are meeting students needs and are aligned with program objectives.

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.

Marketing efforts resulted in an increase in admissions from AY13-14 to AY14-15 with 12 students admitted in AY13-14 compared to 19 students admitted in AY14-15. Also, the retention rate was 50% in AY13-14 compared to 70% in AY14-15. The Graduate Standards and Admissions committee will continue to review the curriculum to ensure that the required and elective courses are meeting students needs and are aligned with program objectives.

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.

For the upcoming year, the Department will seek to further assess the development of students' knowledge base beyond the integrative academic essay. This will be accomplished by creating an exit exam required to complete in CRIJ 6388. This exam will include questions from the core courses required in the MS program (e.g., CRIJ 5330 Critical analysis of justice administration, CRIJ 6333 Seminar in organization and administration, CRIJ 6334 Research Methods and quantitative analysis in criminal justice, CRIJ 6336 Computer/Technology applications for criminal justice, CRIJ 6392 Program evaluation in criminal justice, CRIJ 6365 Community theory and the administration of justice). The goal is to assess student learning prior to graduation and to identify areas for improvement for future cohorts. Another goal is to strengthen students' abilities to take an intrapersonal perspective on their own academic and professional development. This may be accomplished by implementing a self-assessment of elements from the portfolio.












Online Assessment Tracking Database

Sam Houston State University (SHSU)
2014 - 2015

Criminal Justice PhD

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Goal	Conduct Scientific Research   Enhance and develop student's ability to conduct scientific research that adds to the current body of knowledge in criminal justice and criminology.
Objective (L)	Doctoral Students Will Be Able To Conduct Original Criminal Justice And Criminology Research  Students completing the Ph.D. program will demonstrate the ability to produce original research by integrating knowledge, skills, and abilities learned throughout the program.
Indicator	Successful Defense Of A Research Portfolio  Doctoral students are required to submit and orally defend a portfolio of selected written research products that were developed during their tenure in the doctoral program to a panel of faculty members. The current policy states that the portfolio must contain at least two research articles that are deemed by the committee members as acceptable for submission for publication to a peer reviewed journal.
Criterion	Students Will Score A Pass Or High Pass   Students will receive a Pass or High Pass by the committee members based on the overall quality of the research papers presented. Students will have integrated the various disparate components of the literature on a specific criminal justice or criminological topic into a cogent review of literature, presented a well-defined research question, quantitative or qualitative analysis of data, a summary of results, and contextualized those results. A discussion of the strengths and weaknesses of the research will also be included.
Finding	All Students Defending Their Portfolio Received A Pass Or High Pass  All students who defended their portfolio in AY14-15 (7/7) were admitted to candidacy and formally approved to begin work on their dissertation. 5 (71%) students received a score of Pass and 2 students (29%) received a score of High Pass.
Criterion	Students Defending Their Portfolio Will Have At Least 1 Paper Published Or Under Review  While the current policy states that the minimum requirement for a portfolio defense is two publishable articles, the Graduate Standards and Admissions Committee would like to start seeing Ph.D. students who are defending their portfolio have at least one paper either published or under review at a peer-reviewed journal at the time of the defense.
Finding	57% Of Students Defending Their Portfolio Had At Least 1 Manuscript Published Or Under Review  A review of the CVs of Ph.D. students who defended their portfolio in AY14-15 revealed that

57% (4/7) of them had at least 1 paper published or under review in a peer reviewed journal at the time of their defense.

Indicator

Successful Completion Of The Dissertation

Successful completion of an original research study as demonstrated by the defense of a Dissertation using a faculty-developed rubric. The rubric uses a 1 (insignificant) to 5 (critically significant) rating of specific criteria each dissertation should address. These criteria include: choice of problem, theoretical framework, mode of inquiry, execution of study, interpretation of results, analysis, written presentation, originality of idea and/or approach, and contribution to the field.

Criterion

Students Will Score At Least 80% On Each Of The 9 Criteria Of The Dissertation Rubric

Students will demonstrate their ability to engage in an original research study within the field of criminal justice and criminology. At minimum, a dissertation prospectus will include a literature review of relevant empirical literature and a well defined and defensible methodology. The final dissertation will include the statistical analysis appropriate to the methodology described, and the contextualization of the study results within the existing literature. Students defending their final dissertation will receive a score of 80% or above on each of the 9 elements outlined in the dissertation rubric.

Finding

Majority Of Students Scored An 80% Or Above On All 9 Elements Of The Dissertation






Overall, the majority of the students demonstrated competency in conducting original criminal justice and criminological research. Our findings revealed that only 1 student fell below the 80% threshold for "choice of problem" and "originality of idea and/or approach". Students seem to excel (as demonstrated by a score of 5/5 on the rubric) in the development of a theoretical framework (80%; 6/8), their mode of inquiry (80%; 6/8), the execution of their study (80%; 6/8), the originality of their ideas (80%; 6/8), and the contribution that their study makes to the field (80%; 6/8). Areas in need of improvement include the statistical analysis and the interpretation of the results, with 50% (4/8) and 38% (3/8) of students scoring a 4/5, respectively, which is the minimum requirement.

Action

Encourage Students To Submit Research For Publication And Strengthen Statistical Abilities

For the upcoming year, the Graduate Standards and Admissions Committee will review the different standards across the various portfolio committees to see if a more uniformed approach is needed. In addition, portfolio committee members will encourage students to submit their

research articles for publication prior to the defense of the portfolio in an effort to increase marketability. The findings from our dissertation rubric also suggest that the Department needs to continue focusing on strengthening students' statistical abilities. This will be accomplished by 1. providing a faculty led 1/2 day workshop on statistics the summer prior to starting the Ph.D. program, 2. offering various statistics related elective courses for 2nd and 3rd year Ph.D. students who are beginning to work on their portfolio and dissertation, and 3. providing additional statistical and methodological workshops throughout the semester to further develop specific skills and abilities.

Goal	Doctoral Teaching Fellows Provide Quality Classroom Teaching  Enhance and develop student's ability to demonstrate high levels of teaching effectiveness.
Objective (L)	Provide Effective Undergraduate Classroom Instruction  Advanced doctoral students will develop and demonstrate their aptitude for providing high quality classroom instruction for undergraduate students.
Indicator	IDEA Evaluation Forms  Student ratings of Doctoral Teaching Fellows using the Individual Developmental Education Assessment (IDEA) Evaluation forms.
Criterion	Score Of 4.0+ On IDEA  Doctoral Teaching Fellows will perform at or above the similar/middle 40% box on the IDEA evaluation form. Summary Evaluation will be 4.0 or above for teaching evaluations on the following criteria 1. progress on objectives, 2. excellent teacher, and 3. excellent course.
Finding	Performance Of IDEA Evaluations  18 courses were taught by Doctoral Teaching Fellows in the Fall 2014, with 72% of them (13/18) scoring a 4.0 or above on the IDEA summary evaluations. More specifically, 72%, 83%, and 67% scored a 4.0 or above on the elements of progress on objectives, excellent teacher, and excellent course, respectively. 14 courses were taught by Doctoral Teaching Fellows in the Spring 2015, with 79% of them (11/14) scoring a 4.0 or above on the IDEA summary evaluations. More specifically, 71%, 79%, and 64% scored a 4.0 or above on the elements of progress on objectives, excellent teacher, and excellent course, respectively.

Indicator	Faculty Observations 🔑 Doctoral Teaching Fellows teaching face-to-face will be observed in the classroom by a faculty member using a faculty-developed rubric. Elements being evaluated include Preparation for Lecture, such as organization, content, subject knowledge, and use of Powerpoint as well as Delivery of Lecture, such as professionalism, eye contact, enthusiasm, vocal properties, classroom management, body language, and length of presentation.
Criterion	Score Of At Least 80% Or Above On Faculty Observation 🔑 🔑 Faculty observations of a DTF led lecture will be conducted using the faculty-developed rubric. Students will obtain an average score of 80% or above on the overall rubric and on each of the elements.
Finding	Performance On Faculty Observations 🔑 All DTFs received a score of 80% or above on the faculty teaching observation rubric. The average score was 88.4 with a range of 80 to 95.5. A review of the average for each of the elements reveal that students excel at professionalism in the classroom (97%), maintaining eye contact with the students (92%), enthusiasm (94%), body language (92%), subject knowledge (91%), and use of Powerpoint (92%). Areas in need of improvement include vocal properties (82%), classroom management (82%), and length of presentation (80%).
Action	Teaching Effectiveness 🔑 We will continue to focus on improving Doctoral Teaching Fellows teaching effectiveness. Prior to being assigned an undergraduate class to teach, incoming DTFs will be required to 1. provide a guest lecture with a faculty observer, 2. attend SHSU's annual teaching conference, and 3. complete the Teaching Online with Blackboard Certification Series course. We will also provide a faculty-led discussion on setting and meeting objectives in the classroom as well as discuss and practice (with mock classroom scenarios) proper delivery of lectures and classroom management in CRIJ 7333 (a pre-requisite to teaching).

Previous Cycle's "Plan for Continuous Improvement"

For the 2014-2015 academic year, an increased emphasis will be on strengthening our doctoral teaching fellows teaching skills by providing detailed feedback by faculty observers. Students will also be encouraged to present their original research at University-sponsored events and/or national professional conferences. The development of our PhD students statistical skills is contingent on access to the latest versions of various statistical software programs used in the social sciences (e.g., STATA, MPlus, HLM, etc.). Further, the utilization of the portfolio process as evidence of doctoral student writing ability and research competency will be examined to determine its feasibility in future assessment cycles. A review of the current curriculum is also needed to ensure that we remain current and competitive.

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.

The newly developed Graduate Standards and Assessment Committee members provided teaching observations to all DTFs in an effort to provide feedback on their strengths and areas for improvement in teaching.

In AY14-15, 21 PhD students presented their research at the American Society of Criminology conference in San Diego, CA in November 2014 and 22 PhD students presented their research at the Academy of Criminal Justice Sciences in Orlando, FL in March 2015.

19 PhD students presented their research at SHSU's Graduate Research Exchange in February 2015 and 7 PhD students presented their research at the Woodlands Center Research Symposium in April 2015.

The Graduate Standards and Admissions committee is continuing to discuss the utilization of the portfolio process as evidence of doctoral student writing ability and research competency.

A careful review of the Ph.D. curriculum by the Graduate Standards and Admissions committee compared to other top-ranking CJ Ph.D. granting institutions resulted in a curriculum change for required courses. Doctoral students must now chose 2 out of 4 additional core requirements: 1) Legal Aspects of the Criminal Justice System (CRIJ 7375), 2) Seminar in American Courts (CRIJ 7338), 3) Seminar in American Corrections (CRIJ 7336), or 4) Seminar in American Policing (CRIJ 7334) rather than only requiring Legal Aspects of the Criminal Justice System (CRIJ 7375).

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.

For the 2015-2016 academic year, continued emphasis will be placed on strengthening doctoral student research and teaching skills with an overall goal of placing our graduates in academic positions.

In addition to discussing the utilization of the portfolio process as evidence of doctoral student writing ability and research competency, the Graduate Standards and Admissions Committee will review the different standards across the various portfolio committees to see if a more uniformed approach is needed. In addition, portfolio committee members will encourage students to submit their research articles for publication prior to the defense of the portfolio in an effort to increase marketability.

The Department will focus on strengthening students statistical abilities by 1. providing a faculty led 1/2 day workshop on statistics the summer prior to starting the Ph.D. program, 2. offering various statistics related elective courses for 2nd and 3rd year Ph.D. students who are beginning to work on their portfolio and dissertation, and 3. providing additional statistical and methodological workshops throughout the semester to further develop specific skills and abilities.

Students will be encouraged to publish their research findings in peer-reviewed journal articles as well as present their research at national conferences and University-sponsored events. The Department will start tracking Ph.D. student peer-reviewed publications.

The development of our PhD students statistical and research skills is contingent on 1. access to the latest versions of various statistical software programs used in the social sciences (e.g., STATA, MPlus, HLM, etc.), 2. student travel and professional development funds, and 3. summer research fellowships.

The Graduate Student Development and Assessment Committee will continue to provide formal faculty observations of Doctoral Teaching Fellows. This year, the committee will also include informal "pop-in" observations throughout the semester to provide additional feedback for improvement. Furthermore, to promote excellence in teaching, incoming DTFs will be required

to 1. provide a guest lecture with a faculty observer, 2. attend SHSU's annual teaching conference, and 3. complete the Teaching Online with Blackboard Certification Series course. The instructor of CRIJ7333 (a pre-requisite to teaching) will also discuss setting and meeting objectives in the classroom and practice (with mock classroom scenarios) proper delivery of lectures and classroom management techniques.

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