

**Sub-Committee Report**  
**Assessing Social Responsibility within the University Core Curriculum**

Recommendations for Further Ways to Explore our Data

Social Responsibility is currently being addressed in two ways. First, there are pre- and post-tests administered in multiple sections of the POLS 2305 (American Government) and POLS 2306 (Texas Government) courses, core courses required of all undergraduate students whether taken at SHSU or any other public institution across the state of Texas. The instruments used include a series of twelve multiple choice questions for POLS 2305 and ten multiple choice questions for POLS 2306. The results of the pre- and post-tests are compared to capture expected increases in student “intercultural competence, knowledge of civic responsibility, and the ability to engage effectively in regional, national, and global communities.”

Social responsibility is also examined through a series of approximately eleven questions taken from the NSSE survey given to both first-year students as well as seniors. Scores are compared to those from a sampling of other NSSE-participating institutions from our comparison group and to NSSE-participating Texas institutions. The results of these comparisons provide a sense of how our students compare to those of other peer institutions. Likewise, although a pair-wise comparison of changes in NSSE scores by individual student would be preferred (i.e., conducting NSSE surveys for seniors three years after the NSSE survey given to first-year students), given the broad number of students making up the first-year and senior student samples, we are able to gain a sense of how student exposure to the culture of SHSU may or may not have affected various aspects of social responsibility and engagement.

There are no recommendations for changes to how social responsibility is currently being measured and analyzed.

Recommendations on Additional Data Needed

As with almost all aspects of life, more data will always be preferred over less data, so long as that additional data is analyzed and effectively acted upon. As we conduct our review of core course syllabi, we could be on the lookout for courses in which social responsibility or engagement is demonstrably being assessed. We could then reach out to faculty teaching such courses to examine possible ways of incorporating those assessment results.

However, it is unlikely that course syllabi would provide that sort of clear evidence of social responsibility being properly and objectively addressed. An alternative would be to reach out to faculty, department chairs, and/or associate deans associated with core courses in which social responsibility was listed as a skill objective to be addressed to determine if any formal assessment procedures are being conducted and if the assessment results could be shared with the Office of Academic Planning and Assessment. If faculty/administrators associated with core courses express interest, we could ask them to review with the Political Science faculty the

instrument they have developed to assess social responsibility to see if adaptations could be made for other courses/disciplines.

#### Recommendations for Improvements in Response to Currently Available Data

The motto “a measure of a life is its service” is more than a motto; it is what we are all supposed to be about. Although a cursory review of the data from POLS 2305 and POLS 2306 is that within those courses we appear to do a good job of increasing student awareness of social responsibility and engagement in those courses. On the other hand a quick review of the NSSE data appears to not be as promising. Although there are some very impressive gains in some areas, there are surprisingly also several areas in which no significant gains are taking place and depressingly a few in which the seniors have actually scored lower than the first-year students. Likewise, in comparison to our peer institutions, our first-year students score close to the peer averages and exceed them in several areas (the first-year students exceed the IPEDS average in eight of the fourteen categories and are below the average in four. Our seniors fare much worse, with our scores exceeding the IPEDS average in five categories but are below the average in nine). Although these conclusions are being drawn from one set of NSSE scores, the results are troubling from a school with a service motto and one that also prides itself as being a Carnegie-engaged institution.