STUDENT LEARNING ASSESSMENT REPORT

SUBMITTED BY: STEPHANIE ELLIS
DATE: SEPTEMBER 26, 2014

BRIEFLY DESCRIBE WHERE AND HOW ARE DATA AND DOCUMENTS USED TO GENERATE THIS REPORT BEING STORED: The data for this report comes from assessment of the senior seminar issue briefs, and the Graduating Student Survey. The electronic versions of this data are submitted electronically to the instructors of each section of senior seminar. The identifying information is removed from all of the papers and then they are uploaded to the department chair’s Drop-box folder. This folder is then shared among the Criminal Justice faculty members. The papers are also stored on the department Blackboard site.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

List all of the program’s learning outcomes: (regardless of whether or not they are being assessed this year)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Learning Outcome</th>
<th>Year of Last Assessment</th>
<th>Year of Next Planned Assessment</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Students will apply a working knowledge of criminal justice to a current issue</td>
<td>2012-2013</td>
<td>2013-2014</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Students will demonstrate skills in the use of research methods and Statistics</td>
<td>2012-2013</td>
<td>2013-2014</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Students will demonstrate proficiency in written communication</td>
<td>2012-2013</td>
<td>2012-2013</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Students will demonstrate an understanding of ethical issues and exhibit their application to a social phenomenon</td>
<td>2010-2011</td>
<td>2013-2014</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Describe how the program’s outcomes support Marymount’s Mission, Strategic Plan, and relevant school plan:

Marymount University is a student centered learning community that values diversity and focuses on the education of the whole person, promoting intellectual, spiritual and moral growth.

Our program outcomes are consonant with the Mission Statement: The criminal justice program graduates will be equipped with the ability to think critically about social issues using an understanding of research methods, understand ethical issues, and be facile in written communication.
The School of Education and Human Services Mission Statement states: 

*The core mission of the School is to enable students to serve as agents of positive change for individuals and in the global community.*

Our program outcomes are consonant with the SEHS Mission Statement: Students who graduate from our program will be able to assess their potential role in improving the social world, at the local level and above.

**Provide a brief description of the assessment process used including strengths, challenges and planned improvements:**

This year the assessment activities focused on measuring the following three learning outcomes:

- Students will demonstrate skills in the use of research methods and statistics.
- Students will demonstrate an understanding of ethical issues and exhibit their application to a social phenomenon.
- Students will apply a working knowledge of criminal justice to a current issue.

We continued to rely on assessing the major product of the Senior Seminar class as our direct measure of these learning outcomes, employing independent readers (two full-time faculty in the Department of Criminal Justice) to evaluate the issue briefs, using a custom designed rubric. The faculty members teaching senior seminar collected the data for assessment (Senior Seminar Issue Briefs). The papers were uploaded to the department chair’s Dropbox folder, and the folder was shared among the full time members of the Department of Sociology and Criminal Justice after all of the individual identifying information had been removed. Two faculty members reviewed each paper. For our indirect measure we employ the results of the *Graduating Student Survey*, which is administered by the Office of Institutional Effectiveness.

**Provide a response to last year’s University Assessment Committee review of the program’s learning assessment report:** (List each recommendation and provide a specific response to each).

The comments on the assessment report from the previous year were generally favorable. We received the following comments from the UAC:

Comments on Critical Area 1: Learning Outcomes

- **Outcome #1: This is well done.**
- **Outcome #2 What is meant by ‘current issue’?** I would have thought this referred to current issues within the criminal justice system. But as one reads on (specifically the reasoning behind your addition of the careers in CJ course), it seems that current issues has wider scope: to include something like ‘how to find a job.’ Clarity on the intended meaning here would be helpful

Students select a current issue that relates to the discipline of criminal justice for their capstone paper, the senior seminar issue brief assignment (see Appendix B).
Academic Year: 2013-2014
Program: Criminal Justice: BA Program

✓ Outcome #3: This is well done. The written communication could be more specific by referring specifically to writing elements within criminal justice.

Comments on Critical Area #2 Assessing Learning Outcomes:
✓ Outcome #1: This is well done.
✓ Outcome #2: It looks like you failed to provide the measure for this outcome in the appendix (but accidentally provided the measure for outcome #3 twice). This is corrected in the report for 2013-2014.
✓ Outcome #3: This is well done.

Comments on Collection of Student Work and Responses:
✓ Outcome #1: This is well done.
✓ Outcome #2: This is well done.
✓ Outcome #3: This is well done.

Comments on analysis:
✓ Outcome #1: This is well done.
✓ Outcome #2: This is well done.
✓ Outcome #3: This is well done.

Comments on Improving Curriculum Using Assessment:
✓ Outcome #1: This is well done. One suggestion: when considering ways to improve you might try to acquire longitudinal data, relating how students perform in CJ 209 and CJ 304 with how they perform in CJ 395.
✓ Outcome #2: There is not much information here to go on. What revisions will be made to the instructions for the issue brief and what are the mentioned changes to be made to CJ495? How is career night supposed to help students achieve the outcome?
✓ Outcome #3: This is well done.

Comments on Implementing Curriculum Improvements:
✓ This is well done.

Comments on Addressing Recommendations:
✓ This is well done.
We are in the process of reviewing the CJBA program this year and hope to implement both curriculum changes and changes to our assessment process. We would like to implement course embedded assessment and collect data from CJ209, 300, 304 and 495 in the future. This would allow us to track student progress in a more meaningful way.
Academic Year: 2013-2014
Program: Criminal Justice: BA Program

Outcome and Past Assessment

Learning Outcome 1: Students will apply an understanding of research methodology to analyze a current issue.

Is this outcome being reexamined?  x Yes  □ No
If yes, give a brief summary of previous results (including trends) and any changes made to the program.

Students in the criminal justice program scored an average of 1.64 on this learning outcome for the 2012-2013 year and scored an average of 2.10 in 2013-2014 academic year. For the past two years, we have implemented changes to our advising where we recommend students take statistics earlier on in their program of study and when necessary take a problem solving class prior to taking statistics. Two years ago we also made small changes to the curriculum to introduce research concepts in the introductory level criminal justice classes (CJ209). The trend suggests modest improvements in the average score from 2012-13 to 2013-2014; students are meeting the expectations of the faculty but still have room to improve.

We are in the process of undergoing program review this year and plan to implement a new assessment strategy for the 2014-2015 school year. We would like to include CJ304 in our assessment plan. We hope that by including the Applied Research Methods course in our assessment that it will give us a better understanding of changes that occur between the Applied Research Methods course and Senior Seminar. We will continue to recommend students complete the math requirement for our program (MA132) during their first year at Marymount and take the additional quantitative reasoning course when necessary.

Assessment Activity

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Outcome Measures</th>
<th>Performance Standard</th>
<th>Data Collection</th>
<th>Analysis</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Explain how student learning will be measured and indicate whether it is direct or indirect.</td>
<td>Define and explain acceptable level of student performance.</td>
<td>Discuss the data collected and student population</td>
<td>1) Describe the analysis process. 2) Present the findings of the analysis including the numbers participating and deemed acceptable.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>An evaluation of methodology section of the senior seminar’s issue brief. (See Attachments A and B) (DIRECT)</td>
<td>Students will receive mean scores of 2.5 or above (on a 4.0 scale). This score represents a midpoint between “meets expectations” and “exceeds expectations” (1= does not</td>
<td>Issue briefs from all students in the Fall and Spring sections of SOC/CJ 495 (Senior Seminar)</td>
<td>Two full-time Criminal Justice program faculty members scored the issue brief sections of 33 senior papers using a rubric developed by the Department. Data was missing on eight of the senior seminar papers, which resulted in a total of 25 papers. Scores were entered electronically into a survey instrument and results tallied by the Office of Institutional Assessment.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Interpretation of Results

**Extent this Learning Outcome has been achieved by students (Use both direct and indirect measure results):**

The majority of students in the Criminal Justice program are meeting but not exceeding our expectations (the average score on this learning outcome was a 2.10 using the following scale: 1= does not meet expectations; 2= meets expectations; 3= exceeds expectations; 4 =exceptional analysis) (See Appendix C Table 3). Analysis of the indirect measure indicates that the majority of our students reported good or excellence in their confidence in their ability to conduct research to support a position (almost 92%) and to use quantitative/qualitative data analysis techniques (about 83%) (See Appendix D).
Program strengths and opportunities for improvement relative to assessment of outcome:

Three years ago, the criminal justice and sociology faculty members began advising students to take statistics earlier on in their program of study. Incoming freshmen were encouraged to take statistics (MA132) during their first year at Marymount. Students that expressed concern about statistics were encouraged to take a quantitative reasoning course (MA096) prior to taking statistics. We believe that students need to successfully complete statistics with a C- or better in order to be successful in our Applied Research Methods course. Many of our students continue to struggle with both statistics and Applied Research Methods. However, we met our goal of seeing at least 60% of criminal justice students meet our expectations in the 2013-2014 school year and saw modest improvements in the scores in the previous school year. We hope the scores on this learning outcome will continue to improve and hope to see student scores on this learning outcome improve to by 5% in the next year (65% of students meeting or exceeding our expectations).

Students in the criminal justice program will continue to be required to conduct an independent survey research project in the Applied Research Methods course (CJ304). Providing students with an opportunity to conduct an independent survey research project in CJ304 is a definite strength of the program. The Applied Research Methods course is capped at 20 students, and we believe the smaller class size allows for more hands on instruction and ultimately more meaningful interactions between the instructor and the students.

Discuss planned curricular or program improvements for this year based on assessment of outcome:

We will continue to recommend that students take statistics and problem solving (when necessary) early on in their program of study. We will continue to require that students take statistics and Applied Research Methods. We will also continue to require students to complete an independent research project in Applied Research methods to demonstrate their competency in applying research design and data analysis skills. We will also shift to course embedded assessment and include both Applied Research Methods and Senior Seminar in our assessment of this outcome for next year. We will also continue encourage instructors teaching lower level courses to introduce the material in a basic, rudimentary way earlier in the program of study. We are currently reviewing the Criminal Justice program and hope to revise our curriculum based upon the outcome of the program review.
**Outcome and Past Assessment**

**Learning Outcome 2:** Students will demonstrate an understanding of ethical issues and exhibit their application to a social phenomenon.

Is this outcome being reexamined? ☐ Yes ☒ No

If yes, give a brief summary of previous results (including trends) and any changes made to the program.

**Assessment Activity**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Outcome Measures</th>
<th>Performance Standard</th>
<th>Data Collection</th>
<th>Analysis</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Explain how student learning will be measured and indicate whether it is direct or indirect. | Define and explain acceptable level of student performance. | Discuss the data collected and student population | 1) Describe the analysis process.  
2) Present the findings of the analysis including the numbers participating and deemed acceptable. |

The outcome measuring student understanding of ethical issues as applied to a social issue related to criminal justice is addressed senior seminar’s issue (See Attachments A and B) (DIRECT)

Students will receive mean scores of 2.5 or above (on a 4.0 scale). This score represents a midpoint between “meets expectations” and “exceeds expectations”

Issue briefs from all students in the Fall and Spring sections of SOC/CJ 495 (Senior Seminar)

Two full-time Criminal Justice program faculty members participated in the assessment process and scored the issue brief sections of 25 senior papers using a rubric developed by the Department. Scores were entered electronically into a survey instrument and results tallied by the Office of Institutional Assessment.

The CJBA students had mean scores of 2.22 on this learning outcome with a standard deviation of .790 (See Appendix C: Tables 3 and 4).

Results of the Graduating Student Surveys. (INDIRECT)

A majority of students will report that the program of study provided them the ability to understand ethical issues related to criminal justice.

There were 24 respondents to the Graduating Student Survey.

Approximately 92% of students reported good or excellent ability to “determine the most ethically appropriate response to a situation” (mean = 4.333 on a 5 point scale with 1=poor and 5=excellent; standard deviation = .761). Approximately 96% of graduating seniors responded that they understood the major ethical dilemmas in the field (mean = 4.417 on a 5 point scale with 1=poor and 5=excellent; standard deviation = .717) (See Appendix D).
Interpretation of Results

Extent this Learning Outcome has been achieved by students (Use both direct and indirect measure results):

Program strengths and opportunities for improvement relative to assessment of outcome:

The data from the direct measure of this learning outcome indicate that students are meeting faculty expectations in their understanding of ethical issues. The data from the indirect measure also demonstrates that students are confident in their ability to understand the ethical issues in the field.

Discuss planned curricular or program improvements for this year based on assessment of outcome:

Students are exposed to ethical dilemmas in the field of criminal justice at various points throughout the curriculum. They are introduced to ethical issues in our gateway courses: Principles of Sociology (SOC131) and Introduction to the Criminal Justice System (CJ209). In CJ209 students are required to meet in groups and identify and respond to ethical dilemmas typically faced by criminal justice practitioners. They build on this foundation in our field in the mid level courses through problem solving and review of ethical dilemmas faced by judges, police officers, prosecutors, federal agents, and probation and parole officers, among other criminal justice practitioners. The mid-level courses in our program include Applied Research Methods (students examine ethical issues related to doing research with human subjects), Principles of Forensic Science course (CJ308), Policing (CJ310), Correctional Institutions (CJ311), and Criminal Justice Management (CJ312). Finally, students are required to analyze the ethical dilemmas that are related to a current issue in criminal justice in their senior seminar issue brief. While students are currently meeting our expectations on this learning outcome, we hope that they will continue to improve. Criminal Justice students also have an opportunity to take courses such as Addressing Injustice, and Special Topics in Human Rights as part of their major electives. We would like to incorporate data from CJ209 and one of our 300 level criminal justice courses in our assessment process. While this change is not a curriculum change, we believe that this shift to course embedded assessment will give us more meaningful assessment information.
Learning Outcome 3: Students will apply a working knowledge of criminal justice to a current issue.

Is this outcome being reexamined? X Yes ☐ No

If yes, give a brief summary of previous results (including trends) and any changes made to the program.

The average scores for both the direct and the indirect measures improved from 2012-2013 (average score DIRECT = 2.02; SD=.517; average score INDIRECT = 3.44; SD=1.097) to 2013-2014 (average score DIRECT = 2.44; SD=.812; average score INDIRECT = 4.33; SD =.761). The direct measure scores are based upon the following scale: 1= does not meet expectations; 2= meets expectations; 3= exceeds expectations; 4 =exceptional analysis. Last year the full time criminal justice faculty set the goal of improving the percentage of graduating seniors that expressed their ability to use their knowledge of the criminal justice field to solve a problem was “good or excellent” by 5%. Approximately fifty-six percent of students reported “good or excellent” ability to “solve problems in the field of criminal justice using knowledge and skills.” This year approximately 96% of students reported their ability to “solve problems in the field of criminal justice using knowledge and skills” was “good or excellent.” We did not implement any substantial curriculum changes in the 2013-2014 academic year, but we believe that upward trend in the scores for this item are a reflection of changes that were made several years ago (we added a Criminal Justice Careers course and worked to create greater consistency across courses that had multiple sections).

**Assessment Activity**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Outcome Measures</th>
<th>Performance Standard</th>
<th>Data Collection</th>
<th>Analysis</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Explain how student learning will be measured and indicate whether it is direct or indirect.</td>
<td>Define and explain acceptable level of student performance.</td>
<td>Discuss the data collected and student population</td>
<td>1) Describe the analysis process, 2) Present the findings of the analysis including the numbers participating and deemed acceptable.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The outcome measuring student application of a working knowledge of criminal justice to a current social issue is addressed senior seminar’s issue brief in the key facts section of the paper. (See Attachments A Students will receive mean scores of 2.5 or above (on a 4.0 scale). This score represents a midpoint between “meets expectations” and “exceeds expectations” Issue briefs from all students in the Fall and Spring sections of SOC/CJ 495 (Senior Seminar) Two full-time Criminal Justice program faculty members scored the issue brief sections of 25 senior papers using a rubric developed by the Department. Scores were entered electronically into a survey instrument and results tallied by the Office of Institutional Assessment. The CJ-BA students had mean scores of 2.44 on this learning outcome; standard deviation = .812 (See Appendix C: Tables 5 and 6).
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>and B) (DIRECT)</th>
<th>Results Graduating Student Surveys. (INDIRECT)</th>
<th>There were 24 respondents in the Graduating Student Survey.</th>
<th>Students expressed confidence in their ability to “apply knowledge and skills to new situations.” Approximately 96% of students expressed that they were confident in their ability to “apply knowledge and skills to new situations” and “solve problems in your field using your knowledge and skills” (mean = 4.33 on both of these items on a 5 point scale with 1=poor and 5=excellent; standard deviation = .720 and .761 respectively).</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A majority of students will report that the program of study provided them the ability to solve problems using knowledge of the discipline.</td>
<td>Students expressed confidence in their ability to “apply knowledge and skills to new situations.” Approximately 96% of students expressed that they were confident in their ability to “apply knowledge and skills to new situations” and “solve problems in your field using your knowledge and skills” (mean = 4.33 on both of these items on a 5 point scale with 1=poor and 5=excellent; standard deviation = .720 and .761 respectively).</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Interpretation of Results**

**Extent this Learning Outcome has been achieved by students (Use both direct and indirect measure results):**

The data (both direct and indirect) indicate that students are successfully applying their knowledge of criminal justice to a current social issue. The data from our direct measure indicates that students are meeting faculty expectations for this learning outcome.

**Program strengths and opportunities for improvement relative to assessment of outcome:**

The data reflect that students are successfully mastering this learning objective. We believe that our course offerings and sequencing provide students with a blend of expertise and diverse perspectives. For example, we have a full time faculty member teach the introductory criminal justice course. Several of the mid-level criminal justice courses are taught by criminal justice practitioners, for example, the Criminal Justice Management course is taught by Paul Larsen, Arlington County’s Chief Deputy Sheriff. The Criminal Litigation course is taught by Karen Henenberg, a recently retired District Court Judge. Criminal justice faculty also utilize the rich resources available in the Washington, D.C. area by bringing in a wide range of guest speakers. This is strength of the criminal justice program.

While students are meeting faculty expectations, they have yet to demonstrate that the majority of them are exceeding faculty expectations. We would like to see students score a 2.5 or better on this learning outcome. The criminal justice program is in the process of review, and we plan to revise our curriculum based upon the outcome of our program review and the recommendations of our external reviewer. In the meantime, the department plans to revise our assessment process to include additional courses (CJ304, CJ308, and CJ305) in our assessment plan.
Discuss planned curricular or program improvements for this year based on assessment of outcome:

While students are meeting faculty expectations, they have yet to demonstrate that the majority of them are exceeding faculty expectations. We have a new full time faculty member with expertise in crime scene investigation and forensics. We plan to have Dr. Farrell teach the criminal justice forensics course sequence, and we hope to include a few additional courses to provide students with better career preparation by giving them more substantial course offerings related to crime scene investigation. We hope to pilot a course called Recognition and Recovery of Human Remains during the spring 2015 semester. This course will be offered as a partnership with the Suffolk Police Department over spring break in Suffolk, Virginia. As such, students will have opportunities to engage with full time law enforcement officers. This is a unique opportunity for our students to participate in real world training that will provide not only professional networking, but a marketable specialized skill for anyone seeking a position in field of criminal justice. Students will be exposed to working with law enforcement in the discipline, which can be very beneficial, especially as it relates to experiencing the law enforcement culture and the nature of the work and work environments.