It is recommended that program assessment results be used to celebrate achievements of student learning as well as to identify potential areas for future curriculum improvement.

Please email this completed form as an attachment to thatcherk@slu.edu

CAS PROGRAMS: Please email this completed form by July 1 to Donna LaVoie lavoiedj@slu.edu

1. Degree Program(s) included in this report: FORENSIC SCIENCE
2. Department: SOCIOLOGY, ANTHROPOLOGY, AND FORENSIC SCIENCE
3. School/Center/College: COLLEGE OF ARTS AND SCIENCES
4. Name(s): RICHARD COLIGNON, MARY R. VERMILION
5. Email: rcoligno@slu.edu, mvermili@slu.edu
6. Phone: 977-3640 (Ric), 977-2896 (Mary)

Instructions: Please answer the following five questions to the best of your ability for each degree program offered within your department.

1. Summarize your assessment activities during the past year for each degree program and how this work relates to the established assessment plan (e.g. what program outcomes were assessed, faculty discussions, new survey design, data collection, revised assessment plans or learning outcomes, etc.). Please include how Madrid courses/program were involved.

As a new program, our first year learning objective was to focus on goal #1: developing a Knowledge Base of Forensic Science through which students will be able to identify and explain:

a) major concepts and categories of evidence
b) patterns of evidence
c) trends in forensic science
d) the scientific basis of investigative and analytical methods

Capstone Projects. A rubric evaluating the research competency of students in the program will be applied (Appendix A).

Exit Interviews. The program level Forensic Science assessment activities during our first year as a major program included conducting exit interviews with our single graduating senior as well as with some third year students. The exit interviews with the graduating senior assessed to what degree we met our learning objectives (mastery of concepts, professional competency) and the level of methodological development acquired through lab exercises, through hands-on project activities, and practicum experience (Appendix B).

Exit interviews with the third year students were also of value, as they were asked to comment on their satisfaction and/or dissatisfaction with their experience in the program to date and to
make suggestions for improvements.

No courses in this program are taught in Madrid. Thus, this program requires no coordination with the Madrid campus.

2. Describe specific assessment findings related to the learning outcomes assessed for each degree program, including any pertinent context surrounding the findings. Please include the learning outcomes themselves. (e.g. Our goal was that 75% of students performed at the “proficient” level of competency in problem solving, using a new scoring rubric. 81% of students performed at the “proficient” level in problem solving, exceeding our expectations.) Do not include student-level data. Data included in this report should be in aggregate. Please include how Madrid courses/program were involved.

Our goal was to develop a Knowledge Base of Forensic Science through which students will be able to identify and explain major concepts and categories of evidence, patterns of evidence, trends in forensic science, and the scientific basis of investigative and analytical methods.

The assessment findings for this program are very positive. Our senior graduated with a 3.78 GPA in Forensic Science, amply demonstrating proficiency in acquiring a firm knowledge base of Forensic Science and the ability to recognize, explain, and apply basic research methods and critical thinking skills.

The exit interview with the student underscored the following: Three separate exit interviews took place with upper class students because there was only one graduating senior. Students indicated they have developed an appreciation of our adjunct forensic science faculty bringing real world experience into the classroom. Similarly, the internship was singled out as providing experiences to bridge the gaps between class room and laboratory work and real world equipment and procedures.

The social science courses were singled out as helping the students identify and appreciate the human components of the forensic science.

Student suggested more equipment for the courses Chemical and Biological Forensic Science. They indicated more equipment and emphasis on DNA, toxicology and poisons. They also suggested a few new courses, including finger printing, legal testimony and more experience with mock trials.

No courses in this program are taught in Madrid. Thus, this program requires no coordination with the Madrid campus.

*Please attach any tables, graphics, or charts to the end of this report.*
3. Describe how assessment feedback has been provided to students, faculty, and staff. *(e.g. report for faculty, executive summary for the dean, web page for students, alumni newsletter, discussion with students in class or club event, etc.)*

   During the spring semester, a Forensic Science Club was initiated. Students are extremely enthusiastic about the additional extracurricular learning opportunities the club will provide.

   A Mentoring Matters event was held on March 15th for all Forensic Science majors and minors. During the event, the Forensic Science faculty members were present to answer questions about the program in general, about specific courses, and about practicum and internship possibilities and how to apply for them.

   News related to the program and the achievements of our Forensic Science students are posted in the Department Newsletter each semester.

4. In what ways have you used assessment findings to celebrate student achievements and/or to improve the curriculum this past year? *(e.g. prizes to students, hosting student parties, changes to curriculum, student projects, learning goals, assessment strategies, etc.)*

   During meetings of the Forensic Science faculty over the past academic year, discussions included:
   a) standardization of the learning objectives for the Survey of Forensic Sciences courses
   b) implementation of an early warning alert for students who are falling behind or exhibiting other impediments to the learning process
   c) selection of the Outstanding Student in Forensic Science Award with recognition at the graduation reception
   d) acquisition of additional classroom equipment to enhance the learning experience

   Also see point c) above as well as the notations regarding the Forensic Science Club and the Mentoring Matters event in Section 3 above.

5. Describe any changes to your assessment plans, or any challenges or educational experiences with the assessment process this past year that you would like to share.

   The use of a rubric to measure student learning outcomes has proven promising and will be revised and developed further as will the exit interviews with current and graduating students. In addition, the evaluations submitted by practicum and internship supervisors will be assessed and analyzed in an effort to ascertain any weaknesses and/or highlight the strengths of our program.

   More focus is planned on highlighting student involvement and achievements in practicum and
internship experiences through the Department Newsletters.

Please submit any revised/updated assessment plans to the University Assessment Coordinator along with this report.
APPENDIX A
SAINT LOUIS UNIVERSITY
DEPARTMENT OF SOCIOLOGY AND ANTHROPOLOGY
Capstone in Forensic Science

Rubric for Evaluating Capstone Papers and Presentations

Name of presenter:___________________________________________

Topic: _____________________________________________________

Please rate the presentation on a scale of 1 (lowest score) to 5 (highest score).

Content of Paper or Poster
• _____Clearly introduces topic and states thesis and hypothesis
• _____Transitions smoothly and explicitly between sections and main points
• _____Defines key concepts precisely and accurately
• _____Uses insightful data or examples to demonstrate points
• _____Summarizes and explains implications in conclusion
• _____Uses readings effectively -- quantity, quality, and ideas/quotes

Presentation
• _____Professional appearance and attire
• _____Presentation demonstrated adequate preparation
• _____Research is clearly and succinctly stated
• _____Presentation progresses logically
• _____Visual aids (Power Point, graphs, charts, etc.) are appropriate and helpful
• _____Student was able to answer questions posed by audience
• _____Acknowledged CFM and others involved in the project

Format and Style (Evaluated by Capstone Faculty Mentor only)
• _____Title page has informative yet interesting title, plus name, course, date, and professor's (CFM) name
• _____Citations and reference section are done correctly
• _____Correct grammar is used (spelling, punctuation, verb tense, etc.)
• _____Pages are numbered --except title page, which is implicitly page "0"

Process (Evaluated by Capstone Faculty Mentor only)
• _____Made regular and consistent progress throughout semester
• _____Did not miss, cancel, or reschedule appointments more than once or twice
• _____Met key deadlines laid out in syllabus

Additional comments
APPENDIX B

Exit Interview with Graduating Seniors

Focus group questions:

1. What was the most interesting question on the questionnaire?

2. What elective courses would you suggest we create?

3. What required courses would you suggest we create?

4. Do you feel you have a sense of the breadth of knowledge of this discipline and the patterns of evidence in this field?

5. Were courses with hands-on-experience helpful?

6. Do you think you received helpful guidance from you mentor?

7. Weakness in the curriculum—What courses would help broaden or deepen your sense and appreciation of Forensic Science?

8. Do you feel you have learned to demonstrate a thorough knowledge of foundational forensic science concepts and theory across the various subareas (e.g., Forensic Biology/Chemistry, Crime Scene, Survey of Forensic Science)?

9. Do you feel you have learned to demonstrate an understanding of the scientific basis of investigative and analytical methods?

10. Other Issues:
    a. Facilities?
    b. Research Experience?
    c. Security issues?

11. What additional questions should we be asking?

12. Additional Comments: