SAINT LOUIS UNIVERSITY.

Program-Level Assessment: Annual Report

Program: Sociology	Department: Sociology and Anthropology
Degree or Certificate Level: BA	College/School: Arts and Sciences
Date (Month/Year): June/2020	Primary Assessment Contact: Joel Jennings
In what year was the data upon which this report is based collected? 2019-2020	
In what year was the program's assessment plan most recently reviewed/updated? 2016	

1. Student Learning Outcomes
Which of the program's student learning outcomes were assessed in this annual assessment cycle?

Goal #1: Sociology majors will demonstrate an understanding of issues related to diversity, inequality, and social justice.

Learning Outcomes:
a) identify examples of cross-cultural diversity in beliefs and customs
b) identify examples of stratification by race/ethnicity, gender, and social class, and explain how inequality affects life chances, especially for marginalized others
c) articulate policies and practices that can help promote social justice in local, national, or global contexts

2. Assessment Methods: Student Artifacts
Which student artifacts were used to determine if students achieved this outcome? Please identify the course(s) in which these artifacts were collected. Clarify if any such courses were offered a) online, b) at the Madrid campus, or c) at any other off-campus location.

We analyzed a randomly selected sample of three Capstone papers. The papers were written as a partial requirement for the completion of Soc 4800: Capstone. These Capstone papers either empirical works or literature reviews that were guided by individual faculty members and overseen by an instructor of record in the Sociology division.

Madrid artifacts were not included. Students completed the second half of the semester online due to the onset of the Covid-19 pandemic.

We normally would have undertaken qualitative interviews to supplement the student artifacts, with the complexity of being of campus we were unable to gather that data this year.

3. Assessment Methods: Evaluation Process
What process was used to evaluate the student artifacts, and by whom? Please identify the tools(s) (e.g., a rubric) used in the process and include them in/with this report.

Direct Methods:

1) During June 2020, a committee (Dr. Chris Prener and Dr. Kathryn Kuhn) evaluated a sample of Capstone papers (3 of 16) using a rubric that focused on the three learning objectives. (see Appendices 1.1 and 1.4)

Indirect Methods:

1) We were unable to gather data through indirect methods this year due to Covid-19.

4. Data/Results

What were the results of the assessment of the learning outcomes? Please be specific. Does achievement differ by teaching modality (e.g., online vs. face-to-face) or on-ground location (e.g., STL campus, Madrid campus, other off-campus site)?

a) $(4+4+3.5+4+5+2) = 22.5/6 = 3.75$
b) $(4+5+4+2+5+4) = 24/6 = 4.0$
c) $(5+4.5+2+3+5+4) = 23.5/6 = 3.91$

The teaching modalities this year were split between face-to-face and online instruction due to the Covid-19 pandemic. This is an unusual situation as the mode of instruction is generally completely face-to-face.

5. Findings: Interpretations & Conclusions

What have you learned from these results? What does the data tell you?

The findings from this year's analysis suggests a slightly different pattern than we have seen in past years. In the past we have generally seen some variance in terms of the quality of the students writing, reflecting the spectrum of student ability. This year the focus was more on gaps where the students wrote generally strong papers, but did not address the learning outcome in question. Thus, the comments from the reviewers indicated at several points that the student's papers were excellent in terms of their writing and overall product, but received lower scores because their paper either didn't address the learning outcome due to the structure of the paper, or as was noted several times in the reviews, had an opportunity to address the learning outcomes but did not.

This suggests that as a division we should revisit the learning objectives and consider their role for informing student's papers. Should instructors be guiding students to address the assessment questions in their capstone papers? Does this then create a measure of 'teaching to the test'? Do we as a division need to change the learning outcomes? Is it acceptable to recognize that students are not going to always incorporate the standards into every paper, and we should differentiate in our reports between papers that are assessed with lower scores because they were of lower quality as opposed to those that are assessed at a lower level because they did not address the outcomes (but were generally of higher quality).

Overall, the findings of this assessment suggest that our students did high quality work that reflects well on the department's aspirations toward excellence. This was not necessarily fully reflected in the overall quantitative scores, however, because of the instances where students simply did not address the learning outcome in question. However, unlike in past years, lower scores this year were generally *not* reflective of overall lower quality.

6. Closing the Loop: Dissemination and Use of <u>Current</u> Assessment Findings

A. When and how did your program faculty share and discuss these results and findings from this cycle of assessment?

Sociology has now completed a full assessment cycle. Thus, we will review the data from the past four years in a division meeting in the fall semester 2020 and consider what changes we need to make to the program and/or the assessment documents. Every fall semester the sociology faculty use a division meeting to review the previous year's findings and consider any structural adjustments that need to be made to the program based on our findings. This year this data will be used to address questions around the learning outcomes and how they relate to our expectations for the capstone papers.

B. How specifically have you decided to use findings to improve teaching and learning in your program? For example, perhaps you've initiated one or more of the following:

Changes to the Curriculum or Pedagogies	• Course content	• Course sequence
	• Teaching techniques	• New courses
	• Improvements in technology	• Deletion of courses
	• Prerequisites	• Changes in frequency or scheduling of course offerings
Changes to the Assessment Plan	• Student learning outcomes	• Evaluation tools (e.g., rubrics)
	• Student artifacts collected	• Data collection methods
	• Evaluation process	• Frequency of data collection

Please describe the actions you are taking as a result of the findings.

The actions we will undertake this year, as described above, will consider the implications of 'missing' elements of student's otherwise high quality papers. We will examine the relationship between the capstone course, capstone artifacts, and learning outcomes to consider whether we need to bring these three elements into closer alignment.

If no changes are being made, please explain why.

N/A

7. **Closing the Loop: Review of <u>Previous</u> Assessment Findings and Changes**

   A. What is at least one change your program has implemented in recent years as a result of assessment data?

   Based on the previous assessment, we had an extended discussion in several division meetings about the way to provide a stronger scaffold for students in preparation for their capstones. This involved a discussion of how to ensure that students were prepared in lower-level courses by learning how to do a literature review. This is an on-going discussion, but has resulted in faculty reviewing the skills scaffolding of our undergraduate courses.

   B. How has this change/have these changes been assessed?

   These changes have not been formally assessed as the discussion resulted in faculty considering individual elements of their classes that might be used to solidify the capstone experience.

   C. What were the findings of the assessment?

   Not applicable at this time.

   D. How do you plan to (continue to) use this information moving forward?

   We are continuing to consider and refine the ways that our undergraduate courses support the capstone experience. We anticipate integrating our considerations into changes of the capstone as we move into the new academic core. We expect there will be substantial changes to the Capstone experience at that time.

IMPORTANT: Please submit any assessment tools and/or revised/updated assessment plans along with this report.

Rubric for Assessing Goal #1

Paper # _____   Last Name_____

1) Does the student identify examples of cross-cultural diversity in beliefs and customs?

Poor		*Adequate*		*Excellent*
1	*2*	*3*	*4*	*5*

Comments:

2) Does the student identify examples of stratification by race/ethnicity, gender, and social class, and explain how inequality affects life chances, especially for marginalized others?

Poor		*Adequate*		*Excellent*
1	*2*	*3*	*4*	*5*

Comments:

3) Does the student articulate policies and practices that can help promote social justice in local, national, or global contexts?

Poor		*Adequate*		*Excellent*
1	2	3	4	5

Comments:

Appendix 1.4: Quantitative Sociology Assessment (2020)

Name	Outcome 1	Outcome 2	Outcome 3	Comments and Possible Recommendations
Student 1				
Kathryn	4	4	5	
Chris	4	2	5	
Student 2				
Kathryn	4	5	4.5	
Chris	2	4	4	
Student 3				
Kathryn	3.5	4	2	
Chris	5	5	3	
	22.5	**24**	**23.5**	
	3.75	**4.00**	**3.92**	

1=unacceptable		Outcome 1= identify examples of cross-cultural diversity in beliefs and customs
3=adequate		Outcome 2= identify examples of stratification by race/ethnicity, gender, and social class, and explain how inequality affects life ch
5=excellent		Outcome 3= articulate policies and practices that can help promote social justice in local, national, or global contexts