

## Program-Level Assessment: Annual Report

Program: Sociology – MA Program

Department: Sociology and Anthropology

Degree or Certificate Level: Graduate

College/School: College of Arts and Sciences

Date (Month/Year): June 30, 2020

Primary Assessment Contact: Ness Sandoval  
(ness.sandoval@slu.edu)

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? Summer of 2019

### 1. Student Learning Outcomes

Which of the program's student learning outcomes were assessed in this annual assessment cycle?

This assessment report is for the MA program in sociology. This year three students graduated from the MA program. Two students did a thesis and one student completed the non-thesis track. Additionally, two students defended a thesis proposal. We had three reviewers for this assessment.

The Learning outcome that was assessed was learning outcome #4. **Articulate scholarly research activity clearly, for professional and/or general audiences, in written, oral or visual formats. (Communication)**

See Appendix A for the Learning Outcomes

### 2. Assessment Methods: Artifacts of Student Learning

Which artifacts of student learning were used to determine if students achieved the outcome(s)? 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.

1. *Written examinations and thesis were collected.*
2. *We assessed two completed theses*
3. *We assessed two oral defenses: one thesis proposal and one oral defense.*
4. *All students completed an annual report on their academic progress.*
5. *No artifacts were collected from the Madrid campus.*

### 3. Assessment Methods: Evaluation Process

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

*We held one zoom meeting to clarify the process and which documents were needed for the assessment. We agreed that learning outcome #4 would be used for this assessment. This learning outcome had seven questions. Three reviewers were selected. All information was confidential. The highest scores for each question was 5 and the lowest scores was 1. See Appendix B for the detailed results.*

#### 4. Data/Results

What were the results of the assessment of the learning outcome(s)? 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)?

1. *The highest score rating (average 4.0) for the artifacts was for two questions: “Does the student demonstrate writing in his/her thesis and/or papers that show content knowledge and development? And Does the student follow general sociological and professional conventions in his/her thesis and/or papers? If not, does the student adequately justify the alternative styles?”*
2. *The lowest score rating (average 2.8) for the artifacts was for the question, “At what level would you place the visual presentation competency of this student?”*

See Appendix B for all the results.

#### 5. Findings: Interpretations & Conclusions

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

1. *The findings show that the program has a weakness in preparing students for oral communication (e.g., PowerPoints, graphics, etc.). Part of this problem may be related to the elimination of the proseminar. Another element that may contribute to this weakness is that many of the classes are geared to the Ph.D. level of communication because of the PSP Ph.D. program. There are two classes geared to the MA students.*
2. *The data tells us that we need to ask faculty that teach all graduate classes to incorporate more information on oral communication and how to incorporate graphics into their presentations.*

#### 6. Closing the Loop: Dissemination and Use of Current Assessment Findings

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

1. *We will provide a report at the annual faculty meeting in August.*
2. *The MA programs offers at minimum three open fora in which all students can attend. (1) Fall orientation; (2) Fall Roundtable (Fall), and Spring PSP Graduate Roundtable (May)*
3. *We will hold a roundtable in Fall 2020 and share the results with students and get feedback on types of brownbag that are needed to improve oral communication.*
4. *We plan to have at one roundtable that will focus on oral communication and the use of graphics in oral presentations.*

B. How specifically have you decided to use these 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
- Teaching techniques
- Improvements in technology
- Prerequisites
- Course sequence
- New courses
- Deletion of courses
- Changes in frequency or scheduling of course offerings

Changes to the  
Assessment Plan

- Student learning outcomes
- Artifacts of student learning
- Evaluation process
- Evaluation tools (e.g., rubrics)
- Data collection methods
- Frequency of data collection

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

- *We will provide a report at the annual faculty meeting in August. We plan to have at one roundtable that will focus on oral communication and the use of graphics in oral presentations. This roundtable will be conducted using zoom.*

If no changes are being made, please explain why.

**7. Closing the Loop: Review of Previous Assessment Findings and Changes**

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

The program eliminated the pro-seminar based on previous assessments. We found the pro-seminar to be the weakest part of the MA program.

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

This is the fourth year we have assessed the MA program. Each year we assess a different theme. Next year we will assess Ethics. This year we will review the entire MA program and class content for a possible complete makeover.

**C.** What were the findings of the assessment?

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

Yes. We will continue to use the assessment to give feedback to faculty on areas of strengths and weaknesses of our students.

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

**Appendix A**  
**Learning Outcomes**

Program Learning Outcomes	Curriculum Mapping
<i>What do you expect all students who complete the program to know, or be able to do?</i>	<i>Where is the outcome learned/assessed (courses, internships, student teaching, clinical, etc.)?</i>
Critically assess sociological literature and sociological theories. <b>(Knowledge – theory)</b>	SOC 5010 - Organizational Theory SOC 5100 - ProSeminar Coursework in substantive area Research Proposal/Defense Thesis/Research Papers
Appropriately apply major research methodologies utilized in Sociology. <b>(Knowledge – methods and analysis)</b>	SOC 5050 - Applied Inferential Stat SOC 5600 - Research Methodology Advanced Methods coursework Research Proposal/Defense Thesis/Research Papers
Apply the Sociological Imagination to the study of social issues in a broader societal context. <b>(Critical thinking)</b>	SOC 5010 - Organizational Theory SOC 5100 - ProSeminar Coursework in substantive area Research Proposal/Defense Thesis/Research Papers
Articulate scholarly research activity clearly, for professional and/or general audiences, in written, oral or visual formats. <b>(Communication)</b>	Expected requirement of all coursework Research Proposal/Defense Thesis
Evidence scholarly and/or professional ethical integrity in their research of social issues. <b>(Ethics)</b>	SOC 5100 - ProSeminar SOC 5600 - Research Methodology SOC 5990 - Thesis Research Research Proposal/Defense Thesis/Research Papers Thesis/Papers Defense

## **Appendix B**

**#4. *Articulate scholarly research activity clearly, for professional and/or general audiences, in written, oral or visual formats. (Communication)***

## Summary Learning Outcomes

Program Learning Outcomes	Curriculum Mapping
<i>What do you expect all students who complete the program to know, or be able to do?</i>	<i>Where is the outcome learned/assessed (courses, internships, student teaching, clinical, etc.)?</i>
Articulate scholarly research activity clearly, for professional and/or general audiences, in written, oral or visual formats. <b>(Communication)</b>	Expected requirement of all coursework Research Proposal/Defense Thesis

Student: \_\_\_\_\_

Evaluator: \_\_\_\_\_

Rubric for the evaluation of the final project, of either a “thesis” or “two final papers,” from graduate students in the MA program in sociology, in regards to program learning outcome #4:

Articulate scholarly research activity clearly, for professional and/or general audiences, in written, oral or visual formats. **(Communication)**

1. Does the student demonstrate writing in his/her thesis and/or papers that show content knowledge and development?

❶ Unacceptable	❷ Weak	❸ Adequate	❹ Good	❺ Excellent
Fails to use appropriate and relevant content to develop and shape ideas in the thesis and/or papers.	Uses appropriate and relevant content to develop simple ideas in some parts of the thesis and/or papers.	Uses appropriate and relevant content to develop and explore ideas through most of the thesis and/or papers	Uses appropriate, relevant and compelling content to explore ideas within the context of the discipline and shape the entire piece of work.	Uses appropriate, relevant and compelling content to illustrate mastery of the subject, conveying the writer’s understanding and shaping the entire piece of work.

Comments regarding written content development. If there are deficiencies, please describe.

**AVERAGE SCORE 4.0**

2. Does the student follow general sociological and professional conventions in his/her thesis and/or papers? If not, does the student adequately justify the alternative styles?

❶ Unacceptable	❷ Weak	❸ Adequate	❹ Good	❺ Excellent
There is no consistent system of organization or presentation in the thesis and/or papers.	Attempts to use a consistent system for basic organization and presentation.	Follows some of the appropriate sociological conventions but has drawbacks in terms of organization, content, formatting, citation support and stylistic choices.	Demonstrates mostly consistent use of important professional sociological conventions, including organization, content, formatting, citation support and stylistic choices.	Demonstrates detailed attention to and successful execution of professional conventions specific to sociology, including organization, content, formatting, citation support and stylistic choices.

Comments regarding professional writing style and structure. If there are deficiencies, please describe.

**AVERAGE SCORE 4.0**



3. At what level would you place the writing competency of this student?

① Beginning Undergrad student	② Senior Undergrad student	③ Master's level student	④ Doctoral level student	⑤ Professional level colleague
-------------------------------	----------------------------	--------------------------	--------------------------	--------------------------------

Comments regarding the level of the student's writing competency. If there are deficiencies, please describe.

**AVERAGE SCORE 3.2**

4. Does the student demonstrate prepared, purposeful and effective oral communication of his/her ideas?

① Unacceptable	② Weak	③ Adequate	④ Good	⑤ Excellent
Organizational pattern (specific introduction and conclusion, sequenced material within the body, and transitions) is not observable within the presentation.	Organizational pattern (specific introduction and conclusion, sequenced material within the body, and transitions) is weakly observable within the presentation.	Organizational pattern (specific introduction and conclusion, sequenced material within the body, and transitions) is intermittently observable within the presentation.	Organizational pattern (specific introduction and conclusion, sequenced material within the body, and transitions) is clearly and consistently observable within the presentation.	Organizational pattern (specific introduction and conclusion, sequenced material within the body, and transitions) is clearly and consistently observable and is skillful and makes the content of the presentation cohesive.

Comments regarding oral communication skills. If there are deficiencies, please describe.

**AVERAGE SCORE 3.0**

5. At what level would you place the oral presentation competency of this student?

① Beginning Undergrad student	② Senior Undergrad student	③ Master's level student	④ Doctoral level student	⑤ Professional level colleague
-------------------------------	----------------------------	--------------------------	--------------------------	--------------------------------

Comments regarding the level of the student's oral presentation skills. If there are deficiencies, please describe.

**AVERAGE SCORE 2.7**

6. Does the student demonstrate prepared, purposeful and effective visual presentation of his/her ideas?

❶ Unacceptable	❷ Weak	❸ Adequate	❹ Good	❺ Excellent
Visual presentation is very disjointed and detracts from the presentation.	The visual presentation is limited and provides minimal enhancement and support to some of the ideas, content, results, etc. of his/her thesis and/or papers.	The visual presentation is okay and provides enhancement and support to some of the ideas, content, results, etc. of his/her thesis and/or papers.	The visual presentation is good and provides enhancement and support to most of the ideas, content, results, etc. of his/her thesis and/or papers.	The visual presentation is an excellent supportive tool utilized by the student to enhance and support the ideas, content, results, etc. of his/her thesis and/or papers.

***AVERAGE SCORE 3.7***

7. At what level would you place the visual presentation competency of this student?

❶ Beginning Undergrad student	❷ Senior Undergrad student	❸ Master's level student	❹ Doctoral level student	❺ Professional level colleague
-------------------------------	----------------------------	--------------------------	--------------------------	--------------------------------

Comments regarding the level of the student's visual presentation skills. If there are deficiencies, please describe.

***AVERAGE SCORE 2.8***