

Program-Level Assessment: Annual Report

Program: **MA Leadership and Organizational**

Department:

Development

Degree or Certificate Level: **Master of Arts**

College/School: **School for Professional Studies**

Date (Month/Year): **June 2021**

Primary Assessment Contact: **Steven Winton PhD**

In what year was the data upon which this report is based collected? **2020-2021**

In what year was the program's assessment plan most recently reviewed/updated? **2018**

1. Student Learning Outcomes

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

The MA LOD program has the following set of learning outcomes (LO's):

LO1: Graduates will be able to apply program-specific knowledge to address practical problems using an ethical, evidence-based framework.

LO2: Graduates will be able to utilize argumentation skills appropriate for a given problem or context.

LO3: Graduates will be able to apply organizational development theory in intervention design.

LO4: Graduates will be able to apply leadership competencies appropriate for a given situation or context.

Additionally, the program instituted an assessment process whereby we analyze/review the data for all four LO's each year. We select one or two LO's to focus our efforts. This year we directed our attention on LO4.

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.

Our new assessment protocol integrates data from three sources to evaluate student learning:

1. Instructors complete a formative assessment through a survey at the end of each course. Through the survey, instructors are asked to describe specific artifacts that are related to each LO that is mapped to that course. Instructors then assess competency in this area, as well as potential opportunities for improvement. It is important to note that this process is meant to gather data that is independent of grades given.
2. Faculty mentors complete a summative assessment on each student at the conclusion of their capstone. Mentor's assess the student's performance for each of the learning outcomes.
3. A student assessment of learning outcomes is also completed by students at the end of their degree. This indirect measure asks students to rate the extent they learned and developed on each LO. They also indicate what specific competencies they developed and which they feel they need additional development.

**If we have a Madrid student in the program, then they would be fully admitted into the program.

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.

We pulled raw survey data from each of the three surveys administered in Qualtrics. We then tabulated the quantitative data to provide a high-level overview, as well as content analyzed the qualitative data to identify key themes for each LO.

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)?

Overall we learned that 100% of our students are satisfied with the quality of the program, 95% feel challenged, and 94% would recommend the program to a friend. Furthermore, 100% of the students feel they developed significantly in each of the four learning outcomes (i.e., rated learning on each LO to a great or moderate extent). Overall, student perceptions of learning were similar to previous years. On the formative survey, instructors also perceived student achievement of LOs to be like previous years. The summative survey, however, indicated better achievement of all outcomes, with few students assessed at low-levels of mastery (i.e., students were assessed to be fully or moderately achieving all outcomes).

- Among the LOs, students rated LO4 (apply leadership competencies) highest, and instructors seemed to agree. On the summative assessment, instructors rated that 94% of students demonstrated full achievement of LO4, which is the highest rating received on this LO. On the formative survey instructors noted that 68% of students attained LO4 at a high degree of mastery (the highest of all other LOs).
- For LO 1, 2, & 3 there was some alignment between the summative assessment and the student ratings. Both noted that LO3 (OD) to be one of the lower rated LOs. Instructors, however, indicated more of an issue with LO1 (methods, stats), while students reported learning less on LO2 (effective argumentation skills).
- The formative instructor survey indicated a discrepancy between the content-related LOs (LO3 – OD; LO4 – leadership) and the writing and research-related LOs (LO1 & 2). LOs 1 and 2 were rated much lower than LOs 3 and 4 (68% full student achievement compared to 40/48% full student achievement). Given that argumentation skills and providing evidence are ongoing issues, especially for new students, this is not surprising. Several faculty also commented that focusing on writing and argumentation issues impacts how much time they spend on content.
- The higher ratings from the summative instructor assessment and student exit surveys (above the formative assessment data) suggests that students are improving as they progress in the program (particularly LOs 1 & 2), as these ratings reflect student competency at the conclusion of the degree. It should be noted that changes could also represent random differences among cohort samples.

Please see attached appendix for executive summary of results.

5. Findings: Interpretations & Conclusions

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

Overall, the results tell us that students self-report that they are learning a great extent on each LO. Furthermore, students are satisfied with their experiences in the program. Faculty generally agree that a majority of students are demonstrating full achievement of LOs, but there are a percentage of students only partially demonstrating learning. Most weaknesses relate to student writing abilities and APA knowledge, applying OD tools, utilizing sources and instructor feedback, and forming logical arguments.

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?

Each year a complete report is distributed among key faculty and administrators associated with the program for feedback. Recommendations and action items are discussed, shared, and implemented.

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
- 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
- Student artifacts collected
- 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 the findings.

We continually work to improve the curriculum. Regarding writing we have:

- Implemented a series of orientation and graduate preparation courses (i.e., general orientation, writing, stats) to be taken prior to enrolling in the first course. As we cannot require these courses, we are working on different approaches to better direct students into these modules/courses.
- SPS faculty continue to refer students to our online tutorial platform, SmartThinking.
- Built rubrics and provided tutorials and coaching to assist with APA and general writing. Several classes updated resources and changed assignments (e.g., scaffolding, argument maps) to help students build stronger arguments.

Regarding the leadership LO we have:

- Made significant changes to all of the relevant courses (ORLD 5010, ORLD 5250, ORLD 5350, and ORLD 5100).
- Started a separate Post-Baccalaureate Certificate in Organizational Leadership

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?

We continue to “close the loop” on past assessment work. Past analyses of assessment data were used to inform recent curricular changes, some of which were made to directly influence student learning in LO3 (e.g., adding ORLD 5550 Consulting Skills). Another example was the new writing-focused orientation we implemented to improve student achievement of LO2.

Furthermore, based on this data we intend to make additional changes to improve student learning in each LO. For example, the data suggests that the program is doing quite well on LO4 (i.e., recent changes are working to improve student learning); however, the lower ratings on LO3 (OD) indicate that we need to revisit this LO (i.e., curricular changes we made over the last few years may not have brought about the changes we intended). LOs 1 & 2 seem to be a consistent area of concern even though curricular changes seem to be helping (i.e., more work is needed).

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

It is difficult to comparatively assess how much these changes are impacting student learning as the sample sizes are small and the faculty who rate these each year also vary from year to year. Taken collectively, however, the data tell a story of improvement and is supplemented with qualitative data that provide additional clarification. For example, this year the summative instructor ratings suggest that there have been improvements in student outcomes, particularly with few students in the low end of mastery. Perhaps the strongest evidence that curricular changes have impacted student learning is based on student exit survey comments. We have worked to build a seamless curriculum and students noted how well the curriculum prepared them for their capstone, specifically noting its cohesive nature and how each course built on each other.

C. What were the findings of the assessment?

Formative data suggests there is still opportunity to improve upon LO4, yet a focus on other LOs may be needed. We intend to renew our focus on LO2 and LO3. For example, we can consider how ORLD 5450- Leading Organizational Change introduces students to the basics of an OD approach. We can also work on building better assignments in student MRPs as they grapple with real-world data and working with clients.

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

We take a holistic approach to assessment. The plan will be reviewed annually to ensure it continues to meet the program's needs. If a given learning outcome indicated areas in need of focused assessment, especially as it relates to one or more courses within the program or a foundational competency, then the schedule may be altered as needed, but this alteration will be temporary rather than permanent. As SPS programs continually evolve to meet changing market needs, this assessment plan is to be considered dynamic and subject to change as the program evolves and new programs are offered.

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

Executive Summary
School for Professional Studies
MA Leadership and Organizational Development Program
Assessment of Learning Outcomes

This report provides insight into the achievement of the four learning outcomes for the Leadership and Organizational Development program at the School for Professional Studies:

1. Graduates will be able to apply program-specific knowledge to address practical problems using an ethical, evidence-based framework.
2. Graduates will be able to utilize argumentation skills appropriate for a given problem or context.
3. Graduates will be able to apply organizational development theory in intervention design.
4. Graduates will be able to apply leadership competencies appropriate for a given situation or context.

Three reports detail information from faculty and student perspectives (See pages 5-8 for more detail).

- The Instructor Summative Assessment includes the percentage of students' degree of mastery for each learning objective, and also details the strengths and weaknesses students displayed for each outcome from the instructor's perspective.
- The Instructor Formative Assessment includes identification of a course artifact related to each outcome, strengths and weaknesses in student performance associated with the identified artifact, and suggestions for improving student learning toward the program-level outcome. This report concludes with overall recommendations from faculty for improving student learning in their course and the program overall.

- The Student Assessment includes demographics of students, their ratings of various factors that attracted them to SPS, descriptions of their personal and professional development since joining the program, ratings of competencies that were most useful for their personal and professional goals, and their satisfaction ratings of various program artifacts.

Instructor Summative Assessment of Learning Outcomes

Learning Objective	High degree of mastery (2018, 2019, 2020)	Moderate degree of mastery (2018, 2019, 2020)	Low degree of mastery (2018, 2019, 2020)
<i>Apply organizational development theory in intervention design. (N=13)</i>	41%, 46%, 69%	59%, 31%, 31%	0, 23%, 0
<i>Apply leadership competencies appropriate for a given situation or context. (N=13)</i>	52%, 54%, 94%	48%, 31%, 6%	0, 15%, 0
<i>Apply program-specific knowledge to address practical problems using an ethical, evidence-based framework. (N=13)</i>	55%, 54%, 63%	30%, 38%, 38%	15%, 8%, 0
<i>Utilize argumentation skills appropriate for a given problem or context. (N=13)</i>	58%, 61%, 75%	36%, 31%, 25%	6%, 8%, 0

Learning Objective: *Apply organizational development theory in intervention design*

Strengths:

- Worked with key stakeholders/leadership
- Students were able to understand and apply the OD approach
- Understood role as consultant

Weaknesses:

- **Several projects were more studies of OD, rather than working directly with clients
- Struggled to see role as consultant, need more experience/confidence
- Struggled to get key stakeholders involved
- Encountered obstacles out of one's control (e.g., change jobs, move, COVID)

Learning Objective: *Apply leadership competencies appropriate for a given situation or context.*

Strengths:

- ALL students were competent in applying leadership competencies
- Used findings to make recommendations/spark ideas

Weaknesses:

- More tactical than strategic; Struggled to see big picture and see implications beyond project
- Not prepared to navigate internal politics

Learning Objective: *Apply program-specific knowledge to address practical problems using an ethical, evidence-based framework.*

Strengths:

- Effectively employed mixed methods, including use of survey research; ran descriptive statistics to analyze data (a few did sophisticated analyses)
- Utilized CPS or focus group approach with qualitative data analysis
- Demonstrated mastery in interpreting data and connecting results to recommendations

Weaknesses

- A few struggled with analyzing and reporting survey data
- A few struggled to connect analysis with recommendations

Learning Objective: *Utilize effective discipline-specific argumentation skills.*

Strengths:

- Overall, students present and write well (there has been evident improvement here)
- Accepts feedback

Weaknesses:

- A few still have difficulty organizing/writing the paper or reporting results

- A few still have difficulty building concise argument
- A couple struggled with format of presentation

Instructor Formative Assessment of Learning Outcomes

Learning Objective	Strengths (% of students who demonstrated <i>full</i> achievement of this outcome)	Weaknesses (% of students who demonstrated <i>partial</i> or <i>no</i> achievement of this outcome)	Ideas for Improvement
<p><i>Apply organizational development theory in intervention design.</i> (2018: N=143; 2019: N=73; 2020: 77)</p>	<p>Demonstrated use of OD tools and concepts; ability to write substantive responses; used logical design and strong application of course materials; (2018: 56%; 2019: 59%; 2020: 68%).</p>	<p>Failed to grasp OD tools and could not make connections to topic; lack of clarity and application; submissions missing required components; numerous errors; (Partial - 2018: 29%; 2019: 40%; 2020: 29% / No - 2018: 13%; 2019: 1%; 2020: 4%).</p>	<p>Early feedback on case studies; add video examples of the phenomena under study to further illustrate the concept, especially to help clarify what it means to use an "organizational development approach"; clearer and more direct instructions; additional use of audio feedback; increased focus on coaching; engage SLU's Center for Service and Community Engagement to identify projects; continue with group projects as it was best fit for the learning objective.</p>
<p><i>Apply leadership competencies appropriate for a given situation or context.</i> (2018: N=117; 2019: N=44; 2020: 95)</p>	<p>Developed thoughtful, well-supported models; clearly articulated how leadership competencies would be leveraged for the purposes of the needs assessment; applied competencies to own experiences (2018: 64%; 2019: 52%; 2020: 68%).</p>	<p>Developed models not well-supported; failed to refer to any actual leadership competencies outside of generic discussions; did not think critically; (Partial - 2018: 21%; 2019: 36%; 2020: 21% / No - 2018: 14%; 2019: 11%; 2020: 11%).</p>	<p>COVID required a change in assignments, but some changes were positive and will be implemented in future courses; use TDS; revisit the rubrics to ensure that the anchors and descriptions align with expectations.</p>
<p><i>Apply program-specific knowledge to address practical problems using an ethical, evidence-based framework.</i> (2018: N=118; 2019: 32; 2020: 47)</p>	<p>Effective application of course material relating to both ethics and evidence; sound argumentation and logical flow; recognition of some of the possible issues/pitfalls in completing the project; (2018: 50%; 2019: 31%; 2020: 40%).</p>	<p>Failure to effectively apply course material; lack of logical flow/choppy sections that didn't hang well together; failure to recognize his/her own biases and fallacious thinking when it came to argument construction; (Partial - 2018: 35%; 2019: 59%; 2020: 40% / No _</p>	<p>Change up assignment instructions to improve how well some of the low-performing students encode the requirements; add a "mastery of course material" element to writing rubric; provide more clarity on the final project to better conceptualize a problem.</p>

		2018: 14%; 2019: 0%; 2020: 19%).	
<i>Utilize argumentation skills appropriate for a given problem or context. (2018: N=260; 2019: 97; 2020: 120)</i>	Utilized evidence to support claims and draw conclusions; developed sound arguments with support; well-organized sections; strong APA (2018: 57%; 2019: 45%; 2020: 48%).	Lack of coherence and logic in arguments; struggled with organization of sections, providing support, and citing their claims; (Partial - 2018: 29%; 2019: 46%; 2020: 38% /No - 2018: 13%; 2019: 8%; 2020: 14%).	Ensure participation in writing orientation; increased faculty coaching including live tele-conferences; change instructions to improve how well some of the low-performing students encode the requirements; incorporate an APA activity early on to help students understand the value of APA style and the reason why it's required; utilize a resource or quiz up front about APA format.

Student Assessment of Learning Outcomes

To What Extent Students Learned

Learning Objective	To a great extent (2018, 2019, 2020)	To a moderate extent (2018, 2019, 2020)
<i>Apply organizational development theory in intervention design. (N=19)</i>	73%, 75%, 68%	27%, 25%, 32%
<i>Apply leadership competencies appropriate for a given situation or context. (N=19)</i>	87%, 95%, 84%	13%, 5%, 16%
<i>Apply program-specific knowledge to address practical problems using an ethical, evidence-based framework. (N = 19)</i>	86%, 90%, 79%	14%, 10%, 11%
<i>Utilize argumentation skills appropriate for a given problem or context. (N=19)</i>	59%, 70%, 63%	41%, 30%, 37%

Student Satisfaction

Factors	Very satisfied	Somewhat satisfied	Moderately satisfied	Not at all satisfied
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	(2018, 2019, 2020)	(2018, 2019, 2020)	(2018, 2019, 2020)	(2018, 2019, 2020)
The structure of the program (N=19)	73%, 90%, 79%	20%, 5%, 21%	67%, 5%, 0	0, 0, 0
The subject matter expertise of instructors (N=19)	90%, 95%, 79%	6%, 0, 21%	4%, 5%, 0	0, 0, 0
The application of course material to your work (N=19)	79%, 85%, 74%	21%, 0, 26%	0%, 15%, 0	0, 0, 0
Opportunities for professional development (N=19)	62%, 75%, 74%	31%, 5%, 21%	7%, 20%, 0	0, 0, 5%
Overall sense of community (N=19)	28%, 50%, 53%	55%, 10%, 16%	17%, 35%, 26%	0, 5%, 5%
Student-to-student interaction in SPS graduate classes (N=19)	72%, 50%, 53%	14%, 0, 32%	14%, 45%, 11%	0, 5%, 5%
Faculty-to-student interaction in SPS graduate classes (N=19)	53%, 65%, 63%	40%, 10%, 37%	7%, 25%, 0	0, 0, 0
Communication with (i.e. availability and responsiveness of) the Program Director. (N=19)	97%, 90%, 100%	0%, 5%, 0	3%, 5%, 0	0, 0, 0
The quality of academic advice from the Program Director. (N=19)	97%, 90%, 100%	0%, 5%, 0	3%, 5%, 0	0, 0, 0
Your understanding of Saint Louis University's Jesuit mission (N=19)	68%, 50%, 58%	26%, 15%, 32%	6%, 35%, 11%	0, 0, 0
Rigor of graduate classes at SPS (N=19)	67%, 80%, 84%	30%, 0, 11%	3%, 20%, 5%	0, 0, 0
Overall graduate experience at the School for Professional Studies (N=19)	83.33%, 85%, 74%	13.33%, 0, 21%	3.33%, 15%, 5%	0, 0, 0
Overall quality of graduate education	67%, 85%, 74%	30%, 0, 21%	3%, 15%, 5%	0, 0, 0

at the School for Professional Studies (N=19)				
	Strongly agree (2018, 2019, 2020)	Agree (2018, 2019, 2020)	Neither agree nor disagree (2018, 2019, 2020)	
My graduate degree from SPS has/will help me advance my career (N=19)	50%, 70%, 79%	40%, 30%, 16%	10%, 0, 5%	
Generally, my graduate courses challenged me (N=19)	40%, 74%, 56%	56%, 26%, 33%	4%, 0, 0	
I would recommend this program to a friend or colleague (N=19)	70%, 90%, 72%	23%, 10%, 22%	7%, 0, 5%	