

Northern Michigan University

OUTCOMES ASSESSMENT REPORT – Academic Department

When submitting one report for multiple programs, put common objectives at the beginning and indicate multiplicity or uniqueness. If programs have substantially different content, create separate documents. Create separate documents for different level programs, e.g. AS, BS, MS. Use a filename that reflects your dept or program, e.g. BusinessBS-OA-Report2011.docx or ComputerScience-OA-Report2011.docx

Department or Program: Criminal Justice - BS	Submitted by: Gloria Urban
Report for July 1, 2010 to June 30, 2011	Date submitted: January 25, 2012
Department Mission Statement (include program mission statement, if applicable). Confirm <u> </u> X <u> </u> Y <u> </u> N (explain)] that this mission statement matches the department website mission statement as well as the one on file with Academic Affairs at http://webb.nmu.edu/aqip/SiteSections/NMUMission/Academic_Departments_Mission_Statements-April2011.pdf	
Intended Objective #1 (Learning outcomes use a verb to indicate how the student work can be observed; reflect what students should be able to do after a course ends, not what the instructor teaches; usually can be assessed in more than one way; can be understood by someone outside the discipline.)	Means of Assessment for Objective #1 (Describe the statistic or criteria that measures success in achieving this goal. What is the desired and/or minimum target you expect? What method is used to collect the data for the statistic? Multiple measures and one external measure are stronger assessments. Attach copy of rubric, survey, scale, test, etc., if not already on file with the Outcomes Assessment Committee)
Knowledge-Based Learning Students will be able to demonstrate knowledge about the U.S. criminal justice system, and apply such knowledge to practical problems and situations.	1a. Rated Interview, items 11-12 Students participated in a mock employment interview with a panel of three independent practicing professionals from the field of criminal justice. Item 11 on the rating form asked the degree to which the students “demonstrated knowledge about the field” during the interview. Item 12 was a rating of their ability to “apply knowledge to problem-solving situations.” The modal scores for items 11 and 12 were calculated. Criteria for success was 90% of students would receive modal scores of 2 or better (on a 3 point scale) for each of these items 1b. Senior Essay – content scores Students completed a short, in-class essay during their senior year. Students chose one from ten possible essay questions (questions are available as attachments to the approved plan). The portion of the essay score pertaining to the content of the essay (including knowledge demonstrated and correct usage of criminal justice terms and concepts) was used to help assess this outcome objective. Criterion for success was 90% of students would receive a score of 2 or better (on a 3 point scale.)
Summary of Assessment Data Collected #1 (For measure in Means, this includes the specific and overall counts, rates, percentages, totals, etc. and trend data in summarized format. Attach a full report, when available, but summary is needed.)	Use of Results to Improve Department Program(s) #1 <i>What do you conclude from your outcomes assessment activities? What, if any, curriculum changes have you made in the past year as a result of assessment activities. Based on what you learned from assessment activities this last year, are there follow-up activities planned or required?</i>
1a. Rated Interview The percentage of students with modal scores of 2 or higher for item 11 (“demonstrated knowledge about the field”) was 84%, down from 87% last year. For item 12 (“apply knowledge to problem-solving situations”) the percentage was 91%, down from 96% last year. Once again, our benchmark of 90% was met for item 12, but not for item 11. The findings indicate our majors (n=69 completing this assignment) were slightly better at the application of general criminal	1a. Rated Interview The results exceeded our benchmark of 90% of modal scores of 2 or better for item 12 (apply problem-solving), but they did not for item 11 (knowledge about the field; 84%). There was a downward trend in scores on both items from last year. During our 2010 outcomes assessment retreat we discussed how this might be better addressed within our curriculum, as well as the methods we were using to measure this construct. We did agree, however, that if our students are to excel in one of these, we prefer that they excel in the ability to

<p>justice knowledge to hypothetical situations than in communicating it in a more abstract way. The slight trend downward in scores was noted.</p> <p>1b. Senior Essay</p> <p>Of the 69 students completing this exercise, 90% were rated at 2 or above in the area of content, down from 92% last year.</p>	<p>apply knowledge to problems than to simply articulate facts. At our 2011 retreat we again discussed the findings, and noted the room for improvement implicating the curriculum as a whole. It was agreed that we stand a better chance of consistently communicating content of a high level with the addition of two full-time faculty, thus relying less on adjunct instructors. We hope that we can expect improvement in these scores within the next four years time, assuming we do not lose additional faculty.</p> <p>1b. Senior Essay</p> <p>Results were shared and discussed at our Outcomes Assessment Retreat. The slight decrease in the content score was seen as disappointing, but not surprising given the variability of information given when so many adjuncts are used to teach the curriculum. Hopefully this score will increase as this cohort of freshmen reaches their senior year with access to the additional full-time faculty.</p>
<p>Intended Objective #2</p>	<p>Means of Assessment for Objective #2</p>
<p>Interpersonal Communications</p> <p>Students will be able to effectively communicate about their personal and academic backgrounds, as well as communicate knowledgeably about criminal justice issues, both orally and in writing.</p>	<p>2a. Rated Interview</p> <p>Items 5-10 on the interview rating form addressed general interpersonal communication skills. Item 15 was a rating for "Overall oral communications" and item 16 was a rating for "Overall impression" of the students' interview performance.</p> <p>The success criterion was 90% of student ratings for these items would have a modal rating of 2.0 or greater.</p> <p>2b. Resume rating</p> <p>As part of the above process students were required to provide the panel with a resume and cover letter. The panel of professionals rated the materials in terms of the format and writing (not on the amount of experience students had). Items 1-4 of the ratings instrument addressed the resume and cover letter.</p> <p>The success criterion was 90% of student ratings for these items would have a modal rating of 2.0 or greater.</p> <p>2c. Senior Essay – writing skills scores</p> <p>Seniors completed a short, in-class essay as discussed above. The portions of the essay scores pertaining to writing skills were evaluated.</p> <p>Criterion for success was 90% of students would receive a score of 2 or better (on a 3 point scale) for each evaluative area.</p>
<p>Summary of Assessment Data Collected #2</p>	<p>Use of Results to Improve Department Program(s) #2</p>
<p>2a. Rated Interview</p> <p>90% of students received a modal rating of 2 or higher on the global measure "Overall impression," a very slight decrease from last year's 91%</p> <p>Like last year, the benchmark of 90% of students with a score of 2 or better was observed for all but one of the other 6 evaluative items. Modes of 2 or higher were found for 88% of the students for the item "Appropriate level of confidence," (up from 85% last year). The other item ratings ranged from 90% to 100%</p>	<p>2a. Rated Interview</p> <p>The results were reviewed by the faculty at our 2011 outcomes assessment retreat. Faculty were gratified at the overall findings. The 88% result for the item "Appropriate level of confidence," while still not meeting the benchmark, is an increase from 85% last year, and 74% from the year before. Faculty were pleased we are moving in right direction.</p> <p>2b. Resume rating</p> <p>Again this year, we spent a lot of time at the retreat discussing the resumes students produced. As noted before, the current CJ program focuses on preparing students for the profession, and thus resume writing is crucial.</p>

<p>2b. Resume rating</p> <p>Like last year, all four of the resume/cover letter scores fell below the 90% benchmark. Item 1, "Appearance and format" was modally scored 2 or better 66% of the time, down 4% from last year (70%). Item 2, "Spelling, grammar and punctuation" improved slightly from 76% to 78%. Item 3 "Overall writing ability" improved from 78% to 79%. Finally, item 4 "Overall professionalism" improved from 78% to 82%.</p> <p>2c. Senior Essay – writing skills scores</p> <p>Evaluation of legibility met the criterion 88% of the time, an increase from 85% last year. Satisfactory spelling, grammar and punctuation increased from 88% to 90%. "Organization and clarity of expression" fell from 100% last year to only 86% this year.</p>	<p>Methods for strengthening the curriculum in this area were debated. The consensus was to emphasize resume writing more in the CJ490 course, by providing more instruction and additional evaluation and feedback in this area. How instruction on resume writing might be incorporated elsewhere in the curriculum was discussed.</p> <p>2c. Senior Essay – writing skills scores</p> <p>The faculty found these mixed results to be surprising. While the benchmark of 90% was not met for having legible handwriting, it was met for spelling, grammar and punctuation, an improvement from last year. We believe the "organization and clarity of expression" item reflects the time and effort these students put into this course requirement and the drop from last year was discussed. The faculty agreed that this might be addressed by placing more emphasis on the importance of students taking their time and doing a good job on this essay.</p>
<p>Intended Objective #3</p>	<p>Means of Assessment for Objective #3</p>
<p>Preparation for the Profession</p> <p>Students will demonstrate professionalism in the areas of ethics and cultural diversity, and skills in preparation for employment.</p>	<p>3a. Rated Interview</p> <p>Items 5-10, as discussed above rated the students on appearance, attitude and bearing during the interview process. Item 13 rated the students on their ability to "articulate an ethical position in problem-solving." Item 14 asked if the student demonstrated "sensitivity to cultural diversity" during the interview. Item 16 was a global rating of overall impression of the students based on the interview.</p> <p>Criterion for success was 90% of students would receive modal scores of 2 or better (on a 3 point scale) for these items.</p> <p>3b. Resume rating</p> <p>Items 1-4, as discussed above rated the students' on their resume and cover letter. Item 4 was a global rating of the overall professionalism reflected in the materials.</p> <p>Criterion for success was 90% of students would receive modal scores of 2 or better (on a 3 point scale) for this measure.</p>
<p>Summary of Assessment Data Collected #3</p>	<p>Use of Results to Improve Department Program(s) #3</p>
<p>3a. Rated Interview</p> <p>Items 5-10, as discussed above, resulted in ratings meeting the benchmark in all but one area: item 10 "appropriate level of confidence" (88%).</p> <p>Item 13 on their ability to "articulate an ethical position in problem-solving" received modal ratings of 2 or above only 88% of the time, a decrease from the 94% achieved last year. Item 14, "students' demonstrated sensitivity to cultural diversity during the interview" had modal scores of 2 or above for 96% of students, the same as last year.</p> <p>3b. Resume rating</p> <p>Items 1-4, as discussed above, rated the students' on their resume and cover letter. Item 4 was a global rating of the overall professionalism reflected in the materials. Modal scores of 2 or</p>	<p>3a. Rated Interview</p> <p>The ratings in the area of cultural sensitivity, which remain unchanged from last year, were gratifying. However, the ratings for the "ability to articulate an ethical position" which decreased from last year were somewhat disappointing. We discussed ways this topic might be better explored during the interview process, as well as how we might include more instruction about this in our curriculum. The other interview findings were also discussed, as outlined earlier in this report.</p> <p>3b. Resume rating</p> <p>As discussed earlier, resume writing will be emphasized more, both by giving additional instruction and by increasing opportunities for practice and evaluation in the CJ490 class, and elsewhere where it is appropriate in the curriculum.</p> <p>.....</p> <p>The following was added in response to the 2011-2012 OA Committee request</p>

above were found for 82% of the students, which was an increase from 78% last year, but still a disappointing performance overall.

that the "Use of Results" section of the report be expanded. It was added once at the end, rather than repeat the information multiple times in the document.

The feedback from the 2010 OA report was shared with the faculty at our annual outcomes assessment retreat. The faculty congratulated the CJ OA Coordinator on finally coming up with a plan and a report which was acceptable to the administration. We then reviewed the results of the data collected. While some of the measures met or exceeded the benchmark of 90% of majors meeting stated goals, others did not. The differences from the previous year were not consistent and may well reflect random fluctuation. The faculty agreed the 90% benchmark, which was set early on in the OA process, is somewhat arbitrary and might be unrealistic. We agreed, however, that we should stick to the approved plan in an effort to be consistent in data collection for at least a few years, in order to see if there are any observable trends.

We discussed the general notion of standardized student learning, and the whole notion of a set of "knowledge" which reflects the education we hope to provide to our undergraduates. Consistent with the larger academic discourse currently alive across the nation, we find the concept controversial. As scholars, we strongly defend academic freedom, as well as recognize that our discipline is very dynamic and always changing (e.g., search and seizure law and individual liberty rights learned by students in the class of 2000 bears very little resemblance to what should have been taught since 2001, and has changed substantially each year since).

We agreed, however, that there is some historical knowledge base which we might expect our majors to know. Unfortunately there is no standardized knowledge test in criminal justice, such as a Graduate Record Exam subject test which we might use to both standardize our curriculum and test for content. We then discussed how we might more consistently teach any information, which brought us to our second major stumbling block in terms of assessment of standardized student learning.

Faculty pointed out that during the 2010-2011 academic year, there were only three full-time, tenured or tenure-track faculty in a department of over 400 majors. In addition to this, the three faculty in question had commitments to several different academic programs under the CJ umbrella, not just the bachelor's degree in Criminal Justice, which is the program being evaluated in this report. As a result, 50% or more of our curriculum was taught by adjuncts during the evaluation period. Regular faculty have little contact with adjuncts, especially the large number of those teaching on-line courses, and thus little influence over this group of variously educated and prepared individuals, which changes each semester.

Even if we could agree among ourselves what the important and measurable content of courses should be, the reality is that consistency of course content is probably unrealistic, given the cost per credit hour that the University has invested in teaching our majors. Fortunately, two faculty vacancies were filled for the 2011-2012 academic year, and while this is moving in the right direction, about a third of our program, including core courses, will still be taught by adjuncts this year.

When faculty discussed what to do with the OA findings, and what we might learn from them to improve our curriculum and instruction, faculty were unable to recommend any specific changes, other than what is reported above. It was suggested that we admit that we probably failed to provide standardized student learning, but we have no evidence of that either. However, because outcomes assessment is an ongoing process, we will continue to struggle with these ideas and try to move forward toward a rational evaluation system.