

**MAJOR FIELD ASSESSMENT  
M.S. APPLIED SOCIOLOGY  
Report on Results/Use  
May 2007**

The mission of Southeastern Louisiana University is to meet the education and cultural needs, primarily of Southeast Louisiana, to disseminate knowledge and to facilitate lifelong learning through quality instruction, research and service in a safe, student-centered environment.

The MS Program in Applied Sociology attempts to prepare students to research and analyze current conditions and, working with members of the community, develop strategies for the effective and efficient functioning of institutions, organizations and community groups.

**1. Goal 1**

Provide students with knowledge of the field of applied sociology.

a. Assessment

- (1) Criterion: Students completing the masters program in Applied Sociology will be able to demonstrate a high level of understanding of applied sociological theory, methods, statistics and evaluation.

Procedure 1: An understanding of this criterion is established by examining formal coursework grades corresponding to these four areas. All students are required to take SOC 603 Applied Social Theory, SOC 604 Applied Research Design and Methodology, SOC 605 Advanced Statistics for Applied Sociology, SOC 606 Evaluation and Assessment.

Results Obtained: Most students who enrolled in these four classes during the fall 2005 semester through the spring 2007 semester timeframe successfully demonstrated a high level of understanding of applied sociological theory, methods, statistics and evaluation. A couple of students were unsuccessful and are no longer in the program. An examination of grades in these four core classes shows:

- 1) Of the 25 students who registered for SOC 603- Applied Social Theory during the assessment period, sixteen students earned grades of 'A', six earned grades of 'B', and three earned grades of 'C'. Therefore, only 12% were unable to demonstrate a high level of theoretical understanding.
- 2) Of the 23 students who registered for SOC 604- Applied Research Design and Methodology during the assessment period, fifteen students earned grades of 'A' and eight earned grades of 'B'.

Therefore, all students were able to demonstrate a high level of methodological understanding.

- 3) Of the 23 students who registered for SOC 605- Advanced Statistics for Applied Sociology during the assessment period, nine students earned grades of 'A', ten earned grades of 'B', two earned grades of 'C', and two earned grades of 'F'. Therefore, only 17% were unable to demonstrate a high level of statistical understanding.
- 4) Of the 12 students who registered for SOC 606- Evaluation and Assessment during the assessment period, seven students earned grades of 'A' and five earned grades of 'B'. Therefore, all students were able to demonstrate a high level of program/institution evaluation understanding.

Procedure 2: Students' sociological knowledge is measured by faculty committee evaluations of students' performance on their Internship / Thesis Proposal Defense and their Internship / Thesis Defense-Oral Exams.

Results Obtained: During the assessment period ten students graduated with a MS Degree in Applied Sociology, two wrote internship reports while eight wrote theses. These ten students displayed an acceptable ability to apply their sociological knowledge to the development of programs and research activities as determined by faculty committee evaluations of their performance during their Internship/Thesis Proposal Defense and their Internship/Thesis Defense-Oral Exams.

(2) Criterion: A student graduating with the M.S. in Applied Sociology will have a GPA no lower than 3.0.

Procedure: An understanding of this criterion is established by examining GPAs of students who have successfully completed the M.S. in Applied Sociology degree during the assessment period.

Results Obtained: The ten students who successfully earned a M.S. degree in Applied Sociology during the assessment period displayed a high level of academic performance as measured by their GPA. Two students finished with a perfect 4.0 while seven others earned GPA's between 3.6 and 3.9. Another student finished with a 3.081 GPA, which was the lowest GPA earned. All earned GPAs above the target GPA of 3.0 and displayed ability to process important sociological information and successfully apply it to their respective internship research projects or thesis research projects.

## 2. Goal 2

To provide students with the skills needed for work in middle to upper management of public agencies or similar organizations or for further graduate study at this or other universities.

- (1) Criterion: Students graduating with the M.S. in Applied Sociology will complete a field internship or applied research thesis project in which they will master applied sociological skills.

Procedure: An understanding of this criterion is established by examining successful completion of field internship or applied research thesis projects the M.S. in Applied Sociology program during the assessment period.

Results Obtained: During the assessment period, two students have successfully completed field internship projects, defended their work and been awarded a M.S. degree in Applied Sociology. Field internships require 200 hours of practical work within public or private agencies and entail access to middle or upper management in order to facilitate a research / practical project to further the ability of the agency to provide its services to the public. Both students received the praise and thanks of the agency supervisors. Eight students conducted thesis research and successfully defended their work to the satisfaction of all committee members. Thesis work requires a serious commitment to a research agenda and that the student researcher obtains the requisite theoretical, methodological and analytical skills to complete the research. Additionally, thesis work requires strong organizational skills and the ability to work with three committee members.

## 3. Goal 3

To provide students with a cultural and global sociological perspective.

- (1) Criterion: Students completing the masters program in Applied Sociology will gain an awareness of an applied sociologist's role in a multicultural environment through an internship in an agency that serves the public or through a research project with a multicultural or global perspective and submit and successfully defend a written internship report or thesis to the graduate faculty.

Procedure: An understanding of this criterion is established by examining successful completion of field internship or applied research thesis projects the M.S. in Applied Sociology program during the assessment period.

Results Obtained: During the assessment period, two students successfully completed field internship projects, defended their work and been awarded a M.S. degree in Applied Sociology. Both students examined the provision of services to members of local communities by class, gender and race. One

examined first generation college students and the other examined the provision of food stamps.

Eight students successfully completed thesis research projects, defended their work and been awarded a M.S. degree in Applied Sociology. One looked at students interested in studying sociology by race, class and gender, two dealt with religion in the African American community, one dealt with drug use among the adolescents, one dealt with sex abuse, another with reactions to women in law enforcement and two dealt with homicides. All ten projects, therefore, examined the role of governmental agencies in providing needed services to members of ethnically diverse communities furthering a multicultural perspective.

- (2) Criterion: Students graduating with the M.S. in Applied Sociology will have had an opportunity to participate in a study abroad program that offers sociological coursework in a cultural immersion environment.

Procedure: An understanding of this criterion is established by examining the number of students who have successfully completed the study abroad program during the assessment period.

Results Obtained: During the assessment period, three students who earned a MS Degree in Applied Sociology participated in the Department's Costa Rica Study Abroad program.

## **Conclusion**

The Applied Sociology Graduate Faculty Committee will continue to monitor assessment data and other indicators of the program's development and make curriculum changes based on these results.