

College Annual Assessment Reporting Form

For activity during 2010-11

College: CSBS

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Due: October 28, 2011

Please provide an overview of college-level assessment activities, if relevant.

While CSBS assessment is by department, the college standard is that by Spring 2012 all departments are successfully applying assessment data to improving their program's learning outcomes.

**College-level assessment process:**

*Is there a college assessment coordinator or college assessment committee? Is this a new position or committee?*

Matthew Cahn (POLS) is currently the Administrative Fellow in the college, and is responsible for facilitating assessment across the college. This responsibility was formally conducted by the Associate Dean of the College.

*What are their responsibilities?*

To facilitate departmental assessment across the college's 9 departments. While CSBS assessment is by department, the college standard is that by Spring 2012 all departments are applying assessment data to improving their program's learning outcomes in a meaningful way. To this end, the college is working with the University's Office of Academic Assessment to provide each department clear feedback on the quality and application of the department's assessment efforts.

**College-level learning outcomes:**

*Describe any college-wide learning outcomes.*

CSBS graduates can reason critically, understand statistics, and make informed judgments on evidence and social contexts.

**Fundamental Learning Competencies:**

*Were any Fundamental Learning Competencies (eg. critical thinking, written communication) assessed this year?*

As the attached summary of departmental assessment activities indicates, the departmental SLOs across the college align with the university's fundamental learning competencies. Although the specific SLOs vary by department, there is overlapping emphasis on all four FLCs. Departments with SLOs that align with university FLCs in 2010-2011 include:

- **Knowledge of Human Cultures and the Physical and Natural World:** CSUN graduates understand the history and scope of human knowledge in the natural and social sciences and appreciate the diversity of aesthetic and cultural achievements throughout the world.  
**ANTHRO; GEOG; PAS; POLS; PSYCH; MSW; SOC; URBS**
- **Intellectual and Practical Skills:** CSUN graduates can effectively engage in inquiry and problem-solving, critical analysis, and creative thinking; they have quantitative literacy, are information competent and appreciate the role of these as life-long learning skills.  
**ANTHRO; GEOG; HIST; PAS; POLS; PSYCH; MSW; SOC; URBS**
- **Communication Skills:** CSUN graduates can communicate effectively through written, signed or spoken languages, through visual and audio media using text, video, graphics, and quantitative data, both individually and as a member of a team.  
**ANTHRO; GEOG; HIST; POLS; PSYCH; MSW; SOC**
- **Personal and Social Responsibility:** CSUN graduates are actively engaged in diverse local and global communities, have multi-cultural knowledge, and use ethical principles in reasoning and action when solving real-world challenges.  
**PAS; POLS; MSW**

CSBS Assessment Activity Summary 2010-2011

Department	SLO Assessed	Method	Sampling Strategy	Rubric	Results	How is Evidence Being Used to Improve Student Learning?
<p><b>ANTHRO</b></p>	<p>Undergraduate SLO 7: Demonstrate the ability to collect, describe, analyze and interpret anthropological data according to generally accepted professional anthropological practice (Research Skills).</p>	<p>Evaluation of Capstone Seminar Paper</p>	<p>Three sections of Anth 490 were selected as to represent the 3 sub-fields of Anthropology taught in the department: one in archaeology (490A: 8 students), one in biological anthropology (490B: 15 students), and one in cultural anthropology (490C: 13 students).</p>	<p>Informal Rubric Used.</p>	<p>The rubric scores suggest students are not proficient in critical/analytic thinking. Students also scored poorly on "Use of Theory" and "Integration of Theory and Data." Students also had trouble writing thesis statements and developing an argument. Overall, student writing mechanics were not up to par (faculty blamed this on students' failure to write multiple drafts of the papers).</p>	<p>At the course level: a faculty member shared the idea of assigning a grade for the final papers' draft, which she asks for in advance and on which she gives feedback, to try to overcome the problem she noticed of students turning in drafts instead of final papers because of lack of time for finalizing their essays.</p> <p>At the program level, the results of assessment prompted us to update our undergraduate course alignment matrices (adding in new courses that had been developed, and courses whose objectives had been modified, since 2005) to evaluate the possibility of addressing more thoroughly the skills involved in articulating and developing an argument at an earlier point in the program than is currently done.</p> <p>We will use this preparatory step to revising undergraduate SLOs in the coming year. As part of the revision process, we will also re-name SLOs as Program Learning Outcomes. In studying the writing/research readiness issues in 490, we realized that there is actually nothing in the current SLOs that directly addresses academic writing and communication, particularly academic writing and communication that makes use of theory and data. Undergraduate SLO 7 gets closest but emphasizes Research Skills, which is too narrow. This is one of the tracks we will follow and discuss as we review our SLOs and design assessment tools for them with input from the faculty in the different anthropology sub-fields.</p>

ANTHRO continued over leaf

Department	SLO Assessed	Method	Sampling Strategy	Rubric	Results	How is Evidence Being Used to Improve Student Learning?
ANTHRO (cont.)	Graduate SLO 8: Demonstrate the ability to collect, describe, analyze and interpret anthropological data according to generally accepted professional anthropological practice (Research Skills).	Faculty-evaluated colloquium; survey of students and faculty.	Students enrolled in the first section of Anth 696B offered in Spring 2011 (n = 16).	No Rubric Used.	Students in the first cohort are currently making more progress than students in the old format (working independently), as students in the old format could end the semester without completing the key requirements (an annotated research bibliography in Anth 696A and a thesis proposal in Anth 696B), whereas they cannot pass the new seminars without completing these requirements. Students are more focused and more on track to complete their research (and therefore, their degrees). Students who took the survey noted in general that both 696 courses had been helpful for the maturation of their thesis project and for the organization/scheduling of their research work (more than 70% even found the courses 'very helpful' or 'extremely helpful' for the maturation of their project).	<p>We will not be able to definitely conclude on the improvements of our curriculum until we get the results of the direct assessment on our students progress when they graduate (in the mean time, we have gathered direct evidence of students learning before implementation of the new 696 courses through the compilation of data on all of the students who entered our graduate program since 2000).</p> <p>The suggestions of a change in course grading and format of the new 696 classes are on the agenda of a faculty meeting this Fall in order to discuss them collegially with all faculty members.</p>

**Note:** A new Anth 696 sequence was implemented in Fall 2010 and a cohorted seminar series was offered starting with Anthropological Research Design (696A) in Fall 2010, followed by 696B (Proposal and Grant Writing) in Spring 2011.

Department	SLO Assessed	Method	Sampling Strategy	Rubric	Results	How is Evidence Being Used to Improve Student Learning?
GEOG	Student demonstrates ability to construct a literature review.	Literature reviews are assessed in Geography 300. Literature reviews are assessed again in Geography 490. Thus assessment of this SLO occurs at two points in the program.	Nearly all of the Geography 490 student papers were read. (Unfortunately, we lost track of three papers and those did not get assessed.) N=19. This represents virtually all of the graduating seniors from our department for the year.	Formal Rubric used.	It has long been clear to faculty that our students struggle to write high-quality literature reviews. We assessed literature reviews in 2007-08 and found the average score to be 3.33 (out of 5); in 2008-09 we assessed literature reviews again and the average dipped to 3.0. This year we were pleasantly surprised to find the average significantly up, to 3.5. This result likely reflects changes that various faculty have made to their courses in an effort to improve student performance on literature reviews. (These changes are described in previous assessment reports.) Given the small number of majors in our department (i.e. the small N), it is not possible to interpret the results with high confidence.	<p>The relatively high quality of literature reviews in Geography 490 papers reflect past course modifications by faculty to produce better writers of literature reviews. Nonetheless, this year's positive results have invited some skepticism. One of the 490 instructors suggests that high student performance on literature reviews may misrepresent actual student ability levels. The final product assessed reflects, to some extent, the direction, editing and writing advice of faculty over multiple drafts. Thus, student skills may be significantly weaker than final products indicate. Future assessments of literature reviews will be modified to produce more accurate data on student skill levels. This may occur by assessing drafts and by interviewing students in addition to assessing their work. The strategy will have to be worked out by the assessment committee this year. Because of our uncertainty in the reliability of the assessment data, the department remains committed to emphasizing literature-review skills.</p> <p>Several instructors have recently made or plan this semester to implement changes to courses designed to improve student performance on literature reviews: One of the 490 instructors, has introduced a WRAD-funded activity into his Geography 351 (Urban Geography) course designed to teach students how to critically respond to and synthesize batches of scholarly articles on a given topic. This activity hence directly addresses skills required in the writing of literature reviews. Another requires her Geography 366 (Geography of Environmental Hazards) students to read the scientific literature and use it in their written papers. She also added a new assignment to her Geography 467 (Arid Lands Geomorphology) class requiring students to read several journal articles and submit a written and oral report on them. Another devotes significant time in Geography 300 to teaching literature review skills.</p>

GEOG Continued over leaf

Department	SLO Assessed	Method	Sampling Strategy	Rubric	Results	How is Evidence Being Used to Improve Student Learning?
GEOG (cont.)	Student demonstrates ability to collect useful data or information from field observation.	Only the capstone papers were assessed.	Nearly all of the 490 student papers were read. (Unfortunately, we lost track of three papers and those did not get assessed.) N=19. This represents virtually all of the graduating seniors from our department for the year		<p>The results drew two immediate and sharp responses from faculty, who see them as importantly revealing. The data indicate that few students actually collect field data or make field observations for their 490 projects. Although we have not assessed this SLO in the past, faculty believe that if we had we would have found things different 15-20 years ago. Some believe that there has been a long-term decline in the number of students who focus on field-based, physical geography. While students are interested in this topic, some believe that they “lack basic skills that would enable them to feel comfortable moving forward.” In faculty’s view, students lack the skills to do mathematical or statistical analysis of data. “Even when students do collect field data they don’t know how to analyze it. Many students, who have otherwise done excellent work, reach a brick wall at this point.”</p> <p>A second opinion generated by the data was that a 15-week time-frame is too short for students to engage in meaningful, field-based research. Under the circumstances, there is a temptation to bypass field work and collect data from online sources for use in, for example, GIS projects.</p>	<p>The finding suggests the need for more field-based physical geography classes and exercises in field data collection and observation. One Geography 467 course is now requiring students to complete specific data gathering tasks in the field to help them understand the nature of team-based research and learn to acquire their own data.</p> <p>In general, however, modifying courses or the program to address the need indicated by this assessment report presents special challenges. For several years, the faculty have expressed great interest in expanding the number of field courses offered, but have been frustrated by economic constraints and burdensome administrative requirements. What to do under the circumstances will be discussed at faculty meetings this year.</p>

Department	SLO Assessed	Method	Sampling Strategy	Rubric	Results	How is Evidence Being Used to Improve Student Learning?
<b>HIST</b>	<p>Student demonstrates the ability to select a research problem and to search for relevant primary and secondary sources;</p> <p>Student demonstrates the ability to write a research essay using a scholarly format that includes footnotes and bibliography.</p>	<p>Gateway Capstone comparison of student research papers.</p> <p>We are in the process of devising a survey that will give information on student preparedness and experience with writing research papers.</p>	<p>These amounted to about ten papers from each course.</p>		<p>We have seen general progress and generally were satisfied with the way students learned. However, we felt that in many ways the students demonstrated deficiencies in raising their level to analytical discussions, incorporating historiographical discussions and the like.</p>	<p>We are examining how assessment may lead us to changes in the program (in the sense of 'closing the loop').</p> <p>One of the changes in advisement was to indicate to students not to take the gateway and capstone course in the same semester.</p> <p>The necessity to compile a 5-Year Plan allowed us to engage more faculty in thinking about assessment and led to productive discussion on how to make it work for our department. As highlighted in our 5-Year Plan, SLOs #1,2,3 will be assessed in the Fall of 2011 in the course of analyzing the results of our first survey of the HIST 301 sections.</p>

Department	SLO Assessed	Method	Sampling Strategy	Rubric	Results	How is Evidence Being Used to Improve Student Learning?
PAS	Gain an understanding of the political, social-historical and cultural perspectives of the African American experience in Africa and the African Diaspora.	Compared the midterm and final in PAS 100. Six questions (5 fill-in-the blank and 1 short answer response) were selected from both the midterm and again from the final. The content of the questions covered information about the relationship of African Americans to Africa; the role of religion in Black culture; the meanings of Diaspora and Black internationalism; the distinction between material and nonmaterial culture; Black cultural theorists and social movements; and the processes of cultural change from the New Negro movement to Hip-Hop generation.	Not stated.	None.	On the midterm, the 101 students averaged a score of 87% on the six questions and on the final they averaged 86%. The strongest areas of knowledge were the relationship of African Americans to Africa (91%); the meanings of diaspora and Black internationalism (92%); and the difference between material and nonmaterial culture (92%). The areas where students were not as proficient were in the short answer responses that asked them to discuss the process of cultural change from the "old negro" (pre-Reconstruction era) to New Negro (1920s) (74%). While they had a better understanding of the question related to Hip-Hop cultural formation (78%), their short answer responses were rather simplistic and lacked depth. However, this may be more a result of many of them not being sufficient writers rather than them not understanding the question.	<p>Since PAS 100 is the department's "gateway" course, it is imperative that more standardization take place between the various sections. Development and use of the assessment rubric will make this process much easier.</p> <p>The curriculum committee has begun working on ways to insure that each section of the course address the core concepts from the SLOs. There is also discussion of implementing a common text to be utilized by all faculty who teach the course in order to standardize the material.</p>



Department	SLO Assessed	Method	Sampling Strategy	Rubric	Results	How is Evidence Being Used to Improve Student Learning?
<b>POLS</b>	POLS assessed all 6 SLOs listed below.	Collected ten samples of final exams or final papers from the following courses: Political Science 372, Political Science 471C, and Political Science 471D. Two members of the assessment committee were then asked to read the samples and score them following our assessment rubric.	We chose 10 samples randomly from each course assessed.	Formal Rubrics were used.	Our students have improved compared with previous assessment cycles, particularly with regards to critical thinking. Most students score in the satisfactory range for the SLOs assessed.	<p>We have implemented changes, such as including SLOs on our syllabi and giving our students clear directions on exam and paper prompts.</p> <p>We have seen positive results from these efforts as our students progress through the major.</p> <p>Moving forward we will apply resulting evidence to recommend revisions to our undergraduate curriculum specifically with regard to the sequencing of our courses and to the consideration of course additions/deletions.</p>

POLS' SLOs:

- I. Professional Interaction and Effective Communication – Students should demonstrate persuasive and rhetorical communication skills for strong oral and written communication in small and large groups.
- II. Develop a Global Perspective – Students should demonstrate knowledge and theories relevant to global politics and policies. This includes knowledge of Western and non-Western political systems, processes, values and models of politics and patterns of interaction among them. Students should demonstrate an understanding and respect for economic, socio-cultural, political and environmental interaction of global life.
- III. Active Citizenship and Civic Engagement – Students should demonstrate a knowledge and awareness of contemporary issues, political institutions, and problems in the community and their historical contexts. Students should demonstrate an understanding of the importance of community involvement and leadership.
- IV. Critical Thinking – Students should demonstrate increasingly sophisticated skills in reading primary sources critically. Students should be able to research and evaluate the models, methods and analyses of others in the field of Political Science, and critically integrate and evaluate others' work.
- V. Political Decision Making– Students should demonstrate an in-depth understanding and knowledge of the political institutions through which public policies are formulated, modified, and implemented.
- VI. Political Analytical Skills – Students should demonstrate a working knowledge of research designs, hypothesis formulation, measurement of variables, data collection, and analysis.

Department	SLO Assessed	Method	Sampling Strategy	Rubric	Results	How is Evidence Being Used to Improve Student Learning?
PSYCH	Students will demonstrate appropriate and ethical use of subjects by going through the process of subject recruitment and debriefing the human subjects involved in psychological research.	cross-sectional comparison of responses to the same quiz for students at 150 (no instruction in this subject) and 321 (explicit instruction) levels. All quiz responses were analyzed for % correct responses,	all students in one large section of each course were given the quiz	no rubric used; we examined % correct responses	The results indicated that, on average, students' overall scores increased: the students in the junior level class (i.e., PSY321) got 90% of the 10 questions on the ethics quiz correct, while students in the freshmen level class (i.e., PSY150) got 72% of the 10 questions on the ethics quiz correct. If mastery of the content was determined by getting at least 7 of the 10 questions correct, then 95% of the students in PSY321 exhibited mastery, while 72% of the students in PSY150 exhibited mastery.	One recommendation for the department is to require all professors teaching PSY 321 to have their students complete the online certification by the NIH.  Although these results do provide indication that students are learning about the ethical treatment of participants, we have not yet directly assessed students' ability to complete research in an ethical manner – this would be a higher level of mastery for SLO 6 that we would expect at the capstone (400) level.
PSYCH (cont.)	Students will demonstrate sufficient use of statistical analysis, interpretation, and presentation of psychological data	longitudinal comparisons of students' knowledge at the beginning of the semester and again at the end of a semester were used to examine changes in students understanding as a result of participating in our core, required statistics course. A set of exam questions were administered at the beginning and end of one semester.	all students in one large section of the course were given the two exams	no rubric used; we examined % correct responses	students generally show increased mastery of subjects taught at the end of the semester compared to the beginning of the semester	we are looking at ways to assess students' use of these ideas in 400-level capstone courses

PSYCH Continued over leaf

Department	SLO Assessed	Method	Sampling Strategy	Rubric	Results	How is Evidence Being Used to Improve Student Learning?
<b>PSYCH</b> (cont.)	Students will demonstrate knowledge of the theories, concepts, and empirical approaches from diverse perspectives of psychology, including biological processes, developmental processes, individual and social processes, learning and cognitive processes.	longitudinal (within a semester) and cross-sectional analyses of responses to a series of short answer questions administered as embedded questions on exams were used to examine changes in students' understanding of core themes in psychology. Responses to embedded short answer questions on exams were analyzed.	responses from all students in one large section of the course were analyzed	there is an informal rubric used to evaluate the short answer responses	these results suggest that the majority of students were understanding the underlying concept and were able to apply it across multiple periods of children's development, with large percentages demonstrating understanding during both years assessed and increases in understanding within the semester during which longitudinal analyses were conducted	One implication for this finding that has been incorporated into the course for Fall, 2011, is to informally "quiz" students on the general definitions throughout the semester and to assess their understanding of the basic concept before specific examples are covered to ensure that all students understand the definition and general examples early in the semester. These findings suggest that this may be a promising method for assessing this SLO in the future and that students are getting practice at the core knowledge/processes desired in 300-level cluster courses for our major.

Department	SLO Assessed	Method	Sampling Strategy	Rubric	Results	How is Evidence Being Used to Improve Student Learning?
<b>Social Work</b>	MSW program uses "competency" as a term for SLO in order to be consistent with the Educational Policies (EP) developed by the Council of Social Work Education (CSWE), our accreditation institution. Each year, the MSW assessment measures the following ten competences (EP 2.1.1 – 2.1.10) that CSWE required.	We collected data using questionnaires on Moodle.	We invited all the students to complete a scale on Moodle. We also asked all faculty who taught required courses to complete a course grid for each student in the course.	No rubric. Closed ended surveys were used.	<p>The analysis of our assessment data showed that there was a significant improvement in students' confidence in performing competencies as a result of MSW education.</p> <p>Analysis of 14 course grids also confirmed this finding.</p> <p>In terms of assessment method, collecting data from the students and faculty using Moodle has been found to be very effective, which we will continue to use.</p>	Analysis of assessment data is reported to the faculty four times a year. As a response to the report of assessment analysis, each curriculum committee (e.g., practice, research, policy, and Human behavior in the Social Environment) is meeting and reviewing their courses based on these results. Then the committee either makes curriculum changes or confirms the current curriculum based on the assessment analysis.

CSWE Competencies we measured include:

- (1) EP 2.1.1 Identify as a professional social worker and conduct oneself accordingly.
- (2) EP 2.1.2 Apply social work ethical principles to guide professional practice.
- (3) EP 2.1.3 Apply critical thinking to inform and communicate professional judgments.
- (4) EP 2.1.4 Engage diversity and difference in practice.
- (5) EP 2.1.5 Advance human rights and social and economic justice.
- (6) EP 2.1.6 Engage in research-informed practice and practice-informed research.
- (7) EP 2.1.7 Apply knowledge of human behavior and the social environment.
- (8) EP 2.1.8 Engage in policy practice to advance social and economic well-being and to deliver effective social work services.
- (9) EP 2.1.9 Respond to contexts that shape practice.
- (10) EP 2.1.10 Engage, assess, intervene, and evaluate with individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities.

Department	SLO Assessed	Method	Sampling Strategy	Rubric	Results	How is Evidence Being Used to Improve Student Learning?
<p><b>SOC</b></p>	<p>Students will be able to recall and comprehend concepts, principles, theories, and knowledge in the field of Sociology as related to their particular option.</p> <p>Students will be able to recall and interpret common statistics used in Sociology.</p> <p>Students will be able to apply critical thinking skills to answer questions about social phenomena.</p>	<p>Multiple-choice exam with 40 questions in the areas of General Sociology, Statistics, Research Methods, and Sociological Theory. A supplemental test with 10 questions in one of the following option areas: General Sociology, Criminology/Criminal Justice, Social Welfare, and Work &amp; Society (linked to student's declared option).</p> <p>Students were given a Pre-Test questionnaire to fill out which asked them about sociology courses they have completed, their Option Area, as well as various demographic questions.</p>	<p>The incoming cohort that was tested consisted of 60 students in a Soc 202 (Sociological Analysis Course). This course is required early on in the major and is a prerequisite for many subsequent courses. The course also has students from a cross-section of Option Areas. The exiting cohort that was tested consisted of 93 students in two sections of a Soc 497/L course. Ninety-three percent of these students were seniors in their last semester at CSUN and had completed all required courses for the major.</p>	<p>No rubric was used. Closed ended survey.</p>	<p>The assessment results show that students are retaining core concepts, theories, and sociological concepts learned in their classes. It also indicates that students are certainly exiting the major with more knowledge than they had coming into the major. The results indicated that the exiting cohort scored higher on the exam than the incoming cohort, however mean scores were relatively low.</p>	<p>The larger class sizes have caused some faculty to have to resort to multiple choice exams rather than writing assignments and critical thinking exercises. Graduate Teaching Assistants would help. Our prior Assessment effort suggested that we need to improve student writing through a "Writing for Sociology" course. The results from the test will be used to revisit our course content and course sequencing.</p>

Department	SLO Assessed	Method	Sampling Strategy	Rubric	Results	How is Evidence Being Used to Improve Student Learning?
URBS	<p>Students are expected to know the key forces responsible for urban development in the U.S. and elsewhere in the world.</p> <p>Students are expected to demonstrate knowledge of current principles and practices of urban planning relevant at multiple levels of government from local to global.</p>	<p>2 waves of data collection on a test instrument constructed with the full participation of URBS faculty for both URBS 310 and URBS 150</p>	<p>This was a full census of sections during the semesters that data were collected. URBS 310 = 500 cases, URBS 150 = 830 cases</p>	<p>Formal Rubrics were used.</p>	<p>Student learning across URBS 310 most strongly promotes the achievement of both SLO I and II.</p> <p>It does not appear that student learning across URBS 150 is systematically promoting the achievement of the department's primary program objective (SLO I).</p>	<p>A course revision may be warranted. The assessment results will aid in course revision and General Education recertification.</p>