

Assessment Cycle 2018-2019

Unified Public Safety Administration Program

College: Arts and Sciences

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Date: 6/24/19

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Date: 7/2/2019

Northwestern Mission. Northwestern State University is a responsive, student-oriented institution that is committed to the creation, dissemination, and acquisition of knowledge through teaching, research, and service. The university maintains as its highest priority excellence in teaching in graduate and undergraduate programs. Northwestern State University prepares its Students to become productive members of society and promotes economic development and improvements in the quality of life of the citizens in its region.

College of Arts and Sciences Mission. The College of Arts & Sciences, the largest college at Northwestern State University, is a diverse community of scholars, teachers, and students, working collaboratively to acquire, create, and disseminate knowledge through transformational, high-impact experiential learning practices, research, and service. The College strives to produce graduates who are productive members of society equipped with the capability to promote economic and social development and improve the overall quality of life in the region. The College provides an unequalled undergraduate education in the social and behavioral sciences, English, communication, journalism, media arts, biological and physical sciences, and the creative and performing arts, and at the graduate level in the creative and performing arts, English, TESOL, and Homeland Security. Uniquely, the College houses the Louisiana Scholars' College (the State's designated Honors College), the Louisiana Folklife Center, and the Creole Center, demonstrating its commitment to community service, research, and preservation of Louisiana's precious resources.

Department of Criminal Justice, History, and Social Sciences. The Criminal Justice, History, and Social Sciences Department at Northwestern State University is dedicated to the development of students for roles in academic, leadership, professional, and research careers in the challenging fields of criminal justice, history, public safety, law, and public service. Utilizing transformational, high-impact experiential learning practices, research and service the department produces graduates equipped to be productive members of society and a driving force in the economic development and improvement of the overall quality of life in the region. The department delivers Bachelor of Arts degrees in Criminal Justice and History and Bachelor of Science degrees in Unified Public Safety Administration with concentrations in Law Enforcement

Assessment Cycle 2018-2019

Administration, Fire, and Emergency Medical Services Administration, Emergency Management Administration, and Public Facilities Management. Certificate programs in Pre-Law and Paralegal Studies and Public Policy and Administration are also available in addition to a Pre-law and Paralegal Studies concentration and minor. The department hosts the Bachelor of Applied Science degree in Resource Management with concentrations in Human Resource Management, Industrial Technology-Manufacturing Management, Public Safety Management, Culinary Science, Environmental Science, Archaeology and Pre-law and Paralegal Studies. New admissions to this degree have been suspended. The department also delivers a Master of Science degree in Homeland Security, and a Post Masters certificate in Global Security and Intelligence.

Unified Public Safety Administration Mission Statement: Develop students in gaining an appreciation for the complexities of homeland security organizations, leadership, policies, ethics, and challenges, through the review of pertinent literature, critical and synthetic thinking, research, and reflective analysis and assessment. The Bachelor's Degree in Unified Public Safety Administration is unique in that it teaches students how to develop plausible resolutions to the risks and threats currently challenging emergency response personnel through the innovative delivery of transformative student learning experiences preparing graduates for life and career success in this expanding occupational field of emergency management in the public and private sectors. Courses are designed with the present and future administrator or leader in mind having direct application to the challenges of emergency management.

Purpose (optional): The Unified Public Safety Administration program will prepare students for entry positions and enhancement of positions currently held to leadership positions of greater responsibility in government and the private sector with the ability to comprehend, influence, create and respond to government public safety policies from national, state and local levels in this region. It will also prepare interested students for the pursuit of further / additional advanced degrees in Homeland Security, Political Science or Strategic Leadership, at this or other institutions.

Methodology: The assessment process for the UPSA program is as follows:

1. Data from assessment tools (both direct – indirect, quantitative and qualitative) are collected by the program coordinator.
2. The program coordinator will analyze the data to determine if students have met measurable outcomes.
3. Results from the assessment will be discussed with the program faculty and department head.

Assessment Cycle 2018-2019

4. Individual meetings will be held with faculty teaching core and supporting courses if required (show cause).
5. The Program Coordinator, in consultation with the UPSA Advisory Committee and department head, will propose changes to measurable outcomes, assessment tools for the next assessment period and, where needed, curricula and program changes.

Student Learning Outcomes:

SLO 1. First and second year students will be able to describe the historical issues, evolution and context of early America domestic homeland security challenges hazards risks and resources in present public safety preparedness and responses.

Course Map: Tied to course syllabus objectives.

UPSA 2400: Introduction to Corporate and Municipal Emergency Management

UPSA 2550: Hazards Risk Assessment Methods

UPSA 2700: Planning and Decision Making in Public Organizations

UPSA 4700: Event and Venue Security

Measure 1.1. (Direct – knowledge)

On an annual basis, students enrolled in UPSA 2400, UPSA 2550 and UPSA 2700, all required courses for UPSA students, will complete course assignments designed to evaluate the student's knowledge and understanding of the foundational concepts, theories, strategies, challenges and applications of emergency management principles. 75% of enrolled students will be able to describe a basic understanding by scoring 70% or higher on the assignments of the course. Weekly worksheets from the three courses will be used in this determination. Risk Assessment Exercises from UPSA 2550 and Weekly Scenario Exercises from UPSA 2700 are used to measure application of emergency management principles using the same metric.

Findings: Target Met

Analysis: In 2017-2018 the assessment was not met, and the standard of measurement was not changed. The determination was to apply a statistical treatment at the conclusion of this assessment cycle to neutralize skewing influences from students not submitting assignments. Clarification of instructions and grading rubric application were applied. A statistical treatment to address students not submitted assignments was not necessary.

Assessment Cycle 2018-2019

UPSA 2550 was not offered during this assessment period.

Based on the analysis of the AY 2017-2018 results and to drive continuous improvement in student learning, the following changes were implemented in this term and assessment period for UPSA 4700: 1) a new textbook with new assignments was used; 2) more stringent application and interpretation of grading metric was employed, in preparatory status for transition to the university rubric for the QEP project; 3) new and significantly revised course exercises were used (the exercises reflected changes in event security practices, the use of new technologies, and changes in law); 4) new readings allowed for side-by-side analysis and comparison literary and governmental critical event assessments; and 5) a reflection component and element was added to the course and as per the students' capstone experience.

During AY 2018-2019 assessment, two of the courses used in this measure were offered, UPSA 2400 and UPSA 4700. Seventy-eight percent (78%, 7 of 9) of enrolled students in UPSA 2400 were able to demonstrate an understanding of the subject matter of the project by scoring seventy percent (70%) or higher on semester assignments. Eighty-five percent (85% 11 of 13) of enrolled students in UPSA 4700 were able to demonstrate an understanding of the subject matter of the project by scoring seventy percent (70%) average for the course. Eighty-nine percent (89%, 8 of 9) of enrolled students in UPSA 2400 were able to demonstrate an understanding of the subject matter of the project by scoring seventy percent (70%) or higher on semester assignments.

In all courses in this element, students did well on weekly assignments. Students in UPSA 2400 had lower scores on tests than on weekly assignments. Students did well on the assigned term paper. In UPSA 4700, students struggled with initial assignments derived from materials in the textbook during the first part of the semester. When presented with exercises during the second half of the course, principles from the second half of the course applying principles from the textbook in scenario situations, students performed better. An offering of UPSA 4770 delivered as a Special Topics course (UPSA 4000) was offered to a limited population. Course results mirrored those of the scheduled offering of UPSA 4700.

In UPSA 2700 weekly reflection assignments were added and well-received by the students, as the primary structured direction provided students for the reflections required them to incorporate personal experiences and context to course context. While this addition added an additional assignment each week, no students voiced concern regarding the new expectations or level of rigor.

Assessment Cycle 2018-2019

Decision: Based on the analysis of the AY 2018-2019 findings, Measure 1.1 activities, exercises and current writing project requirements required during the course are appropriate to evaluate student knowledge and understanding of the subject matter of the courses. To continue the pattern of continuous improvement, the faculty will continue to use the current SLO measure, however a statistical treatment will be applied only if necessary, during assessment evaluation at the conclusion of this period to neutralize skewing influences from students not submitting assignments. During this reporting period, no treatment was necessary, giving the high level of participation by students in the evaluated courses.

UPSA 2700, a third of four courses in the measure was offered this term. This course incorporated a new series of weekly reflection exercises in which students are challenged with developing and explaining personal opinions. These exercises were added to promote critical thought and analysis, personal growth and understanding, and to prepare students in the reflection process for future assignments of reflection mandated by the university.

The use of this measure at the existing level of performance will remain. Successful performance for one reporting period does not justify a greater standard.

UPSA 2400 will next be offered in two years. Evaluation of the course will be undertaken Summer 2019. With no significant patterns of performance, course shortcomings or other performance indicators emerging, this course will receive further scrutiny in upcoming months.

UPSA 2550 is scheduled for delivery during the next assessment period.

Measure 1.2. (Direct – Skill / Ability)

Students will demonstrate their critical thinking and problem-solving skills through a series of scenario-driven exercises in which they are required to analyze and develop a response to municipal management situations. In this response, they must create a plan that contains relevant, justifiable, feasible, and actionable recommendations based on the information presented. 70% of the students will score 8 or higher on the Critical Thinking – Problem Solving Rubric

Findings: Target Met.

Assessment Cycle 2018-2019

Analysis: In AY 2017-2018, 100% of students completing the capstone project scored above eight (8) as specified in the objective. One hundred percent (100%) of enrolled UPSA 4700 students completing the capstone assignment were able to perform critical analysis of municipal management situations and develop responses and strategies appropriate to meet course objectives and lesson standards.

To drive continuous improvement in student learning, in AY 2018-2019, the faculty expanded the elements in exercises and assignments by incorporating university-wide defined standards for the QEP project. This manifested a redesign of UPSA 4700 and UPSA 4480 to become the capstone experience for the UPSA degree. As a result, in the first half AY 2018-20189, 100% of students completing the capstone project scored above eight as specified in the objective. One-hundred percent (100%) of enrolled UPSA 4700 students completing the capstone assignment were able to perform critical analysis of municipal management situations and develop responses and strategies appropriate to meet course objectives and lesson standards. Current exercises are appropriate devices to provide students with the opportunity to display understanding of foundational concepts and theories of public safety and emergency management response to a complex fictional scenario involving multiple theoretical and pragmatic considerations and the exercises will continue to be refined.

Decision: Based on the analysis of the AY 2018-2019 Fall Semester results, Measure 1.2 research and writing project requirements are appropriate (but will continue to be refined) to demonstrate critical thought skills in analysis and response preparation to municipal management situations. This concept remains critical and forms a foundational tenet of emergency management philosophy. During this cycle, AY 2018-2019, external factors, including inclusion of the Quality Enhancement Plan Project for this degree, will result in the redesign of UPSA 4700 and 4480 to meet university QEP standards. Evaluative modifications will be made, aligning the learning measure with the content of the newly designed course.

In AY 2019-20 UPSA 4700 with its redesigned format with a textbook used for the second time will continue to use new and updated exercises and newly incorporated reflections. Exercises contained in weekly assignments will be expanded to include scenarios in material content is used in response to “real life” situations with which the student can identify, requiring them to analysis situation and apply an appropriate resolution. It is hoped these exercises will assist students on exams, where applications of higher levels of thought have proven problematic.

UPSA 4480 was piloted involving greater documented community partner interaction, reflection exercises and Research Day presentations. All students participated in presentations in a public setting or to faculty. Interactions with community partners was enhanced, and public presentations of works will continue.

Assessment Cycle 2018-2019

SLO 2. Senior students will know the role and functions of the various agencies, laws, standards, risks, threats, tasks and assignments in a comprehensive capstone exercise developed in conjunction with a community partner.

Course Map: Tied to course syllabus below.

UPSA 4480: Senior Seminar

UPSA 4700: Event and Venue Security

Measure: 2.1. (Direct – knowledge)

On an annual basis, a sample number of research papers and/or projects from the required courses above will be evaluated by a panel of faculty members through the University of Louisiana Academic Summit, NSU Research Day, using a standardized research paper rubric (attached) or a formal presentation to UPSA faculty. The papers and/or projects will be evaluated to determine if students can demonstrate basic knowledge of fundamental principles of emergency management, laws, practices, and procedures. At least 80% of students sampled will score 75% or higher on the evaluation.

Findings: Target Met.

Analysis: Based on analysis of the AY 2017-18 period and anticipating implementation of the QEP for the degree, a course redesign was conducted with a new textbook and newly created or updated exercises for UPSA 4700 from AY 2017-18. The expansion of course focuses and coverage in UPSA 4700 to an all hazards proprietary risk course, expanding beyond the current security for a specific site and subject orientation was made. To allow for more complex exercises and assessments, both classes will be converted from eight- to sixteen-week periods of instruction.

During the assessment period (AY18-19), from offerings of USPA 4480, Senior Seminar projects were completed and, in all cases, demonstrated a satisfactory measure of principles of emergency management, applicable law, recognized practices, and procedures. All students (100%) met the 75% threshold of this standard. Senior seminar projects employ a progressive problem-solving analysis strategy, performed in conjunction with a community partner. From UPSA 4700 final grades satisfactorily demonstrated student understanding of recognized practices of municipal event security management was evident. At least 80% of students exceeded the 75% threshold standard for this measure.

Assessment Cycle 2018-2019

The success of meeting the target objective is not surprising, given the capstone nature of these courses. Both courses were converted from compressed to full term courses. This conversion led to less student stress and a more time for student development of exercises and a more complete treatment and understand of concepts and objectives.

All students participated in public presentations showcasing their work, but independent of the presentation, projects stood alone. Presentations through Research Day or electronically to faculty, provided direct contact with the university community for these post-traditional students.

Decision: To meet university QEP standards, the senior seminar course will now require a formal presentation at either ULS Academic Summit, NSU Research Day, another appropriate professional conference, or to a panel of faculty. This practice will continue.

In AY 2019-20A rubric will be established for the presentation, capable and allowing consistency in evaluation of presentations made by students in the multiple options of permitted forums.

Again, the concern is voiced that the QEP standard for the university of expectations for an "entry level employee" DO NOT reflect the efforts of students and expectations for senior seminar students established and practiced long before QEP standards were mandated for all university students. I do not feel the benefit and learning from these projects or efforts for continuous improvement are served by diminishing student rigor, quality, community engagement, public safety enrichment and most of all student learning by lowering the quality of achievement which is being met.

Measure: 2.2. (Indirect – Attitude)

At the end of the term students will be administered a survey asking: "In my public safety administration courses I was provided a collegiate level of understanding of homeland security policy, strategy, threat assessment and trends, associated law and procedures, and how the various agencies interact across the spectrum of operations." At least 85% of students will respond that they strongly agree or agree with the statement.

Findings: Target Met.

Assessment Cycle 2018-2019

Analysis: In AY 2017-2018, the target was met. Exit interviews of graduating seniors were conducted by the program coordinator. In all instances, students expressed satisfaction and gratitude for the NSU experience and satisfaction with their degree. No negative, critical, or offerings of recommendations for improvement were provided. This result is consistent with that from the previous year.

Decision: In AY 2019-20 when students apply for graduation and the make the currently perfunctory contact with their advisor as required by the Registrar's Office, will be used to perform the Exit Interview.

Also, in AY 2019-20, to develop critical thought practices earlier in the curriculum and to more accurately measure student critical thought practices, a problem-solving rubric will be implemented into the scenario exercises of UPSA 2700. Consistent with new standards for the UPSA program, all assignments will require APA style and citation. Requiring APA style and citation will result in focused responses, increased clarity that are easily read and understand.

SLO 3. Senior students will demonstrate that they understand the current policies and procedures to mitigate, prevent and respond to a disaster, analyze and implement regimens for safety and risk reduction, the ethics of care and compassionate leadership, and the mechanisms for measuring all-hazards threat and recovery.

Course Map: Tied to course syllabus below.

UPSA 3700: Disaster Response Operations and Management

UPSA 4400: Legal Issues in Emergency Management

UPSA 4480: Senior Seminar

UPSA 4700: Event and Venue Security

Measure 3.1. (Indirect – Knowledge / Attitude)

During the final semester of the senior year, the department will sample students with a performance survey. One question on this survey will state: "The Unified Public Safety Administration program at NSU has enabled me to conduct risk assessments, implement mitigations measures, navigate leadership challenges, and know the foundational concepts of the all-hazards approach to the emergency management process." Respondents will be able to respond with strongly agree, agree, neutral, disagree, strongly disagree. At least 85% of students will respond that they agree or strongly agree with the statement.

Assessment Cycle 2018-2019

An online survey will be sent to a convenient sample of community partners who employ UPISA program students, asking them the degree to which they agree with the statement, "NSU graduates hired by you are able to recognize and articulate the foundational assumptions, central ideas and dominant criticisms of Homeland Security programs, strategies, and theories." Response choices will be, "strongly agree, agree, neutral, disagree, and strongly disagree." At least 85% of community partners will agree or strongly agree with that statement.

Findings: Target Met.

Analysis: During this assessment period (AY 2018-2019), course offerings of UPISA UPISA 4480, and UPISA 4700 were offered. Results from available data found successful efforts of the course based on grades and student evaluations and fulfillment of university QEP requirements. Exit interviews of graduates were conducting, revealing satisfaction with the degree and program. Meaningful survey responses were not received from community partners. During telephone conferences with students, community sponsors were supportive of efforts. The respondent comments were consistent with comments from years past.

Decision: In AY 2019-20, as a part of the student application for graduation process, the student exit survey will be conducted. From analysis of the results from AY 2018-2019 for Senior Seminar projects, a revised method of assessment of community partners will be incorporated into the curriculum was determined appropriate. A portion of the exit interview will contain questions designed to assess student's ability to apply knowledge and skills within this objective.

Discussion with faculty concluded questionable if any value of this SLO. Course grades, course feedback and other measures already in place suggest the continuance of the SLO and its assessment is not necessary and assessment of SLO 3 should be discontinued in its current form. However, no final action will be taken at this time, and the issue re-visited at the conclusion of the next assessment period. A new survey will be incorporated into the exit interview required for graduation by the Registrar's Office (to give meaning to this perfunctory task) in which SLO 3 elements are measured.

Comprehensive summary of key evidence of improvements based on analysis of results

Based on an analysis of the AY2017-2018 data, the following changes were implemented in AY2018-2019 in the first academic term:

Assessment Cycle 2018-2019

- Course materials for UPSA 4700 were revamped to assure current content was included and assignments restructured to reflect new textbook. This process will continue.
- Exercises were expanded in UPSA to incorporate new controlling regulatory standard and reflect changes in law and expansion of course content to model an All Hazards Approach strategy. This practice will continue.
- Exercises and weekly assignments were updated to reinforce learning objectives in the class and to expand critical thought requirements for the student. Additional reflection exercises were added to three courses.
- UPSA 4480 was meshed with the newly revised UPSA 4700 to meet university QEP initiatives for the degree.
- Reflection components have been added to UPSA 2700, 4480 and 4700, actions applauded by students.

Plan of Action moving forward

The UPSA degree program continues to be an efficient, unique, and profitable offering for the university, extending support to students in multiple disciplines of the university beyond the degree program itself, specifically: criminal justice, resource management, general studies and ROTC.

Parties outside the university have made contact seek their academic interests be included in the degree and curriculum. The university has yet to act on these requests, although recommendation for inclusion of three new concentrations requested externally has been made.

During the next assessment period, the degree benefit from a comprehensive review of curriculum content. Stakeholders external to the university have sought expansion of the degree to meet their needs. However, available resources and to maintain a quality program, expansion of the program is not automatic.

Two significant changes will be implemented going forward. All exercises in the UPSA curriculum will be evaluated by rubric posted in the course materials. A second significant change will be the requirement of APA style and citation in all submitted assignments. These practices will increase both the rigor and academic quality of coursework. It is anticipated that these higher standards result in lower scores in all areas except tests. This action of improvement will be closely monitored and is a

Assessment Cycle 2018-2019

primary factor for not increasing levels or expected performance for SLO's this evaluation period.

This degree has been the recipient of recognition as one of the top programs of this type in the nation and is poised for explosive and exponential growth should such a path for the degree be desired and pursued by the university. This year the program had ten graduates, a new high for the degree.

Assessment Cycle 2018-2019