

AC 2020-2021 Assessment

Unified Public Safety Administration Program (256)

College: Arts and Sciences

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Northwestern Mission. Northwestern State University is a responsive, student-oriented institution committed to acquiring, creating, and disseminating knowledge through innovative teaching, research, and service. With its certificate, undergraduate, and graduate programs, Northwestern State University prepares its increasingly diverse student population to contribute to an inclusive global community with a steadfast dedication to improving our region, state, and nation.

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 unequaled 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 Administration, Fire, and Emergency Medical Services Administration, Emergency Management Administration, Public Facilities Management, Nuclear Surety and Geo- Measurement. 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

AC 2020-2021 Assessment

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.
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.

AC 2020-2021 Assessment

COVID-19 Statement: Due to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, some SLOs and Measures were unable to be assessed. Alternative methods for assessment were attempted but did not succeed in providing data.

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

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 not met.

Analysis: In AC 2019-2020, the target was met. Based on the analysis of the results of AC 2019-2020 and to drive continuous improvement in student learning, the following changes were implemented in AC 2019-2020. New exercises and responsive scenarios were added to the course, activities equivalent to tabletop exercises, allowing students to perform analysis from the perspective municipal leaders. As UPSA 2400 and 2550 were not offered, no curriculum changes were made.

As a result of these changes, in AC 2020-2021, the target was not met. Five of nine (56%) students met the designated level of performance.

Decision: In AC 2020-2021, the target was met. Based on the analysis of the AC 2019-2020 findings, and to continue the pattern of continuous improvement, in AC 2021-2022 the faculty will add new exercises, instructional materials and course content. When next

AC 2020-2021 Assessment

offered, both UPSA 2400 and 2550 will have new textbooks/reading materials and new assignments.

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

Course Map: Tied to course syllabus objectives.

UPSA 4480: Senior Seminar

UPSA 4700: Event and Venue Security

Findings: Target met.

Analysis: In AC 2019-2020, the target was met. Based on the analysis of the AC 2019-2020 data, to drive continuous improvement in student learning, a reflection component and element were added to the course as per the students' capstone experience, and rubric based evaluation of these assignments was implemented.

As a result of these changes, in AC 2020-2021, the target was met. One hundred percent (100%) of students (5 of 5) completing the capstone projects and courses showing critical thinking expectations 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.

During AC 2020-2021 assessment, two of the courses used in this measure were offered, UPSA 2400 and UPSA 4700. Seventy-seven percent (77%, 10 of 13) 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. All 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.

Decision: In AC 2020-2021, the target was met. Based on the analysis of the AC 2020-2021 results, in AC 2021-2022, research and writing project requirements will be refined to demonstrate critical thinking skills in analysis and response preparation to municipal management situations.

AC 2020-2021 Assessment

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 not met.

Analysis: In AC 2019-2020, the target was met. Based on the analysis of the AC 2019-2020 results, in AC 2020-21, live forums for presentations to the academic public and peers and the ability for students to respond to questions from the audience were not possible.

As a result, the target for this objective was not met. All public events were cancelled, eliminating public presentation forums. Thus, 0 of 5 (0%) students met the target.

Decision: In AC 2020-2021, the target was not met. Based on the analysis of the AC 2020-2021 results, and to drive continuous student learning improvement, in AC 2021-2022 faculty will implement the following changes. A return to formal, live presentations is anticipated with the approach of AC 2021-2022. The requirement of a formal presentation at either the ULS Academic Summit, NSU Research Day, or another appropriate professional conference will be reinstated.

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,

AC 2020-2021 Assessment

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.

Interviews conducted as "exit interviews" with all graduating students found satisfaction with the program, and in many cases testimonials to the impact of the advisor, curriculum and program were provided.

Findings: Target met.

Analysis: In AC 2019-2020, the target was met. Based on the analysis of the AC 2019-2020 results, in AC 2020-2021, exit interviews were conducted in conjunction with the mandatory contact with advisor provision of the application for graduation protocol. In all cases students were satisfied with the program. Reasons provided for satisfaction shared the common threads of program flexibility, individual projects allowing for problem identification and resolution and interaction with faculty.

As a result, in AC 2020-2021, the target was met. Five of five (100%) of students indicated that they agreed or strongly agreed with the survey statement.

Decision: In AC 2020-2021, the target was met. Based on the analysis of the AC 2020-2021 results, and to drive continuous student learning improvements, the following will be implemented in AC 2021-2022. A rubric will be created and used for the evaluation of projects that will go beyond the presentation itself which will include input from the community partner working with the student.

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

AC 2020-2021 Assessment

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.

Findings: Target met.

Analysis: In AC 2019-2020, the target was met. Based on the analysis of the AC 2019-2020 results, in AC 2020-2021, the following changes were implemented. The exit interview departed from the Likert style forced response measure for the question of program effectiveness to an open-ended response to solicit information to complete the measure. In the past recent years, the once widely accepted standard of the "all hazards approach" to emergency management preparations and operations is under examination in the discipline to that of preparation and responses to threats "known and unknown". Accordingly, the exit interview was changed to reflect evolution of the discipline.

As a result of these changes, in AC 2020-2021, the target was met. Five of five (100%) of students indicated that they agreed or strongly agreed with the survey statement.

Decision: In AC 2020-2021, the target was met. Based on the analysis of the AC 2020-2021 results, and to drive continuous improvements in student learning, in AC 2021-2022 the faculty will implement the following changes. Course content will be delivered to isolate information delivered through an apolitical lens, with appropriate analysis of all information presented to avoid bias. Two courses subject to immediate modification are UPSA 2500: Social Dimensions of Disaster, and UPSA 4400: Law and Public Policy will be offered with new content.

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

Based on an analysis of the limited AC 2019-2020 data, the following changes were implemented or reinforced in AC 2020-2021 to drive the cycle of improvement:

- A reflection component and element were added to the course as per the students' capstone experience, and rubric based evaluation of these assignments was implemented.
- A newly structured exit interview for graduating students was implemented to reflect changes in the philosophical foundation of the discipline.
- New tabletop style exercises were added to UPSA 2550 to allow for student analysis of risk assessment through the eyes of municipal administrators.

AC 2020-2021 Assessment

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, family and consumer science, education, psychology, addiction studies and ROTC.

- Following this assessment, SLO's for this assessment will be evaluated for appropriateness, current validity, and possible modification.
- All textbooks will be reviewed for future use. Current textbooks in some cases are dated and others hard to obtain. Major changes in philosophical underpinnings of emergency management coming in part from the pandemic and examinations of law enforcement practices have made for an academic paradigm shift in course content for several courses.
- In recent years two courses UPSA 3000 and UPSA 3600 have played a growing role in the UPSA curriculum, but the courses are not a part of the formal assessment process. The roles of these two courses in the formal assessment process.
- External sources have approached seeking the addition of an additional concentration for the degree and independent certificates within the degree. The examination of these initiatives will be considered forthwith.
- The requirement of a formal presentation at either the ULS Academic Summit, NSU Research Day, or another appropriate professional conference will be reinstated.
- A rubric will be created and used for the evaluation of projects that will go beyond the presentation itself which will include input from the community partner working with the student.