Homeland Security, Masters of Science

School of Social Sciences and Applied Programs

Program College: Arts and Sciences

Prepared by: Dr. Tim Pardue   **Date: 6/1/2022**

Approved by: Dr. Greg Handel   **Date: 10 June 2022**

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, 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.

School of Social Sciences and Applied Programs. The Criminal Justice, History, and Social Sciences Department at Northwestern State University is dedicated to developing 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, 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 also delivers a Master of Science degree in Homeland Security and a Post-Master's Certificate in Global Security

and Intelligence.

Homeland Security Program Mission Statement: From the Homeland Security Act of 2002 to the current National Security Strategy, students will gain a distinct appreciation for the complexities of homeland security organizations, leadership, policies, ethics, and challenges, through the review of pertinent literature, critical thinking, research, and reflective analysis and evaluation. The Master's Degree in Homeland Security is unique. It pushes students to develop plausible solutions to the relentless national, international, and transnational threats currently challenging global security through the innovative delivery of transformative student learning experiences, preparing graduates for life and career success in this ever-growing occupational field.

Purpose: The master's program will prepare students to engage in research from a cross-national and global perspective. It prepares students for entry positions in government and the private sector. The ability to comprehend, influence, and respond to government policy from a national, international, and global security perspective is increasingly critical. It will also prepare interested students to pursue further/additional advanced degrees in Homeland Security, Political Science, Strategic Leadership, or International Relations at other institutions.

Methodology: The assessment process for the MA/MS program is as follows:

(1) Data from assessment tools (direct – indirect, quantitative, and qualitative) are collected and returned to the program coordinator.

(2) The program coordinator will analyze the data to determine whether students have met measurable outcomes.

(3) Results from the assessment will be discussed with the program faculty.

(4) If required, individual meetings will be held with faculty teaching core graduate courses (show cause).

(5) In consultation with the HS Advisory Committee, the Program Coordinator will propose changes to measurable outcomes, assessment tools for the next assessment period, and, where needed, curricula and program changes.

Note: The Homeland Security Degree program assessment leverages four Student Learning Outcomes (SLO) expressing what the student will know, be able to do, or demonstrate when they complete the program. Every course within the program is nested in a student's learning outcome attainment. However, HS 5000, HS 5050, and HS 5200 are foundational and have been explicitly addressed in the first two SLOs due to the magnitude of the effect they have on a student's overall success in the program. The data derived from these courses are especially helpful in the overall program design.

Student Learning Outcomes:

SLO 1. First and second-semester students will describe the historical evolution and context of early American domestic homeland security challenges from the establishment of the Department in 2002 through today's international and globalization challenges.

Course Map: Tied to course syllabus objectives.

HS 5000: International Terrorism, Transnational Organized Crime, and Covert Ops (**Foundational Course)**
HS 5050: Homeland Security (**Foundational Course**)
HS 5650: International Security and Globalization (**Support Course**)

Measure 1.1. (Direct – knowledge)
On an annual basis, students enrolled in HS 5000 and HS 5050, required courses for HS Master's students, and HS 5650, a support course, will be administered course exams containing a series of questions taken from a question bank developed by a faculty committee designed to evaluate the student's basic knowledge and understanding of the foundational concepts, theories, strategies, and challenges of Homeland Security from early America through current international and globalization challenges. Eighty percent (80%) of enrolled students will be able to describe a basic understanding by scoring eighty five percent (85%) or higher on the exams, demonstrating a basic understanding of the foundational concepts, theories, strategies, and challenges of Homeland Security from early America through current international and globalization challenges.

Findings: The target was met.

Analysis: In AC 2020-2021, the target was met. Ninety-one percent (91%) of students scored an eighty five percent (85%) across all question modules reflecting the student's basic knowledge and understanding of the foundational concepts, theories, strategies, and challenges of Homeland Security from early America through current international and globalization challenges. However, students continue to struggle to identify key milestones in the evolution of Homeland Security from 1800 to the present day. The average score in AC 2020-2021 was 6.31 out of 10 on the rubric, improving fifteen percent (15%) from AC 2019-2020. The faculty apportioned this instruction module over the entire first half of the semester to drive further improvement. Faculty also focused students on current events through discussion boards, scenarios, etc., requiring them to reflect and associate how today's events are based on lessons learned over time. Students must understand the evolution of homeland security doctrine and capability driven by history. By understanding the past, students will be better prepared to lead the Homeland Security enterprise in the future. (https://www.hsaj.org/articles/679

Based on the analysis of the AC 2020-2021 results, the faculty implemented the following changes in AC 2021-2022 to drive the cycle of improvement. Faculty developed scenarios highlighting critical milestones in the evolution of homeland security requiring students to use their critical thinking skills to determine why decisions were made, what drove both doctrine and capabilities, and what they would have done differently as a homeland

security assessment team member. Students prepared a historical timeline highlighting what they consider the most significant historical events that drove the establishment of the Department of Homeland Security and, more importantly, the "why" behind their selection of a particular event.

Students improved their ability to identify critical events in the evolution of homeland security by improving their rubric score from 6.31 to 8.2. However, students did not do well in determining the roles and responsibilities of critical players – organizations performing the homeland security function and, most importantly, how this function is apportioned among numerous governmental and non-governmental agencies. As a result, the target was met in AC 2021-2022.

Decision: In AC 2021-2022, the target was met. Based on the analysis of the AC 2021-2022 results, the faculty will implement the following changes in AC 2022-2023 to drive the cycle of improvement in student learning. Faculty will develop scenarios requiring students to identify key players, offices, and organizations responsible for responding to natural, man-made, and terrorist events at the local, state, and federal levels. Students will need to identify the role and responsibility, reflecting how the mix of organization change according to the type of event.

These changes will improve the student's ability to determine how the homeland security enterprise is maintained not only by the Department of Homeland Security but rather how this function is shared among numerous governmental and non-governmental agencies. By doing so, the cycle of improvement will continue.

Measure 1.2. (Direct – Skill / Ability)

Students will demonstrate their critical thinking and problem-solving skills through scenario-driven exercises in which they are required to analyze and develop a response to a homeland security situation. In this response, they must create a plan that contains relevant, justifiable, feasible, and actionable recommendations based on the information presented. Eighty (80%) of the students will score 13.6 (85%) or higher (max is 16) on the Critical Thinking – Problem Solving Rubric

Findings: Met

Analysis: In AC 2020-2021, the target was met with eighty three percent (83%) of students scoring an average of 15.3 (95.6% of rubric max 16) on the critical thinking-problem solving rubric, reflecting students can analyze and develop a response to a homeland security situation in which they create a plan that contains relevant, justifiable, feasible, and actionable solutions based on the information presented.

Based on the analysis of the AC 2020-2021 results, the faculty implemented the following changes in AC 2021-2022 to drive the improvement cycle. Faculty created scenarios where the information provided allowed students to analyze how the Department of Homeland Security task-organized to prepare, prevent, and mitigate natural and man-made disasters. The scenarios required students to scrutinize the process by which

Presidential Disaster Declarations occurred and how assistance becomes available upon declaration. Students were required to describe the incident command system (ICS) and its sound basis for the National Incident Management System (NIMS). Students studied the different kinds of research conducted by the nation's top research laboratories to protect critical infrastructure. By doing so, students demonstrated their critical thinking and problem-solving skills and their ability to create a plan that contains relevant, justifiable, feasible, and actionable recommendations based on the information presented.

As a result, the target was met in AC 2021-2022. Eighty six percent (86%) of students scored 14.4 on the critical thinking-problem solving rubric. Students successfully described the incident command system (ICS) and how it serves as a sound basis for the National Incident Management System (NIMS). Students identified what kind of research is being conducted by the nation's top research laboratories to protect critical infrastructure. The student did not do well in addressing the dual-use, all-hazard systems currently being used by the DHS.

Decision: In AC 2021-2022, the target was met. Based on the analysis of the AC 2021-2022 results, the faculty will implement the following changes in AC 2022-2023 to drive the cycle of improvement in student learning. To build upon students' understanding of the cycle of continued capabilities development, faculty will introduce how the US Government employs dual-use, all-hazards systems to protect US transportation systems and critical infrastructure. Specifically, students will study dual-use, security/safety systems used for both transportation systems and those essential infrastructure components to address the risk of terrorism and other non-intentional hazards (man-made or natural).

These changes will improve the student's understanding of the maturing nature of capabilities development and how it drives the adaptations in the all-hazards doctrine.

SLO 2. Third-semester students will know the role and functions of the various agencies comprising DHS and the US intelligence agencies in assessing foreign, domestic, and cyber threats, what counterterrorism strategies are in use to thwart terrorist aggression, and the constitutional issues associated with these strategies.

Course Map: Tied to course syllabus below.
HS 5100: Venue and Event Security
HS 5150: Domestic Terrorism Prevention and Analysis
HS 5300: Constitutional Issues and Global Security
HS 5400: Network Security and Cyberterrorism
HS 5750: Homeland Security Policy Seminar

Measure: 2.1. **(Direct – knowledge)**

On an annual basis, a sample number of research papers and projects from the courses above will be evaluated by a panel of faculty members using a standardized research

paper rubric (Attachement 1). The papers and/or projects will be evaluated to determine if students can demonstrate a basic knowledge of fundamental principles of homeland security policy, domestic and international trends in terrorism, the evolving nature of cyberspace, and how the homeland security associated laws affect the operations of law enforcement and intelligence operations. At least eighty percent (80%) of students sampled will score ninety percent (90%) or higher on the evaluation.

Findings: The target was met.

Analysis: In 2020-2021, the target was met, with over eighty five percent (85%) of students scoring an average of ninety percent (90%) or better on the application assignments and exercises that were presented to them throughout their coursework. Students were able to analyze and assess the current state of Homeland Security events and apply the knowledge to real-world scenarios.

Based on the 2020-2021 results analysis, the faculty implemented the following changes in 2021-2022 to drive the cycle of improvement**.** Faculty utilized current events and historical events to create engaging and applicable assignments that allowed students to demonstrate their understanding of the vast number of resources available to those in the homeland security profession, both private and public sectors. These assignments measured the student's ability to apply the knowledge gained throughout the coursework to real-world situations and scenarios.

As a result, in AC 2021-2022, the target was met. Over eight five percent (85%) of the students scored above ninety percent (90%), which reflected an improvement in this area. The changes that were made positively impacted the students' performance and understanding of the material.

Decision: In AC 2021-2022, the target was met. Based on the analysis of the AC 2021-2022 results, the faculty will implement the following changes in AC 2022-2023 to drive the cycle of improvement in student learning. Faculty will continue to monitor current political trends impacting Homeland Security and implement new material into the classroom to ensure students are exposed to current trends in the profession. Faculty will continue to evaluate new technology available to educators that allow more realistic situations to be presented to students during their studies.

These changes will improve the student's ability to write, apply theoretical concepts and understand variables in Homeland Security, thereby continuing to push the cycle of improvement forward.

Measure: 2.2. (Indirect – Attitude)

At the end of each semester, the program will sample students with a survey, which will state: "In my homeland security courses, I was provided a master's 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." Respondents will be able to respond with strongly agree, agree, neutral, disagree, or

strongly disagree. At least eighty five percent (85%) of students will respond that they strongly agree or agree with the statement.

Findings: The target was met.

Analysis: In 2020-2021, the target was met. Coursework was created that engaged students throughout the course rather than end-of-course surveys. This method allowed faculty to take the information gained through the student's responses to improve the content of the course as the course was in progress and not just after the course ended. This meant that content was constantly being improved, which allowed students to have a voice in their learning environment. Athough students provided feedback, only a limited number of students provided feedback that was able to be implemented or that was useful in the improvement of the courses.

Based on the analysis of the 2020-2021 results, the faculty implemented the following changes in AC 2021-2022 to drive the cycle of improvement. Students provided feedback throughout the term that was more usefule and able to be implemented than it was in previous terms. This feedback was utilized to update and enhance the coursework and student experience. This feedback gained using discussion questions, informal surveys, and advising throughout the term enhanced student learning. The process ensured the content being delivered is current, engaging, stimulating, and relevant to the profession of Homeland Security as well as the individual student goals.

As a result, in AC 2021-2022, the target was met. Students were provided multiple opportunities to provide feedback and address concerns or accolades with the curriculum throughout the academic term and 85% agreed they received a Master's 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. However it was noted that students felt that the information on how the various agencies interact across the spectrum of operations can be increased and enhanced.

Decision: In AC 2021-2022, the target was met. Based on the analysis of the AC 2021-2022 results, the faculty will implement the following changes in AC 2022-2023 to drive the cycle of improvement in student learning. Students will be provided additional instruction that covers the interaction of agencies across the spectrum of operations. .

These changes will improve the student's understanding of the knowledge and skills that are required of those professions in the realm of Homeland Security, thereby continuing to push the cycle of improvement forward by providing more oppturnities for students to provide input and professional needs to the faculty. This will allow the program to continue to evolve and address current local and national employer needs.

SLO 3. Fourth-semester 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.

HS 5200: Research Design and Methods in Homeland Security
HS 5350: Executive Leadership, Diplomacy, and Ethics in Homeland Security
HS 5500: Counterterrorism, Intel Analysis, and Advanced Criminal Investigations
HS 5550: Advanced Cyber-forensics and Cyberwarfare Issues
HS 5600: Managing Chaotic Organizations
HS 5700: Peace Studies, Conflict Transformation, and Global Security

Measure 3.1. (Direct – Knowledge / Ability)

At the end of their fourth semester students will be administered a series of scenarios assessing their knowledge and ability to conduct risk assessments, implement mitigation measures, navigate leadership challenges, and know the foundational concepts of the all-hazards approach to the emergency management process though scenario driven exercises. Eighty percent (80%) of enrolled students will score eighty five percent (85%) or higher on a battery of questions demonstrating an ability to conduct risk assessments, implement mitigation measures, navigate leadership challenges, and know the foundational concepts of the all-hazards approach to the emergency management process.

Findings: The target was met.

Analysis: In 2020-2021, the target was met with eighty three percent (83%) of students scoring an eighty five percent (85%) or higher, demonstrating an ability to conduct risk assessments, implement mitigation measures, navigate leadership challenges, and know the foundational concepts of the all-hazards approach to the emergency management process.

Based on the analysis of the 2020-2021 results, the faculty implemented the following changes in AC 2021-2022 to drive the cycle of improvement. The faculty exposed students to intelligence literature, doctrine, and policies that shape how the Department conducts risk assessments – operations through scenarios that supported students' understanding of intelligence as a discipline, process, and occupation within the homeland security enterprise.

As a result, in AC 2021-2022, the target was met, with ninety percent (90%) of students scoring an eighty five percent (85%) or higher on a battery of questions designed to demonstrate the students' knowledge of how to conduct risk assessments, implement mitigation measures, navigate leadership challenges, and understand foundational concepts of the all-hazards approach to the emergency management process. However, despite this continued growth, faculty felt students needed to improve their understanding of the limitations of intelligence and how to better leverage intelligence support to national policy.

Decision: In AC 2021-2022, the target was met. Based on the analysis of the AC 2021-2022 results, the faculty will implement the following changes in AC 2022-2023 to drive the cycle of improvement in student learning. Faculty will have students develop an intelligence estimate based on an intelligence failure, balanced with current capabilities development, and an associated decision matrix addressing national policy concerns.

These changes will improve the student's ability to understand and identify intelligence gaps and possible national policy adjustments to prevent future intelligence challenges to the Homeland Security Enterprise.

Measure 3.2. (Direct – Skill / Ability)

Two or more faculty members will review position paper submissions by students using Critical Thinking – Problem Solving Rubric (16 points) (attached), in which they are required to analyze and respond to some aspects of Homeland Security, Policy, Strategy, or Leadership. The paper requires all students to demonstrate the capacity to critically analyze information objectively and engage in the development, assessment, determination, compilation, and selection of a potential solution that best supports their position. At least eighty five percent (85%) of projects, papers, and presentations evaluated will score ninety percent (90%) (14.4/16) or higher.

Findings: The target was met.

Analysis: In AC 2020-2021 the target was met. Over eighty five percent (85%) of the projects and assignments evaluated scored over ninety percent (90%). Homeland security faculty collaborated to create engaging, challenging, and thought-provoking assignments. Exercises and assignments were created that required students to address the main issue and underlying causational issues. Current situations and events were used as the basis for these assignments.

Based on the analysis of the AC 2020-2021 results, the faculty implemented the following changes in AC 2021-2022 to drive the cycle of improvement. Faculty within the Homeland Security program collaborated to create engaging and relevant assignments based on the US Government's employment of dual-use, all-hazards systems to protect US critical infrastructure. This collaboration ensured that assignments and projects are created in all the courses that build upon each other and stress students' critical thinking across multiple homeland security domains. The assignments are designed to challenge the students and require them to apply their theoretical knowledge to real world events.

As a result, in AC 2021-2022 the target was met. Students presented much improved papers and projects written at the graduate level, demonstrating their ability to write, apply, and communicate on various topics. Over ninety percent (90%) of students who submitted papers and reviewed writings scored over ninety percent (90%). The collaboration between faculty is increasing the consistency with the teaching methods and direction provided to students.

Decision: In AC 2021-2022, the target was met. Based on the analysis of the AC 2021-2022 results, the faculty will implement the following changes in AC 2022-2023 to drive

the cycle of improvement in student learning. Faculty will expand the opportunity for students to collaborate across the curriculum on projects and writing assignments to demonstrate the multiple disciplined nature of homeland security doctrine. Faculty will form a cohort committee to ensure subject evaluation expertise of student assignments.

These changes will improve the student's ability to apply knowledge gained, thereby continuing to push the cycle of improvement forward.

SLO 4. Students will demonstrate proficiency in evaluating and analyzing Homeland Security research and being able to frame their own research questions.

Course Map: Tied to course syllabus below.

HS 5200: Research Design and Methods in Homeland Security
HS 5900: Graduate Seminar for Thesis Research and Writing Methods in HS.

Measure 4.1. (Direct – Knowledge)

Eighty-five (change for 2019-20 based on 2018-19) percent (85%) of students taking the comprehensive examination will demonstrate proficiency on Part I of the exam, which requires students to analyze and critique three foundational and standardized questions.

The evaluation is based on a skill assessment Comprehensive Exam Rubric (Attachment 1). The rubric consists of five skill assessment areas, which faculty use to grade the exam using a score from zero (low proficiency/fail) to three (Accomplished proficiency). A combined score of 30 (minimum of 10 points per question) and above on the rubric will demonstrate student proficiency on this part of the comprehensive exam. The Graduate Program Coordinator evaluates and reports scores. Students need a minimum score of 20 (10 points per question) to pass the two remaining questions focused on their specific areas of interest.

Findings: The target was met.

Analysis: In AC 2020-2021, the target was met. Students were successful in their creation of research questions and addressing the comprehensive exam questions. Based upon a review of the comprehensive exams taken during this period, over ninety percent (90%) of those taking the exams scored a passing grade. This is over the original goal of eighty five percent (85%).

Based on the analysis of the AC 2020-2021 results, the faculty implemented the following changes in AC 2021-2022 to drive the cycle of improvement. Faculty updated the comprehensive exams to ensure the content being assessed is current and relevant such as the difference in cybercrime, cyberterrorism, and cyberwarfare. The questions assessed during this exam evaluated the students' understanding of Homeland Security and its many facets. Additionally, the faculty continued to assess students' ability to develop appropriate research questions to complete thesis papers.

As a result, in AC 2021-2022, the target was met. One hundred percent (100%) of the students that submitted the comprehensive exam successfully passed the exam, demonstrating their knowledge and understanding of the program goals, outcomes, and objectives.

Decision: In AC 2021-2022, the target was met. Based on the analysis of the AC 2021-2022 results, the faculty will implement the following changes in AC 2022-2023 to drive the cycle of improvement in student learning. Faculty will introduce new questions on the comprehensive exam challenging student knowledge of developing fields of study in the diversity of the homeland security doctrine, the ever-changing nature of security law, such as immigration, the rise of White Nationalism, and the increasing the occurrence of disinformation, and domestic terrorism. By doing so, students will maintain relevancy in homeland security doctrine as it applies to evolving threats, thereby pushing the cycle of improvement forward.

Measure 4.2. (Direct - Knowledge)

Ninety percent (90%) of thesis and non-thesis proposals will demonstrate student proficiency in developing research questions about political-security phenomena that directly relate to and expand upon an existing theoretical body of knowledge.

Committee members will score the proposal at the end of each thesis and non-thesis proposal using the Thesis – Non-Thesis Assessment Rubric (Attachment 1). The rubric consists of twelve skill assessment items, which the thesis committee members will score from low to high proficiency. A cumulative score of 125 or more will demonstrate mastery.

Findings: The target was met.

Analysis: In AC 2020-2021, the target was met. The target rubric score averaged above the goal. The assessments of the student projects indicate an upward trend in rubric scores, which indicates the changes that have been made within the classroom are successful. The caliber of the projects produced by students increased, thus validating the changes undergone by the program over the past few cycles.

Based on the analysis of the AC 2020-2021 results, the faculty implemented the following changes in AC 2021-2022 to drive the cycle of improvement. Students were evaluated using the 12 skill assessments and will be required to score 125 or higher to show proficiency. Faculty within the program worked collaboratively to evaluate and assess the research submitted as Thesis and Non-Thesis papers. The goal score was 150 out of 200 on the rubric. During the course work leading up to the Thesis/Non-Thesis paper, the instructor led students in developing research questions that are objective and original.

As a result, in AC 2021-2022, the target was met. This metric was met and exceeded. Over ninety percent (90%) of students who prepared thesis and non-thesis proposals demonstrated proficiency in their research development of current situations. The goal of achieving over 150/200 on the rubric was met.

Decision: In AC 2021-2022, the target was met. Based on the analysis of the AC 2021-2022 results, the faculty will implement the following changes in AC 2022-2023 to drive the cycle of improvement in student learning. Faculty will continue to work collectively to review the rubric to ensure that it is an accurate measurement of student performance as it relates to the skill set being measured. The 12 skills currently being assessed will be reviewed on a semi-annual basis to ensure alignment with program and course outcomes. The content in 5200 and 5900 will be reviewed, and the assignments will be reevaluated to ensure that the course outcomes are focused on the program outcomes.

These changes will improve the student's ability to develop and conduct research, thereby continuing to push the cycle of improvement forward.

Measure 4.3. (Direct - Knowledge)

Ninety percent (90%) of student thesis and/or non-thesis papers will use the most appropriate methodology for the research question/hypotheses addressed. At the end of each thesis, Paper-in-Lieu, or Project, committee members will score the submission utilizing the Thesis/Non-Thesis Assessment Rubric (Attachement 1). The rubric consists of twelve skill assessment items, which the thesis committee members will score from low proficiency to highly proficient. A score of 125 or higher will demonstrate proficiency. The Program Coordinator will evaluate and report scores.

Findings: The target was not met.

Analysis: In AC 2020-2021, the target was met. Students scored on average over 185 out of 200 and successfully completed HS 5200 and moved onto HS 5900. The proposal process was clearly defined for students who were successful in developing research proposals that would then be used as a foundation for HS 5900.

Based on the analysis of the AC 2020-2021 results, the faculty implemented the following changes in AC 2021-2022 to drive the cycle of improvement. The faculty reviewed the content of HS 5200 and determined that it was focused on the course outcomes that lead to successful completion of the course. The faculty continued to work and guide students during the HS 5200 and provided guidance and knowledge to help students create proposals that would lead to a Thesis or Paper in Lieu. The process for the proposed development is a significant element of HS 5200 and allows students ample opportunities to refine and update their proposals that are used in HS 5900. Faculty are working on the outline of 5200 to identify issues in the methodology so issues can be corrected earlier in the course, thus leading to more success in 5200.

As a result, in AC 2021-2022, the target was not met. Less than the desired ninety percent (90%) of students utilized the most appropriate methodology for the research. Students often created a research methodology that was not correct for the selected research project. It was determined that students would usually modify their research questions and objectives, which led to the incorrect methodology being applied.

Decision: In AC 2021-2022, the target was not met. Based on the analysis of the AC 2021-2022 results, the faculty will implement the following changes in AC 2022-2023 to drive the cycle of improvement in student learning. Faculty will develop additional material and assignments to help students understand the proper research methodology that should be utilized in various scenarios and situations.

These changes will improve the student's ability to conduct research, thereby continuing to push the cycle of improvement forward.

Comprehensive Summary of Key Evidence of Improvement Based on Analysis of Results. The following reflects all the changes implemented to drive the continuous process of seeking improvement in AC 2021-2022. These changes are based on the knowledge gained through the analysis of the AC 2020-2021 results.

- SLO 1. Measure 1.1. Faculty developed scenarios highlighting critical milestones in the evolution of homeland security, requiring students to use their critical thinking skills to determine why decisions were made, what drove both doctrine and capabilities, and what they would have done differently as a homeland security assessment team member. Students prepared a historical timeline highlighting what they consider the most significant historical events that drove the establishment of the Department of Homeland Security and, more importantly, the "why" behind their selection of a particular event.

- SLO 1. Measure 1.2. Faculty implemented the following changes in AC 2021-2022 to drive the improvement cycle. Faculty created scenarios where the information provided allowed students to analyze how the Department of Homeland Security task-organized to prepare, prevent, and mitigate natural and man-made disasters. The scenarios required students to scrutinize the process by which Presidential Disaster Declarations occurred and how assistance becomes available upon declaration. Students were required to describe the incident command system (ICS) and its sound basis for the National Incident Management System (NIMS). Students studied the different kinds of research conducted by the nation's top research laboratories to protect critical infrastructure.

- SLO 2. Measure 2.1. Faculty utilized current events and historical events to create engaging and applicable assignments that will allow students to demonstrate their understanding of the vast number of resources available to those in the homeland security profession, both private and public sectors. These assignments measured the student's ability to apply the knowledge gained throughout the coursework to real-world situations and scenarios.

- SLO 2. Measure 2.2. Students provided feedback throughout the term. The feedback was utilized to update and enhance the coursework and student experience. This feedback was gained using discussion questions, informal surveys, and advising throughout the term. It ensured the content being delivered was engaging, stimulating, and relevant to the profession of Homeland Security and the individual student goals.

- SLO 3. Measure 3.1. Faculty implemented the following changes in AC 2021-2022 to drive the cycle of improvement. The faculty exposed students to intelligence literature, doctrine, and policies that shape how the Department conducts risk assessments – operations through scenarios that supported students' understanding of intelligence as a discipline, process, and occupation within the homeland security enterprise.

- SLO 3. Measure 3.2. Faculty within the Homeland Security program will collaborate to create engaging and relevant assignments based on the US Government's employment of dual-use, all-hazards systems to protect US critical infrastructure. This collaboration will ensure that assignments and projects are created in all the courses focused on critical thinking. The assignments will continue to challenge the students and require them to apply their knowledge to real-world events.

- SLO 4. Measure 4.1. Faculty updated the comprehensive exams to ensure the content being assessed is current and relevant such as the difference in cybercrime, cyberterrorism, and cyberwarfare. The questions evaluated during this exam assessed the students' understanding of Homeland Security and its many facets. Additionally, the faculty continued to assess the creation of research questions that will lead to the successful completion of Thesis papers.

- SLO 4. Measure 4.2. Faculty within the program worked collaboratively to evaluate and assess the research submitted as Thesis and Non-Thesis papers. Students were assessed using the 12 skill assessments and will be required to score 125 or higher to show proficiency. We continued to have a goal of 150 out of 200 for the rubric score. During the course work leading up to the Thesis/Non-Thesis paper, the instructor led the students to develop research questions that were objective and original.

- SLO 4. Measure 4.3 Faculty continued to work and guide students during the HS 5200 and worked to help students create proposals that led to Thesis or Paper in Lieu. The process for the proposed development was a major element of HS 5200 and allowed the students' ample opportunities to refine and update the proposals that will used in HS 5900.

Plan of Action Moving Forward.

During Assessment Cycle 2021-2022, the COVID-19 virus forced Northwestern State University to reevaluate how to execute its mission. Through deliberate planning, Northwestern substantially modified academic programs, facilities, services, and resources to enhance learning and the health and safety of students, faculty, staff, and the public.

Assignments and student learning assessments were modified to maximize the principles of equitable evaluation and assure the highest quality in-person classes, online delivery of courses, and hybrid face-to-face and virtual studies. Technological equipment and resources were updated and expanded to provide high academic quality and flexibility while using lower bandwidth.

Student learning outcomes guide the design and delivery of instruction to ensure student

learning. While the assessment process continues, it would be naïve to assume academic program assessments have not been affected – the degree of which is based on individual programs. The University's commitment to extraordinary educational and experiential student learning opportunities is evident through increased enrollment, even during these trying times.

Looking ahead to AC 2022-2023, and in keeping with our continuous improvement model, faculty have enacted significant changes in the admission process, seeking to address the discrepancies between academic success for applicants and impediments to their admission. It has been found in the assessments that students who have been admitted provisionally, primarily due to low GRE scores, often possess the qualities necessary to succeed in a graduate program. Faculty will be closely monitoring the progress of these new cohorts through continuous assessment.

Changes to student learning outcomes will be primarily concentrated on the target scores and desired percentage of students achieving these goals. Based on the current and prior results, faculty believe the outcomes address the most critical areas for student success. As a critical component of the continuous improvement model, faculty will continue surveying students in every course to ensure goals for their learning are met.

ATTACHMENT 1

Assessment Cycle 2021–2022

Dimension Assessed	Accomplished 4	Proficient 3	Developing 2	Beginning 1
(Inquire) **Identify and define key issue/s and/or problem/s**	Clearly, accurately, and appropriately identifies key issue/s and/or problem/s.	Identifies most or all key issue/s and/or problem/s. Some minor inaccuracies or omissions may be present, but do not interfere with meaning.	Identifies some key issue/s and/or problem/s. May have some inaccuracies, omissions or errors present that interfere with meaning	Most or all key issues/ and/or problem/s are not identified or defined or are identified or defined inaccurately. Meaning is unclear.
(Analyze) **Present and Analyze Data/ Information**	Presents appropriate, sufficient, and credible data/information. Clearly analyzes information for accuracy, relevance, and validity. Information clearly relates to meaning.	Presents sufficient and appropriate data/information. Generally, analyzes data/information for accuracy, relevance, and validity. Minor inaccuracies or omissions do not interfere with analysis or meaning.	Presents some appropriate data/information. May miss or ignore relevant data /information. Analysis is limited or somewhat inappropriate. May contain inaccuracies or omissions that interfere with analysis and/or meaning.	Does not present relevant and appropriate data/information. Fails to analyze or uses inaccurate or inappropriate analysis of data/information. Copies information without analysis.
(Evaluate) **Apply a Multi-Dimensional approach/ Consider context**	Clearly applies a multi- dimensional approach. Synthesizes various perspectives. Acknowledges limits of position or context.	Acknowledges multiple approaches. Some synthesis of perspectives. May not fully acknowledge limits of position or context but is aware of limits or context.	Somewhat simplified position with some sense of multiple approaches. Minor or vague synthesis of perspectives. Some acknowledgement position may have limits. May not acknowledge context.	Student's position is grounded in a singular, often personal perspective. Position may be simplistic and obvious. Little or no awareness that position may have limits or context.
(Solve) **Demonstrate Sound Reasoning and Conclusions**	Reasoning is logical and creative, consistent, complete, and often unique. Conclusion is complex and/or detailed, well supported, complete, relevant	Reasoning is mostly logical, complete, and consistent. Demonstrates some unique or creative insight. Conclusion is generally complete, supported, and mostly consistent and relevant	Reasoning contains elements of logic and/or creative insight, but not fully resolved. May have minor inconsistencies or omissions. Conclusion is relevant but abbreviated or simplified, not fully supported, and/or contains minor	Reasoning is illogical, simplistic, inconsistent, or absent. Conclusion is simplistic and stated as an absolute, or inconsistent with evidence or reasoning. Lack of coherent or clear conclusion.

https://www.lanecc.edu/sites/default/files/assessment/ctrubric-w-12.pdf