

Assessment Cycle 2021-2022

Program: (BS) Unified Public Safety Administration Program (256)

School: School of Social Sciences and Applied Programs

College: Arts and Sciences

Prepared by: Jack Atherton

Date: 5/31/2022

Approved by: Francene J Lemoine

Date: 6/23/2022

Northwestern State University 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. 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.

School of Social and Applied 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, 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.

Assessment Cycle 2021-2022

Unified Public Safety Administration Mission Statement: The Unified Public Safety Administration program strives to develop students in gain 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 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: 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. 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.

To address the COVID-19 static issues, the students and faculty continue to remain affected by the pandemic. It manifests in many ways with each category (students and faculty). Many students are finding themselves excessively stressed and emotionally affected. Many faculty continue to deal with personal issues regarding the pandemic and must address the students' issues in a professional manner.

Assessment Cycle 2021-2022

Student Learning Outcomes:

SLO 1. First, second, and third-semester students will be able to describe the historical evolution and context of early Unified Public Safety Administration, domestic homeland security practices and challenges, hazards, risks and the resources present in 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, when offered, students enroll in UPSA 2400, 2550 and 2700, all required courses for the UPSA degree. 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. Seventy-five percent 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 was not met.

Analysis: In AC 2020-2021, the target was not met. Five of nine (56%) students met the designated level of performance. Based on the analysis of the results from that assessment cycle, the faculty implemented the following changes. 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 during the reporting period and no curriculum changes were made to those classes (UPSA 2400 and UPSA 2550).

As a result of these changes in AC 2021-2022, the target was not met. UPSA 2400 and UPSA 2700 were offered in the fall semester. UPSA 2550 was offered in B-term of the spring semester. From UPSA 2400, 6 of 7 students met the standard of scoring more than 70% on weekly assignments. From UPSA 2700, 3 of 6 students met the standard of scoring more than 70% on weekly assignments. From UPSA 2550, 5 of 8 students met the measure standards. For the three classes combined, 14 of 21 (66%) students met the stated standard. Although improvement was shown (56% to 66%) from the previous assessment period, resorts still fell short of the 70% target. Analysis of students with work not meeting the target measure were found to have consistently not submitted work course expectations of response weekly assignments which require independent research having multiple cited sources presented with formatted APA citations. The standard for UPSA courses appears to be somewhat more stringent than expectations in other classes.

Assessment Cycle 2021-2022

Decision: Based on the analysis of the AC 2021-2022 assessment results, in AC 2022-2023, the faculty will implement the following changes to drive the cycle of improvement. Faculty will incorporate and make available as possible alternative forms of media to aid students with their personal style of learning. UPSA 2400 and UPSA 2700 do not have textbooks, relying upon professional journals, academic journals, and governmental and internet sources for course content. The faculty will begin searching for better targeted and appropriate textbooks. Instructional media will be reviewed and, as appropriate, replaced/updated for the course. The target for the objective will remain unchanged. Expanded treatment of immunity through critical thought exercises will be added.

Measure 1.2. (Direct – Skill / Ability): Students will demonstrate critical thinking and problem-solving skills through a course project/writing requirement in which they perform and submit academic research or service-learning project in each course. This assignment is responsive to the research project requirements developed with the faculty responsible for the course and will evaluate the students' knowledge and understanding of the foundational concepts, theories, strategies, and challenges of working with a community partner as they meet the requirements set for the research project which contributes to the safety of the community. Seventy-five percent (75%) of enrolled students will be able to demonstrate an understanding of the subject matter of the project by scoring 70% or higher on that semester project.

Course Map: Tied to course syllabus objectives.

UPSA 4480: Senior Seminar

UPSA 4700: Event and Venue Security

Findings: Target was met.

Analysis: In AC 2020-2021, the target was met. One hundred percent of students (5 of 5) completing UPSA 4480 and 4700 showed critical thinking expectations specified in the objective. Based on the analysis of these results, the faculty implemented the following changes. The students were able to perform critical analysis of municipal management situations and develop responses and strategies appropriate to meet course objectives and lesson standards due to the faculty making a concerted effort to ensure the students understood the objectives of these classes. The instructors made efforts to contact each student that was struggling and offer more assistance in a one-on-one environment.

As a result of these changes in AC 2021-2022, the target was met. UPSA 4700 and UPSA 4480 were offered in the fall semester. In the fall semester, 66% (2 of 3) of students completing the capstone projects and courses showing critical thinking expectations specified in the objective. In the spring semester, 100% (4 of 4) of students enrolled displayed the analytical skills and applied knowledge satisfactorily. Only 50% of students (3 of 4) enrolled in UPSA 4700 the course were able to perform critical analysis of municipal management situations and develop responses and strategies appropriate to meet course objectives and lesson standards. Review of the student from UPSA 4700 not meeting the target goal revealed that the student was not a UPSA major and was therefore not versed in the practices, theories, and nomenclature of the discipline.

Assessment Cycle 2021-2022

Decision: As a result of the changes in AC 2020-2021, the target was met for this reporting cycle. The target goal will remain unchanged. Both courses will be refined, searching for stronger and appropriate content reflecting course objectives with the goal of enhancing critical thinking analysis and concepts. Recently added reflection exercises will be expanded to include recent cases of emergency management to reinforce applications in actual practice of subject matter found in course objectives. The practice of using examples of recent catastrophes as depicted through the media will continue. Reflection exercises will be reviewed to assure principles of diversity and inclusion are represented in an appropriate, balanced, and inoffensive manner.

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. The Senior Seminar course will include research, application, or analysis, from all UPSA core courses.

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 mapped courses will be evaluated by a panel of faculty members 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. The target is that at least 80% of students sampled will score 75% or higher on the evaluation of their paper/project.

Findings: The target was not met.

Analysis: In AC 2021-2022, all students met or exceeded the stated course requirements and this target goal. Based on the analysis of this assessment cycle, the faculty implemented the following changes. Due to COVID restrictions, live forums for presentations to the academic public and peers and the ability for students to respond to questions from the academic public were not possible; therefore, these requirements were not expected nor required. As a result of this situation, each student was required to create a paper reflecting on their experiences in this discipline.

Decision: As a result of these changes in AC 2021-2022, 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 2022-2023. The requirement of a formal presentation at either the ULS Academic Summit, NSU Research Day, or another appropriate professional conference will be reinstated.

Assessment Cycle 2021-2022

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." The target is that at least 85% of students will respond that they strongly agree or agree with the statement.

Findings: Target was met.

Analysis: In AC 2020-2021, the target was met. Eight of eight (100%) of students indicated that they agreed or strongly agreed with the survey statement. Based on the analysis of this assessment cycle, the faculty implemented the following changes. 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. In all instances of those completing UPISA 4480 (Senior Seminar), students expressed satisfaction with the degree, educational experiences, and what they had learned. All indicated that course content assisted them in their current positions and positions to which they aspire and was satisfactory in terms of program flexibility, individual projects allowing for problem identification and resolution, and interaction with faculty and partners in the community. Seeing a completed project implemented that they help solve was rewarding to the students.

Decision: As a result of these changes in AC 2021-2022, the target was met. To drive continuous student learning improvements, the following will be implemented in AC 2022-2023. A rubric will be created and used for the evaluation of projects that will go beyond the presentation itself to include input from the community partner(s) working with the student. The rubric will measure both the ending presentation and foundation elements used in constructing the presentation.

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 2022-2023. These changes are based on the knowledge gained through the analysis of AC 2021-2022 results.

- Faculty integrated increased reviews of the key learning objectives of the courses and expanded the content of emergency management practices. The exposure to the foundational concepts, theories, strategies, and challenges of the emergency management system was covered in depth through examination of recent catastrophes.
- Teaching styles were re-examined as a direct result of the COVID-19 pandemic. Changes were integrated as necessary, allowing the students to work in an environment which they found more comfortable and safer.
- The faculty also integrated more activities and lessons covering material that the students seem to struggle with.
- The faculty took great time in each class discussing how mainstream media influences thinking and helped students to look at fact-based information instead of media headlines when making up their minds about discretion and subculture.

Assessment Cycle 2021-2022

- The faculty instituted various other resources and provided students with outside resources to assist them in formatting and proper ways to research topics. Students showed a lack of performance in simple grammatical areas.
- Program-wide changes, from the modification of course content to the systematic utilization of evaluation rubrics have resulted in students learning in greater detail and demonstrating a better grasp of the writing process and the expectations of the program faculty. The utility of the rubrics in enhancing student's writing process is significant. Empowering our students with the tools necessary to be successful is at the core of our continuous improvement goals.
- Integrated reviews of the key learning objectives of the courses and expanded the content on emergency management subculture, discretion, core functions, and case law. Expanded examination of doctrines of immunity were implemented.
- Integrated the use of video and other methods of outside resources to assist in better retention and understanding of core functions and ideals within our curriculum.

Plan of Action moving forward:

- 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. Historically 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. Thus far, three new textbooks will be used and have been successful.
- External sources having approached and seeking the addition of an additional concentration for the degree and independent certificates within the degree were added. Certificates responsive to these requests are being prepared for submission to the CRC.
- 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 is being piloted.
- The Department of Criminal Justice, History and Social Sciences has been elevated in stature and is not the School of Social Sciences and Applied Programs all references to the old department status will be removed.
- Student participation with the Louisiana Emergency Preparedness Association will be emphasized as an academic, professional development, job opportunity and networking tool.
- FEMA educational courses will be included as extra-credit exercises in some classes.