

Assessment Cycle 2024–2025 Report

Program: Masters of Homeland Security (MS) (579)

School of Social Sciences and Applied Programs

College of Arts and Sciences

Graduate School

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Date: 5/15/2025

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Date: 5/21/2025

Northwestern Mission. Northwestern State University is a dynamic, student-centered institution dedicated to pursuing, generating, 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.

Graduate School Mission: Northwestern State University's Graduate School maintains its mission and purpose to develop, provide, and support innovative, responsive, and accessible graduate programs of the highest quality. The Graduate School promotes deep engagement with disciplinary literature, fosters innovative scholarly inquiry, and facilitates comprehensive professional development and practice opportunities. It further supports research by members of its academic community. The Graduate School is a source of intellectual capital for the University and contributes to the public welfare of the 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 aims to cultivate well-prepared graduates who can contribute meaningfully to 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 School of Social Sciences and Applied Programs at Northwestern State University is dedicated to the education of students for professional, leadership, academic, and research careers in the challenging fields of criminal justice, public safety, homeland security, public service, and the social sciences. The school provides instruction across a broad range of concepts, with the ultimate goals of student attainment of excellence in analytical and critical thinking abilities, effective interpersonal, communication, problem-solving skills, moral commitment, and the acquisition

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of substantive bases of knowledge necessary to secure positions in criminal justice, all levels of government, public policy, and private organizations. Using active learning, participatory pedagogy, and a Global perspective, the school holds a generalist orientation, through innovative analyses, in a student-centered, nurturing environment, and emphasizing an occupational context.

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. Understanding, influencing, and responding 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) Individual meetings will be held with faculty teaching core graduate courses (show cause) if required.
- (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 assessment for the Homeland Security Degree program utilizes four Student Learning Outcomes (SLOs) that outline what students will know, what they will be able to do, or what they will demonstrate upon completion of the program. Every course within the program corresponds to a student's achievement of these learning outcomes. However, HS 5000, HS 5050, and HS 5200 are foundational courses that have been explicitly included in the first two SLOs due to their impact on a student's overall success in the program. The data from these courses are crucial for overall program design. Additionally, the targets for

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measures 1.1, 1.2, 3.1, and 3.2 were modified to 80 and 85, respectively, to better align with low student course enrollment and adjustments to DHS doctrine by the new administration.

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 and demonstrate a basic understanding of the foundational concepts, theories, strategies, and challenges of Homeland Security from early America through current international and globalization challenges by scoring (80%) or higher on the exams.

Findings: Met

Analysis: In AC 2023-2024, the target was met. Students improved significantly in identifying first responders' roles and functions that support the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) organizations. The average rubric score was 14.3 (16 Max), indicating students' understanding of the Department of Homeland Security's roles and functions. However, students did not show sufficient knowledge of the factors transforming the intelligence landscape.

Based on the AC 2023-2024 results analysis, the following changes were made to drive improvement in AC 2024-2025. The intelligence function needed additional attention based on student responses to various scenarios. Specifically, students struggled to identify and explain the six major factors changing the face of intelligence today. The six major factors that are currently changing the face of intelligence today include changes in the intelligence environment, changes in customers of intelligence, changes in intelligence requirements, the overloading of intelligence requirements to the structure of the current intelligence community, the movement of analysis outside of the intelligence community, and the evolution of the intelligence community into a more diverse and expansive

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community. Faculty increased instruction from two lessons to four, each having a scenario to be addressed by the students.

These changes in AC 2024-2025 resulted in the target being met. Students could articulate and demonstrate how the six major factors are changing intelligence today. However, students could not adequately describe how the Department of Homeland Security does not wholly maintain the function of Homeland Security; it is a function shared among other governmental and non-governmental agencies.

Decision: The target was met in AC 2024-2025. Based on the AC 2024-2025 results analysis, the faculty will implement the following changes in AC 2025-2026 to drive the cycle of improvement in student learning: The Faculty will increase additional readings reflecting how other agencies and the public support the function of Homeland Security. In addition, weekly assignments will incorporate readings and scenarios reflecting the complicated nature of Homeland Security and the various roles departments, agencies, and the public play in providing support.

These changes will improve the students' knowledge of how complicated Homeland Security has become and how it must rely on other departments, agencies, and the public to provide critical support to protect the nation. The student's ability to do so will continue the improvement cycle.

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 their 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 (80%) or higher (max is 16) on the Critical Thinking – Problem-Solving Rubric.

Findings: Met

Analysis: In AC 2023-2024, the target was met, with 82% of students scoring 13.8 out of 16 on the Critical Thinking–Problem-Solving Rubric. Students demonstrated their ability to determine the growth of the dual-use all-hazard systems currently used by the Department of Homeland Security. However, students could better describe the Incident Command System (ICS), how it works, and why it is a sound basis for the National Incident Management System (NIMS).

Based on the AC 2023-2024 results analysis, the faculty made the following changes to drive improvement in AC 2024 -2025. The average student score of 12 out of 16 on the rubric reflects some concern in students' ability to discern the importance of the Incident Command System (ICS) as a component of NIMS. The faculty reworked instruction on NIMS and ICS to ensure students understood that NIMS and ICS have planning, communications, and financial functions, among other similarities. The faculty stressed that NIMS is the overarching framework that outlines how different agencies should coordinate during a

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disaster. At the same time, ICS is the standardized, on-scene management structure responders use to deploy and manage tactical actions within that disaster response framework.

As a result of these changes in AC 2024-2025, the target was met. Students improved their scores to 14.2 out of 16 (88%). However, students could improve their understanding of how homeland security is managed differently at the state and local levels, and how an emergency declaration is made.

Decision: In AC 2024-2025, the target was met. Based on the AC 2024-2025 results analysis, the faculty will implement the following changes in AC 2025-2026 to drive the improvement cycle in student learning. Faculty will expand scenarios that require students to describe the difference in roles and functions between the state and federal governments. The scenarios will require students to describe the process by which the president, governor, and or chiefs make a disaster declaration and explain the process for and types of assistance available upon that declaration. These changes will improve the students' knowledge of the emergency declaration process and the stratification of responsibilities between the state and federal governments.

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 the 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 (attached). The research papers and/or projects will be assessed 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 homeland security-associated laws affect the operations of law enforcement and intelligence operations. At least 80% of the students sampled will score 90% or higher on the evaluation.

Findings: Met

Analysis: In AC 2023-2024, the target was met. Over 80 percent of the students achieved a score of 91% or better, demonstrating improvement in this area. The changes made positively impacted the students' understanding of the material. Based on the analysis of

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the 2023-2024 results, the faculty implemented the following changes in 2024-2025 to drive the cycle of improvement in student learning. The faculty integrated the latest political developments, global events, and related trends into coursework, ensuring students remain informed about Homeland Security issues. They continuously tracked emerging technologies to provide the most accurate, innovative information.

As a result of these changes, the target was met in AC 2024-2025. Students were able to determine DHS involvement in a multitude of events, analyze events, and determine whether DHS was involved, even if that involvement was not made public.

Decision: The target was met in AC 2024-2025. Based on the 2024-2025 results analysis, the following changes will be made to drive improvement in AC 2025-2026. The faculty will focus on recent court opinions and apply those opinions to classroom assignments and discussions. These changes will improve the students' ability to apply laws and policies to DHS scenarios and situations.

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 strongly agree, agree, neutral, disagree, or strongly disagree. At least 85% of students will respond that they strongly agree or agree with the statement.

Findings: Met

Analysis: In AC 2023-2024, the target was met. The number of students polled was as anticipated. Students were able to provide continuous feedback after each term. Based on the analysis of the 2023-2024 results, the faculty implemented the following changes in 2024-2025 to drive the improvement cycle. Formalized polls were incorporated into the classroom to ensure consistent data collection on various aspects of the program. The faculty emphasized the importance of student participation. The faculty also met formally and informally with professionals in the field to determine their expectations regarding skills and knowledge needed. This information was used to inform the modification of course content to ensure students are better prepared for real-world applications.

As a result of these changes, the target was met in AC 2024-2025.

Decision: The target was met in AC 2024-2025. Based on the analysis of the 2024-2025 results, the following changes will be made to drive improvement in AC 2025 -2026. All of the classes offered within the academic year will be polled. One hundred percent (100%) of the program's students will be offered at least one opportunity to provide feedback on their satisfaction with the program.

These changes will improve the students' academic experience regarding course delivery, content, and instruction. The process ensures students have several opportunities to share

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feedback and recommend improvements, supporting their educational experience and the program's relevance. This ongoing input helps align course content with real-world applications in the Homeland Security field, whether students are currently employed or pursuing careers in the industry.

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 safety and risk reduction regimens, the ethics of care and compassionate leadership, and the mechanisms for measuring all-hazards, threats, and recovery.

Course Map: Tied to the course syllabus below.

HS 5050: Homeland Security

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 given 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 through scenario-driven exercises. Eighty percent (80%) of enrolled students will score (80%) 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: Met

Analysis. In AC 2023-2024, the target was met. Even though 82% of students scored 80% or higher on the scenario exercises, students still struggled to develop suitable and acceptable mitigation measures outside those associated with hurricanes and flooding. Students need to improve their understanding of how to leverage the National Disaster Recovery Framework to assist disaster-impacted communities, the importance of the incident command system (ICS), why it serves as a reasonable basis for the National Incident Management System, and how the function of the homeland Security is managed at the state and local levels.

Based on the analysis of the AC 2023-2024 results, and to seek improvement, in AC 2024-2025, the faculty developed more appropriate/more elaborate scenarios. The scenarios increased in complexity in a predictable pattern, allowing students to determine how each challenge should be addressed. Students were given more time to reflect on previous lessons. The faculty developed examples highlighting the learning objectives so that students

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better understand the expectations of the scenario exercises. Designing scenarios that specifically addressed each problem allowed students to diagnose and develop appropriate responses grounded in doctrine and tailored to the specific circumstances of a scenario.

As a result, in 2024-2025, the target was met, with 86% of students scoring 80% 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. However, students could not adequately explain the strengths and weaknesses of social and traditional media regarding their ability to provide timely and accurate information in the aftermath of a disaster.

Decision: The target was met in 2024-2025. Based on the 2024-2025 results analysis, the faculty will implement the following changes in 2025-2026 to drive the improvement cycle. Through additional readings and scenarios, faculty will expose students to the strengths and weaknesses of social and traditional media regarding their ability to provide timely and accurate information in the aftermath of a disaster.

These changes will improve the students' ability to understand how various media types impact the public perception of disaster recovery and how that perception drives capability development.

Measure 3.2. (Direct – Skill / Ability)

Two or more faculty members will review position paper submissions by students using the Critical Thinking – Problem-Solving Rubric (16 points) (attached), in which they must 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 developing, assessing, determining, compiling, and selecting a potential solution that best supports their position. At least 85% of projects, papers, and presentations evaluated will score 85% (14.4/16) or higher.

Findings: Met

Analysis: In AC 2023-2024, the target was met. In AC 2023-2024, 83% of students scored 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. However, students had issues distinguishing between a criminal act and a terrorist act.

Based on the AC 2023-2024 results analysis, the following changes were made to drive improvement in AC 2024-2025. The faculty had students identify the primary differences between crime and terrorism in various scenarios. The faculty also presented students with different scenarios in which the debate on the classification (crime or terrorism) was questioned, such as the 2017 Las Vegas shooting. Students were required to analyze each and determine if the crime rose or met the threshold to be called a terrorist act.

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As a result of these changes in AC 2024-2025, the target was met. Students did well in identifying which crimes met the definition of a terrorist act, including those identified as domestic terrorism. Students did not do well in explaining how critical infrastructure can pose a risk even in the absence of a disaster.

Decision: In AC 2024-2025, the target was met.

Based on the AC 2024-2025 results analysis, the faculty will implement the following changes in AC 2025-2026 to drive the improvement cycle in student learning. Faculty will develop scenarios that show how critical infrastructure can pose a risk through poor or misguided land use planning, inappropriate construction materials, inappropriate design, climate change, urbanization, remoteness, or regulation, for example.

These changes will improve the students' ability to identify how critical infrastructure can pose a risk. A host of actions can impact essential infrastructure outside of any kinetic action.

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

Course Map: Tied to the 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 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 (attached). 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: Met

Analysis: In 2023-2024, the target was met. Although 100% of the students passed the exam, there is room for improvement, and faculty will continue to explore ways to incorporate questions that reflect current trends in homeland security, such as border protection. While the intent was to update the comprehensive exam in 2023-2024 with new questions addressing emerging areas—such as diversity within the homeland security doctrine, the evolving nature of security law (including immigration), the rise of White Nationalism, and the increasing occurrence of disinformation and domestic

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terrorism—those changes were not implemented as planned. Nevertheless, the results indicate strong student performance, and faculty remain committed to revising the exam content to ensure continued relevance and advance the future improvement cycle.

As a result of these changes, the target was met in AC 2024-2025.

Decision: The target was met in AC 2024-2025. Based on the analysis of the 2024-2025 results, the following changes will be made to drive improvement in AC 2025 -2026. The comprehensive exam will be updated to include current and relevant information that not only reflects changes within the profession but also changes made to the program curriculum.

These changes will improve the students' ability to apply knowledge gained within the academic program to relevant scenarios and questions that cover material from their studies within the Homeland Security Program.

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 (see attachment). 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: Met

Analysis: In 2023-2024, the target was met. Based on the 2023-2024 results analysis, the faculty implemented several changes in 2024-2025 to support ongoing improvement in student learning. Faculty collaborated to review and refine the assessment rubrics to ensure student performance is measured accurately and consistently. The 12 skills being assessed were examined for alignment with program and course outcomes. Additionally, the content and assignments in courses 5200 and 5900 were reviewed and re-evaluated to ensure that course-level outcomes directly support the overarching program outcomes.

As a result of these changes, in AC 2024-2025, the target was Met.

Decision: The target was met in AC 2024-2025. Based on the analysis of the 2024-2025 results, the following changes will be made to drive improvement in AC 2025 -2026. Faculty will emphasize mentoring students to formulate research questions that not only reflect the current landscape of Homeland Security but also contribute meaningful insights or solutions to contemporary challenges facing the profession.

These changes are designed to deepen students' understanding of the Homeland Security field's challenges and equip them with strategies to address those issues effectively. As a result, students will develop a professional portfolio that includes relevant, field-specific

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research, preparing them to contribute meaningfully to their current or future professional roles.

Measure 4.3. (Direct - Knowledge)

Ninety percent (90%) of student theses 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 (see attachment). 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: Met

Analysis: The target was met in 2023-2024. Based on the 2023-2024 results analysis, the faculty implemented several changes in 2024-2025 to support ongoing improvement. An emphasis on research methods and the proper application of research has strengthened the Homeland Security curriculum. Faculty developed additional instructional materials and assignments to help students understand which research methodologies are most appropriate for various scenarios. These enhancements have improved students' ability to conduct applied research, reinforcing the program's continuous improvement cycle.

As a result of these changes, the target was met in AC 2024-2025.

Decision: In AC 2024-2025, the target was met. More than 90% of students demonstrated the ability to select appropriate methodologies aligned with their research questions or hypotheses in both thesis and non-thesis work. However, to further strengthen research relevance and rigor, the AC 2025-2026 curriculum will shift toward helping students craft research questions that directly engage with pressing developments and real-world challenges in Homeland Security. This adjustment aims to deepen critical inquiry and ensure student work remains grounded in the evolving demands of the field.

These changes are intended to enhance students' understanding of contemporary issues within the Homeland Security field. In addition, faculty will emphasize selecting and applying appropriate research methodologies to examine and respond to these current issues effectively.

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 2024-2025. These changes are based on the knowledge gained through analyzing the AC 2023-2024 results and lessons learned.

- **SLO 1. Measure 1.1.** The intelligence function needed additional attention based on student responses to various scenarios. Specifically, students struggled to identify and explain the six major factors changing the face of intelligence today. These factors include

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changes in the intelligence environment, changes in customers of intelligence, changes in intelligence requirements, the overloading of intelligence requirements on the current intelligence community's structure, the movement of analysis outside of the intelligence community, and the evolution of the intelligence community into a more diverse and expansive entity. Faculty increased instruction from two lessons to four, with each lesson featuring a scenario for the students to address.

- **SLO 1. Measure 1.2.** The faculty reworked instruction on NIMS and ICS to ensure students understood their planning, communications, and financial functions, among other similarities. The faculty stressed that NIMS is the overarching framework that outlines how different agencies should coordinate during a disaster. At the same time, ICS is the standardized, on-scene management structure responders use to deploy and manage tactical actions within that disaster response framework.
- **SLO 2. Measure 2.1.** Faculty integrated current political developments, global events, and emerging trends into the curriculum to ensure students remained informed on evolving Homeland Security issues. New technologies were continuously monitored and incorporated to provide students with the most accurate and up-to-date information. These efforts strengthened students' ability to analyze real-world scenarios and identify DHS involvement, even when it was not publicly disclosed. To continue the improvement cycle, faculty will incorporate recent court decisions into future assignments and discussions to enhance students' ability to apply laws and policies within Homeland Security contexts.
- **SLO 2. Measure 2.2.** Faculty implemented formalized polling procedures within courses to ensure consistent student feedback on program content, instruction, and overall satisfaction. In addition to student input, faculty engaged with professionals in the field to gather insights into current workforce needs. These efforts allowed the faculty to make informed adjustments to course materials and instruction. Moving forward, every student will be provided at least one opportunity to give feedback during their program, supporting continuous improvement and ensuring that course content remains relevant to the evolving demands of the Homeland Security field.
- **SLO 3. Measure 3.1.** The faculty developed more appropriate/elaborate scenarios. The scenarios increased in complexity in a predictable pattern, allowing students to determine how each challenge should be addressed. Students were given more time to reflect on previous lessons. The faculty developed examples highlighting the learning objectives so that students better understood the expectations of the scenario exercises. Designing scenarios that specifically addressed each problem allowed students to diagnose and develop appropriate responses grounded in doctrine and tailored to the specific circumstances of a scenario.
- **SLO 3. Measure 3.2.** The faculty had students identify the primary differences between crime and terrorism in various scenarios. The faculty also presented students with different scenarios in which the debate on the classification (crime or terrorism) was questioned, such as the 2017 Las Vegas shooting. Students were required to analyze each and determine if the crime rose or met the threshold to be called a terrorist act.

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- **SLO 4. Measure 4.1.** Faculty reviewed the comprehensive exam to ensure alignment with current trends in Homeland Security. While updates to the exam were planned, they were not implemented as intended. However, the faculty used this review process to reaffirm the importance of incorporating emerging issues, such as changes in security law, disinformation, and domestic terrorism, into future assessments. Moving forward, the comprehensive exam will be revised to reflect professional and program curriculum developments, allowing students to more effectively apply knowledge gained throughout the program to relevant and evolving Homeland Security scenarios.
- **SLO 4. Measure 4.2.** Faculty engaged in a thorough review of the thesis and non-thesis assessment rubric to ensure consistency and alignment with both course and program outcomes. This included evaluating the 12 skill areas currently assessed and refining course content and assignments in key courses to support student learning better. Looking ahead, faculty will emphasize guiding students to develop research questions that reflect the current landscape of Homeland Security and contribute meaningful solutions to ongoing challenges.
- **SLO 4. Measure 4.3.** Faculty focused on research methodology by enhancing curriculum materials and assignments to support students in identifying and applying appropriate methods for various Homeland Security scenarios. These efforts helped improve students' capacity for applied research. As the program evolves, faculty will continue this focus by mentoring students to connect their methodology choices with real-world issues, ensuring that their research remains relevant and responsive to developments within the Homeland Security profession.

Plan of Action Moving Forward

- Student learning outcomes continue to guide the design and delivery of instruction to support student achievement. While the assessment process remains ongoing, it is important to acknowledge that academic program assessments may have been impacted, with the extent varying by program. Nonetheless, the University's commitment to providing high-quality educational and experiential learning opportunities remains evident, as reflected in continued enrollment growth despite challenging circumstances.
- Looking ahead to AC 2025-2026, and in keeping with our continuous improvement model, faculty have enacted significant changes in the admission process to align admissions criteria with indicators of academic success. Assessment findings have shown that students admitted provisionally often demonstrate the skills and qualities necessary to thrive in a graduate program. Faculty will continue to monitor the progress of these cohorts through ongoing assessment to ensure that the revised process supports student achievement and program outcomes.
- Changes to student learning outcomes will primarily focus on refining target scores and the expected percentage of students meeting those benchmarks. Based on current and historical data, faculty believe the existing outcomes effectively capture the most essential areas for student success. As part of the continuous improvement model, faculty will continue administering course-level surveys to gather feedback and ensure student

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learning goals are achieved.

Dimension	Accomplished	Proficient	Developing	Beginning
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Assessed	4	3	2	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.