Homeland Security MS

Program College: Arts and Sciences

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

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

Department of Criminal Justice, History, and Social Sciences. The Criminal Justice, History, and Social Sciences Department at Northwestern State University is dedicated to the development of students for roles in academic, leadership, professional, and research careers in the challenging fields of criminal justice, history, public safety, law, and public service. Utilizing transformational, high-impact experiential learning practices, research, and service the department produces graduates equipped to be productive members of society and a driving force in the economic development and improvement of the overall quality of life in the region. The department delivers Bachelor of Arts degrees in Criminal Justice and History and Bachelor of Science degrees in Unified Public Safety Administration with concentrations in Law Enforcement Administration, Fire and Emergency Medical Services Administration, Emergency Management Administration, 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 in that it pushes students to develop plausible solutions to the inexorable national, international, and transnational, threats currently challenging global security through the innovative delivery of transformative student learning experiences which prepare our 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 in which 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 for the pursuit of 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 (both 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 if required (show cause).

(5) The Program Coordinator, in consultation with the HS Advisory Committee, 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 be able to 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 as such 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 (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: Target Met

Analysis: In AC 2019-2020, the target was met. Based on the analysis of the AC 2019-2020 results, and to drive improvement, in AC 2020-2021, faculty redesigned the first half of the HS 5050 course by apportioning the module on Homeland Security's evolution from 1800 to present over the first half of the semester. In doing so, students had a better association and appreciation of how past events shaped the Homeland Security Enterprise. Questions and discussion boards were designed to drive students to compare how past events drove policy and doctrine and to understand its effects on security and *the All-Hazards* approach.

As a result, in AC 2020-2021, the target was met. Ninety-one percent (91%) of students scored 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. In AC 2020-2021 the average score was 6.31 out of 10 on the rubric, improving only .45% from AC 2019-2020. To drive improvement faculty apportioned this module of instruction over the entire first half of the semester. Faculty also focused students on current events through discussion boards, scenarios, etc. and required them to reflect and associate how what is occurring today is

based on the lessons on learned over time. It is important students understand the evolution in 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

Decision: In AC 2020-2021, the target was met. Based on the analysis of the AC 2020-2021 results, the faculty will implement the following changes in AC 2021-2022 to drive the cycle of improvement. Faculty will develop additional scenarios highlighting key 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 member of the homeland security assessment team. Students will prepare an 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.

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: Target Met

Analysis: In AC 2019-2020 the target was met. Based on the analysis of the AC 2019-2020 results, and to drive improvement, in AC 2020-2021, faculty increased the opportunity for students to analyze data and deliver their findings using a multidiscipline approach accounting for infrastructural and human cost. Faculty created scenarios where the information provided allowed students to focus their efforts on these two dimensions. Taking this approach increased the student's understanding and comfort in implementing and demonstrating their knowledge of these steps as part of their critical thinking problem-solving skillset.

As a result, in AC 2020-2021 the target was met with 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 develop a plan that contains relevant, justifiable, feasible, and actionable solutions based on the information presented.

Decision. In AC 2020-2021 the target was met. Based on the analysis of the AC 2020-2021 results, the faculty will implement the following changes in AC 2021-2022 to drive the cycle of improvement. Faculty will create scenarios where the information provided allows students to analyze how the Department Of Homeland Security task organizes to prepare, prevent, and mitigate both natural and man-made disasters. Students will scrutinize the process by which Presidential Disaster Declarations occur and describe the assistance

that becomes available upon declaration, what the incident command system (ICS) is and how it serves as a good basis for the National Incident Management System (NIMS), and identify what kind of research is being conducted by the nation's top research laboratories are conducting to protect critical infrastructure? By doing so, will demonstrate their critical thinking and problem-solving skills and ability to create a plan that contains relevant, justifiable, feasible, and actionable recommendations based on the information presented.

SLO 2. Third-semester students will know the role and functions of the various agencies comprising DHS and the U.S. 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/or projects from the courses above will be evaluated by a panel of faculty members, using a standardized research paper rubric (attached). 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 (80%) of students sampled will score (90%) or higher on the evaluation.

Findings: Target Met

Analysis: In AC 2019-2020, the target was met. Based on the analysis of the AC 2019-2020 results, and to drive improvement in AC 2020-2021, faculty utilized homeland security situations that have evolved and provided assignments that required students to apply their knowledge and understanding of homeland security incidents which have occurred the past 3-5 years. Students were also provided with assignments that involved situations that are secondary homeland security situations. These situations included dealing with local law enforcement entities that may not initially be classified as a national incident and required students to conduct critical thinking analysis as to the appropriateness of their participation and contributions within the scenario.

As a result, in 2020-2021, the target was met with over 80% of students scoring an average of 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 events occurring within Homeland security and apply the knowledge to real world scenarios.

Decision: In 2020-2021, the target was met. Based on the analysis of the 2020-2021 results, the faculty will implement the following changes in 2021-2022 to continue to drive the cycle of improvement**.** Faculty will utilize 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 will measure the student's ability to apply the knowledge gained throughout the coursework to real world situations and scenarios.

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

Findings: Target Not Met

Analysis: In AC 2019-2020, the target was not met. Based on the analysis of these results and to increase the response rate in AC 2020-2021 the means of survey delivery were changed to posting questions within the course coupled with the end of term survey.

As a result, 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 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.

Decision: In AC 2020-2021, the target was met. Based on the analysis of the 2020-2021 results, the faculty will implement the following changes in AC 2021-2022 to drive the cycle of improvement. Students will provide feedback throughout the term. This feedback will be utilized to update and enhance the coursework and student experience. This feedback will be gained using discussion questions, informal surveys and advising throughout the term. This will ensure that the content that is being delivered is engaging, stimulating and relevant to the profession of Homeland Security as well as the individual student goals.

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 (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.

Findings: Target Met

Analysis: In AC 2019-2020, the target was not met. Based on the analysis of the AC 2019-2020 results, and to seek improvement, in AC 2020-2021, faculty developed more appropriate/less elaborate scenarios. The scenarios increased in their complexity in a predictable pattern to allow students to better discern how each challenge should be addressed. Students were given more time to reflect on previous lessons. The faculty developed examples that highlight the learning objectives so that students better understand the expectations of the scenario exercises. By 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 2020-2021, the target was met with 83% of students scoring 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.

Decision: In AC 2020-2021, the target was met. Based on the analysis of the 2020-2021 results, the faculty will implement the following changes in AC 2021-2022 to drive the cycle of improvement. Faculty will expose students to intelligence literature, doctrine and policies that shape how the department conducts risk assessments – operations by developing scenarios that shape the students' understanding of intelligence as a discipline, operation, and occupation within 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 point) (attached), in which they are required to analyze and respond to some aspect of Homeland Security, Policy, Strategy, or Leadership. The paper requires all students to demonstrate the capacity to critically analyze information in an objective manner and engage in the development, assessment, determination, compilation, and selection of a potential solution which best supports their position. At least 85% of projects, papers, and presentations evaluated will score 90% (14.4/16) or higher.

Findings: Target Met

Analysis: In AC 2019-2020 the target was met. Based on the analysis of the 2019-2020 results the following changes were made to drive improvement in AC 2020-2021 to drive the cycle of improvement. Faculty enhanced the number and sophistication of the critical thinking exercises, challenging the students to apply the knowledge they have been gained in the lessons. Faculty also introduced a mixture of testing processes that allowed students to not only show they understand the material but more importantly apply that material to real world situations.

As a result, in 2020-2021 the target was met. Over 85% of the projects and assignments evaluated scored over 90%. Homeland security faculty collaborated to create engaging, challenging, and thought-provoking assignments. Exercises and assignments were created that required students to not only address the main issue, but also underlying causational issues. Current situations and events were used as the basis for these assignments.

Decision: In AC 2020-2021, the target was met. Based on the analysis of the 2020-2021 results, the faculty will implement the following changes in AC 2021-2022 to drive the cycle of improvement. Faculty within the Homeland Security program will continue to collaborate to create engaging and relevant assignments based on the US Government 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 that are 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. 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 (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: Target Met

Analysis: In AC 2019-2020, the target was met. Based on analysis of the 2019-2020 results, in AC 2020-2021, students were exposed to a greater amount of real-world homeland security issues and literature from recent publications in the Homeland Security Digital Library (HSDL). Students were given additional opportunities to sharpen their critical thinking skills using a multiple range of scenarios, including all facets of the All-Hazards approach in which portions of the comprehensive exam questions were included. Students were given the opportunity to rate their response using the comprehensive exam rubric.

As a result, 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 90% of those taking the exams scored a passing grade. This is over the original goal of 85%

Decision: In AC 2020-2021, the target was met. Based on the analysis of the 2020-2021 results, the faculty will implement the following changes in AC 2021-2022 to drive the cycle of improvement. Faculty will update 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 will evaluate the students understanding of Homeland Security and its many facets. Additionally, faculty will continue to evaluate the creation of research questions that will lead to successful completion of Thesis papers.

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.

At the end of each thesis and non-thesis proposal, committee members will score the 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 proficiency to high proficiency. A cumulative score of 125 or more

will demonstrate proficiency.

Findings: Target Met

Analysis: In AC 2019-2020, the was met. Based on the analysis of the AC 2019-2020 results, and to drive improvement, in AC 2020-2021, faculty implemented the following changes for AC 2021-2021. The target rubric score for the proposal was raised to 150 out of 200 to raise the caliber of the projects that our students produce, thus increasing our measure of the success of the revisions that our program has undergone as part of this process.

As a result, 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, or students increased, thus validating the changes undergone by the program over the past few cycles.

Decision: In AC 2020-2021, the target was met. Based on the analysis of the 2020-2021 results, the faculty will implement the following changes in AC 2021-2022 to drive the cycle of improvement. Students will be evaluated using the 12 skill assessments and will be required to score 125 or higher to show proficiency. Faculty within the program will work collaboratively to evaluate and assess the research submitted as Thesis and Non-Thesis papers. We will continue 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, instructor will lead the students to develop research questions that are objective and original.

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 (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: Target Met

Analysis: In AC 2019-2020, the target was met. Based on the analysis of the AC 2019-2020 results, and to drive improvement, in AC 2020-2021, the faculty formalized the requirement for students to produce a research proposal in which they score a minimum rubric score of 185 out of 200 to be allowed to take HS 5900, Graduate Seminar for Thesis Research and Writing Methods in Homeland Security.

As a result, 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.

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Decision: In AC 2020-2021, the target was met. Based on the analysis of the 2020-2021 results, the faculty will implement the following changes in AC 2021-2022 to drive the cycle of improvement. Faculty will continue to work and guide students during the HS 5200 and will work to help students create proposals that will lead to Thesis or Paper in Lieu. The process for the proposal development will be a major element of HS 5200 and will allow the students ample opportunities to refine and update the proposals that will be later used in HS 5900.

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 2020-2021. These changes are based on the knowledge gained through the analysis of the AC 2019-2020 results.

- SLO 1. Measure 1.1. Faculty redesigned the first half of the HS 5050 course by apportioning the module on Homeland Security's evolution from 1800 to present over the first half of the semester. In doing so, students will have a better association and appreciation of how past events shaped the Homeland Security Enterprise. Questions and discussion boards were designed to drive students to compare how past events drove policy and doctrine and its effects on security and *the All-Hazards* approach.

- SLO 1. Measure 1.2. Faculty increased students' opportunity to analyze data and deliver their findings using a multidiscipline approach accounting for both infrastructural and human cost. Faculty created scenarios where the information provided allowed students to focus their efforts on these two dimensions. Taking this approach increased the student's understanding and comfort in implementing and demonstrating their knowledge of these steps as part of their critical thinking problem-solving skillset.

- 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. This 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. This ensured that the content that is being delivered is engaging, stimulating and relevant to the profession of Homeland Security as well as the individual student goals.

- SLO 3. Measure 3.1. Students were given more diverse scenarios in which they were challenged in developing risk assessments, implementing mitigations measures, navigating, selecting possible support agencies, identifying the leadership challenges, and demonstrating their understanding of the all-hazards foundational concepts.

- SLO 3. Measure 3.2. Faculty within the Homeland Security program will continue to collaborate to create engaging and relevant assignments based on the US Government 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 that are 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 assessed during this exam evaluated the students understanding of Homeland Security and its many facets. Additionally, faculty continued to evaluate the creation of research questions that will led to successful completion of Thesis papers.

- SLO 4. Measure 4.2. 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. 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, instructor led the students to develop research questions that are 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 proposal development was a major element of HS 5200 and allowed the students ample opportunities to refine and update the proposals that will be later used in HS 5900.

Plan of Action Moving Forward.

During Assessment Cycle 2020-2021, 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. Because of the tireless efforts of Northwestern's highly accomplished and respected leadership, faculty, and staff, the trust of current and future students in the University's commitment to extraordinary academic and experiential student learning

opportunities is evident through increased enrollment, even during these trying times.

Looking ahead to AC 2021-2022, 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, largely 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 continue to be primarily concentrated on the target scores and desired percentage of students achieving these goals. Based on the current and prior results faculty believe that outcomes are addressing the area's most important to student success. As a key component of continuous improvement model faculty will continue surveying students in every course to ensure that goals for their learning are being met.

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