

# Academic Program Assessment Report

**Assessment** is a term commonly used to encompass the process of gathering and using evidence to guide improvements.

SACSCOC requires that an institution "identifies expected outcomes, assesses the extent to which it achieves these outcomes, and provides evidence of seeking improvement based on analysis of the results".

**Be sure to SAVE your progress as you work!**

**Academic Program**

Sociology, B.S.

**Submission Year**

2020-2021

**Assessment Coordinator Name**

Dr. Daniel M. Harrison

**Enter Assessment Coordinator Email**

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## Program Goal

### Goal

#### Goal 1

**Program Goals** are broad and overarching statements about the skills, knowledge, and dispositions students are expected to gain by the end of their course of study (big picture). They support the Institution's Mission/Goals.

**Program Goal**

Demonstrate disciplinary knowledge in the field of sociology.

**Pillar of Success Supported**

High-Demand, Market-Driven Programs

## Outcomes

### Outcome 1

**Outcomes** are specific, **measurable** statements that reflect the broader goals.

Academic Programs are required to develop **Student Learning Outcomes**, which describe knowledge, skills, and values that students are expected to gain as a result of their educational experiences.

Academic Programs may also develop **Operational Outcomes**, which describe the level of performance of an operational aspect of a program or office (ex. graduation rates, retention, employment data).

**Most goals have at least two outcomes measured.**

**What type of Outcome would you like to add?**

Student Learning Outcome

**Enter Outcome**

Percentage of graduating students demonstrating an ability to describe and use key sociological concepts by scoring at least 70% on Sociology Disciplinary Knowledge Assessment.

**Timeframe for this Outcome**

Academic Year 2019-2020

**Performance Target for "Met"**

Over 75% of students score at least 70% on Sociology Disciplinary Knowledge Assessment.

**Performance Target for "Partially Met"**

Between 50 and 74% score at least 70% on Sociology Disciplinary Knowledge Assessment.

**Performance Target for "Not Met"**

Less than 50% score at least 70% on Sociology Disciplinary Knowledge Assessment.

**Assessment Measure Used**

Sociology Disciplinary Knowledge Assessment

**Frequency of Assessment**

Yearly (spring), at the beginning of Sociology 499 capstone.

**Data Collected for this Timeframe (Results)**

82%

**Score (Met=3, Partially Met=2, Not Met=1)**

3

**Comments/Narrative**

17 graduating seniors took the in-house Sociological Knowledge Disciplinary Assessment at the end of Spring 2020. (One student chose not to complete the assessment). The average score was a 78%. 82% of students scored at least 70% or higher. This indicates that the sociology program is meeting its goal of teaching students the necessary knowledge related to the discipline of sociology.

**Resources Needed to Meet/Sustain Results**

**Explanation of How Resources Will Be Used**

## Outcome 2

**Outcomes** are specific, **measurable** statements that reflect the broader goals.

Academic Programs are required to develop **Student Learning Outcomes**, which describe knowledge, skills, and values that students are expected to gain as a result of their educational experiences.

Academic Programs may also develop **Operational Outcomes**, which describe the level of performance of an operational aspect of a program or office (ex. graduation rates, retention, employment data).

**Most goals have at least two outcomes measured.**

**What type of Outcome would you like to add?**

Student Learning Outcome

**Enter Outcome**

Percentage of students demonstrating disciplinary knowledge by scoring above the national average

(41-58 is the range for 50th percentile) on the Core portion of ETS Sociology Field Test.

**Timeframe for this Outcome**

Academic Year 2019-2020

**Performance Target for "Met"**

Over 75% score at or above average national score on core portion of Sociology Field Test.

**Performance Target for "Partially Met"**

Between 50 and 74% score at or above average national score on core portion of Sociology Field Test.

**Performance Target for "Not Met"**

Less than 50% score at or above average national score on core portion of Sociology Field Test.

**Assessment Measure Used**

ETS Sociology Field Test

**Frequency of Assessment**

Annually, in Soc 499 Sociology Capstone Experience.

**Data Collected for this Timeframe (Results)**

56%

**Score (Met=3, Partially Met=2, Not Met=1)**

2

**Comments/Narrative**

In the 2019-2020 AY, 18 students took the Sociology Field Test (ETS). The average score on the "core" portion of the test for our students was a 42 (on a scale of 20-100) with a range from 28 to 71. The national average score on the assessment is between 41 and 58 (50th percentile). 56% of our students scored at or better than the national average. This indicates that while we are partially meeting our goals concerning teaching students core sociological knowledge, our students could do better when compared to a nationally normed sample. We will have conversations about where our curriculum stands in relation to national recommendations going forward.

**Resources Needed to Meet/Sustain Results****Explanation of How Resources Will Be Used**

## Goal Summary

**Goal Summary/Comments**

Overall, the data indicates that, in the 2019-2020 AY, we were continuing to meet our goals of teaching the disciplinary knowledge of sociology to our students. We are happy to see that average scores on our in-house assessment (the first measure) improved slightly relative to last year to 78% (up from 75%). Scores on the Sociology Field Test were slightly lower, but still in the acceptable range.

**Changes Made/Proposed Related to Goal**

To create degree flexibility, the number of hours in sociology was reduced from 42 to 33 in the 2019-2020 AY. As such the degree has become slightly more generalist than previously. However, our core courses (Soc. 101, Soc. 202, Soc 398, Soc 399 and Soc 499) remain aligned with standard course offerings across departments. Instead of offering a large number of specialized classes, the program continues to focus on the core of sociology. It seems that most students are learning this disciplinary core well.

**Upload Rubrics/Other Files**

## Goal 2

**Program Goals** are broad and overarching statements about the skills, knowledge, and dispositions students are expected to gain by the end of their course of study (big picture). They support the Institution's Mission/Goals.

**Program Goal**

Demonstrate the ability to think analytically.

**Pillar of Success Supported**

High-Demand, Market-Driven Programs

## Outcomes

### Outcome 1

**Outcomes** are specific, **measurable** statements that reflect the broader goals.

Academic Programs are required to develop **Student Learning Outcomes**, which describe knowledge, skills, and values that students are expected to gain as a result of their educational experiences.

Academic Programs may also develop **Operational Outcomes**, which describe the level of performance of an operational aspect of a program or office (ex. graduation rates, retention, employment data).

**Most goals have at least two outcomes measured.**

**What type of Outcome would you like to add?**

Student Learning Outcome

**Enter Outcome**

Percentage of students demonstrating analytical knowledge by scoring at or above the national average on the Critical Thinking portion of the ETS Sociology Field Test.

**Timeframe for this Outcome**

Academic Year 2019-2020

**Performance Target for "Met"**

Over 75% score at or above average national score on assessment.

**Performance Target for "Partially Met"**

Between 50 and 74% score above or at average national score on assessment.

**Performance Target for "Not Met"**

Below 50% score above average national score on assessment.

**Assessment Measure Used**

Sociological Field Test (Critical Thinking)

**Frequency of Assessment**

Each time Soc 499 Sociology Capstone Experience is offered.

**Data Collected for this Timeframe (Results)**

44%

**Score (Met=3, Partially Met=2, Not Met=1)**

1

**Comments/Narrative**

Eighteen sociology graduates took the Critical Thinking portion of the ETS Field Test during the 2019-2020 AY. 44% (8 of 18 students) of our students scored at or above the national average (41-57) on critical thinking skills (the overall score was between 20-100). Our students' average score was a 42, with a high score of a 62 and a low score of a 29. According to our own bench-marks, we are not meeting this goal. There are a lot assessments and assignments in Soc. 499, and this assessment was the very last one. We surmise that some students are being too hasty in completing the assessment and not taking it very seriously. However, the scores should be higher. In AY 2020-2021, we will have conversations about assessing the validity of the instrument in terms of meeting our program goals. solutions.

**Resources Needed to Meet/Sustain Results****Explanation of How Resources Will Be Used****Outcome 2**

**Outcomes** are specific, **measurable** statements that reflect the broader goals.

Academic Programs are required to develop **Student Learning Outcomes**, which describe knowledge, skills, and values that students are expected to gain as a result of their educational experiences.

Academic Programs may also develop **Operational Outcomes**, which describe the level of performance of an operational aspect of a program or office (ex. graduation rates, retention, employment data).

**Most goals have at least two outcomes measured.**

**What type of Outcome would you like to add?**

Student Learning Outcome

**Enter Outcome**

Percentage of students demonstrating analytic knowledge by scoring grade of 70 % or higher on analytical Soc 433 final exam essay question.

**Timeframe for this Outcome**

Academic Year 2019-20

**Performance Target for "Met"**

Over 75% of students score at least 70% on assessment.

**Performance Target for "Partially Met"**

Between 50 and 74% of students score at least 70% on assessment.

**Performance Target for "Not Met"**

Below 50% of students score at least 70% on assessment.

**Assessment Measure Used**

Students are given a Final Examination essay which asks them to pick a theorist, discuss their life

**Frequency of Assessment**

Once yearly, at the end of Sociological Theory.

and work, a concept associate with their work, what this concept means and apply the concept to a social institution in society. The essay is graded on a 50 point scale, with 10 pts. for each part of the question. Scores are then converted to percentages.

**Data Collected for this Timeframe (Results)**  
82%

**Score (Met=3, Partially Met=2, Not Met=1)**  
3

#### **Comments/Narrative**

Seventeen students in SOC 433 answered this question on the final examination. (One student did not answer). 82% of students were able to successfully analyze the work of at least one theorist, their concept, and how it relates to an institution in society. The average score was 88%. This demonstrates that students have the ability to use sociological concepts as analytic tools to think about and study world around them.

#### **Resources Needed to Meet/Sustain Results**

#### **Explanation of How Resources Will Be Used**

### **Outcome 3**

**Outcomes** are specific, **measurable** statements that reflect the broader goals.

Academic Programs are required to develop **Student Learning Outcomes**, which describe knowledge, skills, and values that students are expected to gain as a result of their educational experiences.

Academic Programs may also develop **Operational Outcomes**, which describe the level of performance of an operational aspect of a program or office (ex. graduation rates, retention, employment data).

**Most goals have at least two outcomes measured.**

**What type of Outcome would you like to add?**

Student Learning Outcome

#### **Enter Outcome**

Percentage of Students Satisfactorily completing an assignment that demonstrates the ability to read and comprehend a peer reviewed journal article.

#### **Timeframe for this Outcome**

Academic Year 2019-2020

#### **Performance Target for "Met"**

Over 75% of students score at least 70% or better on assignment

#### **Performance Target for "Partially Met"**

Between 50 and 74% students score at least 70% on assessment.

#### **Performance Target for "Not Met"**

Below 50% of students score at least 70% on assessment.

**Assessment Measure Used**

Students were given a peer-reviewed article from a sociology journal and tasked with summarizing several dimensions of it: what is already known about the topic, what gap in knowledge the author(s) are attempting to fill, what type of method was used, and what the results were. Students were also asked to reflect on how they would change parameters if they were to repeat the study in order to generate new knowledge.

**Frequency of Assessment**

Every semester.

**Data Collected for this Timeframe (Results)**

82% (average over both semesters).

**Score (Met=3, Partially Met=2, Not Met=1)**

3

**Comments/Narrative**

Twenty-three students took the assessment in the fall term and averaged a 78%. Twenty students took the assessment in the spring and averaged an 85%. This shows that we are meeting our goal of teaching students to think critically (as demonstrated by their ability to analyze a peer-reviewed scholarly publication).

**Resources Needed to Meet/Sustain Results****Explanation of How Resources Will Be Used**

## Goal Summary

**Goal Summary/Comments**

Overall, data collected in the AY 2019-2020 indicates that we are doing a satisfactory job teaching students to think analytically. We are disappointed that the critical thinking scores on the ETS assessment were not stronger, but our students do not always do well with standardized tests (especially ones without grades at the end of the semester). They did perform better on in-house analytical assessments which were assigned for grades. We will continue our conversations as a unit and a Department about other ways to improve our students' critical thinking and analytical abilities. We will consider alternative or additional measures of this goal going forward.

**Changes Made/Proposed Related to Goal**

Sociology 398 continues to be a dynamic and evolving course, with Dr. Rubin seeking to use it every semester to further students' skills towards real world applicability. In fall 2020, the students are conducting phone survey interviews on food insecurity, in partnership with a research team at Clemson University. Projects such as this improve student's analytical abilities as well as enhancing their marketability, as many of them will pursue jobs requiring phone research or data analysis skills. We will continue to collect data on students' ability to connect data with the reporting of it via the journal article analysis assignment.

Moreover, we are continuing to reinvent the way we teach Soc 499 (the Senior Capstone Experience), which also enhances student analytical abilities. Starting in fall 2019, students have been required to write a 20-25 page senior thesis based on an independent research project of their choosing. Students are required to determine a research question, develop a research design, collect data, and analyze/interpret the results. This "capstone" project provides an opportunity for students to demonstrate

many analytical skills they have learned during the program. In spring 2020, all 18 sociology capstone students presented their theses at Lander's Student Academic Symposium.

## Upload Rubrics/Other Files

### Goal 3

**Program Goals** are broad and overarching statements about the skills, knowledge, and dispositions students are expected to gain by the end of their course of study (big picture). They support the Institution's Mission/Goals.

#### Program Goal

Demonstrate the ability to apply sociological theory.

#### Pillar of Success Supported

High-Demand, Market-Driven Programs

## Outcomes

### Outcome 1

**Outcomes** are specific, **measurable** statements that reflect the broader goals.

Academic Programs are required to develop **Student Learning Outcomes**, which describe knowledge, skills, and values that students are expected to gain as a result of their educational experiences.

Academic Programs may also develop **Operational Outcomes**, which describe the level of performance of an operational aspect of a program or office (ex. graduation rates, retention, employment data).

**Most goals have at least two outcomes measured.**

#### What type of Outcome would you like to add?

Student Learning Outcome

#### Enter Outcome

Percentage of students demonstrating ability to apply of sociological theory by scoring at least 70% on Soc 202 prostitution assignment.

#### Timeframe for this Outcome

Academic Year 2019-2020

#### Performance Target for "Met"

Over 75% of students score at least 70% on assessment.

#### Performance Target for "Partially Met"

Between 50 and 75% of students score at least 70% on assessment.

#### Performance Target for "Not Met"

Less than 50% of students score at least 70% on assessment.

#### Assessment Measure Used

The Sociology 202 final paper addresses prostitution as a social problem. Students are

#### Frequency of Assessment

Each semester in Soc 202 Social Problems.



assigned to find why it is a social problem and apply at least two of the four major theoretical paradigms of sociology presented in the class to their understand of the nature of the problem (E.g. Conflict, functionalist, feminist, and symbolic interactionist theories).

**Data Collected for this Timeframe (Results)**

93% average across both terms.

**Score (Met=3, Partially Met=2, Not Met=1)**

3

**Comments/Narrative**

Fifty-nine students submitted this assignment in the fall term, and earned an average of 93%. Fifty students completed the assessment in the spring, and earned a 92%. While we are glad to see that so many students can apply sociological theory, we have worries that the assignment might be too easy. We have been using this measure for a number of years. We are currently having conversations about phasing it out and replacing with another measure in AY 2021-2022 in which the students pick their own topic to apply the theories to rather than having that topic assigned to them. It is a very commonly discussed topic and we fear that some of the students are simply doing an internet search for sociology plus the topic in order to get their answers.

**Resources Needed to Meet/Sustain Results**

**Explanation of How Resources Will Be Used**

## Outcome 2

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**Most goals have at least two outcomes measured.**

**What type of Outcome would you like to add?**

Student Learning Outcome

**Enter Outcome**

Percentage of students demonstrating ability to apply sociological theory by earning at least a 70% on the Sociological Imagination paper in Soc 433.

**Timeframe for this Outcome**

Academic Year 2019-20

**Performance Target for "Met"**

Over 75% of students score at least 70% on assessment.

**Performance Target for "Partially Met"**

Between 50 and 74% of students score at least 70% on assessment.

**Performance Target for "Not Met"**

Less than 50% of students score at least 70% on assessment.

**Assessment Measure Used**

Sociological Imagination Research paper. Students research a pivotal event in their life and apply sociological theory to understand their experiences.

**Frequency of Assessment**

Every semester in Sociological Theory

**Data Collected for this Timeframe (Results)**

100%

**Score (Met=3, Partially Met=2, Not Met=1)**

3

**Comments/Narrative**

Eighteen students were given this assignment in Spring 2020 (in Soc 433). The average score on the assignment was an 86%. All students did well with this assignment and successfully applied sociological theory to a pivotal event in their life. This indicates that we are meeting our goal teaching students to apply sociological theory to their own lives and experiences. This assignment has since been moved to Soc 399 since Soc 433 has been discontinued.

**Resources Needed to Meet/Sustain Results**

**Explanation of How Resources Will Be Used**

## Goal Summary

**Goal Summary/Comments**

Assessment data for the AY 2019-2020 year indicates that we are doing very well meeting our goal of teaching students how to apply sociological theory. We pride ourselves on being a program that demonstrates the relevance of sociology to understanding the real world. Students are exposed to theory across the sociology curriculum, and it represents one of the program's strong suits. We are especially good at making sociologically theory relevant to student's personal lives and in other applications to events, institutions, and processes in society.

**Changes Made/Proposed Related to Goal**

One change we have made in relation to this goal is that Soci 499 (Internship) is now a required course for the Sociology major. Not only will this help students transition into the labor market, but it will also give them an opportunity to apply theoretical concepts and perspectives to organizational realities on the ground. Dr. Rubin and his students' collaborative project with Clemson researchers on the subject of food insecurity (mentioned above) is another example of how student's learn to apply sociological theory to the world around them.

**Upload Rubrics/Other Files**

## Goal 4

**Program Goals** are broad and overarching statements about the skills, knowledge, and dispositions students are expected to gain by the end of their course of study (big picture). They support the Institution's Mission/Goals.

**Program Goal**

To comply with Program Productivity standards as defined by the South Carolina Commission on Higher Education.

### **Pillar of Success Supported**

High-Demand, Market-Driven Programs

## **Outcomes**

### **Outcome 1**

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**Most goals have at least two outcomes measured.**

**What type of Outcome would you like to add?**

Operational Outcome

**Enter Outcome**

Major Enrollment

**Timeframe for this Outcome**

Academic Year 2019-2020

**Performance Target for "Met"**

Using a five-year rolling average, the number of students enrolled in the major (a) for Baccalaureate programs is greater than or equal to 12.5, (b) for Master's/First Professional is greater than or equal to 6.

**Performance Target for "Partially Met"**

Not Applicable.

**Performance Target for "Not Met"**

Using a five-year rolling average, the number of students enrolled in the major (a) for Baccalaureate programs is less than 12.5 (b) for Master's/First Professional is less than 6.

**Assessment Measure Used**

Enrollment and Graduation data extracted from Banner.

**Frequency of Assessment**

Annually.

**Data Collected for this Timeframe (Results)**

91

**Score (Met=3, Partially Met=2, Not Met=1)**

3

**Comments/Narrative**

This data indicates that sociology continues to be a popular major at Lander University. The number of majors over the last three years has been relatively stable. However, the program continues to face stressors regarding new majors who transfer to sociology from 2 year schools or who become sociology

majors in their senior year. Often these students have all general education degree requirements and elective credits filled, and have nothing to take but sociology. Given the size of our faculty, the course progressions and prerequisites, it is impossible to offer all the classes a student would need to graduate in one academic year. We try to message this to students, but they still want to get the degree as quickly as possible, which has consequences in terms of academic quality and integrity.

#### **Resources Needed to Meet/Sustain Results**

#### **Explanation of How Resources Will Be Used**

## **Outcome 2**

**Outcomes** are specific, **measurable** statements that reflect the broader goals.

Academic Programs are required to develop **Student Learning Outcomes**, which describe knowledge, skills, and values that students are expected to gain as a result of their educational experiences.

Academic Programs may also develop **Operational Outcomes**, which describe the level of performance of an operational aspect of a program or office (ex. graduation rates, retention, employment data).

**Most goals have at least two outcomes measured.**

**What type of Outcome would you like to add?**

Operational Outcome

**Enter Outcome**

Completions (Degrees Awarded)

**Timeframe for this Outcome**

Academic Year 2019-2020

**Performance Target for "Met"**

Using a five-year rolling average, the number of degrees awarded (a) for Baccalaureate programs is greater than or equal to 8, (b) for Master's/First Professional is greater than or equal to 3.

**Performance Target for "Partially Met"**

Not applicable.

**Performance Target for "Not Met"**

Using a five-year rolling average, the number of degrees awarded (a) for Baccalaureate programs is less than 8 (b) for Master's/First Professional is less than 3.

**Assessment Measure Used**

Enrollment and Graduation data extracted from Banner.

**Frequency of Assessment**

Annually.

**Data Collected for this Timeframe (Results)**

21.6

**Score (Met=3, Partially Met=2, Not Met=1)**

3

**Comments/Narrative**

Sociology continues to have strong graduation rates at Lander University. Despite the limitations and obstacles we face, we are still managing to effectively move students through the program, provide them with an engaging learning experience while they are here, and help them transition into graduate school or the labor market. Our degree completion rate remains strong relative to other programs on campus, some of which have significantly more faculty. in spite of the limited number of faculty.

**Resources Needed to Meet/Sustain Results**

Despite the hiring of Dr. Rubin on a tenure-track line last year, we are still down at least one full-time sociologist. We continue to rely on adjuncts and to teach courses 4-5 courses a term. Many Departments on campus have full-lecturers. We would like to pursue hiring a lecturer as a third full-time faculty member in sociology. This would bring a certain level of continuity to the program, allow us to teach more elective classes, support majors such as criminology and minors such as human services. We estimate it would cost about \$45K., plus fringe benefits annually to hire a Lecturer of Sociology.

**Explanation of How Resources Will Be Used**

The lecturer would teach courses across the sociology curriculum. The new hire would allow us to continue to recruit students to the major, to teach classes students need for their degree, and contribute to E-Core.

## **Goal Summary**

**Goal Summary/Comments**

Sociology continues to be a robust major at Lander University, for incoming freshmen, upperclassmen who switch to sociology and transfer students.

**Changes Made/Proposed Related to Goal**

During the 2019-2020 AY we underwent a systematic program review of the sociology major. We brought the major down from 42 hours to 33. This makes the major more achievable for a greater number of students, particularly transfer students and students who switch majors to sociology late in their college career. We anticipate that these changes will lead to more students choosing sociology as a major in the years ahead.

**Upload Rubrics/Other Files**