

# **Campus Assessment of Student Learning Outcomes**

## **Unit Name: School of Public and Environmental Affairs (SPEA) Assessment Summary Fall 2009-Spring 2010**

**Indiana University Northwest**

**School of Public and Environmental Affairs**

**Annual Assessment Report**

**2009-2010**

### **What are the student learning outcomes in your unit?**

The outcomes identified are specific to the program within the unit. The School of Public and Environmental Affairs consists of undergraduate degrees in criminal justice, public affairs, and health services management. The Master of Public Affairs is the graduate program offered through SPEA. As such, learning outcomes are specific to the programs and are given below based on this structure:

#### **Bachelor of Science in Criminal Justice**

At completion of degree requirements students will be able to:

1. Identify the components and functions of the criminal justice system (police, courts, and corrections)
1. Apply knowledge of the operations of the criminal justice system to real life case scenarios and current events
2. Demonstrate the ability to research and analyze crime data and the impact on crime policy
4. Identify the links between theoretical foundations of crime and delinquency and the development of crime policy
5. Apply communication, computer, and statistical skills to content specific information in criminal justice

#### **Bachelor of Science in Public Affairs**

At completion of degree requirements students will be able to:

1. Identify the elements of public management and describe the interrelationships between them and the complexities of managing in the public sector
2. Demonstrate an understanding of the universe of public policy
3. Demonstrate the ability to do micro and macro reflection that apply content material to individual interpretations and self-awareness and organizational behavior

Bachelor of Science in Health Services Management

At completion of the degree requirements students will be able to:

1. Compare and contrast the U.S. health-care system, including how insurance is provided, with other systems around the world
2. Understand the ethical, legal, financial and political factors which influence the provision of health services in the U.S.
3. Understand the complex barriers to the access and provision of health services in the U.S.
4. Understand the relationship between access of health services, quality of health services, and costs of health services in the U.S.

Masters of Public Affairs –

1. Understand the economic, political, social, and ecological dimensions of globalization, including their implications for governance, institutional and organizational management, and sustainable development
2. Understand the shifting of national responsibilities in the direction of international bodies and systems, state, local, and community-based institutions, as well as in the direction of the private sector
3. Understand the different forms of governance and how they are utilized in partnerships across sectors
4. Understand the American legal system and alternative legal systems
5. Understand how the legal system affects public policy within our constitutional framework as well as the legal constraints affecting the public and nonprofit sectors
6. Understand the structure, functions, and differences between the public, private, and nonprofit sectors with particular emphasis on how issues and problems in the public domain are related to the private and nonprofit sectors
7. Understand the financial, political, and economic environments in the mixed market economy
8. Understand the key forces that drive change and the flexibility and adaptability that are essential attributes for implementing change

9. Have a basic understanding of statistics and data analysis as well as research design and be able to apply and use these skills and tools in policy formulation evaluation and decision making
10. Understand the role of technology and how this relates to public policy and management
11. Understand how organizations operate and work together to gain an understanding of the broader organizational environment
12. Understand alternative perspectives, values and world views and recognize their significance for effective work relationships and service to client groups
13. Understand how to manage diversity
14. Understand collaborative leadership, leadership styles, and their impact on organizations and employees
15. Understand how to work in a team, to deal effectively with conflict, and to negotiate and communicate effectively across constituencies
16. Develop self-awareness about one's responsibility and service to the public
17. Understand the role values play in decision making and develop a commitment to ethical practices and professional excellence

**What outcomes did you assess this academic year?**

Each program within SPEA assessed the specific identified outcomes using course-embedded strategies such as written and objective examinations, research papers, oral presentations, journals, peer evaluations, and community organization assessments of service-learning projects, role play activities, and project reports.

**How did you assess their skills before, during and/or at the end of the semester/academic year?**

Faculty of the Criminal Justice Degree Program used a pre and post test course-embedded strategy in the majority of the required major specific courses. The pretest consists of 10 to 18 multiple choice and true or false questions and is administered the first week of classes. The posttest consisting of the same questions as those used in the pretest, is administered toward the end of the semester. The goal is to determine a baseline level of knowledge of key content information prior to engaging in course lecture and activities and to compare these results with the responses to the post test to determine the level of knowledge after completion of the majority of the course sessions. The same pre and post tests were used in both the fall and spring semesters. Analysis of response data was conducted at the end of each semester and faculty were provided the summary results for the courses they taught. On average, the pretest results indicated that students scored in the range of 40% to 50% correct responses to the test questions. Comparing these results to those of the post tests, we determined that there was

significant increase in student correct responses in some of the classes but in other classes there was very little variance between pre and post results. It is important to keep in mind that we used aggregate data only. We felt it important to have students respond anonymously in order to remove any anxiety over the possibility that their performance level on the pre and post tests could impact their course grade. However, after getting the fall semester summary analysis some faculty felt it important that students self-identify in order to improve motivation to perform at their best and they were offered a small number of extra credit points if they scored 70% or higher on the post test. In comparing fall and spring semester results for the same course (for example all J101 sections) it was determined that having students self-identify and offering them extra credit opportunities did result in slightly better performance. Perhaps the greatest benefit of this assessment strategy has been the level of pedagogical reflection faculty have conducted. Some faculty have decided to vary the assignments used and the lecture format to try to improve learning. In the summer of 2010 the faculty met to discuss changes to test questions and to prepare for another year of using this pre post test course-embedded assessment strategy.

A faculty member who taught two of the primary introductory courses in the Public Affairs program - Public Management (V263) and Managing Behavior in Public Organizations (V366) - used a similar methodology. Based on the result of this testing strategy, the faculty member has decided to reevaluate the test and to restructure it to measure learning outcomes in a more effective manner in the 2010-2011 academic year. The results for the pre post test data reflected a net increase in learning but the faculty member has planned reconstructing the questions to align them more with learning outcomes/objectives.

Another faculty member who taught a required course in the health services management program had students respond to an essay question relevant to the topic at the beginning of the semester and used a similar question on the final exam for the course. The analysis of the results has not yet been conducted. The faculty member plans on using a similar methodology in the fall 2010 semester of the same course. A comparison the results from the fall 2009 and fall 2010 data analysis will be reported in the assessment report for 2010-2011.

Yet another SPEA faculty member used the pre post test strategy with students in two sections of the graduate Public Management Economics (V517) course. The analysis has not been completed.

**Please summarize the data you have collected this semester/academic year.**

The primary form of assessment of student learning outcomes has been through use of course-embedded pre and post tests.

A secondary form of data collected during the 2009-2010 academic year has been through responses to a questionnaire administered to graduating students in both the undergraduate and graduate programs. The survey questions pertain predominately to what would be considered "satisfaction" with the program.

SPEA also utilized focus groups to gather information from senior level students in the Crime and Public Policy (V439) course which is considered the "capstone" course required of all

criminal justice majors. The facilitators of the groups were graduate students enrolled in the Public Program Evaluation (V562) course. Using this unique methodology of having graduate students engage in focused conversations with undergraduate students served multiple purposes: (1) allowed us to gather valuable feedback from upper division students pertaining to satisfaction with the program and (2) provided a venue for the graduate students to demonstrate their ability to utilize focus group development and implementation as a means of public program evaluation which gave the faculty member an additional means of assessment of student learning outcomes. In summary, the focus group feedback provided us with some valuable input for curriculum planning.

**Please describe any programmatic changes you have made or are planning to make based on the data you have collected.**

The results of the pre post test analysis have led to faculty group discussions on ways to improve student learning as well as individual pedagogical reflection. There have been some changes in lecture style as well as course assignments and examinations. One of the primary results has been the use of multiple, smaller assignments rather than one or two lengthy projects for the semester. Another discussion has revolved around the need to integrate learning across courses. For example, utilizing assignments that require students to apply knowledge, skills, and abilities they have learned in other courses. We also recognize that it is important to inform the students that what they learn in one of the required courses will be included in tests and assignments in other required courses.

The questionnaire results and input provided through the focus group participants indicated a need for SPEA to provide information relevant to career development and placement. We used those results to develop strategies to increase internship opportunities for all of our students as well as providing various extracurricular events to increase career networking opportunities for students. For example, in the fall of 2009 we conducted the first of our annual criminal justice week events and included question/answer sessions focused on employment opportunities for criminal justice students to consider. In October 2010 we have planned for a panel of criminal justice employees to answer questions about the interviewing process each of their agencies use and to provide the students with tips on how to perform better at interviews. We are also using the results from the questionnaires and focus group input to develop course rotations, expand sections of courses with high enrollments, and review the days and times courses are offered to meet the needs of the majority while being cognizant of meeting the needs of students for alternative schedules.

**\*\*Note:** Please use this template to provide the responses to the prompts above.\*\*