**Annual Assessment Report for 2020-2021 AY**

Reports completed on assessment activities carried out during the 2020-21 AY will be due September 30th 2021 and must be e-mailed to the Director of Assessment, Dr. Douglas Fraleigh (douglasf@csufresno.edu).

Provide detailed responses for each of the following questions within this word document. Please do NOT insert an index or add formatting. Furthermore, only report on two or three student learning outcomes even if your external accreditor requires you to evaluate four or more outcomes each year. Also be sure to explain or omit specialized or discipline-specific terms.

Department/Program: Criminology Degree BA

Assessment Coordinator: Monica Summers, PhD

1. **Please list the learning outcomes you assessed this year.**

SLO 2: Students will attain basic writing skills that prepare them for long term careers in Criminology and Criminal Justice.

SLO 3: Graduates will be able to access the needed information effectively and efficiently and evaluate information and its sources critically.

\*Assessment activities for 2019-2020 were originally to distribute employer surveys to organizations that are part of CRIM 180 (internship), thereby assessing all SLOs (1-5) through indirect measures. Assessment activities for AY 2019-2020 ended up being suspended due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Once activities resumed, the university provided departments the option of resuming 2019-2020 assessment activities or to skip that year’s plans and go forward with the 2020-2021 assessment plans. Due to disruption to internships as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, the department assessment coordinator chose to suspend the 2019-2020 assessment plan and go forward with the 2020-2021 plan. Assessment plans for 2019-2020 will be included with 2021-2022 assessment activities.

1. **What assignment or survey did you use to assess the outcomes and what method (criteria or rubric) did you use to evaluate the assignment? Please describe the assignment and the criteria or rubric used to evaluate the assignment in detail and, if possible, include copies of the assignment and criteria/rubric at the end of this report.**

The students’ writing communication and information literacy were assessed through research papers from four Research Methods (CRIM 170) sections in Spring 2021. Three sections required students to complete similar research papers requiring students to propose a research project with complete literature review. One section offered students the option to create a survey or conduct field research and then write a paper describing how the survey answered research questions or how field observations answered research questions. Syllabus language from one of the sections requiring a research proposal (three sections had very similar assignments) and language from the section requiring survey/field research, as well as the assessment rubric are provided below:

**Research Proposal:**

*Topic Selection*                                                20 Points

Students must select a topic that bears some relationship to criminology or criminal justice.  Additionally students must also list at least one (1) research question to examine over the course of this project.  Research questions that can be answered with a simple yes/no response are insufficient to satisfy this requirement.  All topics must be approved by the instructor to receive credit for the final proposal.

*Introduction*(3 – 5 pages)                                                                              40 Points

In this section, students must introduce their topic and briefly summarize the nature of the research.  As such, an introduction should (1) introduce or explain specifically the phenomenon to be examined, and (2) include a problem statement.  The problem statement simply denotes significance of the studying the problem, and how your research might contribute to the current literature on the topic.

*Literature Review* (5 – 7 pages)                                                                     60 Points

The literature review is useful to examine and report on what other researchers have uncovered on the topic.  The literature review is NOT expected to be exhaustive.  However, the literature reviewed in this section should be specific to the topic and should primarily focus on studies that describe or explain variables relative to the topic.  Students should provide an overview of the manuscripts described in the literature review noting the following information: (1) the general topic/focus of the analysis and overall results/findings of the study, (2) data analysis techniques (e.g. multiple regression, discriminant analysis), (3) sampling procedures (and it is sometimes useful to note the sample size), (4) type of research (qualitative, quantitative, or mixed methods), and (5) data collection methods (experiments, surveys, interviews, field observations, etc.).  Finally, the literature review should cumulatively assess the manuscripts under review to suggest inconsistencies in findings and also suggest areas (gaps in the literature) where additional research would contribute to the literature.  Students should focus on finding analyses that utilize methods similar to their proposed methodology.  This section will require numerous citations.  Failure to adequately cite sources will result in substantial deductions for the final grade.  Review page 119 of the textbook for more details on writing a literature review.  Generally, this section would also include a theoretical framework to better guide the analysis, however this requirement is reserved for graduate students.  As such, undergraduates are not required to propose a theoretical framework.

*Methodology* (4 – 6 pages)                                                                             80 Points

In this section, students must describe the method by which they will conduct their analysis.  As such, students must propose at least one (1) research question (RQ), the type of analysis (exploratory, descriptive, explanatory; qualitative/quantitative) and the procedures that will be used to answer the RQ.  To this end, this section should specify the scope of the analysis (federal, state, local, international, etc.), unit(s) of analysis, sampling procedures, conceptualize and operationalize terms/variables, and data collection methods.  As well, students should also explain why each of the methods proposed are suitable for their analysis.

A title page (not numbered) should precede the manuscript and a reference page must be included at the end of your methods section.  An abstract is not necessary for the research proposal.  This assignment must adhere to APA requirements (e.g. one inch margins, double spaced, size 12 Times New Roman font, with numbered pages).  Failure to properly format according to APA style requirements will be severely penalized.  Students must PROOFREAD their manuscripts thoroughly to ensure that grammatical errors are minimized, that descriptions are written with clarity, and that words are spelled correctly.  Students are encouraged to utilize the university writing center for assistance.  The final manuscript should include at least twelve (12) full pages of writing excluding the title page and bibliography.

**Survey/Field Research Option:**

*Writing Option #1: Survey Research*

The first writing option involves designing an original survey. You will be expected to choose a specific research question and develop a survey to answer that question. The survey should include no more than five demographic questions, a variety of open-ended and close-ended questions, and at least one matrix or contingency question pertaining to your chosen research question. Each survey should include a minimum of 20 questions. In addition, you must write a 1,200-word paper in which you explain how the questions you selected would provide you with answers your research question.

*Writing Option #2: Field Research*

The second writing option requires you to collect field observations. You will select a research question and conduct observations to answer that question. Each observation period should last at least one hour and you should complete at least three observation periods. You will be expected to submit a copy of your field notes from each observation and complete a 1,200-word paper answering your chosen research question using the data gathered from these observations.

**Please adhere to the *minimum* page length requirement (i.e., 1,200 words).** Your response may include more than 1,200 words, but it cannot be less than 1,200 words. **If your submission is less than this minimum word count, you will lose points.** In addition, you are more than welcome to include outside sources in your papers, but be sure that you have properly cited them (including online sources). All research papers should follow APA guidelines. Grades will be based on your response to the topic, as well as formatting, spelling, grammar and punctuation.

**Benchmark:**

The following rubric was used for this assessment. The benchmark is for all three questions. We expected 75% or more of the senior students would achieve a score of 3 (proficient or higher) on the rubric.

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | Above Benchmark | Proficient (Benchmark) | Partially Proficient | Unsatisfactory |
|  | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| Style and Format | -Consistent with APA style and format-Models language and conventions used in related scholarly literature-Would meet requirements for publication | -Many minor errors, but APA style and format are used-Demonstrates thoroughness and competence in documenting sources-Style and format contribute to the comprehensibility of the paper | -While some APA convention are followed, others are not. Paper lacks consistency of style and format-Unclear citations-Significant revisions would contribute to the comprehensibility of the paper | -APA Style Manual conventions are not followed-Fails to demonstrate thoroughness and competence in documentation-Lack of appropriate style and format make reading and comprehensibility problematic. |
| Mechanics | -Error free in terms of mechanics-Transitions help establish a sound scholarly argument and aid the reader in following writer’s logic | -Many minor errors, but the paper follows normal conventions of the spelling and grammar throughout-Errors do not significantly with comprehensibility-Transitions and organizational structures such as subheadings  | -Frequent errors in spelling, grammar (such as subject/verb agreements and tense), sentence structure and/or other writing conventions make reading difficult and interfere with comprehensibility-Writing does not flow smoothly from point to point; lacks appropriate transitions. | -Paper contains numerous errors in spelling, grammar, and/or sentence structure that make following the logic of the paper extremely difficult. |
| Content and Organization | -Paper excels in organization and presentation of ideas related to the topic-Raises important issues or ideas that may not have been represented in the literature cited-Would serve as a good basis for further research on the topic | -Follows all requirements for the paper-Topic is timely and carefully focused-Clearly outlines the major points related to the topic; ideas are logically arranged to present a sound scholarly argument-Does a credible job summarizing related literature | -While the paper represents the major requirement, it is lacking in substantial ways-The content may be poorly focused or the scholarly argument weak or poorly conceived-Major ideas related to the content may be ignored or inadequately explored. -Overall, the content and organization needs significant revision to represent a critical analysis of the topic. | -Analysis of existing scholarly/professional literature on the topic is inadequate-Content is poorly focused and lacks organization-The reader is left with little information about or understanding of the paper’s topic. |

1. **What did you learn from your analysis of the data? Please include sample size (how many students were evaluated) and indicate how many students (number or percentage instead of a median or mean) were designated as proficient.**

The assessment was administered for Research Methods (CRIM 170). There were (insert total) final assignments submitted for evaluation. Of the (insert total) assignments, 107 assignments were completed by juniors and seniors. Of these 107 assignments, a random sample of 10 assignments from each section were the source for this analysis (n=40).

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | % of students meeting this benchmark | 4(Above) | 3(Benchmark) | 2(Below) | 1(Unsatisfactory) |
| Style and Format |  | **(0)** | **(24)** | (14) | (2) |
| Mechanics |  | **(1)** | **(27)** | (12) | (0) |
| Content and Organization |  | **(0)** | **(15)** | (18) | (7) |

In the area of style and format, only 60% of the students (n=18) met the benchmark. Evaluations of style and format were focused on students’ ability to format papers according to APA guidelines (e.g., in-text citations, headings, reference list). The data suggest that students have difficulty understanding when to provide in-text citations and do not necessarily understand how to format a research paper. For instance, some students only provided in-text citations at the end of paragraphs without consideration for other content in that section. In addition, the literature reviews in several papers were formatted as if they were annotated bibliographies rather than a cohesive document. The two papers identified as unsatisfactory failed to use in-text citations at all. It is important to note that papers from the CRIM 170 section that were allowed the option to do survey/field research did not have to cite references. These papers were evaluated for other APA guidelines.

Only 67.5% (n=27) of the students met the benchmark for paper mechanics. Proficiency at mechanics revolved around spelling, grammar, punctuation and sentence structure. The data indicate that students may not proofread papers since many had several errors related to spelling, grammar, sentence structure and other writing conventions. These errors often made comprehension challenging and students’ writing often failed to transition from point to point successfully.

Students exhibited the most difficulty in content and organization, in which only 37.5% (n=15) of papers were proficient. Many papers lacked an adequate analysis of existing literature and demonstrated an inability to propose methodology that would sufficiently answer the research questions. For example, one paper sought to explore research examining whether TASER exposure affected cognitive ability, thereby potentially violating an individuals’ due process rights. The literature review, however, only included one study on the matter even though a quick Google Scholar search shows several studies available on the subject. The student then proposes methodology that is an experimental design, yet the student goes on to say there will be no control group. In another paper, the student proposes research to assess how felony disenfranchisement affects voting outcomes, but then describes methodology assessing the incarcerated persons’ perceptions about voting and politics. The seven papers identified as unsatisfactory exhibited content that was very poorly focused, lacked organization and did not demonstrate a clear understanding of the topic they chose to write about.

1. **What changes, if any, do you recommend based on the assessment data?**

Prior to offering recommendations, it is important to note contextual factors that may have impacted students’ writing competency and information literacy. In March 2020, the COVID-19 pandemic impacted course delivery in a variety of ways and numerous organizations have noted the effects of the pandemic on students’ mental health. Upon requesting the data from instructors teaching CRIM 170, all four instructors indicated that the papers were of substantially lower quality than in semesters past.

That said, students tend to struggle with writing, so results may not be much better outside pandemic conditions. Students may benefit if instructors offer writing opportunities in their courses, inform students on how to locate peer-reviewed materials relevant to their topic, provide resources on Canvas that may facilitate better writing skills (e.g., example paper, link to OWL Purdue) and give feedback on student writing. As such, all instructors will be informed about the AY 2020-2021 assessment and encouraged to promote student writing. A google folder will be shared in which instructors can share strategies and resources for improving student writing.

In the past, the Department has also discussed developing two possible W courses, “Report Writing and Professionalization in Criminal Justice Related Fields” and “Research and Writing in Criminology”. These additions may also improve students’ writing skills, particularly for careers in criminology and criminal justice. The development of the committee was temporarily suspended due to COVID-19, but will be readdressed in Fall 2021.

1. **If you recommended any changes in your response to Question 4 in last year’s assessment report, what progress have you made in implementing these changes? If you did not recommend making any changes in last year’s report please write N/A as your answer to this question.**

Assessment activities were suspended for AY 2019-2020, so progress refers to recommendations from the AY 2018-2019 report.

As of Fall 2021, all CRIM 50 (three sections) are supported by an SI. There were concerns about some students’ ability to access their SI, as some students’ schedules were not compatible with the SI leader of their specific CRIM 50 course. The assessment coordinator reached out to the Learning Center Interim Director who indicated that if students cannot attend the SI schedule, they are encouraged to attend tutoring. The Learning Center also have online and in-person support for all students enrolled in CRIM 50.

Recommendations also included developing a learning community for statistics instructors in which instructors could discuss appropriate projects/assignments to improve students’ understanding of statistics and overall standards of practice. The assessment coordinator organized a virtual meeting with two other full-time faculty members and the three instructors teaching CRIM 50 for AY 2020-2021. The instructors teaching CRIM 50 agreed to use the same textbook, to teach analytic techniques up to factor analysis and/or ANOVA, and to provide students more instruction on writing and interpretation.

1. **What assessment activities will you be conducting during the next academic year?**

The Department is considering assessment of the following outcomes in AY 2021-2022:

SLO 1: Graduates will be able to correctly and accurately define and describe key criminological terms, theories, and specific examples from criminal law, as well as various aspects of the criminal justice system.

SLO 2: Graduates will be able to write a paper with appropriate use of skills in mechanics, organization, and format.

SLO 3: Graduates will be able to access needed information effectively and efficiently and evaluate the information and sources critically.

SLO 4: Graduates will be able to demonstrate their ability to apply critical thinking to evaluate situations make decisions in their specific field.

SLO 5: Graduates will be able to perform data analysis, interpret the findings, and make statistical conclusions.

Method of Evaluation:

Exit survey: Students who have applied for graduation will be asked to answer a survey commenting on the extent to which the Criminology program at Fresno State has prepared them for their chosen career.

Employer survey: The employer survey will be distributed to the agencies that accept the criminology interns to assess the readiness to work in the agency in terms of the agency specific knowledge, critical thinking skills, and written and oral communication skills.

Both of these surveys will be developed in Fall 2021 and disseminated in Spring 2022.

1. Identify and discuss any major issues identified during your last Program Review and in what ways these issues have or have not been addressed.

Action Plan Progress to Date:

Action 1:

As of Fall 2019, all current Fresno State students wishing to transfer into the Criminology or FBS majors must have a minimum GPA of 2.5.

Action 2:

Two new assistant professors joined the Criminology Department in August 2021. The Department has an active search for a new tenure-track hire to start in August 2022.

Action 3:

An employer survey and an exit survey will be developed by the end of Fall 2021 and distributed in Spring 2022.

Action 4:

A Writing Committee was being developed in Fall 2019. The committee were going to meet to discuss two possible W courses, “Report Writing and Professionalization in Criminal Justice Related Fields” and “Research and Writing in Criminology”. The development of the committee was temporarily suspended due to COVID-19, but will be readdressed in Fall 2021. A taskforce and timeline for curriculum development and implementation will be discussed by the committee.

Action 5:

Mentioned above in respect to the Department’s response to last year’s recommendations (question #5).

Action 6:

In addition to our longstanding collaborations with other Departments and Colleges, the Criminology Department was working with the Philosophy Department on the redevelopment of the Peace and Conflict Studies (PAX) certificate. The Philosophy Department added Criminology courses (specifically CRIM 138 and CRIM 178) to their new Social Justice & Social Change Certificate. Courses from our Department are part of the Correctional Recreation certificate offered through the Department of Recreational Education. Our CRIM 120 and CRIM 120(S)-mentoring at risk youth, also count for the Certificate in Serving At-Risk Youth, offered by the Recreation Administration Department (CRIM 120(S) is currently suspended due to the COVID-19 pandemic).

Action 7:

Supplemental Instruction (SI) is available for all sections of CRIM 50 and FBS 155. The Learning Center also encourages students to take advantage of tutoring available for students who cannot meet with their assigned SI due to their schedule.

Action 8:

The Department is offering more sections than normal in Fall 2021 and has slightly reduced class sizes as a result. We also had a handful of sections with open seats at the start of the Fall 2021 semester, increasing the opportunities for students to register in courses they need to graduate. Starting in Spring 2020, the Department began offering two sections of CRIM 1 per semester which has led to a drastic reduction in the backlog of students waiting to take the course. Due to the additional sections and virtual modality, more than 1,200 students have taken the course since Fall 2020. Currently, around 900 students still need to take CRIM 1.