

Assessment and Continuous Improvement
Major in Human Services: Bachelor of Science Degree
Gordon State College

Preamble

Gordon State College has been immersed in an active program of assessment and improvement for many years. As a historical two-year college with many graduates receiving degrees in “general education intense” Associate of Arts and Associate of Science transfer degrees, we have in the past focused a large part of our assessment activity on student learning outcomes in general education courses - data which was collected and analyzed each year by relevant academic units, the College Assessment Committee, and the Academic Affairs Office. In addition every seven years the College Assessment Committee, the Academic Affairs Office, and the President’s Office worked to complete a comprehensive program review of each of our programs areas. This comprehensive program review was locally called the Multi-Metric Program Review, and it focused on quality, productivity and viability. In concert with a University System of Georgia initiative called Complete College Georgia, we gave continuing and serious attention to retention and completion data. Finally, in recent years we were involved in launching new baccalaureate programming. As each new baccalaureate major came on line, we identified student learning outcomes and began to assess the program using those outcomes. In particular, we created a robust assessment program for our Human Services majors. Over the last decade we used this accumulated evidence as we improved and advanced our programs.

However, the response of the SACS reviewers to our Five Year Interim Report document (submitted in 2012) suggested that we needed to give additional coherence to our assessment, analysis, and continuous improvement processes. We employed a consultant, Dr. Ed Rugg, to review our previous efforts and to help us chart new directions. On the advice of Dr. Rugg, in Spring 2014 we reconfigured our assessment/analysis/improvement processes in these three substantive ways:

- We adopted three Common Program Outcomes (POs) and four common Student Learning Outcomes (SLOs) that will be the basis of our assessment and improvement activities for all of our academic programs going forward.
- We changed both the focus and substance of the assessment measures we were using to determine if outcomes were being achieved.
- We more closely identified the program assessment processes with a portion of the academic leadership team and the faculty responsible for the program.

This document will primarily focus on our work since June 2014, work in which data related to these three POs and four SLOs were collected, then analyzed, and then used to help us improve our Human Services major. However, you will note that the narrative that addresses

improvements starts with a reflection on improvements we implemented in the 2010-2013 timeframe. This portion of the narrative will remind the reader that we were involved in assessment and improvement long before 2014 and will also identify for our campus the changes we made in those earlier days with the goal of improvement that needs to be followed in years to come to determine whether the changes were effective.

Program Outcomes and Assessments: Three common Program Outcomes were adopted by the Senate of Gordon State College in Spring 2014 and will be used in assessing all of our academic programs. Below the reader will find these outcomes as they will be applied to the program leading to a Bachelor of Science with a major in Human Services and will find the assessments that will be implemented to determine our progress in reaching these Program Outcomes for the Human Services major.

Program Outcome #1 - Program Quality: The program leading to a Human Services major achieves accepted standards for providing an exceptional, high quality post-secondary education and attains favorable peer recognition attesting to the high quality of the teaching and learning the program supports. (This outcome is consistent with the GSC Mission “to provide exceptional education” and the GSC Core Values of “high quality post-secondary education” and “effective teaching,” and the governing board’s emphasis on program quality in comprehensive program review)

Assessment of Program Outcome #1: Measurements that will provide the basis for further analysis and interpretation and lead to program improvements:

- a) Data collected from exit surveys completed by all graduating students in HUSV 4901. Program quality will be evaluated by the overall rating on a 4 point Likert scale: 4 represent most positive assessment).
- b) Data collected from student evaluations submitted by internship supervisors in HUSV 4900, an internship course required of all Human Services majors. Program quality will be evaluated by the overall rating on a 4 point Likert scale: (4 representing the most positive assessment).

Program Outcome #2 - Program Productivity: The program leading to a Human Services major achieves and maintains strong levels of annual enrollment and degree completions and contributes to the college’s growth in total enrollment and degrees conferred. (This outcome is consistent with the Comprehensive Program Review expectations of the Board of Regents on program productivity, the Complete College Georgia initiative, the Federal Government’s emphasis on graduation rates, GSC’s enrollment-driven funding, and GSC’s Core Value of preparing leaders for the community and region.)

Assessment of Program Outcome #2: Measurements that will provide the basis for further analysis and interpretation and lead to program improvements:

- (a) Enrollment in upper-level Human Services courses
- (b) Annual number of graduates

Program Outcome # 3 - Innovative Teaching and Engaged Learning: The program leading to a Human Services major employs innovative instructional strategies for engaged student learning that support student success and create an educational environment where students flourish. (This outcome is consistent with the GSC mission in “innovative teaching and engaged learning,” the GSC Vision “where students flourish,” and the GSC Core Values of “engaged faculty-student interaction” and a “vibrant center for learning.”)

Assessment of Program Outcome #3: Measurements that will provide the basis for further analysis and interpretation and lead to program improvements:

- (a) Record of students who complete independent research projects, service learning/experiential courses, and faculty-student collaborative research projects
- (b) Record of students who present talks or posters at professional meetings and publish in journals
- (c) Record of students who complete internships

Student Learning Outcomes and Assessments: Four common Student Learning Outcomes (SLOs) were adopted by the Senate of Gordon State College in Spring 2014 and will be used in assessing all of our academic programs. Below the reader will find these outcomes as they will be applied to the Human Services major and will find the assessments that will be implemented to determine our progress in reaching these Student Learning Outcomes.

SLO # 1 - Communication Skills: Students demonstrate effective communication skills (including writing, speaking, graphical, and interpersonal communication) appropriate for students seeking a Human Services major.

Assessment of Student Learning Outcome #1: Measurements that will provide the basis for further analysis and interpretation and lead to program improvements:

- (a) Results from the HUSV 4900, Internship, in which each student presents an oral presentation and a written presentation and both are rated using a “communication rubric.”
- (b) Observations relative to communication skills from HUSV 4901, Senior Seminar, a capstone course required of all human services majors in which each student presents an oral presentation and are rated using a “communication rubric.”
- (c) Data collected from student evaluations submitted by internship supervisors in HUSV 4900, an internship course required of all Human Services majors. (Evaluated by the overall rating on a 4 point Likert scale: 4 represents the most positive assessment).

- Question N: Demonstrates accuracy and clarity in written and verbal communication
- (d) Data collected from exit surveys completed by all graduating students in HUSV 4901 on the extent to which they are confident in their written and oral communication skills. (Evaluated by the overall rating on a 4 point Likert scale: 4 represents the most positive assessment).
- Question #4: How confident are you that your college experience provided you with the written & oral communication skills you'll need for completion of your goals?

SLO # 2 - Analytical Problem-Solving Skills: Students demonstrate effective analytical and problem-solving skills (including qualitative as well as quantitative modes of analysis) appropriate for students seeking a Human Services major.

Assessment of Student Learning Outcome #2: Measurements that will provide the basis for further analysis and interpretation and lead to program improvements.

- (a) Data collected from student evaluations submitted by internship supervisors in HUSV 4900, an internship course required of all Human Services majors. (Evaluated by the overall rating on a 4 point Likert scale: 4 represents most positive assessment).
- Question D: Demonstrates problem solving by obtaining necessary information and asking for help when needed.
- (b) Data collected from exit surveys completed by all graduating students in HUSV 4901 on the extent to which they are confident in their written and oral communication skills. (Evaluated by the overall rating on a 4 point Likert scale: 4 represents most positive assessment).
- Question #5: How confident are you that you have learned analytical problem solving skills needed to succeed.

SLO # 3 - Technology Skills: Students demonstrate effective information technology skills including skills related to laboratory equipment and skills related to commonly used computer and software applications for students seeking a Human Services major.

Assessment of Student Learning Outcome #3: Measurements that will provide the basis for further analysis and interpretation and lead to program improvements:

- (a) Results from the HUSV 4900, Internship, in which each student presents an oral presentation using PowerPoint.
- (b) Data collected from exit surveys completed by all graduating students in HUSV 4901 relative to technology skills. (Evaluated by the overall rating on a 4 point Likert scale: 4 represents most positive assessment).

- Question #6: How confident are you that you have learned the technology skills needed to succeed?

SLO # 4 - Specialty Area Expertise: Students demonstrate an appropriate level of expertise (knowledge, skills and professionalism) in Human Services, appropriate for their degree level. Assessment of Student Learning Outcome #4: Measurements that will provide the basis for further analysis and interpretation and lead to program improvements:

- (a) Data collected from exit surveys completed by all graduating students in HUSV 4901 (Evaluated by the overall rating on a 4 point Likert scale: 4 represents most positive assessment).
 - Question #2: How confident are you that you have learned the Human Services knowledge that you will need to pursue your goals?
- (b) Data collected from student evaluations submitted by internship supervisors in HUSV 4900, an internship course required of all Human Services majors. (Evaluated by the overall rating on a 4 point Likert scale: 4 represents most positive assessment).
 - Question E: Dresses professionally and appropriately for the work setting.
 - Question F: Is professional in relationships with clients and staff
 - Question H: Shows knowledge of agency structure, function, policy, and procedures
 - Question K: Shows sensitivity to clients and staff while maintaining appropriate boundaries
 - Question M: Demonstrates awareness of and respect for diversity
 - Question O: Demonstrates knowledge of accepted standards of ethical conduct

A History of Continuing Improvements: This portion of our assessment document will chronicle on a year-by-year basis the various initiatives we have undertaken in response to analysis of our assessment data with the goal of improving the Human Services major for the Bachelor of Science at Gordon State College. The first few paragraphs of this document will remind readers of improvements launched in the time frame 2010-2013, before we implemented the mature assessment system on which this document is built. Subsequent sections will chronicle improvements since that time on a year-by-year basis.

Analysis and Improvement Improvements - 2010-2013:

Preparing to Launch Degree: Permission from the University System of Georgia to implement a Bachelor of Science degree and a major in Human Services was given in Fall 2012 and the major was implemented in Fall 2013. Data was used extensively in planning for the degree. We contacted all social service agencies in our region seeking their evaluation of the employment opportunities for persons with this degree, and they enthusiastically endorsed the project with 20 letters of support. At the same time, we solicited their insight about the knowledge and skill base the degree should support and we obtained their pledge to help with internships.

Building an Assessment System: Concurrent with designing our major in Human Services we built an assessment system for that major. We collected our first data on students graduating in Spring of 2014.

Data (2014-Present):

Assessment of Program Outcome #1: Program Quality

Senior Seminar Exit Survey and Supervisor Evaluations

Cumulative Exit Survey* and Supervisor Evaluation** Results		
Academic Year	Exit Survey (n)	Supervisor Evaluations (n)
2013-2014	n/a	4 (1)***
2014-2015	3.62 (16)	3.79 (15)
2015-2016	3.62 (28)	3.4 (30)
2016-2017		
2017-2018		

*Scale: 4-Strongly Agree, 3-Tend to agree, 2-Tend to disagree, 1-Strongly disagree

**Scales: 4-Exceeds performance standards, 3-Meets performance standards, 2-Satisfactorily working towards meeting performance standards, 1-Unsatisfactory progress towards meeting performance standards.

***(n) = number of students

Assessment of Program Outcome #2: Program Productivity

Enrollments and Graduates

Enrollments and Graduates			
Academic Year	Number of Upper Level Sections	Average Enrollment per Section.	Number of Graduates
2013-2014	21	23	1
2014-2015	43	23	13
2015-2016	54	18	24
2016-2017			
2017-2018			

Assessment of Program Outcome #3: Innovative Teaching and Engaged Learning

Record of Innovative and Engaged Learning:

Academic Year	Students completing Research Projects	Students presenting/publishing	Students completing service learning/experiential courses	Students completing internships
2013-2014	1		31	4
2014-2015	3	4	76	30
2015-2016	4	2	28	36
2016-2017				
2017-2018				

Assessment of Student Learning Outcomes

Data from Senior Seminar Exit Survey:

Summary from Senior Seminar Exit Survey*						
Academic Year	# of Students	Q2: Knowledge of Human Services	Q3: Knowledge of key subareas	Q4: Communication Skills	Q5: Analytical Skills	Q6: Technology Skills
2013-2014	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
2014-2015	16	3.58	3.94	3.89	3.44	3.22
2015-2016	28	3.79	3.75	3.83	3.53	3.49
2016-2017						
2017-2018						

*Scale: 4-Strongly Agree, 3-Tend to agree, 2-Tend to disagree, 1-Strongly disagree

Data from Senior Seminar (HSUV 4901) Presentation:

Summary from rubric used to evaluate presentation in Senior Seminar*					
Academic Year	Number of Students	Professionalism	Clarity of Communication	Oral Report Quality	Written Report Quality
2013-2014	1	3	3	3	3
2014-2015	16	2.8	2.63	2.68	2.52
2015-2016	26	2.2	2.11	2.52	2.54
2016-2017					
2017-2018					

* Scale: 3-Exceeds Expectations, 2- Meets Expectations, 1- Need Improvement, 0- Unacceptable.

Data from Internship (HSUV 4900) Presentation:

Summary from rubric used to evaluate presentation in Senior Seminar*					
Academic Year	Number of Students	Technology skills	Professionalism	Clarity of Communication	Report Quality
2013-2014	1	3	3	3	3
2014-2015	16	2.87	2.8	2.63	2.68
2015-2016	31	2.37	2.2	2.11	2.52
2016-2017					
2017-2018					

* Scale: 3-Exceeds Expectations, 2- Meets Expectations, 1- Need Improvement, 0- Unacceptable.

Data from Student Evaluations Submitted by Internship Supervisors

Academic Year	Supervisor Evaluation Questions* and Cumulative Scores**							
	D	E	F	H	K	M	N	O
2013-2014	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
2014-2015	3.67	3.77	3.8	3.77	3.77	3.77	3.7	3.8
2015-2016	3.4	3.5	3.8	3.4	3.7	3.6	3.5	3.6
2016-2017								
2017-2018								

*Questions by survey designation letter:

- D. DEMONSTRATES PROBLEM SOLVING BY OBTAINING NECESSARY INFORMATION AND ASKING FOR HELP WHEN NEEDED
- E. DRESSES PROFESSIONALLY AND APPROPRIATELY FOR THE WORK SETTING
- F. IS PROFESSIONAL IN RELATIONSHIPS WITH CLIENTS AND STAFF
- H. SHOWS KNOWLEDGE OF AGENCY STRUCTURE, FUNCTION, POLICY, AND PROCEDURES
- K. SHOWS SENSITIVITY TO CLIENTS AND STAFF WHILE MAINTAINING APPROPRIATE BOUNDARIES
- M. DEMONSTRATES AWARENESS OF AN RESPECT FOR DIVERSITY
- N. DEMONSTRATES ACCURACY AND CLARITY IN WRITTEN AND VERBAL COMMUNICATION
- O. DEMONSTRATES KNOWLEDGE OF ACCEPTED STANDARDS OF ETHICAL CONDUCT

**Scales: 4-Exceeds performance standards, 3-Meets performance standards, 2-Satisfactorily working towards meeting performance standards, 1-Unsatisfactory progress towards meeting performance standards.

Analysis (2013-2014):

One student completed all necessary program coursework and graduated in Spring 2014. This student was an excellent test subject for our fledgling program and assessment methods. Initially we envisioned video interviews with each graduate to ask questions to assess the program. It became clear, after the first testing this method with a group of students, that this process would take too much time and computer memory to store the data. We will create a written survey for the Fall 2014 graduates.

The fact that the only student evaluated in Spring 2014 scored perfectly on our assessment instruments does not necessarily indicate that our instruments are faulty. This student is of such a high caliber that it may demonstrate that our instruments are functioning perfectly. We will reevaluate our assessment methods after the 2014-2015 school year.

Analysis (2014-2015):

After the second full year of implementation of the BSHS sixteen (16) students completed the coursework necessary to complete an internship and the Senior Seminar Exit Survey. The results of the program are very positive and informative. Though there are areas of the program and of the assessment methods that have been identified as needing changes, the program has proven to be effective. It will be the task of the Department of Business and Public Service Human Services Program Assessment Committee to evaluate the data collected in 2014-2015 during the 2015-2016 academic year. The following is a summary of the 2014-2015 findings.

Program Quality: Since local human service workers were consulted throughout the development of the program and many of these same professionals volunteered to supervise our student's internships, the overwhelming positive scores (3.79/4.0) of the internship supervisor evaluations of our student's performances was believed to be a strong indication that we had developed a quality program that was preparing students for work in the human services sector. It was also encouraging to see positive results (3.62/4.0) for the student's evaluations (Senior Seminar Exit Survey) of how well the program prepared them for their personal experience in the field during their internships.

Program Productivity: The number of upper level sections, class enrollment, and graduates all increased from 2013-2014 to 2014-2015. A true understanding of the program's productivity will not be obvious until we have several years of enrollment and graduation numbers., It is, however, a positive indication of the program's productivity that the number of students who declared human services as their intended area of study increased from 101 in August 2014 to 140 in December 2014.

Innovative Teaching and Engaged Learning: With only one year of data it can only be said that the program afforded students with many opportunities for engaged learning - 31 participated in

2013-2014 and 76 participated in 2014-2015. These learning opportunities included local experiences as well as travel out of state. Several students worked with faculty members and presented papers at either the Gordon State College Undergraduate Research Symposium or at regional conferences. A student from the BSHS program actually won the Undergraduate Research Symposium in 2014 and 2015. The internship program grew impressively from four student placements in 2013-2014 to 30 in 2014-2015.

Student Learning Outcomes and Assessments: The assessment of the SLOs of communication skills, analytical problem-solving skills, technology skills, and specialty area expertise were addressed by the Senior Seminar Exit Survey, Senior Seminar (HSUV 4901) Presentation, Internship (HSUV 4900) Presentation, and the Student Evaluations Submitted by Internship Supervisors. The results from all of these instruments were very positive. These results and the instruments will be evaluated during the 2015-2016 academic year.

Analysis (2015-2016):

Though the growth of the Bachelor of Science Degree in Human Services (BSHS) has slowed, the number of students declaring it as their major at Gordon State College has increased every semester since its inception in Fall 2013. As of Spring 2016 there are 167 BSHS students at Gordon State College. The number of students graduating with a BSHS increased from 10 in the 2014-2015 school year to 24 in the 2015-2016 school year. Thirty-one students completed over 6500 internship hours, serving within the state as well as out. The following is a summary of the 2015-2016 findings.

Program Quality: The overall “approval rating” given to the BSHS students by their internship site supervisors was lower during the 2015-2016 school year (3.4/4.0) than in 2014-2015 (3.79/4.0). Though this overall rating still reflects a very high assessment rating from site supervisors and a positive critique of the BSHS program, several areas were identified to be addressed. These areas are reflected in the lower ratings on the supervisor evaluations in the following areas: demonstrates problem solving by obtaining necessary information and asking for help when needed; dresses professionally and appropriately for the work setting; shows knowledge of agency structure, function, policy, and procedures; demonstrates awareness of an respect for diversity, demonstrates accuracy and clarity in written and verbal communication; and demonstrates knowledge of accepted standards of ethical conduct. These issues will be discussed at a departmental meeting in Fall 2016 to make faculty aware of the drop in the student ratings in this area and discuss how to address these areas in and out of the classroom.

The results from the student’s evaluations (Senior Seminar Exit Survey) of how well the program has prepared them for their personal experience in the field during their internships, were even higher than in 2014-2015 with 12 more students responding (n=28). In the qualitative sections of the survey, students consistently list among the positives of the BSHS program, the support they receive from faculty, the closeness they feel toward their fellow students, the benefits of applying

course material in experiential/service learning environments such as the internship class, and the types of classes that are offered.

Program Productivity: The number of upper level sections and program graduates increased again in the 2015-2016 school year. Fifty-four upper level courses were offered in current year as compared to 43 in the 2014-2015 school year. Ten students graduated with BSHS degree in 2014-2015 and 24 graduate in 2015-2016. It is inconceivable that the BSHS program will continue to grow as it has in its nascent years and in fact the number of students entering the program appears to be leveling off. It would also be impossible to increase the number of courses offered at the current faculty level. The focus of the immediate future will be to address deficits mentioned above and find ways to offer the program to meet the needs of untapped local student markets.

Innovative Teaching and Engaged Learning: In the 2015-2016 school year, Business and Public Service (BPS) faculty increased the variety and number of experiential/service learning opportunities for students. Twenty-eight students participated in two experiential/service learning courses offered in Spring 2016. One of these courses studied sociology and the environment in Costa Rica and involved public service and biology students. Sixteen students participated in this trip to Costa Rica.

The number of online/hybrid classes was increased from 5 in Spring 2015 to 9 in Fall 2015 and then to 17 in Spring 2016. Thirty-one students participated in the BSHS internship program and provided over 6500 internship hours.

Student continued to rate the BSHS program positively on the Senior Seminar Exit Survey. Students overall rating of the program was 3.68/4.0 in the 2015-2016 school year versus 3.61/4.0 in the 2014-2015 school year.

Many of the faculty attended training for and adopted new online programs such as Blackboard Collaborative to improve the student's online experience.

Student Learning Outcomes and Assessments: The assessment of the SLOs of communication skills, analytical problem-solving skills, technology skills, and specialty area expertise were addressed by the Senior Seminar Exit Survey, Senior Seminar (HSUV 4901) Presentation, Internship (HSUV 4900) Presentation, and the Student Evaluations submitted by Internship Supervisors. The results from all of these instruments were very positive.