

**PUBLIC AFFAIRS-APPLIED SOCIOLOGY
OUTCOMES ASSESSMENT REPORT
AY 2021-2022 & 2022-2023**

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Public Affairs

(Instructional Degree Program)

M.A.

(Degree Level)

ASSESSMENT

Program Mission:

The Master of Arts in Public Affairs is an interdisciplinary program in the Social Sciences that provides academic training for careers in public and private organizations, both nationally and internationally. The multidisciplinary core curriculum includes courses in political theory, social theory and historical thought, human culture and economic theory. These courses foster a comprehensive understanding of the social and cultural environment or public and private organizational policy design and implementation. The program prepares students for professional positions in managerial and leadership roles in government agencies, consulting firms, human services, public-interest organizations and businesses significantly affected by public policies, as well as train for entry level doctoral studies.

Student Learning Outcome 1:

That students exhibit an understanding and appreciation of a multidisciplinary approach in relation to the work they eventually do and the social environments in which they live.

First Means of Assessment for Outcome 1:

Assessed through the successful completion of the Interdisciplinary Core requirements earning a B or above:

Criterion 1: Anthropology 6510—Seminar: Concepts of Human Culture (3)

Criterion 2: Political Science 5630—Political Economy (3)

Summary of Data:

Number of Students Meeting Criterion 1 (ANTH 6510)	3	Number of Students Not Meeting Criterion 1 (ANTH 6510)	0
Criterion 2 (POLI 5630)	3	Criterion 2 (POLI 5630)	0
Total Number of Students Assessed:	3	Percent of Students Meeting Criterion:	100 %

Student Learning Outcome 2:

That students exhibit reading and writing skills that will benefit them as teachers in secondary schools and community colleges and also benefit them in Ph. D. programs.

First Means of Assessment for Outcome 2:

Assessment through the successful presentation of the thesis or professional papers.

Criterion 1: The data will be qualitative and come from the members of the student’s thesis/professional papers committee. Successful performance will be based on presentation at a local or national conference where students may demonstrate understanding of sociological theoretical principles and concepts in their thesis/papers.

Criterion 2: Soc 6990—Thesis (6 credits) or completion of two professional papers and six additional hours of coursework.

Summary of Data:

Number of Students Meeting Criterion Criterion 1 (Presentations): *no students attended conferences due to COVID; Criterion 2 (Thesis hours):	N/A 5	Number of Students Not Meeting Criterion 1 (Presentations): Criterion 2 (Thesis hours): *all currently enrolled students are on track for thesis/publishable paper completion	N/A 1
Total Number of Students Assessed:	6	Percent of Students Meeting Criterion:	100

Student Learning Outcome 3:

That students exhibit critical thinking and research skills and demonstrate an understanding of and ability to use qualitative and quantitative sociological research methods of data collection and analysis. They should demonstrate the ability to interpret social scientific research as well as the ability to conduct sociological research through the appropriate application of data collection methods and data analysis techniques.

First Means of Assessment for Outcome 3:

Assessment based on the successful completion of course earning a B or above in the on midterm and final exams.

Criterion 1: Soc 6300- Research Methods in Sociology (3)

Criterion 2: Soc 5300 or Psych 6010 - Statistical Analysis (3)

Summary of Data

NUMBER OF STUDENTS MEETING		NUMBER OF STUDENTS NOT MEETING	
Criterion 1 (SOCI 6300):	3	Criterion 1 (SOCI 6300):	1
Criterion 2 (SOCI/5300 PSYC 6010)	NA	Criterion 2 (SOCI/5300 PSYC 6010)	NA
Total Number of Students Assessed:	4	Percent of Students Meeting Criterion (Criterion 1 only):	75

Student Learning Outcome 4:

That students demonstrate an understanding of sociology and its contribution to understanding society and human behavior through their familiarity with the theoretical and substantive literature. The students should demonstrate:

- The ability to compare and contrast theoretical perspectives within sociology and understand their application to society.
- A theoretical understanding of the impact of race/ethnicity, social class, and gender on the life experiences, changes, and opportunities of people in society.

First Means of Assessment for Outcome 4:

Assessment based on the successful completion of course earning a B or above on midterm and final exams.

Criterion 1: Sociology 5390—Classical Sociological Theories (3)

Criterion 2: Soc 5120—Social Stratification (3)—Assessment based on midterm and final exams.

Criterion 3: Soc 5930 —Race and Ethnic Relations (3)—Assessment based on midterm and final exams.

Summary of Data

NUMBER OF STUDENTS MEETING		NUMBER OF STUDENTS NOT MEETING	
Criterion 1 (SOCI 5390):*	N/A	Criterion 1 (SOCI 5390):*	N/A
Criterion 2 (SOCI 5120)*	N/A	Criterion 2 (SOCI 5120)*	N/A
Criterion 3 (SOCI 5930)	1	Criterion 3 (SOCI 5930)	0

TOTAL NUMBER OF STUDENTS ASSESSED: *The professor teaching SOCI 5390 and 5120 did not incorporate midterm and final exam grades in their teaching pedagogy.	1	PERCENT OF STUDENTS MEETING CRITERION:	100% (of criterion available for assessment)
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Utilization of Results:

- Overall, the program seems to be effective given faculty capacity. An aspect of the program that needs improvement is competing with other institutions' Sociology Master's degree programs in a post-pandemic environment. Although the COVID pandemic posed many challenges in the Fall 2021 semester, our faculty were already prepared to teach courses online.
- We used the results from the last outcomes assessment period to create permanent online options for all courses offered in the program (though face-to-face options are also still offered). Some research demonstrates that online course offerings can help lessen student time-to-degree completion.
- We also used the outcomes results from the last assessment period to successfully lobby for a section of POLI 5630 to be taught. The brown bag series continued to help faculty exchange ideas on pedagogical strategies.
- In brief, we implemented all of the changes to our program based on our outcomes assessment results that we proposed in last cycle's outcomes assessment report.

Changes to Program Based on Results

During AY 2023-2024, proposed future changes include:

- 1) Completely re-evaluating our Student Learning Outcomes (SLOs) and methods of assessment in our upcoming Outcomes Assessment Plan, as several faculty do not utilize the methods of assessment developed long ago in our old plan and so they may no longer be as relevant, and
- 2) Meeting as Sociology faculty more frequently to exchange pedagogical strategies and having more classroom visitations to explain our research and re-establish a strong culture of student advising post-pandemic.

Retention Strategies:

Our proposed retention strategies include a renewed focus on recruitment and retention of students residing on sovereign land. During the period AY 2022-2023, 50% of our students were tribally enrolled. This recruitment practice serves two primary goals; 1) helping the University achieve Native American-Serving Non-Tribal Institution (NASNTI) status by promoting our program as Native-friendly and encouraging graduate students to spread the word to prospective undergraduate students in their social networks, and 2) retaining a population of students who historically have been able to apply for tribal scholarships in addition to GAships. We have instituted the availability of online course options for all Public Affairs-Applied Sociology course offerings in part to accommodate differential levels of access to the main campus across New Mexico for sovereign nations.

We will also encourage students to visit classes and teach mini-lectures in their areas of expertise/research. We plan to continue to offer brown bag opportunities as a practice forum for students who are seeking to attend research conferences. We also plan to increase connection between faculty and students by hiring students to assist faculty research.

A retention strategy from the last assessment period that we intend to continue is to increase contacts with graduate students, especially those who are forced to leave the university before finishing their thesis. We also plan to follow students once they have completed their degrees so to illustrate successful transitions into the job/academic market. We have a student recently accepted into the Sociology PhD program at the University of New Mexico who we plan to invite to speak as an example of our program's success.