An Assessment Plan of the Sociology Program at Illinois Wesleyan University

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Purpose
In preparation for The Higher Learning Commission the Sociology updated the program’s a) goals and objectives; b) student-learning outcomes for Sociology majors. Findings from the following stages will result in modifications to the current programs and student learning for majors.

Stage 1: The Sociology faculty members met to develop ideas relevant for an assessment plan of the program. These ideas include:
- Writing
- Verbal communication skills
- Teamwork
- Leadership
- Initiative
- Using statistics to conduct qualitative research
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- Using library material
- Examining the relationships between social structure, culture, and social policy
- Understanding how individuals and society affect one another
- Examination of diverse societies and consequences of differences between different groups of people
- Using computer software for data analysis
- Understanding sociological theory
- Understanding of basic sociology concepts and applying them
- Interacting with diverse groups
- Off-campus experience

Stage 2: Development of student learning goals and objectives. Examples include:
Goal: The discipline of sociology
  a. Describe how sociology relates to a liberal arts understanding of social reality.
  b. Describe how sociology compares to other social sciences.
  c. Apply sociological principles to others’ experiences.
Goal: The dynamics of culture and social structure
  a. Understand how culture and social structure are constructed.
  b. Examine the interrelationships between social structure, culture, and policy.
  c. Understand how institutions simultaneously shape individuals in society.
Goal: The role of theory in sociology
  a. Define theory and describe its role in building sociological knowledge.
  b. Compare and contrast basic theoretical orientations.
  c. Show how theories reflect the historical context of times and cultures
  d. Describe and apply some basic theories in multiple areas of social reality.
Goal: Qualitative and quantitative methods in sociology
  a. Identify basic methodological approaches and the general role of methods
  b. Compare and contrast the basic methodological approaches for gathering data.
  c. Use computer software for data analysis.
  d. Complete a research paper from conceptualization to analysis and reporting.
  e. Critically assess the methods used in a sociological research report.
  f. Apply the principles of ethical practice as a sociologist.
Goal: U.S. and global diversity
  a. Examine the consequences of differences within and among diverse societies.
  b. Know how to appropriately generalize or resist generalizations across groups.
Goal: Critical thinking skills in sociology
  a. Identify underlying assumptions in particular theoretical orientations
  b. Identify underlying assumptions in particular methodological approaches.
  c. Identify the relationship between patterns of thought and social structures.
  d. Present differing viewpoints and alternative hypotheses on various issues.

Stage 3: Surveys were sent to alum and current students. Examples of questions include:
Please indicate how well your Sociology courses have helped you develop the following skills and abilities.

Current Student Responses

Alumni Responses