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An Assessment Plan of the Sociology Program at Illinois Wesleyan University

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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
- Using statistics to conduct quantitative research
- 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.

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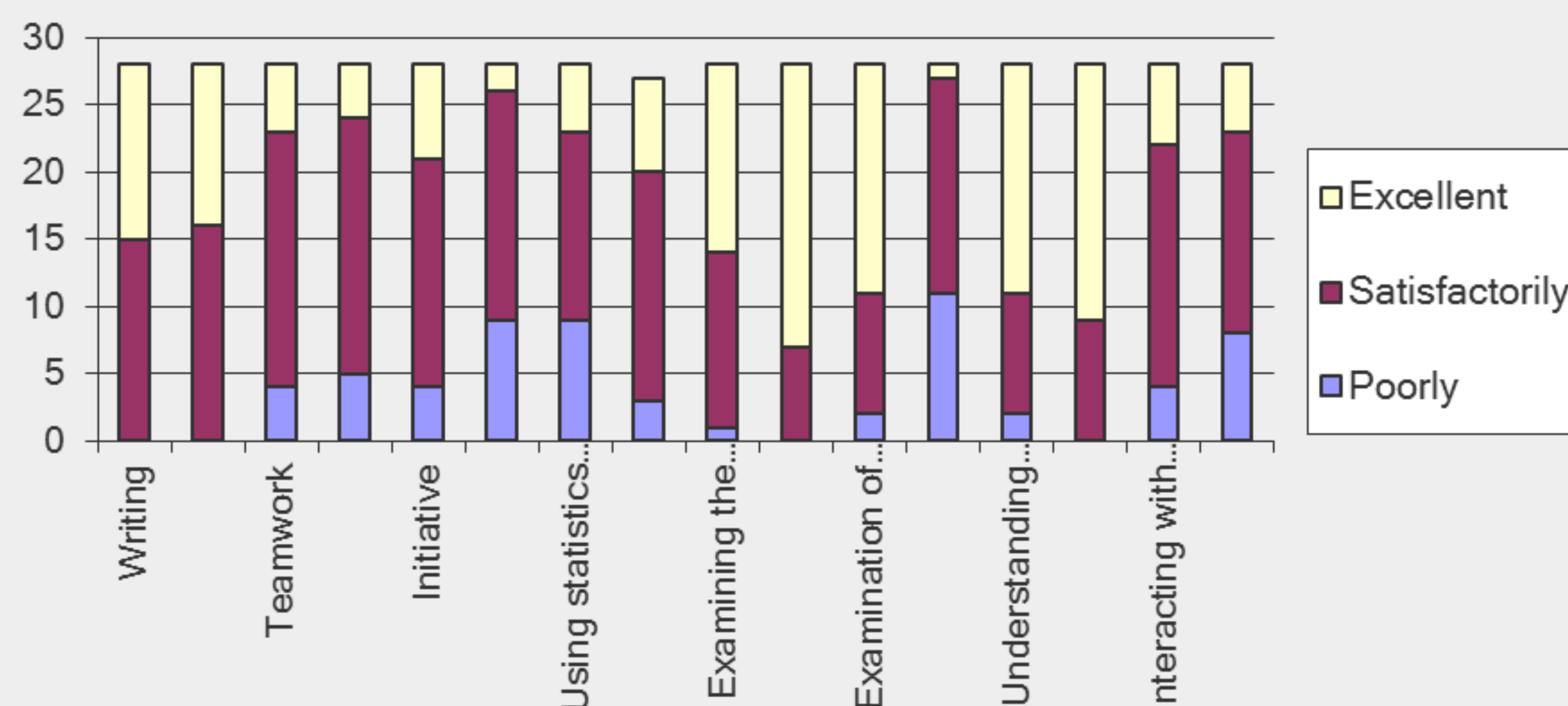
Stage 3: Surveys were sent to alum and current students. Examples of questions include: Please indicate how well your Sociology courses have helped you develop the following skills and abilities.

Alumni Responses