Law Enforcement and Public Safety Leadership, MS

Assessment Overview & Results Summary

College/School: Professional and Continuing Education

Measures Used: The MS in Law Enforcement and Public Safety Leadership (LEPSL) program determines if graduates have achieved the stated programmatic learning outcomes primarily via three processes beyond GPA -- the course design process, the integrative capstone course, and the rigorous assessment plan.

Process for Interpretation of Evidence: Through the iterative course design process, capstone faculty team, and established assessment process, the program has tools to continually assess and ensure program learning outcomes are being achieved by LEPSL students.

How Findings are Used:
- ✓ Changes to curriculum/pedagogy
- ✓ Changes to faculty workload
- ✓ Increased faculty professional development

Results Summary and Continuous Improvement Actions for AY 2020-2021:   To date, in the 2020-2021 academic year, MS LEPSL has conducted two formal assessments, one per semester, with one more assessment forthcoming. For example, the Summer 2021 assessment focused on PLO3 "Engaging in Law Enforcement and Public Safety Institutional Assessment and Change" in the LEPSL 540 Organizational Leadership course. Students in this course were assessed on their ability to engage in law enforcement and public safety institutional assessment and change via the Module Seven Final Project "Consultant's Report for Anytown, USA." Student performance on this Module 7 Final Project is, in our view, a particularly useful measure of PLO3. This project provides students a lengthy evaluation of a fictitious struggling police department, including critical data points related to internal challenges, community engagement challenges, human relations challenges, crime dynamics, and the culture of the organization. The student leverages the course's theories, skills, and best practices to create a tangible action plan to systematically spearhead the necessary institutional changes to improve this struggling organization. Thus, this project directly and powerfully engages issues of institutional assessment and change.173 out of 200 students (86.5%) successfully demonstrated an applicable understanding of PLO3 Engaging in Law Enforcement and Public Safety Institutional Assessment and Change. While the ambitious 90% criterion was not met, the LEPSL Administrative Team is very pleased with this result. This is a challenging project that requires

students to integrate several theories, skills, and best practices from throughout the course. The course curriculum engaged cornerstone theories and foundational readings, presentations from the Lead Faculty, and a series of guest lecture interviews from uber-accomplished practitioners in the region who guided their agencies through institutional challenges and opportunities such as large-scale calls for reform, protests, and the COVID-19 pandemic. Thus, our position is that this project is incredibly valuable and a cornerstone assignment in the entire LEPSL program, and appropriately a challenging exercise for students. The mantra of this program is to build from academic foundations to nurture applicable real-world skills for progressive law enforcement professionals; this mantra is operationalized via this organizational leadership project. We are proud that the evidence suggests that the project is both valuable and challenging. To date, the LEPSL Administrative Team is considering the following two actions related to these assessment results.

Action 1. Final Project: Consultant's Report from Any Where USA: as noted, we interpret these assessment results as evidence that this project is both valuable and challenging. Moreover, informal feedback from students and faculty and the in-depth student surveys reaffirm this position. Given that the benchmark criterion was not met, we will likely use this final project again the next time this course is offered. We will carefully monitor those results via our standard post-course vetting and the formal assessment process to make sure we continue to monitor this issue.

Action 2. Redundant Substance: While somewhat unrelated to the final project assessed here, the student surveys provided evidence that warrants our attention. A theme from these surveys was that some of the substantive elements of the course were redundant across the various modules; while each module emphasized a different leadership theory or best practice, the application elements and discussions with experts did potentially have some substantive overlap, especially on a few topics like leadership vs. management and change management. Further investigation will be necessary to determine if this redundancy enhances a theme to make it more robust, or if it is in fact, unproductive. This will be a significant point of reflection when we rebuild and refresh this course in the future.