

ASSESSMENT WEBSITE INFORMATION

College: Humanities

Degree Program: Sociology MA

Chair/Director: Larry Salinger

2012 Report

DATA SAY:

In the Spring of 2011, graduate faculty assessed our graduating students on three dimensions: theory, research skills, and sub-discipline knowledge. The average score on research skills was only 3.59/5, the lowest of these three dimensions.

SO WHAT:

Students did not have adequate methodological training in graduate school. This meant that they would be hampered in the job market or future graduate studies.

HOW WE CHANGED:

We made several changes to our graduate curriculum. We added a mandatory statistics class. We also added research methods as a prerequisite for qualitative research methods, since this allowed us to do more in-depth work in that course. Finally, we changed our graduate admissions criteria to require more research methods and statistical background prior to entering graduate school.

WHAT WE GOT:

We are still in the process of implementing these changes. It will take at least another year before graduating seniors will have all experienced the new requirements. However, in our graduate research methods course, we assessed four students on their final research paper. All four students received an A on this paper, reflecting improvement over previous year's work.

2013- We assessed graduating graduate students on writing. Last year, these students received a 4.00/5. This year, these students received a 4.30/5. This shows some slight improvement in overall writing ability among graduate students.



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2013 Report

DATA SAY:

We have experienced an increase in the number of graduate students who choose to write an MA thesis. However, 4/4 students who defended the thesis in Spring 2013 required major revisions after their final oral thesis defense.

SO WHAT:

Revisions very late in the semester are usually done more hastily and may not be as high quality. Substantial late revisions also create more stress for the student.

HOW WE CHANGED:

We established a set of new deadlines for the thesis proposal, submission of the thesis to the committee, IRB approval, and thesis defense. We also are now going to require an oral proposal defense. All of these measures will help students develop more finished products earlier in the semester. Our goal is for no students to require major revisions after their thesis defense.

WHAT WE GOT:

We are still in the process of implementing these changes. We will reassess this goal in Spring 2014.

