

# COASTAL CAROLINA UNIVERSITY

## Institutional Effectiveness Report Summary

2010-2011



Office of Institutional Research, Assessment and Analysis

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# INSTITUTIONAL SUMMARY REPORT FOR 2011

## 1. Majors/Concentrations

Working together, the academic colleges, the division of student affairs, and the administrative units use the data collected from internal assessments for continuous improvement and accountability. Internal assessments are either commercially purchased, or locally developed by our faculty and staff. The systematic use of measurement procedures, analyzing and summarizing results, and evaluating and interpreting information from our internal assessments brings change to the institution and lays the foundation for Coastal Carolina University's assessment system. Therefore, our assessment system calls for some if not all of these changes to be guided by data, especially data that are linked to our three major components of assessment: *student learning*, *student development*, and the *operations of our administrative units*. Linking data to change forces us to understand how the nature of change impacts the university.

### **Sociology - Bachelor of Arts**

Students graduating from the Bachelor of Science degree program in Sociology will have a solid background in traditional areas of sociology, including course work in social problems, sociological theory, social structures, the individual in society, and research methods in the social sciences. Through this program students will gain theoretical knowledge and practical skills necessary to investigate questions important to the discipline of sociology from a scientific perspective, emphasizing critical thinking and communication skills in a collaborative environment. Toward this goal, students should be able to demonstrate knowledge of appropriate scientific methods to conduct independent and group research.

#### Pre- and Post-tests

Students in Sociology 331/L (Research Methods for the Social Sciences) completed a 33-item, multiple choice, pre- and post- test. This instrument measures student knowledge of components of sociological research and major research methodologies. These components include sociological importance, sampling strategy, operationalization of concepts, psychometric properties of instrumentation, execution of research, and ethical concerns. Students in SOC 331/L will also complete the ETS-Sociology (Major Field Test) with a 21-item methods in statistics assessment indicator. The ETS will be given as a post-test only at the end of the semester.

#### Assessment results indicate the following:

Data from the pre- and post- test indicate that students improved slightly from the 33-item pre-test (mean score 13) to the post-test (mean score 15). There is concern that because students are not graded on their performance, they did not take the assessments seriously. It is believed that students did not complete the tests to the best of their ability.

The average score for students on the methods and assessment indicator of the ETS-Sociology (Major Field Test) was a 38, while the national norm for this assessment is 51.

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It is necessary to strive to attain more valid and reliable results on the pre- and post- tests. If students are given a grade for their performance, they will be more likely to complete the test to the best of their ability. Alternately, the metrics for evaluating student learning for this area in the program are also under review. Changes in the program are anticipated in the assessment procedure and should be implemented in Spring 2012.

There is also concern that the mean score on the methods and assessment indicator of the ETS-Sociology (Major Field Test) is below the national average for similar programs nationwide. It is necessary to develop strategies to improve and expand instruction of methods and statistics across the curriculum. New courses were introduced in the program in 2010-11 and additional courses are planned for 2011-12. It is understood that that the first iteration of any course will involve adjustment to respond to a variety of critiques of the new course (both peer evaluations and student evaluations). It is suspected that the current score is temporary and more of a reflection on the program's rapid growth. Methods to infuse the current courses with more reflection on both qualitative and quantitative methods of research are being investigated. Reminding students of the usefulness of these methods will also reinforce their learning.

### Sociological Theory as it Relates to the Science of Sociology

Students are expected to develop critical thinking skills by applying theoretical constructs to contemporary phenomena. A 10-item, pre- and post- test was administered to students enrolled in SOC 330 (Sociological Theory) to measure student ability to apply theoretical understandings to scenarios constructed to represent social issues. Students also completed the 18-item general theory assessment indicator as part of the ETS-Sociology (Major Field Test).

Data from the pre- and post- test indicate that students improved slightly from the 10-item pre-test (mean score 4.31) to the post-test (mean score 4.71). There is concern that the pre-test scores may have been inflated as students were allowed to complete the pre-test outside of class. The post-test was incorporated into the final exam. It is possible that students used outside resources such as textbook and internet resources to complete the assessment instrument.

The average score for students on the 18-item general theory assessment indicator was a 37. The national norm for this assessment indicator is 47. However, there is no comparison for the method of delivery of the assessment instrument, which is cause for concern.

### Assessment results indicate the following:

The primary finding from this assessment is the need for use of a consistent testing environment for the pre- and post- test. A consistent testing environment will create more reliable results.

The mean score on the general theory assessment indicator is below the national average nationwide and is a source of concern. Strategies for improving and expanding the instruction of social theory across the entire curriculum need to be developed. Additionally, a capstone course was instituted for all majors where experiential learning will take place and each student will be supported in their own original research project. This course is specifically expected to improve student learning and raise the ETS score.

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### **Resort Tourism Management – Bachelor of Science in Business Administration**

The mission of the Resort Tourism Management major in the Wall College of Business is to educate students to have the qualities and attributes necessary for successful careers in hospitality or tourism related organizations that are based in resort destination areas. The RTM major seeks to develop students who are both knowledgeable in RTM and prepared to be productive, responsible individuals that can think critically about business issues.

In order to assess the efficacy of the Resort Tourism Management department and the students' ability to analyze the tourism market with respect to an assigned development site case, specific questions were created as part of a test for students in RTMA 490. Each student was asked to respond to a series of questions based on readings, classroom discussions, and group projects in which the student participated in creating a development plan for a hypothetical resort development site.

#### Assessment results indicate the following:

The first two questions were designed to measure the degree to which students are able to describe tourism supply and demand. The third question was designed to measure the degree to which students are able to create an idea that capitalizes on the supply and demand factors that they describe. While students seemed to do well on the third question (average 3.7/4), their ability to describe tourism supply and demand in the broadest sense, which was measured in questions one and two was less impressive (average 3.0/4 and 2.7/4). The minimum scores for overall were 1, 1, & 2, respectively.

One factor that may be impacting students' relatively lower performance on question two is the fact that the test wherein this is measured was administered early in the semester. Further, since no course(s) focusing specifically on tourism marketing are offered in the resort tourism management program at Coastal Carolina University, most students may be relatively unfamiliar with the most basic tourism marketing terminology (i.e. trip characteristics such as length of stay/number in party or tourism seasonality strategies such as what is commonly referred to in the hospitality industry as yield management) prior to taking the resort planning course. Based on these results more time will be spent teaching tourism-specific marketing concepts prior to testing in the RTM 490 class.

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## Exercise and Sport Science – Bachelor of Science

The Bachelor of Science in Exercise and Sport Science (EXSS) prepares students for entry into the dynamic and growing field of the movement sciences. Students in the EXSS program acquire the knowledge, skills, and abilities of effective beginning professionals. Students study scientific and foundational content of human movement, engage in scholarly inquiry, and apply knowledge and theory to practice.

Graduates of the EXSS major are trained to assess, design, and implement individual and group exercise and fitness programs for individuals who are healthy and with controlled disease. They are skilled in evaluating health behaviors and risk factors, conducting scientifically-based fitness assessments in laboratory and field settings, writing appropriate exercise prescriptions, and motivating individuals to modify negative health habits and maintain positive lifestyle behaviors. The exercise and sport science professional has demonstrated competence as a leader in university, corporate, commercial, or community settings and programs in which their clients participate in movement and fitness-related activities. Students are also well prepared for graduate or advanced study in the allied health, sport, or medical-related fields.

In order to assess the efficacy of the EXSS department to produce graduates that demonstrate leadership skills and professionalism, the final project in EXSS 415 Personal Fitness Leadership requires students to recruit a client and take them through the entire process of developing an appropriate exercise prescription. Student professionalism and communication skills are evaluated by a standard rubric. Each student's site supervisor completed a summative internship evaluation, which includes ratings of the student's skills related to client interaction, professionalism, communication, and technical ability.

### Assessment results indicate the following:

The average score for professionalism and communication on the EXSS 415 project was 85.4%. Ninety-five percent of students were rated as "outstanding" or "very good" in their final site supervisor evaluations. Additionally, 65% were rated "outstanding", 30% "very good", and 4% were "average".

These scores correlate with feedback received from internship site supervisors and so the EXSS faculty will continue to stress the importance of these characteristics. Ninety-five percent of students received a final evaluation of "very good" or "excellent" by outside, non-biased site supervisors on student professionalism, communication, and technical abilities. This is a positive indication that our students are representing the EXSS program well in the eyes of current professionals in the field. Only one student received an overall final evaluation of "average".

While it appears as if progress is being made with regard to student professionalism and communication skills overall, much work is still needed with regard to improving students' knowledge. The EXSS faculty is looking at each course and analyzing where ACSM KSA skills are lacking or overlapping. It is also hoped that adding faculty and reducing class size will enhance the overall learning experience.