SAINT LOUIS UNIVERSITY

Program-Level Assessment: Annual Report

Program Name (no acronyms): Social Work	Department:
Degree or Certificate Level: PhD	College/School: School of Social Work
Date (Month/Year): 11/01/22	Assessment Contact: Michael Vaughn
In what year was the data upon which this report is based collected? Academic year 2021-2022	
In what year was the program's assessment plan most recently reviewed/updated? 2021	
Is this program accredited by an external program/disciplinary/specialized accrediting organization? No	

1. **Student Learning Outcomes**
   Which of the program's student learning outcomes were assessed in this annual assessment cycle? (Please list the full, complete learning outcome statements and not just numbers, e.g., Outcomes 1 and 2.)

In this assessment cycle the main learning outcomes that were narrowed down to and focused on include:
   - A doctoral student's ability to critically apply themselves in order to evaluate and identify gaps in the existing literature and scientific knowledge that is related to the program. Furthermore, students are encouraged to apply concepts learnt through classes to develop alternative explanations and research strategies.
   - Graduates will be able to design, conduct, and defend dissertation research that expands scientific knowledge in the field of social work. This includes the ability to demonstrate comprehensive knowledge of a specific area of research in their discipline and research topic.
   - Graduates will be able to apply basic principles of ethical behavior (e.g., the Social Work Code of Ethics, human rights framework, other moral theories) and be familiar with codes that guide application of these issues in research such as the importance of principles of confidentiality of information and data, and how these are applied within research.
   - For SLO 3, the outcome is assessed by students' success completion of University IRB training modules.

2. **Assessment Methods: Artifacts of Student Learning**
   Which artifacts of student learning were used to determine if students achieved the outcome(s)? Please describe the artifacts in detail and identify the course(s) in which they were collected. Clarify if any such courses were offered a) online, b) at the Madrid campus, or c) at any other off-campus location.

The artifacts that are typically used to ensure that students achieve the listed outcomes include their coursework, written examination, oral examination, dissertation defense and specific forms of scholarly evidence such as publications and conference presentations. As the PhD program in social work is not a clinical or practice degree (like the MSW degree) these types of research products are important.
   - For the first SLO, the courses that are used to help assess this include: SWRK 6000 (Foundations of Social Theory Development) SWRK 6010 (Principles of Statistics and Data Analysis) SWRK 6020 (Research Design & Measurement) SWRK 6030 (Multivariate Data Analysis) SWRK 6040 (Research Area Synthesis). Student participation in doctoral research symposia at the university, presentation at regional and national conferences, and published manuscripts in peer-reviewed journals are also utilized as an assessment of this program learning outcome as students are encouraged to work on these projects through their courses as well.
   - For the second SLO, which is an ongoing process for the PhD students, the outcome is assessed via results of student's comprehensive written and oral exams, in addition to a satisfactory dissertation defense and dissertation – this is done through the core courses students are required to take as part of their program.

Moreover, while this is done throughout the year, at the end of the academic year, the PhD SW Program Director reviews progress of each student annually with their mentor and reaches out to student about potential concerns. Each academic year the program director and mentor will evaluate the progress and performance of each student. Although we expect our PhD students to achieve exemplary evaluations, in some cases students will not be progressing as expected.

3. Assessment Methods: Evaluation Process

What process was used to evaluate the artifacts of student learning, and by whom? Please identify the tools(s) (e.g., a rubric) used in the process and **include them in/with this report document** (please do not just refer to the assessment plan).

During the core course, SWRK 6040 Research Area Synthesis (RAS), students' committees use the RAS Evaluation Form included in this report for assessment and improvement. (See Appendix A)

Students' dissertation committee evaluate the oral comprehensive examination using the PhD Social Work Oral Comprehensive Examination form included in this report. (See Appendix C)

4. Data/Results

What were the results of the assessment of the learning outcome(s)? Please be specific. Does achievement differ by teaching modality (e.g., online vs. face-to-face) or on-ground location (e.g., STL campus, Madrid campus, other off-campus site)?

This program is conducted entirely on the STL campus. Some course meetings were moved to teaching online via Zoom as per instructor's preference.

The student's productivity is listed below:
- 11 articles were published in peer reviewed articles.
- 3 articles are in the progress of being published
- 5 total conference presentations
- 2 classes were independently taught
- 1 grant and fellowship awarded

This past academic year, 6 students completed their comprehensive written exams, 7 students completed their oral exams, and 7 students completed their dissertation defense.

5. Findings: Interpretations & Conclusions

What have you learned from these results? What does the data tell you?

Overall, the data suggests that the doctoral students are learning a great amount and are continually showing improvement in the areas needed/identified by their instructors. Faculty feedback also shows agreeance that most students are demonstrating full achievement of LOs, but there may also be scope for improvement for a small percentage of students; however, students are proactive in bettering and improving themselves as they often seek support and assistance. Overall, the data suggests that the students are in-fact productive and engaging with their program, with the continuing of the ongoing culture and academic and financial support, we are positive that the exemplified productivity will be ongoing. Furthermore, more efforts will be put into place to ensure students who need more assistance in their PhD journey are given the necessary adequate support. Some of this support, however, is financial, which lies outside of our assessed outcomes.

6. Closing the Loop: Dissemination and Use of Current Assessment Findings

A. When and how did your program faculty share and discuss these results and findings from this cycle of assessment?

Typically, a report is distributed among faculty and administrators associated with the program for feedback. Recommendations and action items are discussed, shared, and implemented within the program. Furthermore, PhD faculty members such as Dr. Vaughn and Dr. Helton among others have multiple meetings throughout the semester to discuss the status of the program to ensure that the students are performing to meet requirements and to discuss strengths and possible areas of opportunities for the program. Furthermore, during these meetings, faculty reviews the previous year's findings and considers any structural adjustments that need to be made to the program based on discussions, findings, and experiences of the faculty. Productivity meetings involving the director of the PhD program and all PhD students are held throughout the year. A living Google document (called our Productivity Document) is utilized that tracks articles and grant work that is published, under review, or in progress, and conference presentations to suggest changes that will increase productivity. Data are shared among the doctoral committee and the Director of the School of Social Work. Faculty members are updated on doctoral student progress during monthly faculty assemblies. A large percentage of faculty service as primary and secondary mentors of PhD students.

B. How specifically have you decided to use these findings to improve teaching and learning in your program? For example, perhaps you've initiated one or more of the following:

Changes to the Curriculum or Pedagogies
- Course content
- Teaching techniques
- Improvements in technology
- Prerequisites
- Course sequence
- New courses
- Deletion of courses
- Changes in frequency or scheduling of course offerings

Changes to the Assessment Plan
- Student learning outcomes
- Artifacts of student learning
- Evaluation process
- Evaluation tools (e.g., rubrics)
- Data collection methods
- Frequency of data collection

Please describe the actions you are taking as a result of these findings.

We continually work to improve course content without large changes in the curriculum, which we view as efficient and inherently interdisciplinary (students take at about half of their courses outside of the school of social work). A number of steps we have taken so far include those outside of traditional coursework.
- Implemented meetings that allow incoming students to get familiar with courses they will be taking and this allows them to be better prepared (i.e., general orientation, writing, stats)
- Faculty refers students to our online tutorial platforms and resources for academic support
- Furthermore, the course sequence for students is specifically tailored based on the area of research interest of the student – we make sure that each student feels as though they are equipped with the right material every semester. – This is done through multiple meetings with the student and their advisor.

The actions being taken as a result of the findings are to continue to improve upon the course content and teaching techniques.

If no changes are being made, please explain why.

N/A

7. Closing the Loop: Review of _Previous_ Assessment Findings and Changes
A. What is at least one change your program has implemented in recent years as a result of assessment data?

More professional development sessions have been implemented throughout this semester given that students are able to come back in-person even more, this was drastically reduced because of Covid in the previous semesters. The frequency has increased to having professional development every other week – this allows current students to learn from people who have been through the process, allows them to understand what dissertation defenses may look like, allows them to ask thoughtful and engaging questions with practitioners and researchers in the field.

B. How has this change/have these changes been assessed?

Regularly scheduled research presentations (mock job presentations) by students enrolled in the program's final year will is also something we are hoping to implement more. Moreover, the program has implemented an Exit Survey for graduating students as well. Beyond this, as a program we always keep an open discussion with our students and give them multiple opportunities to give feedback on the program in regards to what they would like to see more of, what they would like different, as well as in what areas they can be supported. When this data is collected it is discussed among the department to ensure that we are able to implement it in the best way possible.

C. What were the findings of the assessment?

This change was assessed through student feedback.

D. How do you plan to (continue to) use this information moving forward?

The Social Work faculty is constantly reviewing and considering how the learning objectives of the program can always be improved in the implementation of the program. Thorough evaluation of both the content and the process of the program is taken into account to ensure that we are meeting our program goals. Over the course of the following cycle, we will evaluate the modifications we are making to the learning outcomes and utilize the results to guide further adjustments to the assessment protocol, the lessons we instruct, and the assessment procedures. We will bring the PHD program committee together to assess trends and if any curricular changes should be made based upon data while still maintaining efficiency and cost containment.

IMPORTANT: Please submit any assessment tools (e.g., artifact prompts, rubrics) with this report as separate attachments or copied and pasted into this Word document. Please do not just refer to the assessment plan; the report should serve as a stand-alone document.

Appendix A

Research Area Synthesis
Evaluation Form

Date:
Name of student_____
Title of Research Area Synthesis

_____

	Unacceptable	Acceptable	Good	Excellent
1 Critically evaluate and Identify gaps in current scientific knowledge and develop sound explanations and research strategies.				
2 Demonstrate comprehensive knowledge of a specific area of research in your discipline.				

Grade_____
Comments:

Signature (lead faculty)

_____

Signature (faculty)

_____

Signature (faculty)

_____

Appendix B

PhD program School of Social Work
WRITTEN EXAM
Evaluation Form

Date:

Name of student_____

		Unacceptable	Acceptable	Good	Excellent
1	Demonstrate comprehensive knowledge or research methods, measurement, statistics, philosophy of science, theory construction and testing.				
2	Demonstrate comprehensive knowledge of a specific area of research in your discipline.				

Comments:

Signature (lead faculty)

_____

Signature (faculty)

_____

Signature (faculty)

_____

Appendix C

PHD SOCIAL WORK ORAL COMPREHENSIVE EXAMINATION

STUDENT OUTCOME EVALUATION WORKSHEET
Each committee member completes his/her own worksheet either during the exam or immediately following. At-large members do not need to complete this worksheet but are encouraged to make notes for questions/comments.

		Unacceptable	Acceptable	Good	Excellent
1	Critically evaluate and Identify gaps in current scientific knowledge and develop sound explanations and research strategies.				
2	Demonstrate comprehensive knowledge of a specific area of research in your discipline.				
3	Use and interpret basic and inferential statistics.				
4	Evidence scholarly and/or professional integrity in the field of study. Apply codes that guide application of these issues in research such as the importance of principles of confidentiality of information and data.				

- Committee Members may change their initial votes throughout the process. Members are encouraged to make notes throughout the presentation and QA session.
- After the exam, this worksheet will be given to the mentor as a tool to help address problems or deficiencies in the project.

Criterion for a Failing Grade: A student receives one or more "Unacceptable" in categories 1-7 from two or more members of the committee.

- For example, if committee member A felt category 4 was unacceptable and committee member B felt category 6 was unacceptable, then the student should fail the exam.

Step 1: After the presentation is completed, the mentor conducts at least two formal rounds of questions from the committee members, and then permits follow-up questions and additional inquiries until the committee is finished. The mentor will invite questions from the audience. *It is very important that the student demonstrates his/her command of the topic by answering the questions and not relying on the committee members for assistance.*

Step 2: After questions have concluded, the mentor will close the public portion of the examination. Other students, faculty, and guests are excused. If needed, the committee, including at-large members, will meet with the student privately to go over additional questions not suitable for the public forum.

Step 3: The mentor will excuse the student when all questions have concluded in the private portion.

Step 4: The committee, including at-large members, will meet in private to discuss the examination. The student's dissertation committee (not at-large members) then vote and based on these votes the mentor will complete the results form and make sure that it is returned to the Doctoral Program Coordinator who will forward it to Graduate Education. The committee should return the completed results form in a timely manner after the oral exam either passing or failing the student. The committee can no longer "hold" the results form until the student completes the requested changes to the Dissertation Prospectus. If the changes to the dissertation prospectus requested by the committee are significant (as determined by the committee) or the student receives two or more unacceptable evaluations from the committee members, then the student fails the examination.

Appendix D

Students' Progress Report Publications and Grants List

2022

PUBLISHED

Carbone, J. T., **Dell, N. A.,** Issa, M., & Watkins, M. A. (2022). Associations between allostatic load and post-traumatic stress disorder: A scoping review. *Health & Social Work, 47*(2), 132-142.

Carbone, J. T., Kremer, K. P., **Holzer, K. J.**, Kondis, J., & Vaughn, M. G. (2022). Emergency department admissions for physical child abuse: Evidence from the 2007-2016 Nationwide Emergency Department Sample. *Journal of Interpersonal Violence, 37*, 15-16.

Dell, N. A., Brandt-Lubart, K., & Maynard, B. R. (2022). Perspectives on coping with traumatic stress and substance use among Seeking Safety group participants: A photovoice study. *British Journal of Social Work.*

Dell, N. A., Murphy, A. M., Stewart, M., *Sasaki, N., & *Klier, M. (2022). Promoting Recovery among Older Adults with Serious Mental Illness. *Social Work, 67*(2), 184-190.

Dell, N. A., Srivastava Presad, S., Vaughn, M. G., Salas-Wright, C., Hai, A. H., & Qian, Z. (2022). Binge drinking in early adulthood: A machine learning approach. *Addictive Behaviors*, *124*, 107122.

Dell, N. A., Vaughn, M. G., Srivastava, S. P., Alsolami, A., & Salas-Wright, C. P. (2022). Correlates of cannabis use disorder in the United States: A comparison of logistic regression, classification trees, and random forests. *Journal of Psychiatric Research*, *151*, 590-597

Holzer, K. J., Vaughn, M. G., Loux, T. M., Mancini, M. A., Fearn, N. E., & Wallace, C. L. (2022). Prevalence and correlates of antisocial personality disorder in older adults. *Aging & Mental Health, 26,* 169-178.

Morse, G., **Dell, N. A.,** Murphy, A., & Stewart, M. (2022). Happiness, well-being, and recovery: Experiences of adults receiving psychiatric rehabilitation services. *Psychiatric Rehabilitation Journal*. https://doi.org/10.1037/prj0000521

Nishith, P., Huang, J., Morse, G. A., **Dell, N.,** Murphy, A., & Mueser, K. T. (2022). A test of self-medication hypothesis for drug use in homeless persons: the role of severe mental illness. *Journal of Social Distress and Homelessness*, 1-8.

Termos, M., **Holzer, K. J.**, Vaughn, M. G., Kelton, K. (2022). Gender differences in prescription medications among transitioning justice-involved individuals. *Journal of Correctional Health Care, 28*, 198-202.

Vaughn, M. G., Sattler, L., & **Holzer, K. J.** (2022). Juvenile Offenders. In C. Garofalo & J. J. Sijtsema (Eds.), *Clinical forensic psychology: Development, psychopathology, and treatment* (pp. 377-395). London, UK: Palgrave Macmillan (Springer Nature).

IN PROGRESS

Bello-Kottenstette, J., **Dell, N.A., Laxton, A.M.,** & Conte, M.A. (2022) Prevalence and predictors of MAT among reproductive-aged women

Termos, M. & Murugan, V. Theorizing Reproductive Coercion as a form of Intimate Partner Violence (IPV) in Low to Middle Income Countries (LMICs).

Termos, M. & Murugan, V. Intimate Partner Violence during the COVID-19 Pandemic: A Review of Current Responses and Challenges

CONFERENCE PRESENTATIONS

- Bello-Kottenstette, J., **Dell, N.A., Laxton, A.M.,** & Conte, M.A. (2022) *Prevalence and predictors of MAT among reproductive-aged women.* 2022 American Society of Addiction Medicine Annual Conference

- Bello-Kottenstette, J., **Dell, N.A., Laxton, A.M.,** & Conte, M.A. (2022) *Prevalence and predictors of MAT among reproductive-aged women.* 13th National Harm Reduction Conference (submitted)
- **Coccia, K.** (2022). *Advance care planning and hospice utilization for people with dementia: A report from the health and retirement study.* SSWR 26th Annual Conference.
- **Termos, M**. (2022).*Reproductive Coercion as a form of IPV in Low to Middle Income Countries: A Systematic Review.* CUGH 2022 Conference.
- **Termos, M.** (2022). *Contraceptive Disparities: Do immigration and Marital status predict a difference in the use of contraceptives ?* CUGH 2022 Conference.

GRANTS AND FELLOWSHIPS

- **Nketsiah, E. T.** (2022-2023). Association for Gerontology Education in Social Work (AGESW) Pre-Dissertation Fellowship