Institutional Effectiveness
2020-2021

Program: Professional Studies BS

College and Department: College of Interdisciplinary Studies – School of Professional Studies

Contact: Dr. Mike Gotcher

Mission: The Professional Studies Program is committed to serving and providing traditional and non-traditional students with an intellectually engaging and effective undergraduate, educational experience utilizing technology through online delivery systems as they enhance their knowledge, analytical abilities, critical thinking, and communication skills for upward mobility in their professional field.

This online undergraduate degree consists of 120 hours of interdisciplinary course work through TTU and TN eCampus and is available in four concentrations:

- Health Administration prepares students interested in entering the health care field in an administrative capacity planning, coordinating, and supervising the processes of medical facilities/offices.
- Information Technology is designed to prepare managers and non-managers to use information for decision-making as well as improve proficiency in software, operating systems, and management of networking systems.
- International Organizational Leadership prepares students to lead in a global economy spanning differing management styles, business practices, and cultural awareness.
- Organizational Leadership develops a student's foundation of leadership skills through a variety of communication outlets, critical thinking and problem-solving situations applicable in real-world businesses and organizations.

Student Learning Outcomes:

1. Professional Studies majors will demonstrate critical thinking skills, as measurable through the Senior Exit Exam.

2. Students will successfully demonstrate the synthesis of knowledge from their program of study with a focus from their concentration area in a Culminating Project during their senior year.

3. Professional Studies majors will demonstrate real-world problem solving and communication by identifying and developing a research project in his/her concentration area.

A departmentally developed curriculum map can be found in Appendix 1 that shows the connections between courses and student learning outcomes.

Assessment Methods:

1. *Senior Exit Exam:* The Senior Exit Exam is administered to every student who graduates from TTU, with the exception of non-traditional students. This assessment evaluates students in the area of

critical thinking. Scores are aggregated by major and reported annually. The California Critical Thinking Test is a well-tested measure of critical thinking and is accepted by the University as a whole. (It must be noted that the exception of Non-traditional student scores is a university policy and not one of the SOPS. The exemption leads to the exclusion of many of our majors from the data. It's our goal to work toward the inclusion of all SOPS students.)

The School of Professional Studies uses the Senor Exit Exam to evaluate majors in Critical Thinking. The goal is to have an increasing score in the Exam annually, and to meet or exceed the university average score.

Results are distributed to the Dean of the College and discussed among faculty and School Directors.

2. *Student Success Rates*: Although not the only measure, one measure of student learning outcomes is student success rate in courses.

3. *BPS Professional Culminating Project:* The Senior Culminating Project or Capstone course is required of all Professional Studies majors. Each student must complete either a 6000-word research paper or a real-world project that demonstrates a synthesis of knowledge from their program of study from their concentration area.

   Faculty members complete the rubric on each student that completes the course, entering a score based on the rubric. The scores are combined to get an overall score for each semester's cohort of students.

   Data from the rubric is used to assess overall preparedness for the senior project, and student development in research question development, analysis, integration and synthesis of concentration areas, documentation, and critical thinking. Data is also used in program evaluation to assess areas of needed improvement. A score of 2.5 is adequate, 3.0 is considered acceptable, 3.5 advanced, and 4.0 stellar.

Results:

Student Learning Outcome 1: Professional Studies majors will demonstrate critical thinking skills, as measurable through the Senior Exit Exam.

The Senior Exit Exam (California Critical Thinking Test) is administered to every student who graduates from TTU, with the exception of non-traditional students. This assessment evaluates students in the area of critical thinking. Scores are aggregated by major and reported annually. The California Critical Thinking Test is a well-tested measure of critical thinking, and is accepted by the University as a whole. (It must be noted that the exception of Non-traditional student scores is a university policy and not one of the SOPS. The exemption leads to the exclusion of over 40% of our majors from the data. It is our goal to work toward the inclusion of all SOPS students.)

	2018-2019		2019-2020		2020-21	
	Mean	N*	Mean	N*	Mean	N*
Professional Studies BS	71.1	11	75.0	11	73.3	19
TTU Average	76.0	1,515	75.0	1,422	74.4	1,445
CCTST National Average	74	-	74	-	74	-

Student Learning Outcome 2: Students will successfully demonstrate the synthesis of knowledge from their program of study with a focus from their concentration area in a Culminating Project during their senior year.

Faculty members complete the rubric on each student that completes the course.

Senior Capstone Rubric Scores

Area	Spring 2017	Fall 2017	Spring 2018	Fall 2018	Spring 2019	Fall 2019	Spring 2020	Fall 2020	Spring 2021
Information Seeking Selecting and Evaluating	3.51	3.56	3.48	3.58	3.24	3.50	3.64	3.51	3.37
Synthesis	3.51	3.37	3.46	3.48	3.4	3.32	3.29	3.23	3.37

Student success in these courses indicates that, at least from this measure, students are meeting the outcomes established for the professional core. The lowest success rates were for the Computers, Writing & Literature (73%) and International Context (82%) areas. The success rate for International Context has improved slightly.

Student Success for Professional Core Courses

Professional Core Area	**Course**	**Success Rate (%)**		
		2015-19*	**2019-20**	**2020-21**
Administration and Supervision	BMGT 3610 - Principles of Management	97	-	
Organizational Systems	PM 4120 - Organizational Theory & Behavior	88	100	
Team & Organizational Relationships	COMM 3010 - Integrated Corporate Communication	87	100	
Statistical Methods	SOCI 4510 - Introduction to Social Research	76	100	
Written Communications	ENGL 3134 - Computers, Writing & Literature	86	73	
	ENGL 3250 - Professional Communication	89	92	
International Context	SPAN 3550 - Latin America: The Countries and the Peoples	72	82	

* Fall 2015-Spring 2019

Note: Table includes only the most frequently chosen professional core courses. The success rate shown is based on completion of the course with a grade of A, B, or C. For the purposes of this study, students that receive a grade of D or F, or withdraw from the course, have been deemed to have not successfully completed the course.

Student Learning Outcome 3: Professional Studies majors will demonstrate real-world problem solving and communication by identifying and developing a research project in his/her concentration area.

Faculty members complete the rubric on each student that completes the course.

Senior Capstone Rubric Scores

Area	Spring 2017	Fall 2017	Spring 2018	Fall 2018	Spring 2019	Fall 2019	Spring 2020	Fall 2020	Spring 2021
Thesis/Problem Question	3.66	3.61	3.48	3.6	3.65	3.58	3.65	3.37	3.74
Analysis	3.35	3.33	3.39	3.39	3.28	3.26	3.46	3.29	3.42
Documentation	3.27	3.51	3.33	3.33	3.18	3.24	3.41	3.14	3.17
Product Process	3.32	3.18	3.33	3.38	3.11	3.30	3.50	3.27	3.27
Critical thinking	3.51	3.37	3.46	3.44	3.56	3.38	3.49	3.30	3.34

Modifications for Improvement:

Student Learning Outcome 2 & 3

In Fall 2020, a new pre-capstone course was offered with the goal of increasing the preparedness of our students for the challenge and rigor of the capstone experience. The new course, PRST 4994, is being offered multiple times each semester.

During the 2020-2021 academic year the PRST 4994 course was implemented and adjusted to meet the needs of the students and address the course learning objectives. The course is set up to address the following needs:

- Helping students better demonstrate synthesis of knowledge from the two emphasis areas.
- Better understanding of research search tools
- Issues with information literacy
- Issues with resource formatting
- Issues with continuous editing of documents using comments and markup

Trainings have been developed and tweaked to improve library knowledge, and the types of sources required for the Annotated Bibliography assignment are being tailored to the student's individual experiences. The order of assignments has been reworked to elicit more flow and interconnection of assignments. The capstone assignment has been adapted for Professional Studies majors to increase content synthesis.

The course is helping identify students who will need additional support in the Capstone course. We will be looking further into potential intervention approaches to help these students succeed. We will begin evaluating the effectiveness of this new course now that we have had time to tweak the course.

Appendices

1. Curriculum Map
2. BPS Culminating Project Rubric

Appendix 1: Curriculum Map

Course Number	Course Title	Student Learning Outcomes		
		SLO1: Critical Thinking	SLO2: Synthesis of Knowledge	SLO3: Problem Solving
Professional Core (choose courses from each area): 21 credit hours				
One Administration and Supervision Course				
LIST 4093	Special Topics and Leadership		X	X
MGMT 3610	Principles of Management		X	X
PADM 3601	Public Administration		X	X
TECH 4381	Principles of Supervision		X	X
One Organizational Systems Course				
PADM 4226	Introduction to Nonprofit Organizations		X	
PM 4120	Organizational Theory & Behavior		X	
Team & Organizational Relations				
COMM 3010	Integrated Corporate Communication		X	
One Statistical Methods Course				
PBRL 4410	Public Relations Research	X	X	X
SOAA 3350	Social Statistics	X	X	X
SOCI 4510	Introduction to Social Research	X	X	X
Two Written Communications Courses				
ENGL 3134	Computers, Writing & Literature		X	X
ENGL 3250	Professional Communication		X	X
PBRL 3421	Public Relations Writing		X	X
One International Context Course				
JOUR 4712	Mass Media & Cultures		X	
POLI 4350	International Law		X	
PS 3510	International Political Economy		X	
SPAN 3550	Latin America: The Countries and the Peoples		X	
Culminating Special Project Course				
UNIV 4995	Culminating Special Project	X	X	X

Information Technology Concentration (choose one course from each area)				
Management Information Systems Overview				
PTMA 3020	Management Information Technology		X	X
MGMT 3220	Management Information Systems		X	X
UNIV 3713	Freedom, Openness and the Internet		X	X
Software				
CSC 3700	Software Analysis & Design	X	X	X
UNIV 4706	Managing Software Development	X	X	X
Files/Operating Systems				
INFS 3700	Introduction to System Analysis and Design		X	X
Database Management				
CSCI 3222	Database Management Systems	X	X	X
UNIV 4708	Introduction to Business Intelligence	X	X	X
Networks				
CSCI 4017/5017	Introduction to Information Assurance		X	X
INFS 4900	Seminar in Data Communications	X	X	X
UNIV 4995	Culminating Special Project	X	X	X
Organizational Leadership Concentration (choose 5 courses)				
BMGT 3600	International Management		X	X
BMGT 3630	Human Resource Management		X	X
COMM 3560	Intercultural Communication		X	X
PBRL 3400	Introduction to Public Relations		X	X
PBRL 3409	Public Relations Case Studies	X	X	X
LDSP 3000	Leadership Development	X	X	X
MGMT 4800	Corporate Etiquette		X	X
PADM 4401	Comparative Public Administration		X	X
PSY 3590	Psychology of Personality		X	X
PSYC 3210	Abnormal Psychology		X	X
SW 3200	Cultural Diversity		X	X

International Organizational Leadership (all courses required)				
BMGT 3600	International Management		X	X
COMM 3560	Intercultural Communication		X	X
POLI 4350	International Law	X	X	X
POLS 4508	Theories and Concepts in International Relations		X	X
PS 3510	International Political Economy	X	X	X
Health Administration Concentration (all courses required)				
HETH 4210	Healthcare Research	X	X	X
HETH 4211	Healthcare Leadership and Management		X	X
HETH 4212	Trends and Issues in Healthcare	X	X	X
HETH 4213	Community Health: Issues & Services	X	X	X
COBH 4707	International Health: Problems and Issues	X	X	X

Appendix 2: BPS Culminating Project Rubric

Rubric for UNIV 4995 Paper/Project

	Thesis/ Problem/ Question	Information Seeking/Selecting and Evaluating	Analysis	Synthesis	Documentation	Product/Process	Critical Thinking
4	Student posed a thoughtful, creative question that engaged them in challenging or provocative research. The question breaks new ground or contributes to knowledge in a focused, specific area.	Student gathered information from a variety of quality electronic and print sources, including appropriate licensed databases. Sources are relevant, balanced and include critical readings relating to the thesis or problem. Primary sources were included (if appropriate).	Student carefully analyzed the information collected and drew appropriate and inventive conclusions supported by evidence.	Student demonstrated a quality synthesis of materials from both emphasis areas. Ideas were organized in a logical manner and conclusions show a strong integration of ideas drawn from multiple sources.	Student documented all sources, including visuals, sounds, and animations. Sources are properly cited, both in-text/in-product and on Works-Cited/Works-Consulted pages/slides. Documentation is error-free.	Student effectively and creatively used appropriate communication tools to convey their conclusions and demonstrated thorough, effective research techniques. Product displays creativity and originality.	Student demonstrated critical thinking by asking appropriate questions, considering legitimacy of information and sources, and evaluating/including multiple perspectives.
3	Student posed a focused question involving them in challenging research.	Student gathered information from a variety of relevant sources--print and electronic.	Student (s) product shows good effort was made in analyzing the evidence collected.	Student included both concentration areas in the development of the project. Student logically organized the product and made good connections among ideas.	Student documented sources with some care, Sources are cited, both in-text/in-product and on Works-Cited/Works-Consulted pages/slides. Few errors noted.	Student effectively communicated the results of research to the audience.	Student demonstrated critical thinking by asking appropriate questions, and considering legitimacy of information and sources.
2	Student constructed a question that lends itself to readily available answers.	Student gathered information from a limited range of sources and displayed minimal effort in selecting quality resources.	Student conclusions could be supported by stronger evidence. Level of analysis could have been deeper.	Student did not effectively draw from both concentration areas. Greater effort could have been put into organizing the product and drawing conclusions.	Student needed to use greater care in documenting sources. Documentation was poorly constructed or absent.	Student needed to work on communicating more effectively.	Student needed to ask more critical questions in the process of developing the project.
1	Student relied on teacher-generated questions or developed a question requiring little creative thought.	Student gathered information that lacked relevance, quality, depth and balance.	Student conclusions simply involved restating information. Conclusions were not supported by evidence.	Student work is not logically or effectively structured.	Student clearly plagiarized materials.	Student showed little evidence of thoughtful research. Product does not effectively communicate research findings.	Student did not apply critical thinking to the topic or the information used in the research.