

## **2018 Institutional Effectiveness Report: Sociology**

### **Final Annual Report**

**Tennessee Tech University**

**President**

**Provost**

**College of Arts and Sciences**

**Sociology and Political Science**

**Sociology BS**

**Sociology Major Mission**

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**Mission/Vision/Goal Statement**

#### **Departmental Mission Statement**

Within the context of the University's mission, the mission of the Department is to provide students with a quality liberal arts education that prepares them for a rapidly changing world and a variety of work environments and post-graduate educational possibilities.

The Department of Sociology has the primary mission of offering strong academic programs in sociology, criminology and criminal justice, social work (and political science). It provides students with a quality liberal arts education that prepares them for a rapidly changing world and a variety of work environments and postgraduate educational possibilities. Students are educated to not only master a diverse body of knowledge but also to think critically, analyze data, and clearly communicate what they know and discover. Recognizing that we live in an increasingly technological and diverse world, we seek to incorporate technological expertise and appreciation of human diversity into our courses. The Department also strives to serve the wider university, the Upper Cumberland region, and the nation through research and public service.

Based on the mission to provide students with a quality liberal arts education that prepares them for a rapidly changing world and a variety of work environments and post-graduate educational possibilities, the Sociology program has identified two Program Goals and five student Learning Outcomes. These provide our students with a well-rounded education through fostering skills such as critical thinking, data analysis, effective communication and the ability to adapt to changing work environments within a variety of potential occupations. The two Program Goals and five student-Learning Outcomes also prepare our students to be more competitive on the job market or in graduate or law school after graduation.

**Program Goal 1: The Program of Sociology will monitor the number of enrolled majors.** See Table 1 below.

**Table 1: Number of Majors**

Year	Sociology	Sociology w/ a Sociology- Criminology- Criminal Justice Concentration	Sociology w/ a Social Work Concentration
2013	39	178	61
2014	30	165	72
2015	28	157	70
2016	33	129	92
2017	41	116	87

**Program Goal 2: The Program of Sociology will offer both curricular and extracurricular options for majors.** See Table 2 below.

As is evidenced by Table 2, students experience diverse perspectives both within their classes through service learning opportunities and through extracurricular activities. Service learning is

one of the key areas of emphasis for the current QEP for Tech’s SACSCOC. Note that 57.3% of those students who responded to the survey indicate that they have “participated in any service learning activities in [your] classes.”

<b>Table 2: During your time at TTU, have you done any of the following? (N=82)</b>		
	<b>No</b>	<b>Yes</b>
Attended a Sociology-CJ Club meeting	43 52.4%	39 47.6%
Participated in any service learning activities in your classes (i.e., projects completed for a class that require involvement within the community)	35 42.7%	47 57.3%
Volunteered in the community	31 37.8%	51 62.2%
Presented a paper at a professional conference or student symposium	78 95.1%	4 4.9%
Participated in Research Day at TTU	75 91.5%	7 8.5%
Worked on a paper in preparation for publication in a professional journal or student journal (e.g., Journal of Creative Inquiry)	70 85.4%	12 14.6%
Worked with a faculty member on a research project	65 79.3%	17 20.7%
Served as a Teaching Assistant for a professor	74 90.2%	8 9.8%
Served as a Research Assistant for a professor	78 95.1%	4 4.9%
Completed an internship	58 70.7%	24 29.3%

**Learning Outcome 1: Majors in Sociology will demonstrate knowledge of their discipline at a level above or comparable to the national mean.**

In the Sociology program, faculty administer the national Educational Testing Services (ETS) major field examination each fall and spring semester to all enrolled majors in sociology with senior classification. The outcomes of this test allow faculty to directly assess students’

performance on Learning Outcome 1 by indicating how well our students demonstrate knowledge of the discipline at a level above or comparable to the national mean. Performance at a level above or comparable to the national mean on the ETS Major Field Examination in Sociology is defined as Tech students having a mean score no lower than 1.644 standard errors below the national mean, the level at which a difference would become statistically significant at the 0.05 level. By using this standard, the department can regularly assess students' performance on Learning Outcome 1, as seen in Table 3, below.

**Table 3: ETS Major Field- Sociology Knowledge**

<b>Student Learning Outcome 1</b>	<b>Major Field Exam</b>	
<b>Spring 2018</b>	<b>TTU Data</b>	<b>National Data</b>
Mean	142	148.0
S.D.	9	12.8
N	34	7065
<b>Fall 2017</b>		
Mean	142	48.0
S.D.	8	12.8
N	33	6033
<b>Spring 2017</b>		
Mean	148.3	144
S.D.	12.4	11
N	39	4998
<b>Fall 2016</b>	<b>TTU Data</b>	<b>National Data</b>
Mean	142	148.3
S.D.	9	12.4
N	29	4,998
<b>Spring 2016</b>		
Mean	142	148.6
S.D.	13	12.3
N	35	3,804
<b>Fall 2015</b>		
Mean	138	148.6
S.D.	9	12.3
N	32	3,804
<b>Spring 2015</b>		
Mean	143	148.7
S.D.	11	12.2
N	39	2,543
<b>Fall 2014</b>		
Mean	142	148.7
S.D.	9	12.2
N	27	2,543

<b>Spring 2014</b>		
Mean	146	148.8
S.D.	9	11.8
N	38	1,143
<b>Fall 2013</b>		
Mean	142	148.8
S.D.	8	11.8
N	30	1,143

**Learning Outcome 2: Majors in Sociology will demonstrate critical thinking skills at a level above or comparable to the national mean.**

Performance at a level above or comparable to the national mean on the critical thinking sub-score on the ETS Major Field Examination in Sociology is defined as TTU students having a mean score on critical thinking no lower than 1.644 standard errors below the national mean, the level at which a difference would become statistically significant at the 0.05 level. Thus, the department is able to assess our students' performance on Learning Outcome 2 as seen below:

**Table 4: ETS Major Field Critical Thinking**

Student Learning Outcome 2	Critical Thinking	Critical Thinking
<b>Spring 2018</b>	<b>TTU Data</b>	<b>National Data</b>
Mean	42	47.4
S.D.	8	7.2
<b>Fall 2017</b>	<b>TTU Data</b>	<b>National Data</b>
Mean	41	47.5
S.D.	8	12.0
<b>Spring 2017</b>	<b>TTU Data</b>	<b>National Data</b>
Mean	43	47.6
S.D.	11	12.0
<b>Fall 2016</b>	<b>TTU Data</b>	<b>National Data</b>
Mean	43	47.8
S.D.	9	12
<b>Spring 2016</b>		
Mean	44	48.4
S.D.	13	12.6
<b>Fall 2015</b>		
Mean	39	48.4

S.D.	10	12.6
<b>Spring 2015</b>		
Mean	43	48.3
S.D.	11	11.9
<b>Fall 2014</b>		
Mean	41	48.3
S.D.	7	11.9
<b>Spring 2014</b>		
Mean	47	48.4
S.D.	9	11.7
<b>Fall 2013</b>		
Mean	42	48.4
S.D.	9	11.7
<b>Spring 2013</b>		
Mean	44	47.8
S.D.	9	7.3

**Learning Outcome 3: Majors in Sociology will be capable of effective oral and written communication.**

Sociology analyzes the results from the National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE) in order to assess student confidence in their abilities to write and speak clearly and effectively. The results of the National Survey of Student Engagement allow us to assess how well our students perform on learning Outcome 3 by determining their capabilities in effectively using written and oral skills. These results are compared to other TTU students and to our Carnegie peer institutions. Full access to the questions are copyright and trademark protected, but the 2017 TTU College of Arts and Sciences NSSE questions are linked here: [https://www.tntech.edu/assets/usermedia/provost/student-surveys/NSSE17\\_Screenshot\\_US\\_English.pdf](https://www.tntech.edu/assets/usermedia/provost/student-surveys/NSSE17_Screenshot_US_English.pdf). Responses are evaluated by TTU from these questions that address collaborative student research, teamwork, analytical research, research writing, exposure to diversity, faculty interaction, and cultural exposure, among others opportunities in preparation for professional development. Results from the Senior Questionnaire are compared with data from the National

Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE). The NSSE was given spring semesters 2014 and 2016 and the senior Sociology majors demonstrated gains over their freshmen counterparts in both years and on both the oral and written questions components. The NSSE assesses students' engagement in curricular and extracurricular activities, abilities to work as a team, communicate, and critically think. Relevant values from the NSSE are compared to data from the senior questionnaire. The combination of the NSSE exam as well as the writing and presentation requirements in many of our courses ensure the continued ability to monitor students' performance on Learning Outcomes 3.

We are pleased that the NSSE (see Table 5) reflects gains in both 2014 and 2016 among the seniors and that Tech Sociology students score comparably to students in their Carnegie peer institutions.

**Table 5: NSSE Data: 2014 and 2016**

	2014				2016			
	Oral		Written		Oral		Written	
	Freshmen	Seniors	Freshmen	Seniors	Freshmen	Seniors	Freshmen	Seniors
TTU Sociology	2.00	3.78	3.00	3.11	2.89	3.00	2.67	3.27
TTU Total	2.50	2.80	2.60	2.80	2.60	2.90	2.70	2.80
Carnegie	2.80	3.00	2.90	3.10	2.80	3.00	2.90	3.10

**Learning Outcome 4: Majors in Sociology taking the Criminology-Criminal Justice concentration will demonstrate competence in their concentration (Criminal Justice).**

In order to determine how well our students perform on Learning Outcome 4, we administer a **multiple-choice exam** each fall and spring semester to seniors within the Sociology-Criminology-Criminal Justice concentration. Students are expected to answer 75% or more of the questions correctly. The exam, available on file in the departmental office, was developed by

faculty in the department, and is administered during the Educational Testing Service (ETS) Major Field exam. By including this additional assessment, the faculty are able to regularly gauge whether our students are competent in the topics emphasized in the criminal justice concentration. Students met this threshold 100% of the time during the 2012-2016 review period. The Program Reviewer for 2017-2018 suggested revisions during this time to update for new material and the test will be administered again beginning in the 2018-2019 academic year.

**Table 6: Sociology CRCJ Exam Results: Mean Percent Correct on Criminal Justice In-House Developed Exam (Scored by ETS)**

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<b>Fall 2016</b>	<b>Spring 2017</b>
82.04	76.94
<b>Fall 2015</b>	<b>Spring 2016</b>
80.63	77.96
<b>Fall 2014</b>	<b>Spring 2015</b>
78.6	82.5
<b>Fall 2013</b>	<b>Spring 2014</b>
83.1	84.51
<b>Fall 2012</b>	<b>Spring 2013</b>
83.1	82.19

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**Learning Outcome 5: Majors in Sociology taking the Social Work concentration will be rated at a level above average by their supervisor when completing their required internship (Social Work).**

To assess our students' progress on Learning Outcome 5, we use the Internship Evaluation Form, completed by the Agency Supervisor to gauge students' overall performance on the internship requirement of the Social Work concentration. Student performance is rated and the final question is a scale of one to five where students' work in the internship can be correlated to outstanding, good, average, fair or poor. This survey is evaluated in conjunction with the overall work completed by the Social Work Intern and the Journals completed. Ninety



percent of Sociology-Social Work students were expected to be rated at a level above average (outstanding or good) by their supervisor at the completion of their required internship, and the Social-Work students have met this threshold almost every year during the evaluation period.

**Table 7: Internship Supervisor’s Rating of Students in SW 4900 Internships**

Term	Number Enrolled	Number of Outstanding or Good
Spring 2018	17	14
Fall 2017	23	23
Spring 2017	26	26
Fall 2016	25	25
Summer 2016	14	14
Spring 2016	14	13
Fall 2015	18	15
Summer 2015	11	11
Spring 2015	10	9
Fall 2014	14	12
Spring 2014	13	12
Fall 2013	12	11
Spring 2013	9	9
Fall 2012	12	12