

Institutional Effectiveness Report

Assessment Summary

Department or Division: Sociology, Anthropology, Criminal Justice, with Marriage and Family Therapy

Degree Program: Bachelor of Arts Degree in Sociology and Anthropology. Sociology Concentration

Contact Person: Carl Hand

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Assessment Cycle: Accreditation in 2004 with annual reports; reaccreditation scheduled for 2009-2010

Mission (related to VSU mission): The undergraduate concentration in sociology is an applied/clinical program that prepares students to work in a broad range of employment settings. It is designed to give students instruction in the foundations of sociology as well as training in specific skills needed for employment. In addition to the foundations courses in theory, research methods and statistics, all students in the sociology program are required to take courses in both clinical and applied sociology, institutions, inequality, and self and society and issues in sociological practice. Students also complete a required internship in their area of interest and a senior capstone course. The internship is designed to integrate classroom learning with a sociological practice experience. Upon graduation students pursue employment in areas such as human services, human resources, community organization, program development, and organizational management. Some students will pursue graduate work in sociology, social work, family therapy, counseling, law, or public administration.

Assessment History (discuss here how and when the program developed its current assessment program, what it used prior to starting that program to assess its effectiveness, etc.):

The current student learning outcomes and outcome assessments for the major were developed during the quarter to semester transition approximately nine years ago. The sociology concentration within the major underwent substantial review in preparation for a Self-Study as part of program accreditation. The program earned accreditation by the Commission on Applied and Clinical Sociology in 2004 and is going through the reaccreditation process during the current academic year (08/09). By means of Self-Study and hosting Site Visitors, the applied and clinical sociology program produces evidence of meeting national standards and instituting sound practices regarding student training in applied and clinical sociology.

Expected Student Learning Outcomes: Undergraduate educational outcomes are:

1. To familiarize students with sub-disciplines, theories, methods, and core concepts of the discipline they elect to study within the major.
2. To develop in students the ability to apply and utilize the basic quantitative and/or qualitative research and analytical techniques they will need in seeking employment.
3. To teach students the literature and database review skills needed to assess and synthesize the state of knowledge available to apply to the study of selected issues in sociology or anthropology.

4. To support students in the development of the skills required to communicate effectively with people and organizations representing diverse social and culture backgrounds. These skills include writing, speaking, and computing.

Assessments (include when and to whom these are administered, and align goals with specific assessments):

1. Sociology and Anthropology faculty will meet periodically to plan and assess achievement of student and program outcomes.
2. The Senior Capstone experience will provide a basis for assessing written and oral presentation skills.
3. A senior exit survey or exit interview will be conducted for all graduates.
4. When available, university-wide data pertaining to the major or its graduates will be used for program assessment and improvement.

2005-2006

Assessment Results (submit an electronic file of the data collected):

- **Senior Capstone:** We have collected data from students in Senior Capstone (SOCI 4990) that are used to provide feedback about the Program. Attached is an example of the kind of data collected in the Capstone Course. While these data are reported to the faculty routinely, the faculty has not met to discuss implications for program assessment. Our plan is to examine these data and their implication for program assessment.
- **Ongoing Senior Exit Survey:** All graduating seniors must fill out the Senior Exit Survey in order to be eligible for graduation. This survey is required of graduating senior majors in all degree programs at VSU. While surveys are collected and summarized by the University's Office of Strategic Research and Analysis, the data has not been shared consistently at the departmental level to permit program-level assessment of student undergraduate experiences or facilitate program evaluation. However, efforts are underway to address this source of data in a more systematic manner so that program-level faculty can meet to discuss data implications for program assessment.
- **Accreditation Annual Report:** The Commission on Applied and Clinical Sociology requires that accredited programs supply the Commission with an Annual Report in June describing program updates, changes or responses to findings of the Self-Study process. Annual Reports are maintained by the Department Head and Program Coordinator.

2006-2007

- **Senior Capstone:** We have collected data from students in Senior Capstone (SOCI 4990) that are used to provide feedback about the Program. Attached is an example of the kind of data collected in the Capstone Course. While these data are reported to the faculty routinely, the faculty has not met to discuss implications for program assessment. Capstone data is being used to revise the Capstone course and provide majors with up-to-date information on jobs/careers and graduate school opportunities. Some of the data collected in Capstone is used as part of the Self-Study process in preparation for reaccreditation of the applied and clinical sociology program.

- **Ongoing Senior Exit Survey:** All graduating seniors must fill out the Senior Exit Survey in order to be eligible for graduation. This survey is required of all VSU students. While surveys are collected and summarized by the office of Strategic Research and Analysis, the data has not been used consistently at the departmental level to assess student undergraduate experiences or to instigate program evaluation. However, efforts are underway to evaluate these data and meet with department faculty to discuss implications for program assessment.
- **Annual Report:** Accredited programs supply the Commission on Applied and Clinical Sociology with an Annual Report in June describing program updates, changes and/or responses to findings of the Self-Study process. The Undergraduate Program Coordinator consults with the faculty in preparation of the report.

2007-2008

- **Senior Capstone:** We have collected data from students in Senior Capstone (SOCI 4990) that are used to provide feedback about the Program. Attached is an example of the kind of data collected in the Capstone Course. While these data are reported to the faculty routinely, the faculty has not met to discuss implications for program assessment. Capstone data is being used as part of the Self-Study for reaccreditation of the applied and clinical sociology program and to revise and update the Capstone course. We plan to use Capstone data to understand what student majors' experience is within the degree program and selected disciplinary concentration..
- **Senior Exit Survey:** All graduating seniors must fill out the Senior Exit Survey in order to be eligible for graduation. This survey is required of graduating senior majors in all degree programs at VSU. While surveys are collected and summarized by the University's Office of Strategic Research and Analysis, the data has not been shared consistently at the departmental level to permit program-level assessment of student undergraduate experiences or facilitate program evaluation. However, efforts are underway to address this source of data in a more systematic manner so that program-level faculty can meet to discuss data implications for program assessment. Recently an opportunity arose to add department-specific questions to the Senior Exit Survey. Faculty has been asked for input into designing additional questions which may provide an additional source of program assessment data in 2008-2009.
- **Annual Report:** Accredited programs supply the Commission on Applied and Clinical Sociology with an Annual Report in June describing program updates, changes and/or responses to findings of the Self-Study process. The Undergraduate Program Coordinator consults with the faculty in preparation of the report and copies are maintained by both the Department Head and the Program Coordinator.
- **Development of Sociology Concentration Objectives:** In preparation for the reaccreditation of the applied and clinical sociology program by the Commission on Applied and Clinical Sociology, the sociology faculty adopted the following objectives for those students within the applied and clinical sociology concentration:
 1. Understand the components of quantitative research in the context of sociological practice.
 2. Utilize sociological literature in the context of sociological practice.
 3. Communicate effectively in writing and oral communication.
 4. Apply sociological theory and perspectives to a variety of practice settings and real world problems.

5. Successfully integrate into a field setting through a sociological internship.
6. Understand the components of a clinical assessment, treatment planning, and documentation.
7. Understand various clinical techniques.
8. Use applied and clinical abilities to affect positive change in the environment.
9. Integrate theory and research with practice.
10. Address issues of sociological practice that relate to cultural and economically diverse environments.
11. Develop a professional identity as an applied or clinical sociologist through field placement with special consideration given to the application of sociological concepts and ethical issues.

The sociology faculty has begun the process of considering the implications of these new concentration objectives for the program and for assessment and curriculum change.

- **Revision of SOCI 4540 Internship in Sociology:** After extensive discussion of student performances in the SOCI 4540, the applied and clinical program faculty revised the requirements and expectations of the course. These revisions clarify student expectations, responsibilities and course prerequisites.

Overview

Faculty are committed to listening to each other, to students (both enrolled and alumni), and to other relevant constituencies about the quality of the educational curriculum that we are delivering. To that end, we have discussed class work and student progress both informally and formally, at discipline meetings. We regularly listen to student and administrative concerns and try to “close the curriculum loop” using that feedback. This has been an evolving process as our curriculum has developed over the last decade or more and in response to initial accreditation of the sociology program. The lack of specific concentration objectives for sociology and anthropology has prevented more intentional assessment of the programs. Concentration specific outcomes for sociology were developed in Fall Semester 2008 and will become a basis for further assessment. Furthermore, the sociology faculty has adopted a proposal to create a Community Advisory Board. The purpose of this board will be to provide feedback to the sociology faculty from those community members who already have contact with students in the applied and clinical sociology concentration.

Dept. Head/ Director	Date	Dean	Date	VPAA	Date
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Adapted from: University of Alabama SACS site (<http://sacs.ua.edu/degreeInfo2.cfm?college=2&dept=50>) and

University of Western Kentucky SACS Accreditation Review Process (<http://www.wku.edu/sacs/assessmentmanual.htm>)

Dr. Marila Palmer, LeTourneau University, presentation materials from SACS 2008 Summer Institute

Capstone Assessment Files

The following topics have been used as the basis for discussion in SOCI 4990 Capstone and exists as txt files. Each semester includes these content files:

- Skills Self- Assessment
- Plans After Graduation
- Ideal First Job
- Will Student Walk at Graduation?
- Sociology and Anthropology Activities Outside the Classroom
- Resume Preparation
- Best and Worst College Classes
- Knowledge About What Program Graduates Are Doing
- Experience With Main Office and Department Head
- Suggestions for Redesigning the Major
- Experiences with Their Advisor, Registrar, Financial Aid, etc.

Data is available for the following semesters:

Semester and Year

Fall 2005

Spring 2006

Summer 2006

Fall 2006

Spring 2007

Summer 2007

Fall 2007

Examples of students discussions shared with faculty:

Questions below pertain to experience with the front office in the department

Date: Mon, 17 Jan 2005 17:54:01 -0500

From: Chet Ballard <cballard@valdosta.edu>

Subject: capstone comments - main office

X-Sender: cballard/blazemail.valdosta.edu@localhost

To: mbrooks@valdosta.edu, mcapece@valdosta.edu, macheski@valdosta.edu, klowney@valdosta.edu, jhasling@valdosta.edu, chand@valdosta.edu, tmeyers@valdosta.edu

X-Mailer: QUALCOMM Windows Eudora Version 6.1.2.0

X-PMX-Version: 4.7.0.111621, Antispam-Engine: 2.0.2.0,

Antispam-Data: 2005.1.17.7

Questions below pertain to experience with the front office in the department

Hi, hope your MLK day is going well.

Below are pasted the comments of fall capstone students on the front office and service received there, FYI. cbi

i have had a great experience overall with the office and all the employees. only one time was my folder lost and i consider that pretty good for four years. dr brooks is by far my favorite in the office. he always has treated me as an individual person and not just another passing student and i feel like that is very important.

My experience with the people in the departmental office has been fine. I haven't experienced any problems. It was a big shock to me when I changed my major to Sociology that you could actually see your folder whenever you needed, and in fact had to get it yourself to be advised because in my old major, education, the office kept your folder and you never had access to it. I don't really know Dr. Brooks because I have never had him for a class but he has always seemed ok. Barbara has always been helpful whenever I needed to ask her something.

My experience has always been good at the departmental office. Not only is Barbara nice but she will carry on a conversation with you as if she has known you for years. I feel that the departmental office has a nice friendly environment. My folder has always been ready when needed and anytime I wanted to add a class it was done right away.

The setting of the office is very informal. I have always been treated with respect. They were helpful and concerned about the issues I had. They are not always up to date as I think they should be (i.e. no one in the office knew who was teaching a class labeled "staff" on banner for spring semester). My advising folder was always found quickly and easily. Personally, I do fill as though that is a very small amount of space for the number of people there. When Mrs. Barbara, and two student workers are there at the same time, the office

is kind of crowded. I would really like to see a larger office in a more formal environment. Over all though, I feel like they made good use of a small amount of space and for the most part, I can't complain about the service.

I have never really had to go to the office with the exception of advising. Oh yes, and to drop off research papers for professors. Whenever I have went into the office, Barbara and whoever else has been in there are always very friendly, yet professional. I have to admit I have never ever talked to Dr. Brooks. The office, agreeing with xxx is extremely small. There needs to be a larger waiting area for students, but the small space makes for a more homelike atmosphere, which is nice for students.

I have had a good experience with the office although I haven't had to go there for many things. I guess the most important thing is that my folder was always ready when I needed it and everyone was helpful. Dr. Brooks actually called Dr. Richard at his home when I needed him for something important one day. They also were helpful getting me back into school after I had taken a year and a half off.

My experience with the departmental office was excellent. The office staff knows me because unlike the rest of you I have to go there at least once a week or about three times in a month. I think it is mostly due to the fact that I panic so much about graduating so I have to look at my folder or ask questions about classes that I would need to take in order for me to graduate in a timely fashion. All and all the service is some of the best that I have received since coming to VSU. Though the service I great the office is in fact cramped as xxx and others of you have noted. I would have rather had the space in the office expanded rather than the halls to be painted the colors that they painted.

Another thing is that I also enjoy being able to go look at my file any time I want to. Everyone knows advisors are human, too, and since everyone makes mistakes, it is nice for students to check out the situation before they go and accuse their advisor of messing up. I haven't

had this situation happen to me, but I have heard other students who were ill-advised complaining about what their advisors have said. To be able to go take your folder to another professor and have them check things out is a very nice option to those with scary advisors.

My experience with the departmental office has been great. The atmosphere is very friendly and the workers are helpful. There have often been times when I have called and my questions were answered promptly. My past experiences with departmental offices have often been more formal and less personal. It really helps to have such a personal feel.

I've never had a problem with anyone in the main office. Dr. Brooks is not only a great teacher, but a very friendly person as well. Barbara and any of the student workers have always been very helpful and nice whenever I've needed assistance. Barbara was especially helpful when I first changed my major in getting situated with my advisor and with my folder. Speaking of which, my folder has always been there when I've needed it. I agree with the others that the office is kind of small and that we as a department deserve a larger main office. I also agree that the colors chosen to paint the walls are just horrible. I've heard the story of why they are those colors, but it's awful just the same.

the colors in the halls don't bother me. I think it is a weird color scheme but it brightens things up just a bit. I think it is better than being surrounded by only white walls everywhere. It was so plain looking then. When I came back this semester and saw the walls it was kind of a shock but now honestly I don't even notice them.

I have always had service with a smile from the staff at the main departmental office. Ms. Barbara has always been helpful and nice. My folder has always been right on hand when I have been to get it. I would give the Sociology Department five stars for the excellent service I have always received.

I have never had a problem with the departmental office. Everyone is always nice when I go in there or whenever I call. The only problem I see with the office is that it is small. It is not a comfortable feeling standing in there especially when there are about three or four people in there.

I agree about the halls. I don't like the color scheme. I think they could have picked better colors.

I agree with everyone else that the office is a little small. When there are a couple of student workers, the secretary, Dr. Brooks, and students in there needing assistance it does get to be a little cramped. I haven't been in there lately but I have noticed all the folders on the floor and that makes the clutter worse. I'm assuming the space problem might be an issue for other departments as well though so I think the office is ran well considering the limited space. I agree with some of the others that the hall colors are horrible. I don't notice them as much as at the beginning of the semester but they are still really ugly but I guess it could be worse.

The only bad thing I can remember from the department is when my advisor put my transcript in someone else's folder and vice versa. I know people make mistakes but it had all of my personal information on there that I would like to keep private.

I agree that they always found my folder with no problems. I however think they are very organized especially compared to other departments. I was once in the LAS department before I declared a major and they never knew anything that is a lost department.

I have also noticed that there are folders all over the floor. This makes the office seem a little unorganized. The thought that they can actually lose someone's folder is a little scary. I would be mighty upset if they messed something up and they told me that I had to take

another class to graduate. But sometimes people are more organized when things are cluttered around them.

The color scheme is a little wacky but I sort of understand the idea behind it. From my understanding, the purpose is to make finding rooms in the building easier for those people unfamiliar with this building. Though I understand painting halls different colors, I do think

better colors could have been chosen. For the most part, I am pleased with the entire department. The office staff are wonderful and always make me feel at home.

I have always had friendly service from the office. My folder has always been available and not lost. Dr. Brooks and Barbara are always helpful when I need something. The office is a bit small but I do not think it really matters. I do agree that the colors of the walls in the building are really really ugly. It looks like a nursery now.

I have never had a problem with the front office. Anytime that I have ever needed something it was done or I was informed on how to get it done. I sometimes hear students complain about Barb or that Dr. Brooks gave them a smart answer but after working in the front office I can attest to the fact that some questions are better left unasked. I think the only complaint would be the size of the office because it can get sort of tight in there.

The only complaint that I really have is that the tables in the classroom are never cleaned. I have actually seen fingernails on the tables. That is really gross! Other than that, am satisfied with the sociology department.

My opinion stands the same. I still believe that we have a great department. I hear students in other majors complaining about how they (the students) don't work together and that is one thing that I can say about my fellow Sociology classmates we usually work together and are concerned about the well being of each other. The new colors takes some getting used too, but change is a good thing right? Our classrooms are not as bad as other departments and our janitorial staff tries real hard.

I agree about the small space, although I rather like the informal setting. I was a biology major before and everytime I needed to go to the office, it felt too

formal, almost as if I shouldn't be there. But the service has always been great in our department, and I think we're lucky.

When I returned this semester, I was also wondering what was up with the purple and blue walls. It's still a mystery to me.

Another aspect of the department office that made my day was the way they greeted you with a smile. Somedays that is all I needed and a smile always makes me respond in a positive manner.

Questions below pertain to best and worst experiences

Date: Mon, 31 Jan 2005 11:00:17 -0500

From: Chet Ballard <cballard@valdosta.edu>

Subject: Capstone Shares Best/Worst Moments

X-Sender: cballard/blazemail.valdosta.edu@localhost

To: mbrooks@valdosta.edu, mcapece@valdosta.edu, macheski@valdosta.edu, klowney@valdosta.edu, jhasling@valdosta.edu, chand@valdosta.edu, tmeyers@valdosta.edu

X-Mailer: QUALCOMM Windows Eudora Version 6.1.2.0

X-PMX-Version: 4.7.0.111621, Antispam-Engine: 2.0.2.0, Antispam-Data: 2005.1.31.3

The messages posted below were part of any electronic discussion in Capstone last semester on the best and worst memories they take away from VSU. These comments were shared with the VP-Student Affairs. cb

I GUESS MY WORST EXPERIENCE WOULD BE WITH PARKING TICKETS AND ROOMATES WHILE LIVING IN THE DORMS. OH YEA AND LETS NOT FORGET THE COMMUNITY BATHROOMS THAT WE GIRLS HAD TO SHARE IN THE DORMS. I MEAN WHEN YOU HAVE TO WEAR YOUR SHOES TO TAKE A SHOWER, UGHHH! MY BEST MEMORIES WILL BE ALL THE WONDERFUL PEOPLE THAT I HAVE HAD A CHANCE TO MEET THROUGH OUT MY COLLEGE CAREER. I WILL MISS ALL OF IT ONCE IT IS OVER. COLLEGE IS AN EXPERIENCE THAT I THINK EVERYONE SHOULD TRY!

my worst memory of VSU will be the gross community bathrooms in the dorms. Also, I lived on a hall in Langdale before it got renovated, so the carpets were dirty and it was basically just a gross place to live. However, my best memory also has to do with the dorms because I met a lot of good friends there my Freshman year. I would never want to live in that situation again, but it was a good experience.

oh yea i forgot about the nasty carpet and mold growing under the beds in langdale before it got renovated! i lived there too and i can honestly say that my very first trip to vsu when i brought my stuff to the dorms i cried when i saw what i was going to be living in! but it is something i will never forget!

I would have to agree with xxxx and xxxxx on the dorm issue. I lived in Langdale for two years, and even after the renovation, with the insects, power failures, fire drills, and annoying neighbors, dorm life stinks to high heaven! Also, with a psychotic roommate, dorm living would have to be number one on my worst memories of VSU. My greatest memories would be the friends that I have made, and the nice people, old and young, that I have met while here at VSU. I can remember what one student told me as I was visiting this campus a year before I arrived while debating on whether or not to attend. The student that gave me a tour of campus said that the one reason she had stayed here at VSU was because of the laid back, happy-go-lucky attitude of the students and faculty. And I have to agree with her on that! Now what she said about the dorms is another story.

I would have to say that my best memories would have to come from the people that I have met. In this i include my girlfriend that I am sure one day will become more. I have also enjoyed a couple of the classes that I have taken because they have showed me what I want to do later in life. My worst memories would have to come from failed classes because of too many missed days, although I seem to have that under control now.

My best memories of VSU would definitely include last year when my fiance played baseball here. We had so much fun together and really helped each other out tremendously. I never worried about having to cook or really do anything outside of school. He would even come and help me cook/clean up my place. My worst moments at VSU would have to be last year. I experienced a lot of changes including deaths in my family and being very ill. However, my overall experience at VSU has been quite rewarding.

Ugh! Sorry some of your dorm experiences haven't been too pleasant. Fortunately, I haven't had to worry about that since I've always stayed in an apartment. However, that has its disadvantages.

My worst memory of VSU would also have to be the community bathrooms in the dorms. Unfortunately, I still have to put up with nasty people because I still live on campus. It is a shame that young ladies in college do not know how to clean up after themselves. I hate having to share such a small amount of space with a roommate also. She is a neat person though, so I can deal with her. My best experience at VSU has been forming a close friendship with one of my high school classmates. We talked in high school but we have gotten a lot closer since we have been in college. I'm thankful that we both chose to attend VSU.

One of the best memories that I have of VSU is that I have meet lifetime friends that have changed my life for the better and one of the worst days of my VSU days has to be the friends that I met before those that I have now. When I first came to VSU I met a person that I considered to be a friend and another girl that was her friend. The first few months consisted in our tour of Valdosta and their often slippery fingers (stealing from stores)but I never thought one of my "friends" would steal from me. This thought was proven wrong when I was in class one day after a quick trip to the bank only my "friend" knew about. To make this short she lifted me of \$200, my wallet and I.D and told me she didn't, which was a lie because I suddenly had all of this returned after begging for someone to just return my wallet and I.D. Needless to say I never talked to them again because I was going nowhere fast in that relationship with those girls. Thats when I met my other friends at VSU on the front lawn of Brown Hall (The Getto) and she just talked to me when I was at my lowest and has been there since. Now we a roommates and I have all the friends she had as my own. Many of my new friends are different from those i started out with, they don't steal from people especially friends.

Overall Valdosta has been a good place for me to be in or atleast be near because I have never actually lived here. I would have to agree with my class mates wit the people here in Valdosta and and at VSU being the best

thing about VSU. I have learned so much from being around these people these people and these are experiences that I would not trade for anything. I will oneday share with Dr. Ballard something that he had brought me to realize without him even knowing it. I don't really have a worst to share there has been one or two people that I could have gone with out knowing or the professor (and most of you know who)who no matter what you just could not make the grade in their class but I am a strong believer in the saying if it does not kill me it will make me stronger so I also that that professor for making me a stronger individual.

My worst experience here at VSU would be the parking. I mean you pay money to be able to park and still have to park on the side of the street. My best moment at VSU is when I used my privilage to talk to one of VSU's counselors. He has helped me to deal with a lot of things I thought would haunt me forever. I use to think going to a counselor was for people that were "crazy" but I found out that all you need is for an understanding person to listen and sometimes repeat to you what you already know because it is hard for those who are close to understand things you are going through.

I would have to say that my worst experience at VSU has always been parking problems. I think I have paid more money to VSU in parking fines than in tuition or anything else. I buy a permit every year and I don't know why. My best memories of VSU would be all the people I have met. The friends I have met have been terrific. I feel lucky to have had small classes with teachers who really care about making sure everyone knows what is going on. If I had the option of going to another college I would still choose to come to VSU. I love this university parking problems and all.

I do not have any good memories of VSU. I can honestly say that. My worst memories of VSU is VSU. College has not been fun for me at all. I was not fortunate to be able to just work a simple job and go to school, but when I am finished my school is paid for. I do not have any student loans. I know it seems that I have a negative attitude but I really am not like that it is just that I have other things going on besides school and school is a burden to me.

I have to agree with you on what you said about grown women not knowing how to clean up after themselves. I

used to live in Brown hall and there was always an issue with the bathrooms. We had our visitation taken away from us because the ladies would not clean up after themselves.

My worst memories at vsu would have to be sharing the community bathrooms like many of the others. You would think that people would try to pick up after themselves because they have to use the same facility. Also, having to get up for the fire drills 2:00 in the morning and don't let it be cold. It was also a time to see everyone at their worse. Sometimes students would be in the shower when the drills went off. Another bad memory I will have is eating at Palms. The best memories would be the memories I had with my friends. We will have stories for days to tell our children. We laugh about everything we have been through now when we are together.

I would like to agree with you on the horrible parking situation. I know that faculty and staff may say that the students are only ill because they cannot get close parking on campus, such as right in front of the door or within feet of the entrance. Also as a student who lives on campus, I am use to walking to class. It saves on the hassle of parking and it gives me a little exercise. However, this semester I am doing my internship off of campus. I am having to drive there myself, since the location is a rape center, and no one is suppose to know where it is so none of my friends can drop me off. The problem comes when I try to park back on campus in the middle of the day. Nearly every day when I get to Oak Street, there are not any parking spots available AT ALL, close or far. Typically, I am parking over behind the new recreation center. I refuse to get any more parking tickets because I am poor, so I cannot park around the dorms even if I wanted to, as those spaces are marked for twenty minute parking, with about seven marked for ninety minute parking. And those spots on Georgia and next to the Womens' Studies Department are wishful thinking. So when it comes to parking, yes it is an issue, and not because students are lazy--because there is a lack of parking spaces.

Oh yeah, I totally forgot about awful Palms. That would be another bad point of my time here. I was so excited

that I was classified as a Sophomore my second semester in the dorms so I could get a-la-carte and eat at Chick-fi-la(however you spell it)instead of Palms everyday.

ou talk about bad memories of dorm life. My worst memory would have to be when our RA posted a voice board during black history month and someone responded to the board using a racist letter. Needless to say that they could not find the person that wrote the letter. They let it stay up for at least two month and asked for comments on the episode. The incident even received notice by the Spectator which only made the matter worse. I can never forget that episode which elightened me that racism still exists in its true form (Southern Hospitality).

I actually unlike most of the girls had a good experience living in the dorms. I got to eat all that I wanted and I shared a room with my friend from highschool who I still lived with for three years after that in houses. I felt that the dorms were nasty so therefore there was no use in cleaning them. The shower situation was pretty bad but at least we always had hot water. Actually one day my roommate stole my clothes and towel while I was in the shower and locked our room up and left. My RA wasn't in his room so I had to tear the shower curtain down and walk out into the main lobby of Patterson and get the front desk person to let me in my room, that was embarrassing.

I have2 different memories that I would consider to be the best. The first was discovering what I really wanted to go to school for. I originally started here at VSU as a biology major. I wanted to be Vet. and got to UGA after completing my core classes here and saving money. At the end of my first year I became very lost. Even though I did well in my science classes, I didn't enjoy them at all. I knew then that I no longer wanted to be a Vet. However for a couple months I had no idea what I wanted to do. The I took a sociology class, and decided that is what I wanted to go to school for and make a career of. My other favorite memory is meeting my boyfriend of over 2 years. We plan on getting married once we are both out of school and are stable enough to support ourselves. My worst memory is similar to many other: the parking (or lack there of). My very

first day at VSU was awful because of parking. No one told me about parking problems so I left about 45 minutes before class starts (and I only lived about 10 minutes away at the time). However it took me so long to find a spot back on Sustella behind North Oak and then it took me almost 15 minutes to walk to class. Needless to say I was 15 minutes late to my first ever college class, I was so embarrassed!

My best memory of VSU will be Graduation. My worst memory is all the papers I have had to write, going to class, and sitting through boring lectures.

I remember getting a parking ticket from the police dept. The end of my car was in a small area of the yellow part of the curb. that ticket cost me 30 dollars.

The following comments pertain to what students will do after graduation

Date: Mon, 31 Jan 2005 13:00:19 -0500

From: Chet Ballard <cballard@valdosta.edu>

Subject: What Will Capstoners Do After Graduation?

X-Sender: cballard/blazemail.valdosta.edu@localhost

To: mbrooks@valdosta.edu, mcapece@valdosta.edu, macheski@valdosta.edu, klowney@valdosta.edu, jhasling@valdosta.edu, chand@valdosta.edu, tmeyers@valdosta.edu

X-Mailer: QUALCOMM Windows Eudora Version 6.1.2.0

X-PMX-Version: 4.7.0.111621, Antispam-Engine: 2.0.2.0,

Antispam-Data: 2005.1.31.4

Hi All,

Still early in the semester, but here is what the Capstone students say they are doing after graduation.

7 - Start masters programs

 3 MS SOC at VSU

 2 MFT (1 VSU; 1 Nova)

 2 SWK (1 VSU; 1 UGA)

4 - Start or Continue Job - no plans to return for higher education

11 - Start Working, Return Later for MS or Ph.D

5 of 11 are considering masters work in fall, unsure which program, but may work for awhile then decide

FYI

cb

The following comments pertain to the sequencing of courses

Date: Tue, 01 Mar 2005 09:43:24 -0500
From: Chet Ballard <cballard@valdosta.edu>
Subject: Capstone Students on Course Sequencing
X-Sender: cballard/blazemail.valdosta.edu@localhost
To: mbrooks@valdosta.edu, mcapece@valdosta.edu, makeski@valdosta.edu,
klowney@valdosta.edu, jhasling@valdosta.edu, chand@valdosta.edu,
tmeyers@valdosta.edu
X-Mailer: QUALCOMM Windows Eudora Version 6.1.2.0
X-PMX-Version: 4.7.0.111621, Antispam-Engine: 2.0.2.0, Antispam-Data: 2005.3.1.5

Below are the comments from students in Capstone last fall about the sequencing of courses in the major, suggestions for changes, thoughts about spanish, and related matters. I provide them for your information.

cb

I found that statistics was a very important class because it helps to understand how to read tables and charts with statistics in them, and also to see how easy it is to skew the tables into saying what someone want it to say. I think that it would be a great idea to break clinical sociology into two parts so that you can give more focus on role playing and interiewing. I think that the intern experience is very helpful for preparing to enter the workforce. It helps put everything that we have learned into action. You can actually see things that you have talked about in class and can apply that to society.

I think that as a soon to be graduate the prospect of taking Spanish is overwhelming. I suggest that foreign languages be taken with the core classes in the first two years of your college education. I also believe that Theory and should be taken after Research Methods because the theory paper focuses on things that you did in Research Methods. In order for students to make the best possible grades that they can I believe that the students ADVISOR should take more time to assist the student and less time criticizing and downing the student. If I had to do my academic career over again I would balance my schedule so that I may have those classes that are hard mixed with the ones that are easy.

I agree with ***** about the Spanish classes being too difficult, and I liked Dr. Ballard's idea from class about making a Spanish class that coincided with Sociology. It is very overwhelming to try and learn a second language when you are an adult especially if you didnt take it in high school. This summer I got the

opportunity to go to Mexico to take my last two spanish classes and that was the best thing I ever could have done. There you are forced to learn the language because no one around you speaks English, including your teachers. But also, they speak Spanish correctly, not with the Southern accent of most the teachers here at VSU. Plus, by living in their world you see lots of visuals that help you learn the language, like menus at restaurants, signs at clothing stores, and all written material in Spanish so you don't get it confused with English words, like the text books did for me. I also think that students should be given more internship opportunities to go along with classes. Not only would they gain more real life experience in the courses they would be taking, but this would help end the repetitiveness of sitting in a classroom listening to a monotonous lecture while your freezing because the thermostat is broken (if you are ever in West Hall you know where I'm at with this). College is suppose to be the real world, but usually it ends up being an extension of high school for many students.

I think taking Statistics first was an excellent idea. I still have one 4800 class and Internship left. I am also glad that I took Capstone a semester early. Waiting until spring and trying to get everything like, resumes, and GREs out of the way at the last minute could have been very stressful. I think that the program should actually be designed in such a way that students are advised to take Capstone one semester before graduation.

I had a difficult time with Spanish courses but I don't think much could be done to make them better for SOCI majors. Overall I really cannot complain about how the program is designed. I have learned a great deal and hopefully next semester I will be able to apply some of what I have learned to the real world.

I agree with ***** that basically I have no complaints with the program. The order in which I took classes worked out nicely and I don't feel that I've had trouble in any class as a result of the order I took classes.

Statistics first does seem to be a good idea. Last spring I took theory, clinical, applied, and research methods all in one semester. I though that this would be tough, but really it helped me because they all reinforced one another and it allowed me to have a little easier load my last semester. The 4800's are

classes that I think are really helpful. I am taking both of them this semester, Child Welfare and Domestic Violence, and I feel that I am really learning some valuable things that will help me later on in my career.

The two class that were helpful and I wish I would have been able to take first would have been Theory and research methods. Theory class teaches the outline of sociology which helps with the rest of the classes a great deal. Research methods is a wonderful class for all majors and is helpful throughout college.

I THINK FOR THE MOST PART NOTHING REALLY NEEDS TO BE CHANGED. I TOOK MINE IN A SORT OF WEIRD ORDER BUT IT DIDNT MAKE A DIFFERENCE. I STILL FEEL THAT I UNDERSTOOD EVERYTHING AND BENEFITED FROM THE CLASSES NO MATTER THE ORDER THAT I TOOK THEM IN. THE ONLY THING THAT I AM VERY UNHAPPY ABOUT IS THE SPANISH COURSES I HAVE BEEN REQUIRED TO TAKE. I DO NOT BELIEVE THAT PASSING A SPANISH CLASS SHOULD BE REQUIRED, NOT WHEN YOU MEET 2 TIMES A WEEK FOR ONE HOUR. I CONSIDER MYSELF TO BE A PRETTY SMART INDIVIDUAL OR AT LEAST A FAST LEARNER BUT I CANNOT LEARN A FOREIGN LANGUAGE TWICE A WEEK AN HOUR EACH COURSE.

Like many others I really can't complain about the order of everything. I really had no problem with the order of my classes. However, I do agree with xxxx about senior capstone. It should not be taken during the last semester. It would have had a bigger impact on me if I would have taken it last semester.

I think that it is definitely a good idea to take Statistics before methods because you use alot of statistics in research. I think that a good idea for the foreing languages would be to offer a survey of courses were a student may take three different first level courses so that they can get a broad idea of how to speak in three different languages. No one that comes out of three semesters of a foreing language will be fluent enough to use in in the real world. At least not on a day-to-day basis. I think that the other courses were suggested at a good time. I wish that Anthropology would offer an internship in the place of some classes so that we could get our feet wet and have something good to put on a resume.

I agree with ***** that Research Methods should be taken

in the beginning. Since students are conducting research to write papers early on, this class would be extremely beneficial. Also, I think that Sonia's idea was good about taking 4800 courses last. These classes are more application of what you've already learned, and give a more indepth look on a sociological issue. So, by taking them after you've taken methods, theory, and statistics you gain a better understanding of the class. Also, it helps you to be able to apply what you have learned.

I think that the order in which we take our classes is fine also. I feel that my advisor told me the right classes to take at the right time. I do feel that spanish is a lot to swallow. The Spanish I have learned from class is a lot different from the Spanish spoken by people of spanish background from my job, so I don't see how it is helping out to the extent to take so many classes. I do think it would be a good idea to space Clinical out to two semester for the benefit of those who are really thinking about going into counseling.

For some reason my first response did not post so this will be a brief repeat. I really don't think that too much should change maybe except the spanish or whatever language that you chose to take. I feel like a foreign language is too difficult to learn in the short amount of time that we have to take it in. You end up stressing so bad about passing the class that you don't learn anything. You are mostly just memorizing the info just to pass and get it over with.

i have to agree. i have spent the last three semesters stressing out sooo bad b/c of spanish. i have plenty of other classes that i need to divert my time to and spanish nine times out of 10 took up the most time out of any of them.

I think ***** is right and research methods should be taught earlier on. This class would have been very beneficial for all of the anthropology papers that I have written. I don't think that it is so hard that younger students couldn't have taken it. I still think that statistics should be taken before methods though.

I am currently in the third level spanish class. Sadly,

I took both 1001 and 1002 over the summer for the credit. initially I wanted to learn to speak Spanish fluently. It was impossible to learn that much spanish over a course of ten weeks. Now I am struggling somewhat in 2001 though my grade is decent. The question is, is it simply important to satisfy requirements or learn the material?

I agree with *****. Is taking Spanish courses simply a matter of saying, "I was enrolled in the class three times," or is it about actually learning the language. I wanted to minor in Spanish but the outcome isn't worth the difficulty of the classes, the time or stress I would be devoting to it. I also agree with xxxxx and others concerning offering clinical in two parts for those of us considering going into clinical counseling. I know this isn't a programming issue, but when I transferred here it was almost as if my advisor was just as lost as I was. I often had to take the initiative upon myself to make sure that things ran smoothly. He was advising me to take classes that I knew could be used to fill other areas and I got confused. Needless to say, I kept all of my paper work and had to prove to him that I did not need to take those classes. It would just be in the best interest of students if advisors did some preparation ahead of time (at least the first time we meet) instead of trying to deal with all of the stresses of advising in 15 minutes.

The program is set up really well in comparison to others. Many programs require sometimes five or six prerequisites. I am glad that it was easy for me to enroll in the upper-level courses when I needed to.

I have not had a horrible time in my Spanish classes and I feel that I have learned some things but I know if I don't keep up with it I will forget it before long. I also know that I will not be able to carry on a substantial conversation with a Spanish-speaking person when I get through with my three Spanishes. I don't really know what could be done to make the Spanish classes better, but Dr. Ballard's suggestion of having a class geared towards the things we would face in social services might be a good idea.

I believe the two 3000 or 4000 level classes that are

required to take outside of our major can be difficult. First, it is difficult to find a class at that level that does not require a prerequisite. Second, there is a lot of information from 1000 to 3000 that you are not familiar with which can make you feel overwhelmed. That is how I felt taking upper level history courses.

I didn't have any problem with the order that I took my classes in. I definitely do think that taking Statistics first is a good idea, because those skills are needed in other classes, especially Research Methods. I didn't enjoy having to take Spanish and really don't feel like I brought anything away from the classes that would be helpful in a job setting. I think it's a great idea to have language classes geared more towards the things our major focuses on so that we can use those skills. In terms of the Clinical class, I think it would be helpful to have more time to practice those one on one skills with "client", whether it be made mandatory or just be offered as one of our electives.

I feel like Spanish was a waste of time for me because I still do not know anything. I agree with the others when they say it is hard for us to learn another language at this age.

I agree I do not know any Spanish either and this is my fifth year taking it including high school. The funny thing is that most of the people that come here from Mexico and South America do not speak the Spanish that we are taught anyway. I think it should not be required to take.

I also think that the Sociology department should also help us to format a plan for classes and a quick way to graduation. If I had a plan like that then I would not have taken so long to graduate.

I agree with ***** that the 4800 classes are helpful. Not only are they interesting, but I really feel as if I've learned a lot. I took Urban Issues last semester and I am in Domestic Violence now. I don't know how many times, I started discussion at home with my roommate and boyfriend about things I've learned.

I agree with ***** about the two classes outside our

major. The classes can be overwhelming. I think that the advisors should try to at least have a list of classes you can take without having to take a prerequisite class.

I also agree with ***** that research methods should be taken at the beginning. I think that the info that you get out of that class is really helpful in other classes such as theory. You also have to write papers throughout the whole program so it would be more helpful to take it in the beginning. Also, it is true that taking the 4800 classes are more beneficial in the end because that is the way that I took them and I had no problems with keeping up the assignments.

Since I had already taken a upper level philosophy class at Georgia Southern, I used this to satisfy this requirement. I also took Ethics of Health Care which was an upper-level philosophy course. I know nothing about philosophy so I really didn't learn much.

The following comments pertains to student's perceptions of job prospects after graduation

Date: Wed, 05 Oct 2005 16:24:07 -0400
From: Chet Ballard <cballard@valdosta.edu>
Subject: capstone data
X-Sender: cballard@mail.valdosta.edu
To: mbrooks@valdosta.edu, mcapece@valdosta.edu, chand@valdosta.edu, jhasling@valdosta.edu, klowney@valdosta.edu, macheski@valdosta.edu, tmeyers@valdosta.edu
X-Mailer: QUALCOMM Windows Eudora Version 6.1.2.0

I share with you my summary of an electronic discussion in capstone class that asked students to report on the job situation of any sociology graduates they know personally. See the interesting data below.

Capstoners, there were some interesting postings in this week's discussion about sociology majors who have the degree and have entered the job market or graduate school. For the record, and to put a little damper on Kelly's posting about the discussion being a bit depressing, here are the totals by category of posting:

Graduates with good jobs or jobs they like - 18
Graduates with lousy jobs or no jobs - 6
Graduates in graduate school - 7

So the overall picture that emerges from the data you provided in your posts is that close to 85% of the graduates you know with a sociology degree are in good jobs or in graduate school (on the way to good jobs), while about 15% are jobless or working in a bad job.

After several bad budget years in the state of Georgia and a very slow national economy, that isn't so bad in my judgement. Yes, DFCS shows up as a frequently mentioned employer for our graduates, but if you talk to your classmates and see how many plan to work to improve the lives of families or children, it is no surprise that DFCS is the main employer. In our society, we expect government to step in when nobody else will to intervene in the lives of families and protect children and DFCS is that government agency. And don't forget that many move into very exciting, very important jobs at DFCS such as CPS workers.

Interesting point was made about Atlanta and the big city offering opportunities for jobs. On the one hand, many of you look to Atlanta for jobs while as one student said, in Atlanta you compete with students from Georgia Tech, Spelman, Inner Perimeter, Atlanta U, Morris Brown, Kennesaw, and others.

Just look at the possibilities sociology has proven to yield for new graduates: GA Department of Labor, DFCS, Child Protective Service Worker (DFCS and Contact), Probation Officer, Program Evaluator, Youth Counselor, GA Legal Aid Society, Counseling Services, Social Services Delivery Worker, hospital social services, and Private Children's Residential Center Worker. Add in graduate training in sociology, social work, law, and marriage and family therapy. And this is just a sampling from the people you know.

Teaching showed up several times and I believe we will have a slide show on this topic, how to become a teacher with a sociology degree, in the weeks ahead.

Good discussion.
CB

Another example of what majors are planning to do after graduation

Date: Tue, 20 Jun 2006 17:38:38 -0400
From: Chet Ballard <cballard@valdosta.edu>
Subject: what the Capstoners are planning after graduation
X-Sender: cballard@mail.valdosta.edu
To: mbrooks@valdosta.edu, mcapece@valdosta.edu, chand@valdosta.edu, jhasling@valdosta.edu, klowney@valdosta.edu, macheski@valdosta.edu, tmeyers@valdosta.edu
X-Mailer: QUALCOMM Windows Eudora Version 6.1.2.0

Capstone class has eleven students in summer session. As they look at what to do after graduation, here are the plans (of course subject to all kinds of change).

6 have graduate school plans, most at a later date

- 1 is looking at MFTH
- 3 might choose SOCI
- 2 are looking into SWK

- 1 wants to take a year off then apply to ph.d. sociology programs
- 3 have jobs waiting or real job possibilities after graduation
- 1 might enter teaching (special education)
- 3 will take a break for some time before getting on to the next chapter in their lives

Chet

Another example of what students are planning to do after graduation

Date: Sat, 03 Feb 2007 17:15:56 -0500
From: Chet Ballard <cballard@valdosta.edu>
Subject: Capstone Students' Initial Plans
X-Sender: cballard@mail.valdosta.edu
To: mbrooks@valdosta.edu, mcapece@valdosta.edu, chand@valdosta.edu, jhasling@valdosta.edu, klowney@valdosta.edu, macheski@valdosta.edu, tmeyers@valdosta.edu, idenizma@valdosta.edu, afanderson@valdosta.edu
X-Mailer: QUALCOMM Windows Eudora Version 6.1.2.0

Colleagues,

I share with you a first look at what the current Capstone class members plan to do after completing the undergraduate degree.

- 9 will work after graduation (some will seek graduate degrees down the road)
- 8 have already applied or will be applying for admission to graduate programs
 - 2 are thinking ms sociology at VSU
 - 1 anthropology at FSU
 - 1 law school
 - 1 archaeology at TAMU
 - 1 MFTH at VSU
 - 1 Special Ed at VSU
 - 1 UT-Knoxville in ANTH

4 are not decided on work, school, or both

2 will pursue special program opportunity in environmental leadership and Christian relief work.

I will provide Kathe with the names of those Capstone students looking at VSU and those who have not decided for recruitment possibility.

Chet