

**Assessment Findings and Curricular Improvements**  
**Department of Social Work**  
**Undergraduate Program**

**Assessment Measures**

Social Work uses the following measures to assess departmental learning outcomes:

- Senior theses
- Grades, course evaluations, and enrollment totals for capstone seminars (SSS 490)
- Area Concentration Achievement Test
- Grades, course evaluations, and enrollment totals for field seminar courses (SSS 465 and SSS 466)
- Student Perception surveys (Field Student Self-Assessment, National Survey of Student Engagement)
- Field Educator Perception surveys (Field Educator Assessment, Student Field Evaluation)
- Focus Group data

**Assessment Findings**

**Senior Thesis Discussion:**

All social work majors must fulfill the CUA Senior Comprehensive Assessment requirement, which they accomplish through completion of a “Senior Thesis” in SSS 490: *Coordinating Seminar*. This multi-faceted, cumulative assignment allows students to demonstrate their critical thinking skills, integration of learning across the liberal arts and social work curriculums, and ability to meet the requirements of a scholarly paper (e.g., extensive literature search; minimum of 12 cited sources; clear, well-organized writing; adherence to formal APA referencing style) (see Appendix D for a copy of this assignment).

The Senior Thesis includes ten sections that facilitate assessment of student attainment of 11 of the 14 Baccalaureate Program Objectives. Each section of the Senior Thesis serves as an outcome measure for at least one program objective.

The Senior Thesis is graded by the Baccalaureate Program Chair as Pass, Pass with Honors, or Fail. In the event that the student fails, a second reader is assigned from among the faculty who teach in the undergraduate social work program. If the student fails on the first attempt, she or he has the opportunity to resubmit the Senior Thesis, with modifications, after a waiting period of 60 days. As an assessment mechanism, the Senior Thesis provides useful feedback regarding students’ conceptual and analytical abilities related to targeted program objectives.

Evaluative data from the Senior Thesis assignment is available for the past eight academic years (see Table 1). This assignment has been modified and refined over the years and was completed by students during different semesters at various points in this time period. Specifically, students completed their Senior Thesis during the fall semester for the academic years of 2003-2004, 2004-2005, and 2005-2006, and during the spring semester during 2000-2001, 2001-2002, 2002-

2003, 2006-2007, and 2007-2008. In all years, the overall goal was to have 100% of the students receive passing grades on this key assignment and indicator of targeted program objectives.

**Table 1**

*Percentages of Baccalaureate Students Passing the Senior Thesis*

Academic Year	Percentage Failing		Percentage Passing	Percentage Passing with Honors
	Time 1	Time 2		
2007-2008	0	0	64%, <i>n</i> = 09	36%, <i>n</i> = 05
2006-2007	0	0	33%, <i>n</i> = 02	66%, <i>n</i> = 04
2005-2006	1 <sup>a</sup>	NA	38%, <i>n</i> = 03	55%, <i>n</i> = 05
2004-2005	1	0	66%, <i>n</i> = 06 <sup>b</sup>	33%, <i>n</i> = 03
2003-2004	0	0	100%, <i>n</i> = 10	0
2002-2003	0	0	42%, <i>n</i> = 08	58%, <i>n</i> = 11
2001-2002	0	0	100%, <i>n</i> = 06	0
2000-2001	0	0	100%, <i>n</i> = 09	0

<sup>a</sup> Student did not resubmit the Senior Thesis and was terminated from the program.  
<sup>b</sup> Includes the student who failed on the first submission but passed on the second submission

As indicated in Table 52, **students successfully met the benchmark in all years except 2005-2006**. In 2004-2005, one student did not pass in the areas of mezzo practice and policy application, but did pass all areas on the second attempt. Thus, the final pass rate for that year was 100%. In 2005-2006, one student did not submit a completed thesis and, therefore, was terminated from the program. The Baccalaureate Program Committee viewed this not as a failure of the program per se, but as part of the gate-keeping function of social work education. However, both of these failures were taken into consideration for program improvement, to be discussed subsequently. Overall, this data supports that the social work program is achieving its objectives.

**Senior Seminar (SSS 490) Discussion (Attachment 1):**

Social Work also analyzed course grade, evaluation, and enrollment data for SSS 490, Coordinating Seminar, for a five-year period from Fall 2003 through Spring 2007 (see Attachment 1). From this data, it is evident that the vast majority of students are doing exceptionally well in this capstone course. From Fall 2003 to Spring 2007, 75% of students received a grade of A or A-, 8% received a grade of B+, B, or B-, and 11% received a grade of C+, C, or C-. Over these years, only 2 students have failed the course: one in Fall 2004 and one in Fall 2006; these 2 failures are in conjunction with the 2 students mentioned in the previous discussion as not passing the thesis. Course evaluation results are also particularly strong for this course, for both the instructor and the course, with one exception in the Fall 2004, which appears to be an aberration. For that particular year, there was a change in faculty member teaching the course; evaluation data indicates that scores improved with the assignment of a new faculty member to teach that course the following year. Overall, this data supports that the social work program is achieving its objectives.

## Area Concentration Achievement Test Discussion

All Baccalaureate students at NCSSS take the *Area Concentration Achievement Test (ACAT)* during the spring semester of their senior year. The ACAT was developed by the Program for Area Concentration Achievement Testing (PACAT) as an assessment tool for measuring student integration of the content components of particular disciplinary majors. As such, it provides useful information to educational programs concerning curricular strengths and weaknesses.

NCSSS purchases the Social Work Curriculum C version of this instrument to give as a paper and pencil test to students enrolled in SSS 466: *Undergraduate Concurrent Field Education II*. Students are given 120 minutes to complete the instrument, which includes assessment of knowledge in four curriculum areas: human behavior and the social environment, social work practice, social welfare policy and services, and research methods. Thus, the ACAT allows additional assessment of 6 of the 14 Baccalaureate Program Objectives.

The ACAT is scored by PACAT and results are sent to NCSSS. Using the standard score (500,  $SD = 100$ ), programs can compare their students' performance to data from a 5-year national sample of other social work majors. NCSSS receives feedback concerning how each individual student performed and how School scores compare to the national norm. ACAT scores are not used in determining individual student grades for any courses, nor are they used as a graduation requirement. ACAT scores are used only for the purposes of assessment of program outcomes and continuous program improvement planning. This assessment mechanism is most useful for gaining information regarding students' overall comprehension and integration of targeted curricular areas and related program objectives.

Scores for NCSSS Baccalaureate students on this assessment tool are available for the past seven years (please see Table 2). Data include mean and range scores for the four curricular areas tested, plus an overall performance score. NCSSS Program Faculty had set the benchmark for this outcome measure as having each Baccalaureate class, as a whole, meet or exceed the national mean score of 500 ( $SD = 100$ ) in all areas. Findings reveal that this goal was generally met in all areas for all years; in fact, group means were generally at least 1 standard deviation higher than the national average.

In terms of areas of particular strength, ACAT data show that *the human behavior and the social environment* content area received top scores from 2002-2005, while the highest scores were in *social work practice* in 2006 and *research methods* in 2007 and 2008. We speculate that adding a research project to the senior year had a positive impact on the ACAT research scores in 2007 and 2008; we will continue to collect data to see if this conclusion is supported.

ACAT data is also useful in revealing the curriculum areas that need attention. The program did not meet all benchmarks in 2007 and 2008. In 2007, the group mean for the Social Welfare Policy and Services was 462.67, falling at .5 standard deviation below the national average. And, in 2008, group means for Human Behavior and the Social Environment, Social Welfare Policy and Services, and the total fell below 500. Furthermore, in 2002, 2007, and 2008, the lowest scoring area was *social welfare policy and services*. From 2003 to 2005, the lowest was

**Table 2***Baccalaureate Student ACAT Scores: 2002 to 2008*

<b>Year</b>	<b>Curricular Area</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>Min</b>	<b>Max</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>Below Benchmark</b>	<b>Above Benchmark</b>
2002	Human Beh./Social Env.	5	532	742	648.40		X
	Social Work Practice	5	529	643	586.60		X
	Social Wel. Policy/Serv.	5	455	715	579.20		X
	Research Methods	5	468	733	592.40		X
	Overall Performance	5	551	683	630.20		X
2003	Human Beh./Social Env.	19	335	764	635.53		X
	Social Work Practice	19	322	685	551.37		X
	Social Wel. Policy/Serv.	19	311	723	559.79		X
	Research Methods	19	374	763	570.26		X
	Overall Performance	19	288	726	599.95		X
2004	Human Beh./Social Env.	10	272	736	576.70		X
	Social Work Practice	10	464	641	554.70		X
	Social Wel. Policy/Serv.	10	379	703	562.50		X
	Research Methods	10	413	704	561.20		X
	Overall Performance	10	396	703	580.60		X
2005	Human Beh./Social Env.	8	452	724	642.75		X
	Social Work Practice	8	350	656	549.50		X
	Social Wel. Policy/Serv.	8	477	717	614.25		X
	Research Methods	8	561	821	638.25		X
	Overall Performance	8	494	773	640.87		X
2006	Human Beh./Social Env.	5	388	681	561.80		X
	Social Work Practice	5	516	675	588.60		X
	Social Wel. Policy/Serv.	5	514	668	575.80		X
	Research Methods	5	371	705	587.80		X
	Overall Performance	5	454	700	597.20		X
2007	Human Beh./Social Env.	6	476	599	552.83		X
	Social Work Practice	6	434	630	553.00		X
	Social Wel. Policy/Serv.	6	342	531	462.67	X	
	Research Methods	6	528	606	570.50		X
	Overall Performance	6	507	607	543.00		X
2008	Human Beh./Social Env.	15	363	580	490.33	X	
	Social Work Practice	15	362	672	516.33		X
	Social Wel. Policy/Serv.	15	291	561	440.93	X	
	Research Methods	15	426	711	538.20		X
	Overall Performance	15	367	632	495.20	X	

*social work practice*; and in 2006, the lowest was *human behavior and the social environment*. Curriculum changes and faculty assignments were made that have resulted in improvements in the areas of practice. In regard to human behavior, changes had been made to the curriculum and to the faculty teaching in the sequence that resulted in improvements over the last years up until this year; we speculate that changes in faculty teaching in this sequence have resulted in the recent decline.

In comparing various Baccalaureate class performances based on overall mean scores, the 2002 class emerged as the strongest ( $M = 630.20$ ) and the 2008 class as the weakest ( $M = 495.20$ ). It is possible that the 2008 class's lower performance may be an effect of moving the Senior Thesis assignment to the Spring semester, resulting in students taking the ACAT while completing the research project and thesis. However, as this was also the case for the 2002 and 2007 classes, more data are needed to determine the relationship among these factors.

Overall, the ACAT data supports that we are meeting our program objectives, and provides us with data on areas that require continued attention.

### **Baccalaureate Student Field Evaluation Discussion**

All seniors are evaluated by their agency Field Educators at the end of the spring semester after completing 480 hours of field education. This assessment is conducted using a comprehensive "Student Field Evaluation" form consisting of 47 items, which includes five different areas (*Student Use of Self, Social Work Processes, Understanding of the Agency, Supervisory Process, and Professional Behavior*). Field students and Field Educators also have the opportunity to include additional items to address skills unique to the student in a sixth area (*Professional Skills*). The first five areas include a total of 16 items that are identified as "threshold items" – or items that are considered as essential for successful completion of the field placement and eventual social work practice. This assessment mechanism provides targeted information concerning how students demonstrate attainment of program objectives in a field placement setting. As such, this evaluative process contributes greatly to the program's understanding of student competencies, especially as they relate to the real world of social work practice.

All items are scored using a 10-point rating system (1-2 = *Unsatisfactory, performance is well below expectations*; 3-4 = *Fair, performance is below expectations*; 5-6 = *Satisfactory, performance meets expectations*; 7-8 = *Very good, performance exceeds expectations*; 9-10 = *Outstanding, performance far exceeds expectations*). Beyond quantitative ratings, Field Educators are also asked to provide narratives concerning areas of strength and areas of educational gaps or difficulties; particularly, specific feedback is required regarding any area receiving a score of less than 5. Different areas of the Student Field Evaluation form allow assessment of various aspects of 12 of the 14 Baccalaureate Program Objectives.

Data from the Baccalaureate Student Field Evaluation form have been compiled for the past eight years. NCSSS program faculty have set the benchmark for acceptable student performance as receiving a rating of 5 or more on each of the 16 threshold items included in the evaluation form. Table 3 shows the percentages of students who passed, withdrew, or failed field for academic years from 2000-2001 to 2007-2008. **All of the students reached the targeted benchmark for five of the past seven years, but one student failed in each of the 2005-2006,**

**2006-2007, and 2007-2008 academic years.** The Baccalaureate Program considers these outcomes to be reflective of the professional gate-keeping responsibility of social work education. An additional student withdrew from field in 2005-2006 and in 2007-2008. Overall, this data supports that the program is meeting its objectives.

**Table 3**

*Baccalaureate Student Outcomes on the Student Field Evaluation Threshold Items*

<b>Academic Year</b>	<b>Percentage Passing</b>	<b>Percentage Withdrawing</b>	<b>Percentage Failing</b>
2007-2008	90%, n=17	5%, n=1	5%, n=1
2006-2007	86%, n = 06	0	14%, n = 01
2005-2006	84%, n = 10	8%, n = 01	8%, n = 01
2004-2005	100%, n = 10	0	0
2003-2004	100%, n = 10	0	0
2002-2003	100%, n = 21	0	0
2001-2002	100%, n = 08	0	0
2000-2001	100%, n = 10	0	0

**Field Seminar Discussion (Attachments 2 and 3)**

Social Work also analyzed course grade, evaluation, and enrollment data from the two field seminar courses, SSS 465 and 466, for a five-year period from Fall 2003 through Fall 2007 (please see attachments 2 and 3). **From this data, it is evident that students are doing exceptionally well in the field component of the social work curriculum.** Over the years, the distribution of grades reflects that students are doing well in the two field seminar courses, with the vast majority receiving high grades. There are only 2 students who received an F during this time frame in SSS 465, and no students who failed SSS 466. If a student does not pass the field seminar in the fall, she or he will not be enrolled in the spring semester. One student in SSS 465 and 2 students in SSS 466 received grades in the C range during this time; while not failing, a C in a field course would prevent the student from being eligible for Advanced Standing at a social work program. Again, the program does not view this as a failure to meet objectives but as an implementation of the gate-keeping function that is imperative in schools of social work. Likewise, the average grade for SSS 465 tends to be higher than the average grade for SSS 466, which reflects the gate-keeping function. The course evaluations also yield data that reflect positively on the students experiences in these courses, with both the course and instructor receiving high ratings. Overall, this data supports that the program is meeting its objectives.

**National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE) Discussion (Attachment #)**

Social Work also utilizes the NSSE data to evaluate achievement of desired outcomes. This data allows us to look at our performance in the area of general education compared to other students at CUA and to other students at peer institutions. Additionally, as some of the questions coincide with program level objectives, this survey also helps to triangulate data regarding these objectives.

**Data from the 2007 NSSE indicate that social work majors are performing well compared to their CUA and Carnegie peers.** The means for social work students are significantly above the means for their CUA peers and their Carnegie Peers in regard to applying theory or concepts to practical problems or in new situations: thinking critically and analytically: solving complex real-world problems: having serious conversations with students of a different race or ethnicity: having serious conversations with students who are different in terms of religious beliefs, political opinions, or personal values; and understanding people of other racial and ethnic backgrounds. The mean for social work students is below their CUA and Carnegie peers on only one item: analyzing quantitative problems, but this difference is not significant. This relatively weaker performance is not surprising to us as quantitative skills are often an area in which social work students do not feel quite as confident. Students also rated themselves low in the area of research for the self-assessment survey on our program objectives as discussed below. However, in contrast to this data, our ACAT data demonstrates that our students are increasingly performing well in the area of research.

### **Baccalaureate Field Student Self-Assessment and Field Educator Assessment Forms**

Implemented during 2006-2007, the “Field Student Self-Assessment” and “Field Educator Assessment” forms were new additions to the continuous improvement process at NCSSS, designed to allow targeted evaluation of all program objectives from two different perspectives: students in the senior year and Field Educators. The Field Student Self-Assessment form asks students enrolled in senior field placements to evaluate themselves on each of the 14 Baccalaureate Program Objectives. Students were instructed to assess their own abilities at this point in their education using a 5-point response format (1 = *unsatisfactory*; 2 = *less than adequate*; 3 = *adequate*; 4 = *more than adequate*; and 5 = *excellent*). A corresponding rating scale, the Field Educator Assessment form, was distributed to Field Educators, who were asked to rate their field student’s performance on each of the 14 program objectives. A rating of 3, or *adequate*, was set as the benchmark for all ratings by both students and Field Educators (see Appendix D for copies of these two assessment forms.) It should be noted that respondents were informed that this information would be used to provide feedback about the *program as a whole*; not as evaluation of any individual student’s performance. Therefore, both students and Field Educators were instructed to not place students’ or Field Educators’ names on the instrument.

Data were collected using these surveys during the Spring 2007 semester. Assessment forms were administered to seniors in their Field Seminars. Students were given a copy of the Field Educator Assessment form to take to their Agency Field Educator, with a letter explaining the form, and a stamped, self-addressed return envelope. A follow-up email from the Director of Field Education encouraged Agency Field Educators to complete and mail back their forms. Six seniors and five Field Educators provided ratings on these outcome measures, (100% and 83% participation rate, respectively).

The administration process was revised for the Spring 2008 semester. Instead of using paper forms, Survey Monkey was utilized to administer the survey on line. Unfortunately, the response rate suffered significantly. Eleven seniors responded to the survey. Sufficient responses were received to allow for analysis of the student self-report data, but not for the field instructors. The administration process will be revised again for Spring 2009 to try to improve participation rates.

**Table 4*****Field Student Self-Assessment and Field Educator Assessment Means for 2007 & 2008***

<b>Baccalaureate Objectives</b>	<b>Field Student Self-Assessment 07</b>	<b>Field Educator Assessment 07</b>	<b>Field Student Self-Assessment 08</b>
1. Understand the history of professional social work, including past traditions and current issues.	4.00 (.63)	3.80 (.45)	4.00 (.89)
2. Apply critical thinking skills to sw practice.	4.33 (.82)	4.60 (.55)	4.18 (.87)
3. Know the NASW Code of Ethics and apply social work values and ethics to social work practice within all work environments.	3.83 (.98)	4.20 (.45)	4.09 (.83)
4. Engage in respectful, knowledgeable, skillful, & nondiscriminatory practice with particular attention to people who may have been discriminated against on the basis of age, class, color, culture, disability, national origin, ethnicity, race, religion, family structure, marital status, sex, and sexual orientation.	4.33 (1.21)	4.80 (.45)	4.45 (.69)
5. Develop knowledge and skills necessary for generalist practice with systems of all sizes, including individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities.	4.33 (.82)	4.20 (.45)	4.36 (1.12)
6. Apply a theoretical approach supported by empirical evidence to the helping process including relationship building, assessment, planning, and intervention with client systems of all sizes, with special attention to populations-at-risk.	3.67 (.82)	4.00 (1.00)	4.00 (1.00)
7. Develop the knowledge and skills necessary for professional practice with diverse religious and spiritual client populations.	2.83 (1.33)	4/25 (.50)	4.27 (.91)
8. Take personal responsibility for professional development through supervision and consultation.	4.67 (.52)	4.80 (.45)	4.27 (.91)
9. Promote social and economic justice.	4.33 (.52)	3.80 (.84)	4.45 (.82)
10. Prepare social work practitioners to critically analyze existing social policy, including global, federal, state, local, and agency polices and programs, in the context of American social welfare history and contemporary society.	4.17 (.75)	4.00 (.00)	3.91 (.94)
11. Apply knowledge of bio-psycho-social-spiritual development and theoretical frameworks of human behavior to an understanding of individuals, families, groups, and organizations across the life span using a person-in-environment approach.	4.50 (.55)	4.20 (.45)	4.36 (.67)
12. Participate in scientific inquiry through the development of research knowledge & skills to evaluate research studies, apply research findings to practice, and evaluate personal practice.	3.00 (.63)	4.00 (.00)	3.36 (.92)
13. Function within the structure of organizations and service delivery systems and seek necessary organizational change.	4.00 (.63)	4.00 (.82)	3.91 (1.04)
14. Learn to use communication skills differentially across client populations, colleagues, and communities to affect change and to improve service delivery to agency clients.	3.67 (.82)	4.50 (.58)	4.09 (.83)



Review of these data for 2007 indicates that both students and Field Educators generally report **attainment of expected competencies**. Student self-ratings showed means of greater than the benchmark (3 or “adequate”) for 13 of the 14 program objectives in 2007, with only objective #7 (*Develops knowledge and skills for practice with diverse religious and spiritual client populations*) receiving a lower mean rating of 2.83. Students in 2007 also rated themselves low in regards to research, which is consistent with their self-rating of quantitative skills on the 2007 NSSE. Field Educators’ ratings of student competencies reached the benchmark for all program objectives. It should be noted that for 9 of the 14 program objectives, Field Educators rated students higher than students rated themselves.

Review of these data for 2008 indicates that all student self ratings were above the benchmark. The highest rated objectives were in the areas of diversity and promoting social and economic justice, followed by human behavior and the social environment and practice. The lowest rated objective was research. We speculate that the students were harder on themselves in this area as working on the research project helped them to learn what they did not know.

### **Senior Focus Group Interview Discussion**

To augment quantitative findings from the outcome measures described above, qualitative information from focus group interviews are also utilized for program assessment purposes. Since the 2004-2005 academic year, the Baccalaureate Program Chair has conducted focus group interviews with members of the senior class near the end of the spring semester. Students are asked to reflect upon their experiences as social work majors and to share specific areas of strength and identify areas that need improvement. They are also asked some specific, targeted questions depending upon issues that have surfaced during the course of the year or issues raised by the Baccalaureate Program Committee or the Dean. Data from these focus groups are shared with the Baccalaureate Program Committee during the last meeting of the year or the first meeting of the next academic year. Data are incorporated into ongoing program planning and continuous improvement efforts.

Student feedback from “Senior Focus Group Interviews” is available for the past three years. The following summaries identify major themes that emerged from these interviews by academic year. Although program objectives are not directly addressed, some student observations shed light on areas of the Baccalaureate program and its curriculum that may impact student achievement of these objectives. Responses to this feedback generally resulted in some type of curriculum modification. Further discussion of how this information informed program development is included in the section on use of assessment findings.

#### **2004-2005 Academic Year:**

- Students were not satisfied with the assignment used for the Senior Thesis as they did not feel that it reflected integrated learning across the curriculum.
- Students also reported variation in satisfaction with their first social work practice course during their junior year. Generally, they liked the course itself, but there was varying levels of satisfaction with the field placement component of this course.

- Students were generally favorable about a proposal to move the social work major to NCSSS, but they had questions regarding: 1) designation of the name of the degree; b) possible impact on Commencement; and 3) possible impact on the opportunity to pursue a double major.

#### **2005-2006 Academic Year:**

- Overall, students articulated that they felt very prepared for the next phase of their lives, which included advanced standing at NCSSS, advanced standing at another graduate school, employment, or participation in service activities.
- Students voiced dissatisfaction with the content covered in SSS 453: *Social Work Practice II*.
- Students also noted weaknesses in the linkages between the practice course sequence and the field sequence. The students clearly articulated that they would have liked to have seen more alignment between the syllabi for the courses and more coordination of in-class discussions and assignments.
- Students in this cohort also held favorable views concerning the proposal to move the social work major to NCSSS, but they voiced the same questions as their peers did the year before.

#### **2006-2007 Academic Year:**

- Students indicated that they were satisfied with the program. They particularly liked the way the Senior Thesis assignment was designed and the way the class was structured to give them individualized attention on their topics.
- Students also stated that they were very pleased with the practice course sequence and felt that they were well prepared. They particularly liked being included with the MSW students in the Coverdale project as part of SSS 454: *Social Work Practice III*.
- Students reported that the curriculum content area of human behavior and the social environment could be better integrated into SSS 453: *Social Work Practice II* as they felt that a “refresher” class in human behavior might have been helpful in their attempts to apply theory since it had been two years since they had received that content.
- The participants of this focus group expressed an interest in seeing the field seminar class structured a bit differently. While they liked the process elements of the class, they indicated that they would like to see the course include more specific content. Similar to the feedback from the previous year, they felt that the link between the practice courses and the field seminars should be clearer to both avoid redundancy and to increase development of knowledge and skill.
- Students also expressed concern over the implementation of the social welfare policy and services course sequence. They discussed their reactions to having two different instructors teaching in this sequence, noting strengths and weaknesses in the curriculum.

- Students were also very favorable regarding the question of moving the social work major to NCSSS. They particularly liked the possibility of having the option to stay with the School of Arts and Sciences or to move to NCSSS. They felt that most would want to move to NCSSS, but that having the option would allow for choice depending on individual situations.

### **2007-2008 Academic Year:**

- Students reported that they liked the structure of the thesis assignment. They liked the level of detail included in the assignment and the pacing of the assignment over the course of the semester. They particularly liked the two sessions in the library.
- Students would like to see the research project restructured. They would like for it to be better integrated into the field seminar. They would like it to be renamed as “practice evaluation” rather than “research project.” They would like some more guidance; for example, to know that it was acceptable to present a project that did not have the anticipated outcome or that was difficult to implement as planned.
- Students reported that they would like to see increased integration and review of human behavior into the fall of the senior year.
- Students were favorable regarding moving the social work major to NCSSS.

### **Curricular Improvements**

Assessment mechanisms for the Baccalaureate Program include 5 quantitative measures (*Field Student Self-Assessment Form, Field Educator Assessment Form, Student Field Educator Form, Senior Thesis*, and scores on the *ACAT*). All of these measures constitute either direct or indirect assessment of the Baccalaureate Program Objectives. Two of these measures provide general information regarding the overall percentages of students who successfully met the targeted benchmark. Results show consistently high percentages of students achieving the targeted benchmarks in terms of field performance (Student Field Educator Form) and comprehensive understanding of curricular content (Senior Thesis) (refer to Tables 50 and 52). The remaining three measures allow us to pinpoint areas of strength and areas needing improvement. Table 91 provides an overview of each objective by these three outcome measures, allowing identification of patterns across assessment tools.

Several themes are apparent from this overview of quantitative assessment findings:

### **Areas of Baccalaureate Program Strengths**

- As the highest rated area by both students and Field Educators in 2007, students have apparently gained competence in *taking responsibility for their own professional development through supervision and consultation*. This speaks most directly to their field placement experience, but also to their learning in SSS 490: *Coordinating Seminar*, where they regularly consult with the instructor to complete the Senior Thesis assignment.

- The ability to *engage in respectful, knowledgeable, skillful, and nondiscriminatory practice with diverse groups* is also among the highest rated student competencies by both students and Field Educators in 2007 and by students in 2008, reflecting the program's commitment to these areas evident in the discrete Diversity course and as infused content in other courses.
- *Critical thinking skills* also emerge as a strength on self perception surveys completed in 2007 and 2008. This skill set is emphasized across the liberal arts and social work curriculums and is explicitly addressed in the Senior Thesis, as well as assignments in other courses.
- High student ratings and relatively high ACAT scores suggest strong student competencies in the area of *generalist practice*, reflecting previous efforts to strengthen practice courses and more explicitly link practice courses to the field seminar.
- Although both students did not rank research or quantitative skills as high on self perception surveys in 2007 or 2008, this area emerged as the highest on the 2007 and 2008 ACAT. One possible explanation for this discrepancy is due to the recent integration of a research project as one of the assignments in SSS 455 & SSS 465: *Undergraduate Concurrent Field Education I & II*. Although challenging for students, this hands-on research project allowed them to increase their skills, while deepening their understanding of the complexities of the research process. In other words, they may have "learned what they didn't know" simply by engaging in the myriad of tasks involved in any research process and thus rated themselves more harshly than in other areas, even though their ACAT scores were well-above the national average.

### **Areas Targeted for Improvement**

- In 2007, the only objective receiving ratings beneath the benchmark of "adequate" was student perception of *developing the knowledge and skills necessary for professional practice with diverse religious and spiritual client populations*. This finding could be indicative of the amount of contemplation that students put into thinking about competent practice in this area. For some CUA students, ensuring that they remain connected to their own beliefs and values while maintaining respect and an affirming attitude toward clients' diverse religious or spiritual traditions is an area in which they devote significant self-reflection. Thus, it is possible that the relatively low score may be the result of students' judging themselves stringently on this objective. It is important to note that Field Educators' ratings on this objective was much higher, indicating that they did not view this area as a weakness. It is also important to note that with increased emphasis to this objective in the Practice sequence and the Coordinating seminar, the mean for this item increased to 4.27 in 2008. Data will continue to be collected to monitor this objective.
- Although revealing ratings above the benchmark of "adequate", Field Educators rated the objective on *understanding of the history of social work, including past traditions and current issues* as their lowest area in 2007. It is possible this finding is related to the fact

that this content is most directly addressed in SSS 101: *Introduction to Social Work*, which students take during their first semester as social work majors; they may not be reflecting this knowledge in their last semester while in field placement. Efforts were made to increase the focus on the history of the profession in the senior year during the 2007-2008 academic year.

- Student performance on the *social welfare policy and services* section of the ACAT did not reach the benchmark of the national average for 2006-2007 nor for 2007-2008, and thus, emerges as an area for concern. This result may reflect changes in faculty instructing this content area. We plan to continue to monitor the data in this area to determine if we need to revise the curriculum in this content area.
- Data on *promoting social and economic justice* show a mixed picture, with students ranking it among their top three and Field Educators as one of their two lowest in 2007. The reasons for this are not clear, but will be further explored. We speculate that the students are learning about macro practice and becoming enthusiastic about it in the spring semester; it is also a key section of the thesis, so their perception may be that they are integrating this content into their practice more than they are.
- Although the objective on *developing knowledge and skills necessary for generalist practice* emerged as a strength in self perception data in 2007 and 2008 and shows a relatively high ACAT score, we have had students who have not passed the field component of the program in the last 2 years. Feedback from the Senior Focus Group Interviews also suggests a need to strengthen the linkages between content in the practice courses and field placement experiences. We formed a sub-committee to work on linking these courses for the 2007-2008 academic year, and this sub-committee will review the data to suggest improvements for the 2008-2009 academic year.

Regardless of the reasons underlying particular assessment findings, these five areas have been identified as areas for improvement based on both quantitative and qualitative data from 2006-2007. A similar process of program response to identified concerns has occurred every academic year.

**Table 5*****Baccalaureate Program Responses for Continuous Improvement: 2006-2007***

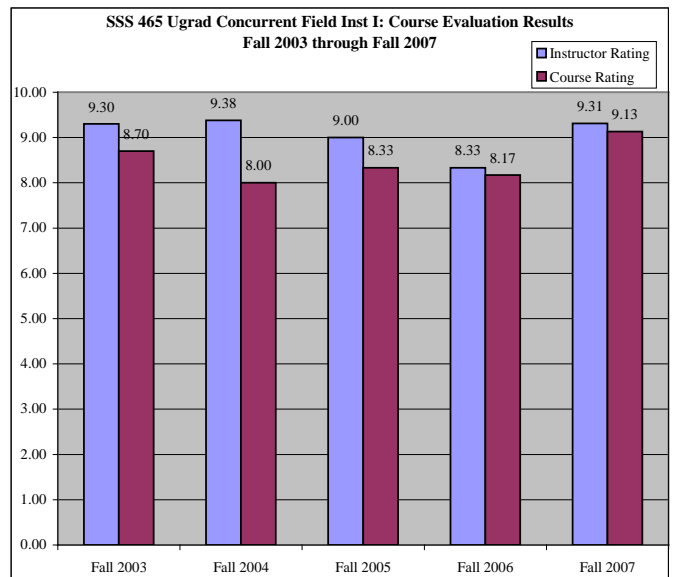
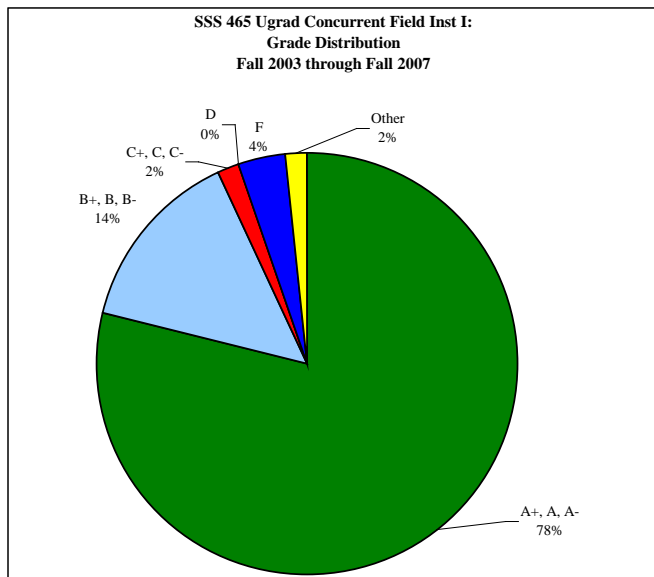
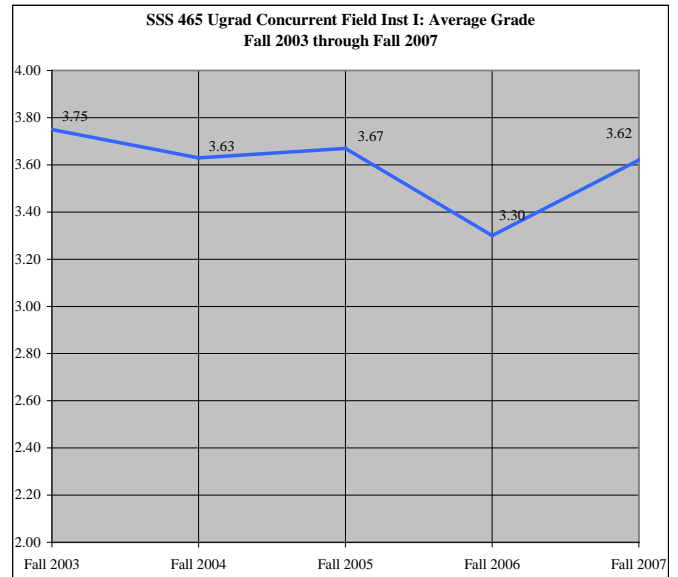
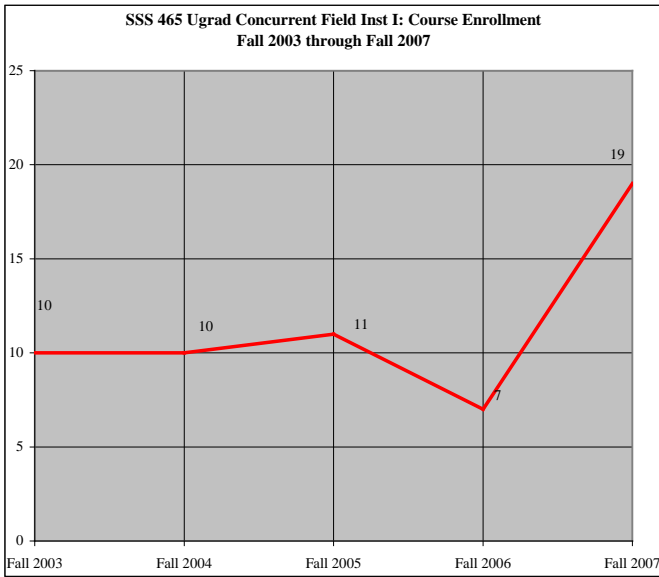
<b>Area for Improvement</b>	<b>Baccalaureate Program Response</b>	<b>Timeline</b>
Develop the knowledge and skills necessary for professional practice with diverse religious and spiritual client populations (Obj. 7)	More specific content on religious/spiritual diversity was added to SSS 326 and a directed process recording assignment was added to SSS 465 to address developing skills in this area. Data will be collected in Spring 2008 to determine the impact of these revisions.	2007-2008
Understand the history of social work, including past traditions and current issues (Obj. 1)	A proposal will be presented to the Baccalaureate Committee regarding better integration of this content into SSS 490 and the practice sequence (SSS 352, 453, 454). Data will be collected in Spring 2008 to determine impact of changes in syllabi and course focus.	2007-2008
Prepare social work practitioners to critically analyze existing social policy, including global, federal, state, local, and agency policies and programs, in the context of American social welfare history and contemporary society (Obj. 10)	This content area was revised over the 2006-2007 year. Data will be collected in Spring 2008 to determine if the changes have made a positive impact.	2007-2008  (table continues)
Promote social and economic justice (Obj. 9)	Syllabus for SSS 326 was revised during Spring 2007. Syllabi for SSS 465 and SSS 466 were revised over the summer of 2007. The new field seminar syllabi will be implemented in Fall 2007 and Spring 2008. Data will be collected in Spring 2008 to determine if revisions produce a positive change.	2007-2008
Develop knowledge and skills necessary for generalist practice with systems of all sizes, including individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities (Obj. 5).	Syllabi for SSS 453 and SSS 454 were revised in response to the student who did not pass, particularly in regard to weighting of assignments to provide earlier feedback to the student. Data will be collected to determine if revisions lead to improvements. Syllabi for SSS 465 and SSS 466 were revised. Data will be collected to determine if revisions lead to improvements.	2007-2008

THE CATHOLIC UNIVERSITY OF AMERICA  
Outcomes Assessment

SENIOR SEMINAR SUMMARY DATA: SCHOOL OF SOCIAL SERVICES  
SSS 465 Ugrad Concurrent Field Inst I

Term	Course Enrollment	Course Grade		Course Grades Grade Distribution						Course Evaluation Results					
		Avg.	StDev.	A+, A, A-	B+, B, B-	C+, C, C-	D	F	Other**	Course Eval. #	Course Eval. %	Instructor Rating Avg.	Instructor Rating StDev.	Course Rating Avg.	Course Rating StDev.
Fall 2003	10	3.75	0.40	9	1					10	100.00%	9.30	0.82	8.70	1.49
Fall 2004	10	3.63	0.38	6	4					8	80.00%	9.38	1.19	8.00	2.78
Fall 2005	11	3.67	0.55	9	1	1				6	54.55%	9.00	1.26	8.33	1.37
Fall 2006	7	3.30	1.46	6				1		6	85.71%	8.33	1.37	8.17	1.17
Fall 2007	19	3.62	0.93	15	2			1	1	16	84.21%	9.31	0.48	9.13	0.89

\*\*The "Other" category includes grades of I, W, AU, and P.

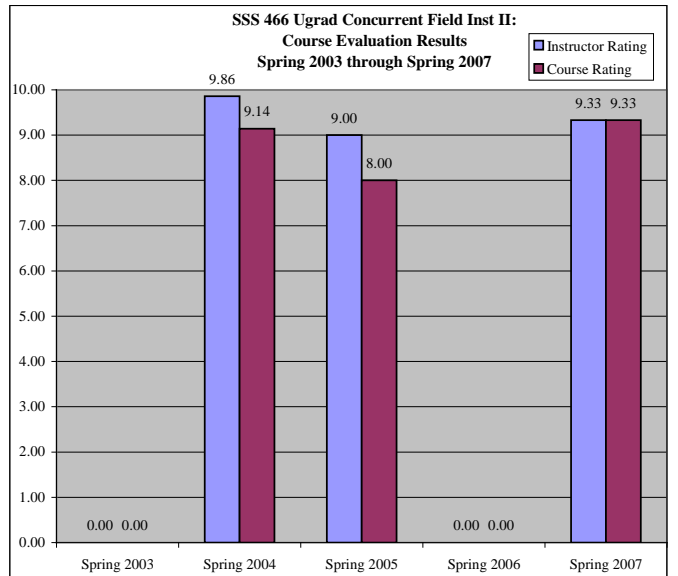
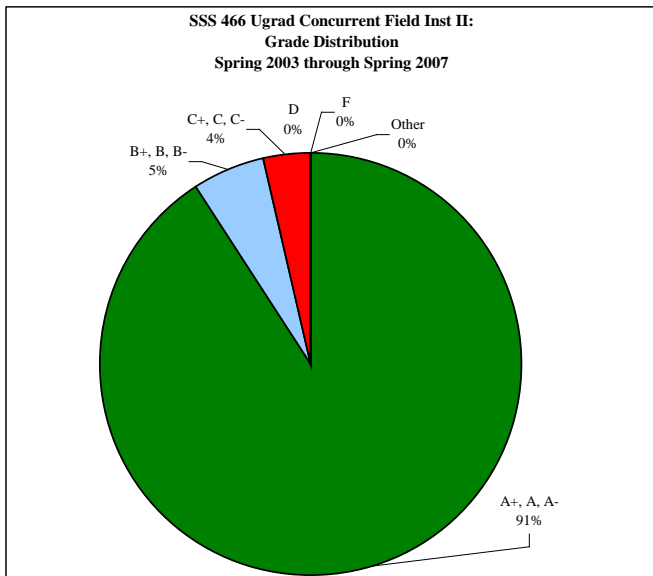
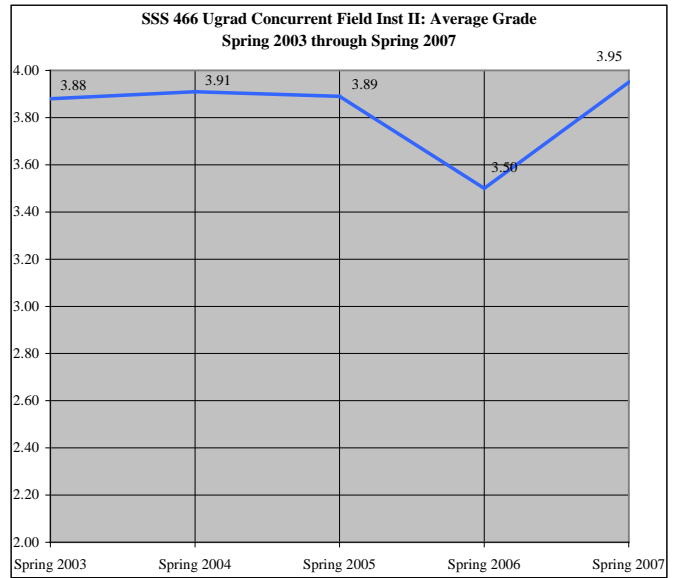
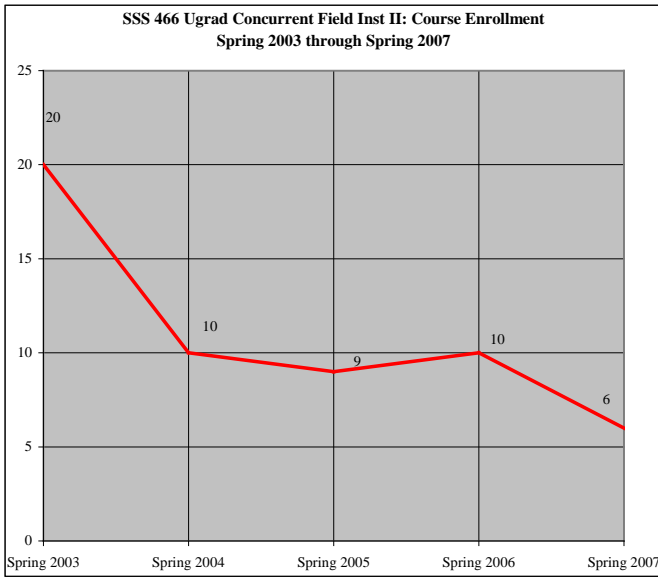


THE CATHOLIC UNIVERSITY OF AMERICA  
Outcomes Assessment

SENIOR SEMINAR SUMMARY DATA: SCHOOL OF SOCIAL SERVICES  
SSS 466 Ugrad Concurrent Field Inst II

Term	Course Enrollment	Course Grade		Course Grades							Course Evaluation Results					
		Avg.	StDev.	Grade Distribution							Course Eval.		Instructor Rating		Course Rating	
				A+, A, A-	B+, B, B-	C+, C, C-	D	F	Other**	#	%	Avg.	StDev.	Avg.	StDev.	
Spring 2003	20	3.88	0.24	19	1						0.00%					
Spring 2004	10	3.91	0.14	10						7	70.00%	9.86	0.38	9.14	1.07	
Spring 2005	9	3.89	0.24	8	1					3	33.33%	9.00	1.73	8.00	3.46	
Spring 2006	10	3.50	0.82	7	1	2					0.00%					
Spring 2007	6	3.95	0.12	6						3	50.00%	9.33	1.15	9.33	1.15	

\*\*The "Other" category includes grades of I, W, AU, and P.



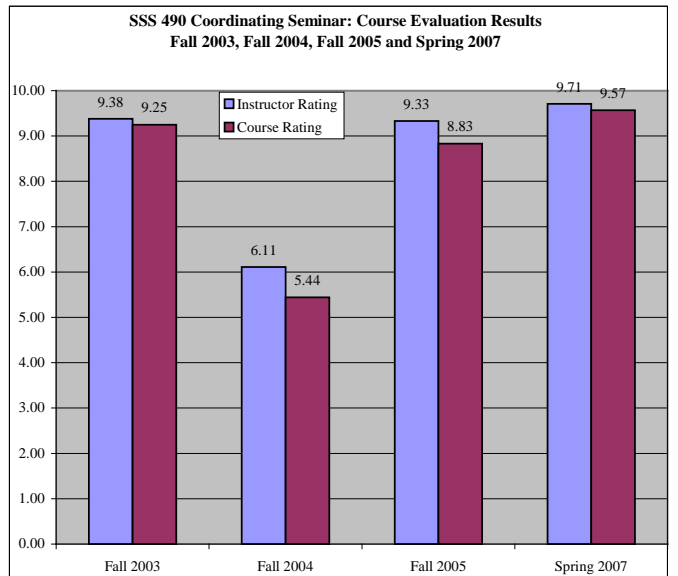
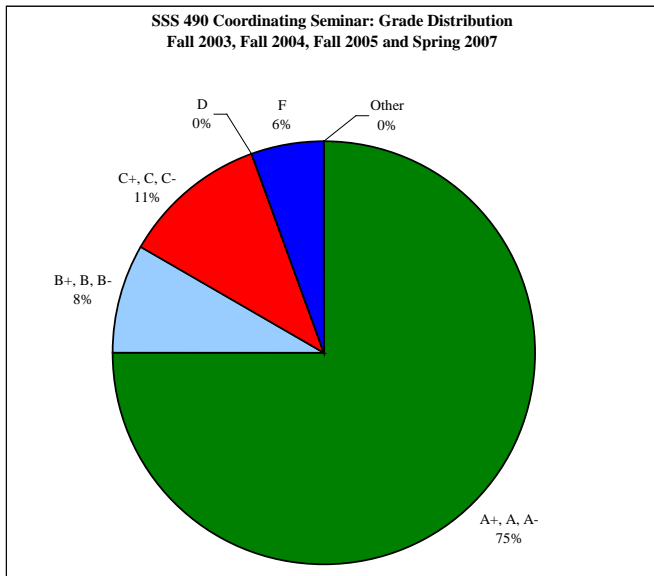
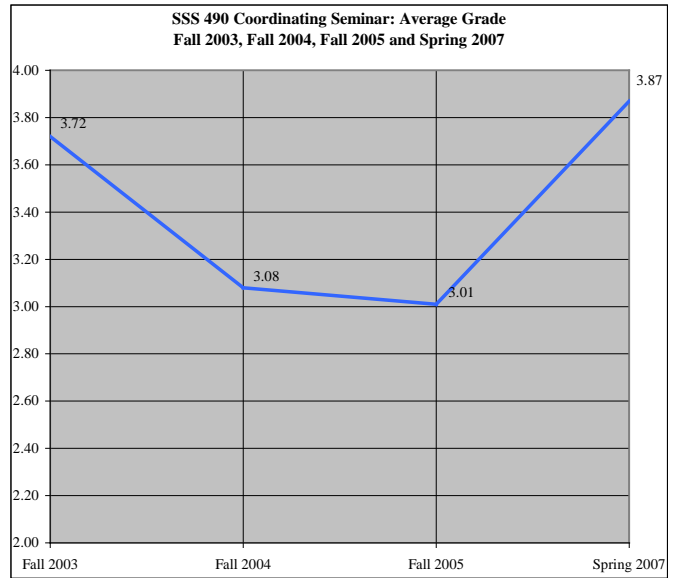
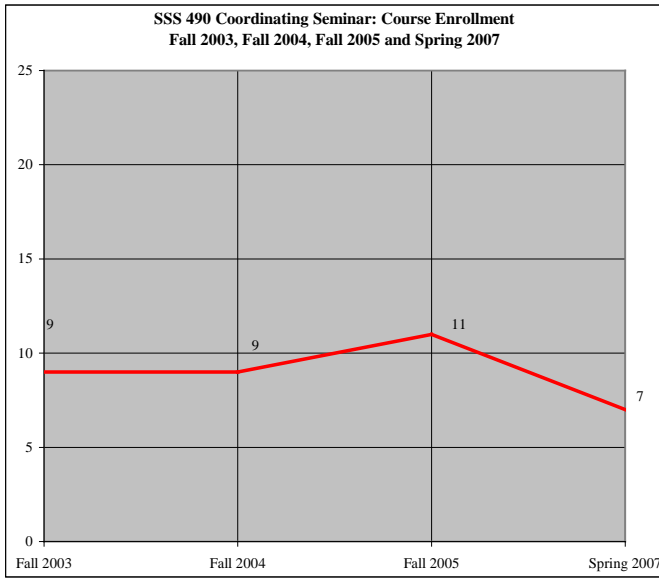


THE CATHOLIC UNIVERSITY OF AMERICA  
Outcomes Assessment

SENIOR SEMINAR SUMMARY DATA: SCHOOL OF SOCIAL SERVICES  
SSS 490 Coordinating Seminar

Term	Course Enrollment	Course Grade		Course Grades						Course Evaluation Results					
		Avg.	StDev.	Grade Distribution						Course Eval.		Instructor Rating		Course Rating	
				A+, A, A-	B+, B, B-	C+, C, C-	D	F	Other**	#	%	Avg.	StDev.	Avg.	StDev.
Fall 2003	9	3.72	0.31	8	1					8	88.89%	9.38	0.92	9.25	1.16
Fall 2004	9	3.08	1.32	5	2	1		1		9	100.00%	6.11	1.76	5.44	2.51
Fall 2005	11	3.01	1.37	7		3		1		6	54.55%	9.33	0.82	8.83	0.98
Summer 2006	1	3.00			1						0.00%				
Spring 2007	7	3.87	0.16	7						7	100.00%	9.71	0.49	9.57	0.53

\*\*The "Other" category includes grades of I, W, AU, and P.



**Standard 12: General Education** : The institution's curricula are designed so that students acquire and demonstrate college-level proficiency in general education and essential skills, including at least oral and written communication, scientific and quantitative reasoning, critical analysis and reasoning, and technological competency.

**2007 National Survey of Student Engagement Mean Comparisons: Selected Catholic University General Education Goals  
Social Service: Seniors**

**Graduates will demonstrate proficiency in oral and written communication, including the argumentative essays, research papers, presentations, and creative and collaborative work employing a variety of media.**

	Department of Social Service	Social Service compared with:								
		Catholic University			Carnegie Peers			NSSE 2007		
		Mean <sup>a</sup>	Mean <sup>a</sup>	Sig <sup>b</sup>	Effect Size <sup>c</sup>	Mean <sup>a</sup>	Sig <sup>b</sup>	Effect Size <sup>c</sup>	Mean <sup>a</sup>	Sig <sup>b</sup>
<i>During the current school year, about how much reading and writing have you done? 1=none, 2=1-4, 3=5-10, 4=11-20, 5=more than 20</i>										
Number of assigned textbooks, books, or book-length packs of course readings	n/a	3.35			3.08			3.13		
Number of books read on your own (not assigned) for personal enjoyment or academic enrichment	n/a	2.24			2.17			2.17		
Number of written papers or reports of <b>20 pages or more</b>	n/a	1.73			1.59			1.62		
Number of written papers or reports <b>between 5 and 19 pages</b>	n/a	2.99			2.49			2.55		
Number of written papers or reports of <b>fewer than 5 pages</b>	n/a	3.20			2.93			2.96		
<i>To what extent has your experience at this institution contributed to your knowledge, skills, and personal development in the following areas? 1=very little, 2=some, 3=quite a bit, 4=very much</i>										
Writing clearly and effectively	n/a	3.04			3.03			3.06		
Speaking clearly and effectively	n/a	2.94			2.92			2.95		

**Graduates will show facility in critical thinking and reasoned analysis.**

	Department of Social Service	Social Service compared with:								
		Catholic University			Carnegie Peers			NSSE 2007		
		Mean <sup>a</sup>	Mean <sup>a</sup>	Sig <sup>b</sup>	Effect Size <sup>c</sup>	Mean <sup>a</sup>	Sig <sup>b</sup>	Effect Size <sup>c</sup>	Mean <sup>a</sup>	Sig <sup>b</sup>
<i>During the current school year, how much has your coursework emphasized the following mental activities? 1=very little, 2=some, 3=quite a bit, 4=very much</i>										
<b>Memorizing</b> facts, ideas, or methods from your courses and readings so you can repeat them in pretty much the same form	2.66	2.66	.00	.00	2.78	.00	-.13	2.75	.00	-.10
<b>Analyzing</b> the basic elements of an idea, experience, or theory, such as examining a particular case or situation in depth and considering its components	3.66	3.36	.00	.41	3.22	.00	.59	3.23	.00	.58
<b>Synthesizing</b> and organizing ideas, information, or experiences into new, more complex interpretations and relationships	3.50	3.20	.00	.35	3.01	.00	.59	3.03	.00	.56
<b>Making judgments</b> about the value of information, arguments, or methods, such as examining how others gathered and interpreted data and assessing the soundness of their conclusions	3.49	3.11	.00	.44	2.94	.00	.63	2.96	.00	.60
<b>Applying</b> theories or concepts to practical problems or in new situations	3.83	3.33	*	.63	3.18	**	.79	3.18	**	.78
<i>In your experience at your institution during the current school year, about how often have you done each of the following? 1=never, 2=sometimes, 3=often, 4=very often</i>										
Put together ideas or concepts from different courses when completing assignments or during class discussions	3.00	2.97	.00	.04	2.91	.00	.11	2.90	.00	.12
<i>To what extent has your experience at this institution contributed to your knowledge, skills, and personal development in the following areas? 1=very little, 2=some, 3=quite a bit, 4=very much</i>										
Thinking critically and analytically	3.83	3.33	*	.68	3.32	*	.67	3.33	*	.65
Analyzing quantitative problems	2.51	2.70	.00	-.20	3.05	.00	-.62	3.04	.00	-.60
Learning effectively on your own	3.01	2.97	.00	.04	2.99	.00	.03	3.00	.00	.01
Solving complex real-world problems	3.67	2.53	**	1.18	2.75	**	.97	2.74	**	.98

Social Service compared with:

Graduates will demonstrate an understanding of scientific and quantitative reasoning.

	Department of Social Service	Catholic University			Carnegie Peers			NSSE 2007		
	Mean <sup>a</sup>	Mean <sup>a</sup>	Sig <sup>b</sup>	Effect Size <sup>c</sup>	Mean <sup>a</sup>	Sig <sup>b</sup>	Effect Size <sup>c</sup>	Mean <sup>a</sup>	Sig <sup>b</sup>	Effect Size <sup>c</sup>
<i>To what extent has your experience at this institution contributed to your knowledge, skills, and personal development in the following areas? 1=very little, 2=some, 3=quite a bit, 4=very much</i>										
Thinking critically and analytically	3.83	3.33	*	.68	3.32	*	.67	3.33	*	.65
Analyzing quantitative problems	2.51	2.70	.00	-.20	3.05	.00	-.62	3.04	.00	-.60

Social Service compared with:

Graduates will demonstrate an ability to find information effectively using appropriate resources and technologies, critically assess the validity and relevance of information, and utilize it in ethical and legal ways.

	Department of Social Service	Catholic University			Carnegie Peers			NSSE 2007		
	Mean <sup>a</sup>	Mean <sup>a</sup>	Sig <sup>b</sup>	Effect Size <sup>c</sup>	Mean <sup>a</sup>	Sig <sup>b</sup>	Effect Size <sup>c</sup>	Mean <sup>a</sup>	Sig <sup>b</sup>	Effect Size <sup>c</sup>
<i>In your experience at your institution during the current school year, about how often have you done each of the following? 1=never, 2=sometimes, 3=often, 4=very often</i>										
Worked on a paper or project that required integrating ideas or information from various sources	3.68	3.41	.00	.37	3.26	.00	.55	3.29	.00	.52
Included diverse perspectives (different races, religions, genders, political beliefs, etc.) in class discussions or writing assignments	3.66	2.70	.00	1.03	2.74	.00	1.00	2.80	.00	.94
<i>During the current school year, how much has your coursework emphasized the following mental activities? 1=very little, 2=some, 3=quite a bit, 4=very much</i>										
<b>Making judgments</b> about the value of information, arguments, or methods, such as examining how others gathered and interpreted data and assessing the soundness of their conclusions	3.49	3.11	.00	.44	2.94	.00	.63	2.96	.00	.60
<i>To what extent has your experience at this institution contributed to your knowledge, skills, and personal development in the following areas? 1=very little, 2=some, 3=quite a bit, 4=very much</i>										
Learning effectively on your own	3.01	2.97	.00	.04	2.99	.00	.03	3.00	.00	.01

Social Service compared with:

Graduates will demonstrate knowledge of and respect for different cultures and religions.

	Department of Social Service	Catholic University			Carnegie Peers			NSSE 2007		
	Mean <sup>a</sup>	Mean <sup>a</sup>	Sig <sup>b</sup>	Effect Size <sup>c</sup>	Mean <sup>a</sup>	Sig <sup>b</sup>	Effect Size <sup>c</sup>	Mean <sup>a</sup>	Sig <sup>b</sup>	Effect Size <sup>c</sup>
<i>In your experience at your institution during the current school year, about how often have you done each of the following? 1=never, 2=sometimes, 3=often, 4=very often</i>										
Included diverse perspectives (different races, religions, genders, political beliefs, etc.) in class discussions or writing assignments	3.66	2.70	.00	1.03	2.74	.00	1.00	2.80	.00	.94
Had serious conversations with students of a different race or ethnicity than your own	3.83	2.70	**	1.08	2.68	***	1.17	2.66	***	1.18
Had serious conversations with students who are very different from you in terms of their religious beliefs, political opinions, or personal values	3.67	2.88	*	.84	2.71	**	1.00	2.71	**	1.00
<i>During the current school year, about how often have you done each of the following? 1=never, 2=sometimes, 3=often, 4=very often</i>										
Tried to better understand someone else's views by imagining how an issue looks from his or her perspective	3.33	2.85	.00	.55	2.81	.00	.61	2.82	.00	.60
<i>To what extent does your institution emphasize each of the following? 1=very little, 2=some, 3=quite a bit, 4=very much</i>										
Encouraging contact among students from different economic, social, and racial or ethnic backgrounds	2.81	1.97	.00	.88	2.41	.00	.41	2.44	.00	.37
<i>To what extent has your experience at this institution contributed to your knowledge, skills, and personal development in the following areas? 1=very little, 2=some, 3=quite a bit, 4=very much</i>										
Understanding people of other racial and ethnic backgrounds	3.66	2.20	***	1.46	2.54	**	1.14	2.59	**	1.08