

**Academic Program Assessment Plan  
Certificate: Homeland Security Studies**

**Department of History and Political Science  
College of Humanities and Social Sciences  
Colorado State University-Pueblo**

Plan appended by Steven Liebel, Assistant Professor of Political Science, Director of Center for the Study of Homeland Security (CSHS), May 2015.

Plan originally developed by David Malet, Assistant Professor of Political Science, Director of Center for the Study of Homeland Security (CSHS), March 2012.

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**Mission**

The Homeland Security Studies Program offers an in-depth opportunity for the scholarly study of the political and public policy issues involved in the field of homeland security and defense. It is also intended to provide professional development opportunities for graduates in a growing sector of the economy (minor) and to serve mid-career professionals interested in expanding substantive knowledge and career advancement (certificate).

The Program (encompassing both the Minor degree and the non-transcripted Certificate curriculum contained within the Minor) fulfills the missions of both the university and the department as described in the University Catalog:

“The University shall offer a broad array of baccalaureate programs with a strong professional focus and a firm grounding in the liberal arts and sciences.”

“The programs in history, political science, philosophy, and geography are intended to provide domains of study both for students who desire knowledge for personal enrichment and for students who desire to apply knowledge toward career objectives.... Departmental programs ... prepare students for occupations in government, business, education ...”

The Certificate in Homeland Security Studies provides students and mid-career professionals a program in line with the each mission. The program provides an admixture of hands-on tactile learning and theoretically informed analysis. This education is directly exportable to a real-world environment and to the advancement of those seeking personal enrichment and career advancement.

## **Goals and Student Learning Outcomes**

In 2010, the national Homeland Security and Defense Education Consortium Association (HSDECA) proposed national accreditation standards and learning outcomes for homeland security undergraduate and graduate degree programs. While no guidelines were proposed for certificates or minors, this program has adopted and adapted HSDECA learning outcomes for undergraduate programs as the basis for the Certificate/Minor curriculum so as to be in compliance with all accreditation recommendations.

The following section is detailed in four areas. First, Undergraduate Degree General Outcomes are used as a foundation for student understanding and application. These identify broad points of program coverage. Second, Core Area Outcomes identify specifics areas of concentration that are necessary for HSDECA program compliance. Each core area must cover certain aspects of knowledge within homeland security. I.E., a course concentration in intelligence necessitates more specific knowledge of that area than others. Third, program goals are detailed that are in line with General and Core Area outcomes. Fourth and finally, Student Learning Outcomes are identified and are used the means to assess student learning and application. Student Learning Outcomes distill information from both the General Outcomes and Core Outcomes into identifiable means of program assessment.

### **Undergraduate Degree General Outcomes (HSDECA a-i)**

According to HSDECA, satisfying general outcomes indicate that programs meet a minimum set of professional and intellectual standards in degree curriculum. Though some of the following outcomes may be satisfied by program coursework, some may be satisfied by the institution's general education requirements, course test out or high school AP equivalency. Thus, at a general level, homeland security, homeland defense, or similarly named baccalaureate degree programs must demonstrate that their graduates have:

- a) An ability to apply homeland security or defense concepts in a non-academic setting through an internship, cooperative, or supervised experience to include real-world experiences, strategies, and objectives.
- b) An understanding of professional ethics and how they apply in the field of homeland security or defense.
- c) An ability to apply knowledge of mathematics and science.
- d) An ability to work collaboratively.
- e) A recognition of transnational and global application of homeland security or defense issues, strategies and operations.

- f) An ability to design, conduct and evaluate exercises applicable to the disciplines of homeland security or defense.
- g) An ability to identify, describe and critically evaluate applicable homeland security or defense technologies.
- h) Knowledge of contemporary or emergent threats, challenges or issues including natural, man made and technological hazards.
- i) Demonstrate the ability to synthesize, analyze or evaluate homeland security or homeland defense issues or challenges (i.e., either a capstone practicum or undergraduate thesis).

### **Core Area (CA) Outcomes (HSDECA 1-23)**

Core area outcomes demonstrate professional breadth of preparation as it applies to the field of homeland security or homeland defense. Programs satisfying core area outcomes should include the following curricular (i.e., core academic) areas. Suggested definitions for each academic area follow. Although programs can assume some latitude in how their specific curriculum integrates or operationalizes each of the core areas below, programs must accomplish each of the following outcomes. Whereas undergraduate programs must accomplish each of the following outcomes at a lower level of learning, graduate programs must accomplish these outcomes, but demonstrate a higher level of learning than undergraduate programs. Hence, homeland security, homeland defense or similarly named programs must demonstrate that their students have:

#### **CA1. Intelligence** - *A systematic process of collection, analysis, and dissemination of information in support of national, state, and/or local policy or strategy.*

- 1) An ability to demonstrate knowledge of intelligence and counter-intelligence concepts, to include the collection, analysis, and dissemination of intelligence data both within the US and internationally.
- 2) An ability to demonstrate knowledge of the organization and mission of the federal Intelligence Community, state and local intelligence agencies within the US, private/corporate sector intelligence efforts, and selected components globally.
- 3) An ability to demonstrate and synthesize fundamental intelligence concepts while understanding their variables, limitations, and shortcomings.

#### **CA2. Law & Policy** –*Legal and policy formulations that provide the basic direction of homeland security means and objectives and establish a context for homeland security within the broader purview of national security.*

4) An ability to demonstrate knowledge of legal and constitutional principles and their application in the area of Homeland or National Security law and policy.

5) An ability to demonstrate knowledge of case law, precedential, and court decisions relating to and having an effect upon homeland security policy and law.

**CA3. Emergency Management** - *Emergency management includes the process of preparation for and the carrying out of all emergency functions necessary to protect, prepare for, respond to, and recover from emergencies and disasters caused by all hazards, whether natural, technological, or human caused. Emergency management is a comprehensive and continuous improvement oriented process designed to save lives, avoid injury or illness, and minimize damage to the environment and economic losses to property.*

6) An ability to demonstrate knowledge of emergency management and response concepts, operations, phases, and procedures across the range of homeland security challenges.

7) An ability to demonstrate knowledge of entry-level emergency management training and exercise types and strategies, and risk management principles.

**CA4. Risk Analysis** - *A systematic method of identifying the assets (e.g., critical infrastructure and key resources) of a system, the threats (i.e., strategic, political, economic, technological, or cultural) to those assets, and the vulnerability of the system to those threats in such a way as to be able to quantify threats and their consequences to a system for the purpose of developing appropriate countermeasures.*

8) An ability to demonstrate knowledge of risk analysis principles, processes, and techniques, in both the public and private sectors. This includes knowledge of an all hazards approach to risk analysis and infrastructure protection.

9) An ability to demonstrate knowledge of threat, vulnerability, consequence, and critical infrastructure analysis.

10) An ability to demonstrate basic industrial security strategies, challenges and principles.

**CA5. Critical Infrastructure & Key Resources** – *Systems, resources and assets, whether physical or virtual, so vital to the United States that the incapacity or destruction of such systems, resources or assets would have a debilitating impact on national security, economic security, public health or safety, or any combination of these.*

11) An ability to demonstrate knowledge of the evolution and basic principles of critical infrastructure, in both the private and public sectors vital to their community, state or the nation.

12) An ability to identify and describe each of the recognized sectors of critical infrastructure and key resources, and identify appropriate counter measures using a risk-based methodology.

13) An ability to compare and contrast private sector and governmental responsibilities in the area of critical infrastructure/key resource identification and protection.

14) Identify and describe each mode of transportation and their responsible administrative authorities, threats to their security, and major legislative responses to transportation security threats including potential countermeasures to these security threats.

**CA6. Strategic Planning** - *the process of defining an organization's strategy (a long term plan of action designed to achieve a particular goal or objective) or direction and making decisions on allocating its resources to pursue this strategy, including its capital, its technology and its human resources.*

15) An ability to demonstrate knowledge of applicable national strategies and plans, including their history, inter-relationships, similarities and differences.

16) An ability to demonstrate knowledge of the strategic planning interface between national, state, and local governments.

17) An ability to demonstrate knowledge of basic principles underlying strategic planning, and identify these principles as they apply to the National Strategy for homeland security.

**CA7. Terrorism** - *The threat of violence, individual acts of violence, or a campaign of violence designed primarily to instill fear. Terrorism is violence for effect: not only and sometimes not at all for the effect on the actual victims of the terrorists' cause. Fear is the intended effect, not the by-product of terrorism.*

18) An ability to demonstrate knowledge of the history and basic concepts of global terrorism to include groups, ideologies, and underlying causes.

19) An ability to demonstrate knowledge of specific types of terrorism (e.g., state-supported, transnational, domestic, international) including their similarities and differences.

20) An ability to demonstrate knowledge of the conceptual aspects of counter-terrorism, counter-terrorist activities, and outcomes and be able to identify and describe examples of these concepts.

**CA8. Strategic Communication** – *An effects-based approach of synchronized themes and messages designed to enable the implementation of the national elements of power; to include but limited to diplomatic, intelligence, military, economic, financial, information and law enforcement, toward the accomplishment of national and homeland security objectives.*

21) An understanding of interagency communications needs, methods and processes.

22) An ability to compose and deliver professional reports, presentations and briefings in order to develop and refine analytical abilities and to demonstrate effective oral and written communication skills.

23) An understanding of the national instruments of power and their role in communication and homeland security structures and agencies.

### **Homeland Security Studies Program Goals**

Keeping HSDECA outcome goals and core academic areas in mind, the goals of the Center for the Study of Homeland Security are thus as follows:

1. To provide individual courses as well as an academic certificate and minor in the field of Homeland Security Studies
2. To maintain congruence between course content and Core Area Outcomes as defined by the HSDECA.
3. To develop in certificate students writing and communication skills that are directly exportable to a real-world circumstance and professional career environment.
4. To develop in minor students skills in higher order thinking such as critical thinking and knowledge, and to properly socialize students into a professional mindset
5. To develop in all students an understanding of the methods and ideas behind homeland security, defense, and application.

### **Expected Student Learning Outcomes**

In order to assess the effectiveness of instruction and student learning as it pertains to meeting these General and Core criteria, as well as program goals, the following Student Learning Outcomes are defined and assessed on an annual basis by the Director of the Center for the Study of Homeland Security for either the Certificate or Minor:

1. Knowledge: Students will be able to demonstrate knowledge of: intelligence and counter-intelligence concepts; legal and constitutional principles pertaining to

homeland and national security policy; strategic planning interfaces between national, state, and local governments; conceptual aspects of terrorism and counter-terrorism; and understand basic inter-agency communication needs, methods, and processes.

2. Writing: Students will be able to construct and present coherent, objective, and well reasoned arguments or discussions pertaining to topics on homeland security.
3. Critical Thinking: Students will be able to: recognize issues that are pertinent to homeland security; question issue validity; develop logically sound arguments pertaining to said issues; and evaluate sources of evidence pertaining to the issue (including contrary and supporting evidence).
4. Communication: Students will be able to construct, compose, and deliver professional reports, research, and briefings.

Because the Certificate is subsumed within the Minor, the goals of the certificate program contribute to the overall educational experience and goals of the minor. The Certificate SLO's are thus assessed independently and in conjunction with the SOL's of the Minor. The two programs are thus assessed simultaneously, but with different SOL's in mind. The primary distinction springs from the need of certification students to learn immediately applicable skills, while minors master skills of higher order thinking. The Certificate program and Minor will be assessed on the following annual cycle:

2013-14:	Certificate SOL:	Writing/Communication,
	Minor SOL:	Critical Thinking
2014-15:	Certificate SOL:	Writing/Communication,
	Minor SOL:	Knowledge
2015-16:	Certificate SOL:	Writing/Communication
	Minor SOL:	Critical Thinking
2016-17:	Certificate SOL:	Writing/Communication
	Minor SOL:	Knowledge

The manner in which these Student Learning Outcomes are assessed is addressed in the following section.

### **Assessment Methods and Results**

Program faculty are primarily adjunct instructors with professional training in relevant fields. The CSHS Director meets annually with faculty to compare intended learning outcomes with student performances in each of the three Certificate program courses (all offered annually). Course and program curricula are reviewed to evaluate

alignment of individual course goals, content, and instructional methods with the overall program goals and outcomes.

Assessment will be conducted via a combination of written assignments, presentations/briefings, and in-class group presentations. This combination allows for the assessment of two SLO's (Writing and Communication) at the same time, something which is necessary given the pace of the certificate program. Students will be expected to present key findings on best practices in published literature and cases histories, apply theoretical concepts to current events and case studies, and to demonstrate pre-professional skills in developing effective written work and live presentations.

These assignments will be read and observed by the Director of the Center for the Study of Homeland Security. Utilizing an established rubric, the Director will record independent scores based off of both the submitted research papers and the presentations which constitute each students portfolio. The Director then submits a report of the assessment findings, as well as any related action plans, to the chair of the Department of History and Political Science and the Political Science Program coordinator, the Dean of CHASS, as well as the Assistant Provost for Assessment and Student Learning. The CSHS director holds primary responsibility for ongoing program assessment activities as well as for revision of the plan itself.

To ascertain the level of student proficiency, students must be minimally proficient in all core areas to receive the degree or certification that connote pre-professional competence. The expectation is that 80% of students achieve the level of "proficient, with few scoring either "exemplary", "emerging" or "not present."

To obtain the Minor students must successfully complete all six courses with the Political Science departmental standard of a grade of C or better. Students will not pass key courses for certification without demonstrating proficiency.

### **Dissemination of Program Goals and Outcomes**

The CSHS director will meet with course instructors at least once per year to determine whether changes should be made to individual course syllabi based on student learning outcome results. The director will discuss assessment data at scheduled semester Political Science Program meetings for analysis and recommendations.

To inform the public and the university community at large, written accounts of current program goals, expected student outcomes, and assessment activities are published in the Colorado State University-Pueblo Catalog. The CSHS Director will provide program faculty with written copies of the goals, outcomes, and curriculum map. Descriptions of program activities are provided prior to the awarding of Certificates at the annual Political Science Forum.



### **Curriculum (9 credit hour non-transcripted Certificate)**

Students will receive, upon the completion of POLSC 270, 271, and 272, a non-transcripted Certificate in Homeland Security Studies that is awarded by the Political Science Program, which independently maintains student records for this award. The three courses for the Certificate correspond to the state-approved curriculum adopted by UCCS for its homeland security certificate program.

Required courses that incorporate core student learning outcomes (SLOs):

1. *Introduction to Homeland Security*, (POLSC 270) 3 credits

An overview of homeland security and key threats and responses. Major topics addressed include the structure of the Department of Homeland Security and its relation to member, state, and local agencies; strategic and military approaches to countering threats; legal elements; and the role of government-private sector partnerships.

2. *Terrorism*, (POLSC 271) 3 credits

An examination of extremist groups and private violence in the context of domestic monitoring, prevention, and response. Areas of emphasis will include recruitment and law enforcement vs. military approaches to counter-terrorism.

3. *Critical Incident Management*, (POLSC 272) 3 credits

The policies and practices of local first responders, inter-agency relationships, specific threats including infrastructure failure, natural disasters, political violence, and unconventional weapons.

See curriculum map for relation of curriculum to level of expected student learning outcomes.

These three courses are only reflective of the courses necessitated for the Certificate program. The Center for the Study of Homeland Security Studies also offers additional courses and a full academic minor to fully fulfill the academic obligations as presented by the HSDECA.

### **Curriculum Map**

- Course Designations:
  - 270 – Introduction to Homeland Security Studies (certificate and minor)

- 271 – Terrorism (certificate and minor)
- 272 – Critical Incident Management (certificate and minor)
- 373 – Intelligence and National Security (minor only)
- 374 – Homeland Security and the Law (minor only)
- 375 – Threat and Strategic Planning (minor only)

<b>Homeland Security Program SLOs</b>	<b>270</b>	<b>271</b>	<b>272</b>	<b>373</b>	<b>374</b>	<b>375</b>
<u>Knowledge</u> : Students will be able to demonstrate knowledge of: intelligence and counter-intelligence concepts; legal and constitutional principles pertaining to homeland and national security policy; strategic planning interfaces between national, state, and local governments; conceptual aspects of terrorism and counter-terrorism; and understand basic inter-agency communication needs, methods, and processes.	I	I	I	E	E	E
<u>Writing</u> : Students will be able to construct and present coherent, objective, and well reasoned arguments or discussions pertaining to topics on homeland security.	I	E	E	E	E	E
<u>Critical Thinking</u> : Students will be able to: recognize issues that are pertinent to homeland security; question issue validity; develop logically sound arguments pertaining to said issues; and evaluate sources of evidence pertaining to the issue (including contrary and supporting evidence).	I	I	I	E	E	E
<u>Communication</u> : Students will be able to construct, compose, and deliver professional reports, research, and briefings.	I	E	I	E	E	E

## **Itemized Changes to Assessment Plan**

- May 2013:
  1. Assessments section amended to reflect more closely the means of annual assessment (i.e., written paper and verbal presentation).
  2. Course curriculum and “Assessment Methods and Results” section amended to accurately reflect the course work necessary for the certificate, not the minor (i.e., three courses removed), wording respecified.
  3. Courses listed in curriculum specified as “270, 271, 272” to remove ambiguity from student expectations for completion.
  4. Curriculum map description refined.
  5. “Goals and Student Learning Outcomes” final paragraph clarified to represent restructured section on General/Core Outcomes and Student Learning Outcomes.
  6. “Undergraduate Degree General Outcomes (HSDECA a-i)” edited to reflect HSDECA acronym.
  7. “Core Area (CA) Outcomes (HSDECA 1-23)” edited for formatting
  8. “Student Learning Outcomes” section added. This addition was made to reflect changes to the 2013-2014 CSU-Pueblo Catalog on program Student Learning Outcomes.
  9. “Curriculum” section relocated to end of document.
  10. Curriculum Map learning outcome for POLSC 271, Terrorism, “Compose and deliver professional reports, presentations and briefings” changed from “E” to “I” to better reflect the courses 200 level expectations.
  11. Assessment method adjusted. The phrase: “In addition to faculty assessments, in-class written evaluations are collected from all students on the final day of class” has been removed. This action was taken because the assessment of Student Learning Outcomes by the program director and outside faculty is reflective of instructor ability. With the addition of student feedback via anonymous online evaluations, and annual consultations between the Director and faculty, these written evaluations are viewed as redundant.
  12. Assessment method adjusted. The phrase: “The CSHS director will meet with course instructors at least once per semester” has been appended to “at least once per year.” This is because it is not possible to meet every semester given that assessment only occurs once per year. The program director will meet with all faculty once per year following assessment to update instructors on outcomes and future goals and revisions.
- May 2014
  1. Annual cycle for SLO adjusted to reflect short term nature of certificate program and long term nature of minor, as well as goals of the certificate program being separate from the minor. This change was recommended in 2012-13 and allows for the assessment of multiple SLO's at the same time.

2. Certificate program mission statement updated to define the goals of the program and to emphasize their congruence with the missions of both the university and department. This update also emphasizes the relationship between the professional training students receive in class and career development.
3. Assessment Methods and Results section updates to reflect a newly included metric of “expected achievement level” and to incorporate means of assessment that are more expansive than simply written work. This includes the addition of a student portfolio monitoring procedure, newly implemented for certificate students, that allows the director to identify student strengths and weakness early in the program, so as to provide clarity for how the students needs can best be addressed moving forward.
4. A new section was added to the plan: Dissemination of Program Goals and Outcomes. This helps to better delineate the manner in which the program director will incorporate the findings of the annual assessment into the curriculum with both the faculty, and public.
5. Numerous passages have been eliminated that give reference to the minor bring in it's first year.
6. Curriculum map revised to reflect on recommendations made in 2012-13 that it should include SLOs that are assessed directly as opposed to alternative technical SLOs. This adjustment also reflects the revised program SLO's made in 2013-14.
7. Program goals have been revised so as to maintain consistency with the HSDECA, but to also focus on the purpose of the assessment.

Colorado State University – Pueblo Academic Program Assessment Report for AY 2014-15 Due: May 10, 2015  
 Program: Homeland Security Studies (Certificate) Date: 5/08/2015  
 Completed by: Steven Liebel, PhD (Program Director)  
 Assessment contributors (other faculty involved in this program's assessment): \_\_\_\_\_

Please complete this form for each undergraduate, minor, certificate, and graduate program (e.g., B.A., B.S., M.S.) in your department. You'll also find the form at the assessment website at <http://www.colostate-pueblo.edu/Assessment/Resources/Pages/default.aspx>. Thank you.

Please describe the 2014-2015 assessment activities for the program in Part I. Use Column H to describe improvements planned for 2015-2016 based on the assessment process. In Part II, please describe activities engaged in during 2014-2015 designed to close-the-loop (improve the program) based on assessment activities and the information gathered in 2013-2014. Thank you

**I. Program student learning outcomes (SLOs) assessed in this cycle, processes, results, and recommendations.**

A. Which of the program SLOs were assessed during this cycle?	B. When was this SLO last assessed?	C. What method was used for assessing the SLO? (Please include a copy of any rubrics used in the assessment process)	D. Who was assessed? Please fully describe the student group(s) and the number of students or artifacts involved.	E. What is the expected achievement level and how many or what proportion of students should be at it?	F. What were the results of the assessment?	G. What were the department's conclusions about student performance?	H. What changes/improvements to the <u>program</u> are planned based on this assessment?
1. Communication 2. Writing  From the SLO statement:  Communication: <i>"Students will be able to construct, compose, and deliver professional reports, research, and briefings."</i>  Writing: <i>"Students will be able to construct and present coherent, objective, and well reasoned arguments or discussions pertaining to topics on homeland security."</i>	Communication was assessed alone in the 2012-13 academic year. Spring semester 2013.  2013-14 was the first year Writing was assessed, and was done so in conjunction with Communication. Spring semester 2014.	Communication: The program director observed and evaluated in-class presentations of student research on terrorist organizations. Evaluations were performed taking into account feedback students were provided prior to presentations on content, technique, attire, and presentation materials.  See communication rubric attached at end of document.  Writing: The program director used a common rubric to evaluate papers from the Terrorism class.	19 students from the Spring term 200 level Terrorism course were sampled. 22 students constitutes every student in the course, but three students withdrew before writing assignments were submitted and presentations were performed.	As per the programs assessment plan, 80% of students should perform at or above "proficient" for each SLO. With 19 students in the assessment pool, 16 should achieve at or above proficiency.	16 of 19 students met the expectation of proficiency for communication, and 14 of 19 met the expectation of proficiency for writing.	Communication:  Strengths – Students display strong ability to digest feedback from the professor provided prior to presentation and incorporate it into presentation tools. Students also displayed a heightened sensitivity to theoretical causes and links. Students dressed appropriately for a professional employment style presentation. Finally, students displayed knowledge in post-presentation question session.  Weaknesses – Students frequently ran over their allotted time limit, evidencing some lack or preparation. Students also displayed	In all of the areas addressed in 2014-15, the area that stands out as requiring the most focus is writing. Student presentations were professional and well organized, in part given changes made within the syllabus and teaching style, but writing remains a challenge for some students. This can be addressed by adjusting feedback to students who appear to be at-risk in their papers that are submitted earlier in the semester before the final paper.

		See writing rubric attached at end of document.				<p>trepidation and frequently read off of notes as opposed to owning the material.</p> <p>Writing:</p> <p>Strengths – As in prior years, students display an ability to amass significant volumes of relevant evidence based research and distill it to critical points/facts. They also display an ability to do quality background research. The majority of papers were quite strong.</p> <p>Weaknesses – Several student papers, those deemed lower than proficient, were significantly weaker than their peers, the vast majority of which were strong. This would indicate a bimodal distribution within the classes writing. Many students "got it" from the syllabus and instruction, few did not.</p>	
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Comments:

Communication:

To meet the expectation of 80% proficiency, 16 of 19 students must attain said level. Upon assessing all students according to the same communication rubric, 16 achieved proficiency. This is at the necessary level. Contributing to this level are several circumstances: one student failed to present and thus failed the assessment entirely; one student failed to achieve proficiency in "delivery" given inappropriate attire/pace/voice volume; and two students consistently read off of their notes, as opposed to teaching the class.

Numerous remedies to the presiding issues can be applied in class. First, student presentations are a necessary component of the student's semester grade, accounting for 10% of said grade. This fact is made clear on introduction of the syllabus and throughout the semester. The instructor can do little more to make students come to class aside from tying it to grades and providing a positive environment in which to discuss material. The presentation could perhaps be a larger component of the student's grade, so as to further emphasize its importance. Second, students should be told to emphasize timing and delivery, perhaps with some instruction in class as to how to prepare for a presentation to a professional audience.

Writing:

To meet the expectation of 80% proficiency, 16 of 19 students must attain said level. Upon assessing all students according to the same writing rubric, 14 achieved proficiency. This is below the necessary level. Contributing to this level are several circumstances: one student failed to turn in a final paper, four students failed to adequately organize their paper; and two students failed to make adequate connections between concepts/theories and goals of groups.

There are remedies to these issues that can be applied in class. First, as the primary noticeable issue within papers, organization can be further emphasized. Currently, the students turn in their research paper in multiple stages throughout the semester, at each point receiving typed feedback from the instructor. Because organizational issues are something every student should confront as a necessary component of developing basic skills, organization will hold a higher place within the feedback students receive. Because this is something the program has done for years, changes will be made within the practice of feedback, emphasizing information tailored to identify at-risk students and improve their performance. Third, as the area of concern that emphasizes higher level thinking, drawing connections between why groups/organizations do what they do and the theories presented in class is a critical area in need of emphasis. Because the class is theoretical in nature, examples illustrating the relationship will be incorporated and additional time will be spent on developing an understanding between cause and effect.

**II. Follow-up (closing the loop) on results and activities from previous assessment cycles. In this section, please describe actions taken during this cycle that were based on, or implemented to address, the results of assessment from previous cycles.**

A. What SLO(s) did you address? Please include the outcome(s) verbatim from the assessment plan.	B. When was this SLO last assessed?	C. What were the recommendations for change from the previous assessment?	D. Were the recommendations for change acted upon? If not, why?	E. What were the results of the changes? If the changes were not effective, what are the next steps or the new recommendations?
<p>1. Communication 2. Writing</p> <p>From the SLO statement:</p> <p>Communication: <i>"Students will be able to construct, compose, and deliver professional reports, research, and briefings."</i></p> <p>Writing: <i>"Students will be able to construct and present coherent, objective, and well reasoned arguments or discussions pertaining to topics on homeland security."</i></p>	<p>Communication was assessed alone in the 2012-13 academic year. Spring semester 2013.</p> <p>2013-14 was the first year Writing was assessed, and was done so in conjunction with Communication. Spring semester 2014.</p>	<p>The 2013-14 assessment called for following through on the programs decisions to emphasize: improved writing, discussion of theoretical connections between causes of terrorism and counter-terrorism, and improvement to presentation training via dress-code and feedback between professor and student prior to presentation.</p>	<p>Yes, the recommendations were acted upon. As all recommendations were made by the program on the basis of face-to-face student contact, and were subsequently supported by the reviewers, all were acted upon.</p>	<p>First, all students are – and have been – required to submit a paper in multiple stages throughout the semester. This give the professor increased opportunity to monitor student writing progress. What was new, however, was the professors emphasis on structure and grammar, which were not previously emphasized in relation to other areas. That students improved in a general sense (with few exceptions, indicating that some students were reluctant to spend ample time on research), indicates a positive trend.</p> <p>Second, there was increased time spent on relating cause and effect in terms of theoretical argumentation and the importance of theory in establishing a relationship between motivations for terrorism and how to end/prevent it. This markedly improved student papers and presentations for all who did so.</p>

				<p>Third, every student submitted their presentations to the professor in advance of presentation to obtain feedback. All students who submitted updated their presentations in accordance with recommendations, improving the professionalism of their brief.</p> <p>Fourth, including a dress-code as part of the grade for the presentation dramatically improved the professionalism of the student presentations. All presenting students took the presentation seriously and taught the class in a professional manner.</p> <p>Moving forward, there will need to be effort put in place to make sure that all students are on board with the aims of the paper and presentation. That there was such disparity between the proficient and non-proficient papers can be addressed by providing increased oversight of students presenting at-risk tendencies in paper iterations submitted early in the semester.</p>
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Comments:

Communication:

Notes on incorporated recommendations:

In all three areas where the program deemed it necessary to adjust, and where the reviewers concurred, there was improvement. In particular, there was improvement in: overall writing performance, making connections between cause and effect, professionalism in terms of presentation decorum and attire, and finally, improvement in terms of students incorporating feedback to refine their presentations.

A note on hold-over recommendations from previous years:

Two recommendations have been continued from the 2012-13 communication assessment. The first recommendation was to increase the sample size of students included in the assessment. The 2012-13 assessment was performed utilizing a random sampling technique. Of a class of 20 students, five students were assessed by both the program director and two faculty members from the department of political science. The students had volunteered to present on a given day and were unaware they would be assessed. The program director then assessed the remaining 15 students in the absence of additional faculty, and correlated scores from the two samples to validate the scoring methods between them. Justification for this approach was related to time constraints, these additional faculty could not sit through four days of presentations (20 students, five students presenting per day), and instead were available for only one (five students), and further, the random sample was shown to be highly correlated to the larger class sample, indicating that there was little to no bias in scoring. However, while the reviewer did not provided justification for requesting a larger sample, it can be assumed that there were concerns with skewness or bias in the outcome given that there were no points of validation for the non-peer reviewed portion of the sample. To accommodate these concerns, the updated sample includes the entirety of the class being assessed in a uniform fashion. This should prevent concerns about possible outliers not being included as discreet data points, and allows the assessment to capture potential problems wholesale by scoring all students individually.



While sampling the entire class does provide added clarity, there are two possible negatives to requiring the assessment of all students in a uniform manner. First, it prevents the inclusion of external faculty participating in the process. Faculty cannot be present for multiple class sessions given their own schedules and commitments. Second, because the random sample of 2012-13 was highly correlated to the remainder of the class, thus providing evidence that the method was functional (i.e. the scores provided by external observers were equivalent to those taken by the program director alone), it is difficult to discern the advantages of including the entire class in the sample, especially when it means there is limited external participation in the observation process.

The second recommendation was to allow students more time to present their research. To accommodate this recommendation student presentation time was increased from 7 to 8 minutes. This is the maximum allowable time given restraints pertaining to the number of students in the class and the amount of time available given a set number of class periods. To increase this further would necessitate the removal of critical theoretical material coverage and would cut directly into the question and answer sessions following each presentation.

#### Writing:

In the areas where the program deemed it necessary to adjust, and where the reviewers concurred, there was improvement. However, the area that requires continued emphasis at the present is the semester long process of writing a substantive research paper, which will be addressed through increasingly tailored feedback such that students were are potentially at-risk of going off track later in the process are headed off.

**Homeland Security Studies Certificate  
Colorado State University--Pueblo  
Communication Rubric**

Intended student learning outcome assessed with this rubric:

- *Students will be able to construct, compose, and deliver professional reports, research, and briefings.*

Student work assessed:

- Research presentation/briefing

Communication	Exemplary:	Proficient:	Emerging:	Not Present:
<b>A. Delivery</b>	Delivery is <i>dynamic</i> , utilizing <i>varied</i> tone, volume, pace, and body language in support of argument(s). Attire <i>enhances</i> environment.	Delivery is <i>clear</i> , utilizing <i>appropriate</i> tone, volume, pace, and body language in support of argument(s). Attire <i>supports</i> environment.	Delivery is audible, utilizing <i>flat</i> or <i>non-varied</i> tone, volume, pace, and body language in support of argument(s). Attire <i>detracts</i> from environment.	
<b>B. Presentation Tools</b>	Presentation tools are <i>logical</i> , utilizing <i>clear</i> sequences and transitions. Visual aids are <i>error-free</i> and <i>enhance</i> presentation environment.	Presentation tools are <i>mostly logical</i> and <i>generally</i> utilize clear sequences and transitions. Visual aids are <i>generally error-free</i> and <i>support</i> the presentation environment.	Presentation tools are <i>occasionally logical</i> and may utilize <i>confusing</i> sequences and transitions. Visual aids are <i>error-prone</i> and <i>detract</i> from the presentation environment.	
<b>C. Question and Answer Period</b>	Provides a <i>thorough</i> justification of conclusions, <i>clearly</i> explains rationales and assumptions.	Provides a justification of conclusions, explains rationales and assumptions.	Conclusions are not clearly justified, and/or assumptions are not explained.	

**Homeland Security Studies Certificate  
Colorado State University--Pueblo  
Writing Rubric**

Intended student learning outcome assessed with this rubric:

- *Students will be able to construct and present coherent, objective, and well reasoned arguments or discussions pertaining to topics on homeland security.*

Student work assessed:

- Research paper from student portfolio

<b>Critical Thinking</b>	<b>Exemplary:</b>	<b>Proficient:</b>	<b>Emerging:</b>	<b>Not Present:</b>
<b>A. Application of Evidence, Concepts, Theories</b>	Evidence, concepts, and theories, incorporated are <i>relevant</i> , and <i>clearly</i> articulated	Evidence, concepts, and theories are incorporated	Evidence, concepts, and theories are incorporated on a <i>limited</i> basis, and are only <i>occasionally</i> relevant	
<b>B. Quality of Reasoning</b>	Connections drawn between evidence, concepts, theories, and conclusions are <i>clearly</i> explained and <i>fully</i> evaluated	Connections drawn between evidence, concepts, theories, and conclusions are explained and evaluated	Connections drawn between evidence, concepts, theories, and conclusions are <i>occasionally</i> explained and evaluated, potentially incorrectly	
<b>C. Exposition and style</b>	Document is <i>well</i> organized, <i>clearly</i> structured, and <i>free</i> of spelling and grammatical errors. Organization <i>contributes</i> to readability.	Document organization is <i>coherent</i> , with occasional spelling and grammatical errors. Organization neither contributes nor detracts from readability.	Document organization is <i>opaque</i> with frequent spelling and grammatical issues. Organization detracts from readability.	