Summary Statement – Academic Program Performance in 2011-12

Provide a summary statement about academic program performance over the previous year including high points and low points.

Student performance in academic year 2011-2012 was strong. Students continue to meet or exceed the benchmarks we have set for them in the areas that we have been able to measure.

The program continues to face challenges due to lack of faculty in key areas, particularly in providing our students a consistent, appropriately focused methods course which we are able to use to track student progress in this key area. We continue to fill our methods requirement by allowing students to take courses in other departments. We are unable to track their success in these courses, and we have no control over what the students are learning or the standards that are being set for them. We will be offering a Qualitative Methods course in Fall 2012 (taught by Dr. Johns), and this will allow us to track the progress of students who register for this course. Dr. Johns will be making this course into a permanent course this coming year and the program will be modified to allow the new course to fulfill the students’ methods requirements. However, this does not solve the problem of our lack of control over the quantitative methods course. All ISS faculty are currently teaching the maximum load. There is no room for us to rotate this critical course into our schedules, even if we had the expertise to do so. We need a sociologist on staff who can cover this course on a regular basis, be part of the ISS faculty, and assist in other aspects of the program, such as building the Sociology cognate. We have been using adjuncts to cover our Sociology courses and this is just not acceptable. Sociology is a critical cognate for the ISS degree and a natural place to build enrollments. These courses need to be taught by a permanent, fulltime tenure track faculty member. We have asked for a line for a Sociologist for many years in a row but to no avail. Despite the size of our major, we continue to operate with a very limited number of faculty (three fulltime faculty, one shared
appointment with Psychology). All of our faculty have additional commitments to other programs (Psychology, Anthropology, Geography and Social Work). The addition of Susan Allen to our faculty brought the very popular Social Work cognate into the fold and has been very beneficial for the program. However, as Dr. Allen is the only social work faculty member on campus, her teaching schedule is completely full. Dr. Johns has taken over several of the core ISS courses (ISS 4935 while Dr. Schmidt was on sabbatical; ISS 3013 starting in Spring 2013) to cover for Dr. Schmidt and to relieve Dr. Gaskin-Butler of one course because of increasing pressure on her to teach Psychology courses. However, the cost of shifting Dr. Johns to ISS core courses is a reduction in upper level GEO courses, which are needed for the Geography cognate as well as the ESP undergraduate program. Dr. Johns has increased her teaching load to 3/3 and a faculty member from Tampa has been able to cover one of our upper level GEO courses, while we have just been unable to offer other important courses such as Medical Geography (needed for Health Sciences), Global Conservation (ESPG), and Human Geography (needed for the minor in Geography). Additional faculty resources must be allocated to ISS.

Lack of control over student learning in other areas is becoming an issue for our program, because students may arrive in the senior seminar with a diversity of levels of preparedness. Based on the cognates and cognate courses they take, some students may arrive in the capstone seminar without ever having written a serious research paper; many of them have woefully inadequate writing skills. We will be addressing this problem in the coming year in a variety of ways. First, we will continue to fight for an additional faculty member in Sociology. Sociology courses are very popular; data shows that they almost always fill completely. The content of these courses is ideal for transferring critical skills to ISS students. Having a Sociologist on staff would allow us greater control and a greater ability to track student progress and ensure student learning in key areas. Second, we are completing an analysis of the most popular cognate courses among our majors. We then intend to work with the faculty in other departments who teach these courses to ensure that our students are getting the skills they need to be successful. We will choose the courses that best fulfill our program goals, and guide students toward these courses. We may propose changes to the major itself to limit the cognate courses for ISS students so that we have better control over their learning. Furthermore, we will collaborate with key faculty in other departments and see if we can get them on board to help track our students. It is a lot to ask of faculty with other duties, but we are going to try. Third, we will re-examine our gateway course, ISS 3013, to determine if changes to this course might help better ensure student preparedness for the critical analysis, research and writing skills needed in the senior seminar.

**Summary Statement – Impact of Changes Made in 2011-12**

Provide a summary statement about changes that were made in your program as a result of ongoing assessment in 2011-2012 and the positive/negative impact of the changes that were made.

Last year, the only programmatic change has been the movement of Dr. Susan Allen into the SCL department and the ISS program. This brings the Social Work cognate into the department and has been very beneficial. Dr. Allen has also introduced an internship for students in the Social Work cognate, which has been very successful.
Last year we altered our assessments in two minor ways. We added the Social Work internship to our civic engagement SLO and we added assignments from ISS 3013 to our Communication SLO. Our goal was to broaden the scope of our assessment beyond the sole focus on the capstone seminar. This has been a successful strategy that has allowed us to get a more complete picture of how our students are doing.

Academic Learning Compacts: 2011 – 2012

“... to ensure student achievement in undergraduate and graduate degree programs ...”

Academic Program: ISS
Person Responsible: Rebecca Johns, Program Coordinator

**Mission of Academic Program (include URL):**
USF St. Petersburg Interdisciplinary Social Science (ISS) program is intended to provide students a broad grounding in the social sciences while creating opportunities to explore selected disciplines in more depth. The program emphasizes critical analysis of social issues, introduces students to a variety of paradigms and perspectives with which to frame social problems, gives students the opportunity to explore the research process, exposes students to a variety of methodologies, and emphasizes effective writing. The program provides a measure of flexibility and allows students to design a rigorous course of study built around at least two disciplinary interests.

**List Program Goal(s) / Objective(s):**
Program Goals / Objectives must be mapped to College Goals / Objectives – use consistent nomenclature.
[Please note impact of any changes that were made as a result of 2010-11 assessment]

ALCs must address student learning in four areas: 1. Content/Discipline Skills; 2. Communication Skills; Critical Thinking Skills; and 4. Civic Engagement.

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<td>1a. Identify an important social issue, and analyze the macro and micro level causes at the root of the problem as well as the social economic and</td>
<td>Final paper for ISS 4925 (capstone seminar)</td>
<td>Students will write a 13-15 page research paper that should include at least 8 bibliographical sources on the topic of</td>
<td>Fall 2011: 85% of students received a score of 70% or higher. 45% of the students received a final grade of A. Spring 2012: 73% received a grade of 70% or higher on</td>
<td>We will continue to use this assignment and assessment. The problem of students dropping the course or failing to complete the paper will be addressed by</td>
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| 2a. Write clearly and effectively, producing well organized, logical, well-supported written arguments that reflect appropriate use of language and meet assignment objectives. | ISS 4935 is the ISS capstone seminar; it require a major paper offering students an opportunity to identity a social problem analyze it, and demonstrate an understanding of how different social sciences approach the issue. A 13-15 page paper that includes at | 70% of students earn a score of 70% or better on the final draft of the paper.                                                                 | Fall 2011: 85% of students received a score of 70% or higher. 45% of the students received a final grade of A. 
Spring 2012: 73% received a grade of 70% or higher on the final paper. 46% received a final grade of A. 5 students did not complete the course. | We will continue to use this assignment and assessment. The problem of students dropping the course or failing to complete the paper will be addressed by strengthening student learning earlier in the program. |
### 3. Critical Thinking Skills

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<td>3a. Demonstrate an understanding of how knowledge (in Social Science) is generated</td>
<td>ISS 4935 requires students to prepare an annotated bibliography</td>
<td>70% of students will receive a score of 70% or higher on the annotated bibliography.</td>
<td>Fall 2011: 88% of students received a score of 70% or higher on this assignment. Spring 2012: 86% of students received a score of 70% or higher.</td>
<td>We will continue to use this assessment.</td>
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<td>3b. Demonstrate sound critical</td>
<td>ISS 4935 requires a major paper in which</td>
<td>70% of students will score a 70% or better</td>
<td>Fall 2011: 85% of students received a score of 70% or higher.</td>
<td>We will continue to use this assessment.</td>
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2b. Exhibit functional oral communication with minimal apprehension, and exhibit a willingness and readiness to communicate and share research results with others

ISS 3013 requires students to participate in 3 debates on important and controversial social issues.

70% of students will receive a score of 70% or higher on two of the debates, and a score of 80% or higher on at least one of the debates.

Fall 2011:
- Debate #1: 87.5% received a score of 70% or higher.
- Debate #2: 81.3% received a score of 70% or higher.
- Debate #3: 78.6% received a score of 70% or higher.

Spring 2012:
- Debate #1: 100% received a score of 70% or higher.
- Debate #2: 92.3% of students received a score of 70% or higher.
- Debate #3: 100% of students received a score of 70% or higher.

No data was collected on the second part of the assessment.

The Debates continue to work well as assessments of this SLO.
thinking by applying the university intellectual standards

| the intellectual standards are displayed. | on the final paper | 45% of the students received a final grade of A. Spring 2012: 73% received a grade of 70% or higher on the final paper. 46% received a final grade of A. 5 students did not complete the course |

4. Civic Engagement

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<td>a. Students will demonstrate an ability to apply basic social science research methods in the preparation of reports based on the analysis of social issues that impact the local/regional community</td>
<td>ISS 4940 requires students to write a term paper analyzing the internship experience in the context of relevant theory and literature. Students not enrolling in the internship will fulfill this objective through the writing of the term paper in ISS 4935.</td>
<td>70% of students will score a 70% or better on the final paper</td>
<td>100% of students who completed the internship paper received a grade of “Pass.” Two students did not complete the internship overall, so the overall completion rate is 86%.</td>
<td>Because the internship is graded on a pass/fail scale, this assessment will be modified to reflect that. We will continue to use the internship to assess engagement of those students who register for it. The program will be considering other ways to assess civic engagement in the coming year.</td>
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*Please include multiple assessments. For example: students perform well on classroom assignments, norm-referenced tests/surveys, and they get accepted to graduate school or are employed.