During the 2011/12 academic year the Justice Department revamped its SLOA plan for the Bachelor of Arts in Justice. To assess critical thinking and technical writing skills the Department will collect writing samples from one of its three writing intensive courses, which the faculty will review and evaluate for writing skills and critical thinking skills. For this report 12 papers (totaling more than 80 typed pages) from JUST 454’s midterm hypothetical problem were evaluated. To assess oral communication skills, the Department will record presentations from one of its upper division courses, which then will be evaluated by the collective faculty. In developing the assessment plan this year, the decision to collect the oral presentations was made too late to collect the recordings for the 2011/12 academic year. To assess students learning in the core areas of the Justice degree, the department developed a pre/post objective exam consisting of five questions from each of the required course areas. The Department will administer the exam to all JUST 110 courses in the first week of each semester to determine the justice knowledge level students have upon entering the program. The exam will also be administered in JUST 460, the program’s current capstone course, to assess the students’ knowledge at the end of their Justice curriculum. The exam was finalized too late to administer to any JUST 110 courses; however, the exam was administered to students (N=12) in spring semester’s JUST 460 course.

The intent was for the Justice faculty to review the writing samples during the last week of contract. Unfortunately, three of the faculty were involved in instructing Maymester courses and did not have much time to thoroughly review the papers. What review was possible concluded this particular group of papers demonstrated strong writing abilities and strong critical thinking skills. The assignment involved students identifying and discussing legal authority for five legal issues presented in a hypothetical problem and then applying the legal authority to the facts of the problem. All papers demonstrated more than satisfactory levels of writing and critical thinking skills, with some papers demonstrating exceptional skills levels.

Regarding the assessment objective exam, the results were not as strong as the Department had anticipated. Eight areas were tested corresponding to JUST 110, 125, 293 (201), 222, 251, 300, 340 and 358. The percentage of answers correct, associated with questions associated for JUST 110, 300 and 340 were 71, 70 and 75 respectfully. The Department considers those results satisfactory learning outcomes. The three courses with the worst results were JUST 222, 251 and 358, with percentages correct being 55, 40 and 55. JUST 222 and 251 results do not come as a surprise to the Department. These courses had been instructed by former assistant professor Dr. Janet McClellan. The quality of her instruction was recognized as less than satisfactory and contributed to her dismissal. Currently, assistant professor, Dr. Rob Duke has assumed primary responsibility for instructing those two courses, and the Department has high expectations for learning outcomes to greatly increase for the two courses. JUST 358 is instructed by associate professor, clinical Mr. Mike Daku. Mr. Daku, who has enjoyed a good reputation with students, was surprised by the results, indicating he thought the
questions were easy. In response to the low score he intends to insure that key concepts are strongly emphasized in the coursework. One other notable result was that the percentage correct for the questions associated with JUST 201 was 67. What is surprising is that of the 12 students taking the assessment exam, only one had taken the course (the course is currently proposed as a new course and has been taught one semester as a special topics course). The fact that without any formal instruction 2/3 of the answers were correct suggests the questions are too basic or overlap with subjects from other courses. In any event, after the exam is administered next fall in JUST 110 classes, the Department will need to examine the results and perhaps revise questions.

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Justice