

Texas Southern University
Assessment Narrative
Academic Years 2007-08 thru 2009-10

BARBARA JORDAN – MICKEY LELAND SCHOOL OF PUBLIC AFFAIRS

Program: PhD in Urban Planning & Environmental Policy

The mission of the Doctoral program in Urban Planning and Environmental Policy is to prepare future scholars to conduct high-quality research in Urban Planning and Environmental Policy and to use inclusive approaches to study urban issues.

Goal 1

The goal of the PhD program in Urban Planning and Environmental Planning is to create a learning environment that encourages high quality, comprehensive research in issues related to urban planning and environmental policy area. Towards this goal, the program has identified two specific learning objectives: (i) to ensure that students have in-depth knowledge and skills in urban planning theory, analytical methodology, and environmental policy analysis; and, (ii) to ensure that students have an ability to conduct research on issues related to housing and community development, land use and transportation planning, or environmental policy.

Outcome 1.1 – Students will demonstrate in-depth knowledge and skills in the fields of urban planning

The first learning objective is to ensure that PD students have gained demonstrable, in-depth knowledge and skills in the fields of urban planning and environmental planning. This involves introducing students to subjects such as advanced planning theories, urban theories, environmental policy, environmental and natural resource management, analytical planning methods and environmental monitoring and assessment. The Program measures its success towards this learning objective through a PhD qualifying exam that students are required to take after they have completed a minimum of 12 credit hours of core course work. The Exam tests them in three areas of study: planning theory, methodology, and environmental policy. The results from these exams are the metric used to measure the success of the first learning objective.

The Program's target in the years 2007-08; 2008-09; and 2009-10 were to have at least 70% of all students who took the PhD qualifying exam to pass.

Findings (2008-2010)

The Program was able to achieve this target in all three years. In 2007-08 and in 2008-09, four students appeared for the qualifying exam and all four (100%) passed. In 2009-10, seven students appeared for the Exam and six (85.7%) of them passed.

Action Plan Summary – 2007-2008

The Program aims to assign each student an academic advisor who will help the student to select courses for study and help them to prepare for the PhD Qualifying Examination.

Action Plan Summary – 2008-2009

The Program will also provide its students with a study review guide before the Exam and in particular reference to the results from 2009-10.

Action Plan Summary – 2009-2010

Allow students to re-take the Exam should they happen to fail at their first attempt.

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Outcome 1.2 – Students will demonstrate knowledge and skills to conduct independent, original research

The second learning objective of the PhD Program is to ensure that students have gained demonstrable knowledge and skills to conduct independent, original research in the fields of urban planning and environmental policy. This involves encouraging students to combine the knowledge gained from their core and elective courses with an extensive literature review of the topics of interest to them. The Program measures its success towards this learning objective by administering a PhD comprehensive exam that all students are required to take after completing at least 42 credit hours of core and elective course work, and having attained an overall GPA of at least 3.0. The Exam tests students on their knowledge in two or three subjects that the student has identified as topics of interest for their dissertation research. The exam is conducted in a combined format of a written test and an oral defense. The results from the Comprehensive Exam are used as a metric to measure the success of this second learning objective.

The Program's targeted success rates in the years 2007-08; 2008-09; and 2009-10 were to have at least 70% of all students who appeared for the PhD comprehensive exam to pass.

Findings (2008-2010)

The program was able to achieve its target in all three years. Nine students appeared for the PhD comprehensive exam between 2007-08 and 2009-2010 and all nine (100%) passed.

Action Plan Summary – 2007-2008

The PhD Program will assign all PhD students a comprehensive exam committee and a committee chair that will help guide them through the process of the comprehensive exam.

Action Plan Summary – 2008-2009

The chairperson and the committees will help to familiarize students with the format of the exam and help the student select the topics of interest for their dissertation research.

Action Plan Summary – 2009-2010

The chairperson and committee members will help the student in identifying relevant literature for these topics and help them create a reading list of information to be tested during the exam.

Texas Southern University
Assessment Plan
Academic Years 2007-08 thru 2009-10

College/School: Public Affairs

THECB CIP Code 04.0301.00

Discipline/Program: PhD in Urban Planning & Environmental Policy

| Goal | Student Learning Outcomes/ Objectives | Metric | Target | | | Findings | | | Action Plan | Reference Document |
|--|---|------------------------------------|--|--|--|--|--|---|--|---|
| | | | 2007-08 | 2008-09 | 2009-10 | 2007-08 | 2008-09 | 2009-10 | | |
| Goal 1 To create a learning environment that encourages high quality, comprehensive research in issues related to urban planning and environmental policy area | SLO 1.1 Students will demonstrate in-depth knowledge and skills in urban planning theory, methodology of planning analysis, and environmental policy analysis | UPEP PhD qualifying exam scores | Majority of the students (70%) will pass their qualifying exam | Majority of the students (70%) will pass their qualifying exam | Majority of the students (70%) will pass their qualifying exam | 100% (4 out of 4) students passed the exam | 100% (10 out of 10) students passed the exam | 85.7% (6 out of 7) students passed the exam | <p>Based on 2007-08 Findings Assign each student an academic advisor to help the student select courses and prepare for the exam</p> <p>Based on 2008-09 Findings Provide study guide before the exam</p> <p>Based on 2009-10 Findings Allow students to re-take the exam if they fail at the first attempt</p> | R1.1 UPEP PhD student qualifying exam reports 2007-2010 |
| | SLO 1.2 Students will demonstrate the ability to conduct research on housing and community development, land use and transportation planning, or environmental policy | UPEP PhD comprehensive exam scores | Majority of the students (70%) will pass their qualifying exam | Majority of the students (70%) will pass their qualifying exam | Majority of the students (70%) will pass their qualifying exam | 100% (1 out of 1) students passed the exam | 100% (4 out of 4) students passed the exam | 100% (4 out of 4) students passed the exam | <p>Based on 2007-08 Findings Assign students a comprehensive exam committee and a committee chair to guide them through the process of the comprehensive exam</p> <p>Based on 2008-09 Findings Encourage students and comprehensive exam chairs and committee to work closely together to help familiarize students with the format of the exam and to help in the selection of topics for study</p> <p>Based on 2009-10 Findings Encourage students to work closely with their comprehensive exam chairs and committee to develop a list of bibliographic material for their selected topics of interest</p> | R1.2 UPEP PhD student comprehensive exam reports emails 2007-2010 |