**Sociology Department Results**

Submitted by Dr. William J. Cunningham and the Sociology/Psychology Faculty

**Sociology Department Assessment Strategies:**

Because there is no nationally standardized examination available for introductory level Sociology courses, the full-time instructors in the Sociology and Psychology Departments collaborated to develop a common pre-test/post-test for assessment purposes. All instructors teaching General Sociology are asked to administer the 40 item multiple-choice examination at the beginning and conclusion of each term. In the assessments reported below the 40 multiple choice items are embedded in the comprehensive final administered during finals week.

**General Sociology:**

Students from 6 sections of General Sociology completed both the pre- and post test. Data from the 2010-2011 academic year are summarized below:

**Fall 2010**

* Number of Students Tested: 82 students-3 sections
* Pre-Test Mean Score: 40% correct
* Post-Test Mean Score: 65% correct

**Spring 2011**

* Number of Students Tested: 106 students-3 sections
* Pre-Test Mean Score: 40% correct
* Post-Test Mean Score: 70% correct

**Evaluation of Pre and Post Test Data:**

The full-time faculty in the Sociology and Psychology Departments reviewed the test results for differences in mean scores between individual sections of the course taught during the academic year. First, the Sociology pre-test has provided a very consistent measure of what the students’ basic knowledge of Sociology as they enter the classroom. In all 6 sections the average score was a 40% on the pre-test. Second, looking at the post-test results there is a significant increase in their knowledge of Sociology after taking the class and taking the comprehensive final exam for the course.

In addition to overall mean score differences, individual item analysis was conducted to determine any relationships in correct answers between pre-test and post-test responses. Through item analysis, faculty attempted to indentify if the majority of incorrect answers were either a question one would define as an identification question or an application question. The pattern of missed questions seemed to fall primarily in the category of identification questions which is asking the student to be more familiar with definitions and vocabulary. In order to address this issue the faculty will have to develop strategies of teaching and test reviews to help students retain the information more frequently. The results will allow faculty to discuss content areas where emphasis may be being less consistently applied across sections of the course.

During the 2010-2011 school year, the full-time faculty employed a qualitative assessment tool called a C.A.T. to further examine how students perceive course content, including the textbook and materials used, as well as the various teaching strategies employed for specific content areas within the course. The full-time faculty offer the General Sociology course without pre-requisites to invite developmental students into the course. The full-time faculty is always exploring new teaching methods to help all students in the class to be successful. Thus, assignments, extra credit assignments, and teaching strategies are always analyzed and reviewed as to their effectiveness to these ends.