

Institutional Effectiveness Report

Academic Year 2007-2008

Political Science

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POLITICAL SCIENCE PROGRAM EFFECTIVENESS REPORT 2007-08

Section I. Program Outcomes and Goals

Outcome 1

Graduates will be able to demonstrate knowledge of the terms, concepts, and principles of political science.

Outcome 2

Graduates will demonstrate the ability to produce a complete behavioral research assignment in which they develop and test empirical hypotheses, utilize statistical research methods and draw conclusions about their findings.

Outcome 3

Graduates will demonstrate the ability to produce a complete theoretical essay in which they present and analyze a theoretical argument and express themselves clearly and concisely in a written format using correct grammar, spelling, punctuation, and documentation.

Outcome 4

Political science faculty will maintain currency in the discipline.

Outcome 5

Political science faculty will contribute to the body of knowledge in the discipline.

Outcome 6

Political science faculty will disseminate the expertise gained through education and research to the university community, the city of Florence, and the Pee Dee region of South Carolina.

Outcome 7

Political Science faculty will provide quality instruction in every class.

Section II. Assessment Activities

Outcome 1

In Spring 2008 the internal exam was administered in POL 395 (Political Theory) to all students in the course. The technology survey was administered in Spring 2008 to all students in POL 395 in order to assess the effectiveness of the technology grant.

Outcome 2

No assessment was done for this outcome in 2007-2008. The POL 295 class is now taught by a new faculty member. That faculty member will develop a revised Outcome 2 to be presented to the program faculty for consideration and possible adoption at the end of academic year 2008-2009. Assessment would then be done using the new Outcome 2 in 2009-2010.

Outcome 3

The theory papers from the POL 395 class for Spring 2008 were evaluated in late April.

Outcome 4

The department chair compiled the data for this outcome from the annual reports submitted by faculty in March.

Outcome 5

The department chair compiled the data for this outcome from the annual reports submitted by faculty in March.

Outcome 6

The department chair compiled the data for this outcome from the annual reports submitted by faculty in March.

Outcome 7

The department chair compiled the data for this outcome in late April from the student evaluation data provided by the University for Spring 2007 and Fall 2007.

Section III. Results and Evaluation

Outcome 1

The result from the political science internal exam in Spring 2008 was an average score of 69.27 (N=22). We did not reach the benchmark of having graduating political science majors average 70 percent or better on the internal exam in Spring 2008, though the results were very close. The faculty noted that results have been improving in the last four academic years. If the trend continues the faculty has every expectation that the average score on the internal exam will be 70 or higher in the near future. Results for the internal exam are presented in Table 1.

Results from the administration of the technology survey to political science students were mixed in Spring 2008. In response to the statement “Members of the FMU political science faculty use technology to aid in instruction”, 68.1 percent of students in Spring 2008 (N=22) either indicated agreement or strong agreement. This was largely unchanged from Spring 2007 when the percentage was 68.42. The statement “The Political Science and Geography computer lab contributed to my educational experience at FMU” was either agreed with or strongly agreed with by 54.5 percent of students in Spring 2008, in contrast to 73.69 percent of students in Spring 2007. Finally, the last statement “My experience as a political science major has made me more comfortable using computers and other technology resources” was either agreed with or strongly agreed with by only 22.7 percent of students in Spring 2008, a marked contrast with 68.42 percent of students in Spring 2007.

Since Spring 2006 the faculty had noted a larger number of ‘neutral’ responses to the items in the survey. In Spring 2008 this continued, but an additional development was noted: namely, an increase in the number of ‘disagree’ and ‘strongly disagree’ responses. The large

number of 'neutral', 'disagree', and 'strongly disagree' responses were found especially in responses to the last statement "My experience as a political science major has made me more comfortable using computers and other technology resources." This appears to confirm what the faculty concluded in Spring 2007 that students enter the program with more computer experience and knowledge so that there is not as much value added in the technology sphere by students' experiences in the program.

Outcome 2

There were no results in 2007-2008 for this outcome, for the reasons explained in Section II of this report.

Outcome 3

Results from POL 395 papers for Spring 2008 are summarized in Table 2. For comparative purposes, results from 1998-2007 have also been included. For papers from Spring 2008, we failed to meet the benchmark for measures 1, 2, and 3.

Outcome 4

The results for Outcome 4, as compiled by the department chair, were 132 points and are summarized in Table 3. For 2007-08, the program exceeded the benchmark for this outcome.

Outcome 5

The results for Outcome 5, as compiled by the department chair, were 72 points and are summarized in Table 3. For 2007-08, the program exceeded the benchmark for this outcome.

Outcome 6

The results for Outcome 6, as compiled by the department chair, were 165 points and are summarized in Table 3. For 2007-08, the program exceeded the benchmark for this outcome.

Outcome 7

The results for Outcome 7, as compiled by the department chair, are presented in Table 4. For 2007-2008 the program exceeded the benchmark for this outcome. Only full-time program faculty are included in Table 4. However, program faculty who teach either one or two courses per semester also have scores which exceed the benchmark for this outcome, indicating that quality instruction is provided in every course taught by political science faculty.

TABLE 1: ASSESSMENT RESULTS FOR OUTCOME 1

SCORES ON POLITICAL SCIENCE INTERNAL EXAM

Term	N	Score
Spring 1998	2	53.0
Fall 1998	8	68.1
Spring 1999	24	61.4
Fall 1999	9	74.3
Spring 2000	11	72.0
Fall 2000	9	62.7
Spring 2001	11	72.7
Fall 2001	7	74.1
Spring 2002	4	64.8
Fall 2002	3	50.66
Spring 2003	20	58.3
Fall 2003	7	60.28
Spring 2004	20	58.9
Fall 2004	6	63.0
Spring 2005	14	57.57
Fall 2005	9	61.33
Spring 2006	20	72.6
Fall 2006	4	68

Spring 2007	19	66.42
<i>Spring 2008</i>	22	<i>69.27</i>

TABLE 2: ASSESSMENT RESULTS FOR OUTCOME 3

Term	Measure 1: Quality of Analysis	Measure 2: Quality of Writing	Measure 3: Overall
Spring 1998	100%	63%	50%
Spring 1999	80%	100%	60%
Fall 1999	100%	100%	63%
Fall 2000	100%	100%	80%
Spring 2002	100%	100%	50%
Spring 2003	100%	100%	57%
Spring 2004	100%	83%	83%
Spring 2005	100%	100%	100%
Spring 2006	100%	100%	100%
Spring 2007	85.71%	71.43%	85.71%
<i>Spring 2008</i>	<i>57.14%</i>	<i>57.14%</i>	<i>57.14%</i>

TABLE 3: ASSESSMENT RESULTS FOR OUTCOMES 4, 5, AND 6

Faculty Member	Outcome 4 Score	Outcome 5 Score	Outcome 6 Score
Faculty #1	11	5	16
Faculty #2	11	6	33
Faculty #3	20	4	9
Faculty #4	18	14	7
Faculty #5	24	5	41
Faculty #6	17	0	11
Faculty # 7	31	38	48
<i>2007-2008 Total</i>	<i>132</i>	<i>72</i>	<i>165</i>
2006-2007 Results	103	54	122
Benchmark	50	40	75

TABLE 4: ASSESSMENT RESULTS FOR OUTCOME 7

Faculty Member	Spring 2007	Fall 2007
Faculty # 1	1.29	1.57
Faculty # 2	1.70	1.59

Faculty # 3	1.30	1.59
Faculty # 4	1.35	1.24
Faculty # 5	1.58	1.85
Faculty # 6	1.29	1.10
Faculty # 7	--	1.43

Section IV. Improvements in Place

Outcome 1

The political science internal exam has been given since Fall 1997. In Fall 2003 the internal exam was completely revised by the program faculty. The revised exam was modified in Spring 2006 to allow students to omit ten (of sixty) questions on the test. This modification was adopted to make the test a better and fairer evaluation of students' knowledge of political science. The program faculty again modified the test before its administration in Fall 2006 by deleting several questions, re-writing several questions, and adding several new questions in order to update the test. The changes were made to improve the test by eliminating vague or 'bad' questions, clarifying other questions, and adding some timely questions to the test.

Outcome 2

There is insufficient data to warrant program changes relevant to Outcome 2 at this time.

Outcome 3

A finished preliminary draft of the required paper in POL 395 (Political Theory) is required in order to improve the quality of analysis and writing of students. The instructor of the course gives extensive written feedback on the preliminary drafts of the papers, which students must then revise and rewrite. This improvement was implemented in Summer 1997 and has met with considerable success in most years.

Outcome 4

To support the ability of the faculty to maintain currency in the discipline, the department chair, as part of the departmental budget request, has asked for significant increases in travel and computer funds since 1997.

In addition, department faculty applied for and received a grant to purchase a Smart Board technology system for a second classroom used by department faculty. Because of the acquisition of the first Smart Board technology system a workshop on using Excel through the Smart Board was held for program faculty in 2007-2008.

Outcome 5

To support the ability of the faculty to contribute to the body of knowledge in the discipline, the department chair, as part of the departmental budget request, has asked for significant increases in travel and computer funds since 1997. Because of increased funding program faculty have received department travel funds as well as technology resources as needed. In addition program faculty have access to grants for both scholarly research and travel to professional conferences through the University.

Outcome 6

Program faculty continue to share their expertise both with the members of the university community and the broader community through various means. These means include the giving of presentations on scholarly topics and communication with representatives of the media on issues and topics related to faculty members' areas of specialization. As evinced by the data for 2007-08, these activities are ongoing and extensive.

Outcome 7

2007-2008 is the first academic year in which assessment has been done for this outcome, resulting in evidence of the strength of program faculty as classroom teachers.

Section V. Planned Improvements

Outcome 1

The political science faculty met at the end of Spring 2008 to evaluate our progress on this outcome. The faculty noted that though the benchmark was not met for this outcome in Spring 2008, the average score of 69.27 % was very close to the benchmark of 70% and there has been steady upward progress in average test scores on the internal exam in recent years. The faculty reached a decision to review and possibly revise the internal exam in academic year 2009-2010 after the addition of a new member of the program faculty.

The political science faculty agreed in Spring 2008 to discontinue administration of the technology survey. The faculty believes that there is adequate evidence (from the results of conducting the survey for many years) of the value to the students of the computer lab, which was originally funded by a technology grant.

Outcome 2

The political science faculty will develop and consider for adoption a new Outcome 2 in 2008-2009 with the intention of implementing assessment of the new outcome in academic year 2009-2010. This is because, as noted in Section II, a new faculty member has taken over the responsibility for POL 295.

Outcome 3

The program faculty are aware that the results of the assessment for Outcome 3 are at odds with recent assessment results for this outcome. The failure to meet any of the benchmarks for this outcome was clearly out of line with years of past assessment results. This could be an

anomaly or the beginning of a negative trend. The faculty decided to monitor the results for this outcome carefully to see if any action needs to be taken.

Outcome 4

The political science faculty met in April 2008 to evaluate our progress on this outcome. The faculty was pleased to note that we had exceeded the benchmark of 50 points. The faculty decided to consider revising the benchmarks for Outcomes 4, 5, and 6. The proposal to be considered would revise the benchmarks to reflect an average number of points per faculty member (rather than a total number of points earned by all faculty). This would ensure that the benchmarks would not be dependent on the total number of program faculty in any given academic year.

Outcome 5

The political science faculty met in April 2008 to evaluate our progress on this outcome. The faculty was pleased to note that we had exceeded the benchmark of 40 points. The faculty decided to make no changes at this time.

Outcome 6

The political science faculty met in April 2008 to evaluate our progress on this outcome. The faculty was pleased to note that we had exceeded the benchmark of 75 points. The faculty decided to make no changes at this time.

Outcome 7

The political science faculty is very pleased with the first evaluation of Outcome 7. All program faculty (both full-time and part-time) received an average rating of 2 or better on student evaluations in Spring 2007 and Fall 2007. The faculty decided to make no changes at this time.

Submitted 9 May 2008 by:

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