Student Outcomes Assessment and Success Report AY 2018-19

Unit/Program Name: **Political Science**

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Part 1a: Summary of Student Learning Outcomes Assessment

a. What learning outcomes did you assess this past year? If this is a graduate program, identify the Graduate Student Learning Outcome each outcome aligns with.	**b. (1) What assignments or activities did you use to determine how well your students attained the outcome? (2) In what course or other required experience did the assessment occur?**	**c. What were your expectations for student performance?**	**d. What were the actual data/results?**	**e. What changes or improvements were made or will be made in response to these assessment results or feedback from previous year's report?** *Can expand on this in Part 2.*
1. Written Communication: a) Write a persuasive argument supported by evidence; b) write a paper/essay with minimal grammatical or spelling errors; c) use appropriate citation method; d) demonstrate the ability to write different styles of papers.	In PSCI 499 (Senior Seminar), students wrote three "thought papers" exploring issues related to the assigned readings, and one research paper on a topic of their choosing (in conjunction with the instructor)	Students should average 12 points out of 20 possible points for each paper using the UDIE/AAC&U Written Communication rubric.	Of the 15 students in PSCI 499, 10 students averaged 12 points or higher on the papers.	The Department is considering how to better address writing within the major. Currently we are considering whether to add a specific course to our curriculum, or to strengthen the writing component in some existing courses.
2. Critical Thinking and Analysis: a) compare/contrast different perspectives; b) identify strengths and weaknesses of policies or behaviors; c) draw connections between scholarly works; d) apply theory to current events/policies; e) identify appropriate method to analyze an issue or event.	In PSCI 499, students completed the ETS Major Field Test (MFT) in Political Science during this course, which included a section on critical thinking and analysis. In addition, the four papers students submitted were used to assess their critical thinking skills.	On the MFT, our departmental mean for the Analysis and Critical Thinking section should have 50% of the other institutional means below ours. In PSCI 499, using the professor-developed rubric combining the AAC&U Critical Thinking rubric and the department's student	On the MFT, the departmental mean (62) in this section had 52% of other institutional means below ours. This was a slight increase from Spring 2018 (61, 43%). In PSCI 499, 11 of the 15 students averaged 24 points or higher on the three Thought Papers, and 7 of the 15 students had 24 points or	The Department has not yet discussed a response to these specific results. As part of a more general discussion of assessment and student learning outcomes later this fall, we will reexamine our targets/benchmarks and then proceed from there.

		learning outcomes, students should average 24 out of 40 points on the three thought papers, and 24 out of 44 points on the research paper.	higher for the research paper. These results are significantly better than 2018 for the Thought Papers, but significantly worse on the research papers.	
3. Qualitative and Quantitative Research Skills: a) use theory to guide research, develop well thought-out explanations; b) students apply appropriate methodology for research (case study, quantitative, qualitative); c) students demonstrate knowledge of and application of basic terms of empirical research; d) students demonstrate understanding of prior research on their topic; e) effective organization and presentation of their findings.	In PSCI 499, students completed the Political Science MFT, which included a section on research methodology. Students submitted a research paper as the final paper in PSCI 499, which were assessed on their demonstration of expected research skills. Also assessed student research papers in PSCI 340, Political Inquiry.	On the MFT, the departmental mean for the Methodology section should have 50% of scores below our mean. In PSCI 499, using the professor-developed rubric (developed from the Department's student learning outcomes), students should score a mean of 2.00 or higher on research skills (0 to 4 point scale). In PSCI 340, using the professor-developed rubric for the research papers, 75% of the students should earn 110 points out of 160, with a class mean of 120 points or higher.	On the MFT in PSCI 499, the departmental mean of 52 had 49% of other institutional means below ours. This result is better than in 2018 (50, 36%). In PSCI 499, 8 of 15 students had an average of 2.00 or higher on the research skills rubric. This is a slightly better result than in 2018. The departmental mean was 2.08, about the same as in 2018. In PSCI 340, 17 of the 18 students scored 110 points or higher on the rubric, with a class mean of 121.4.	The Department is considering whether to move PSCI 499 from the spring semester to the fall semester. "Senioritis" strongly impacted several students this past year, who submitted sub-par research papers compared to their previous written work. If we do move the course from spring to fall, we will hopefully have research paper that are more reflective of actual student learning, and thus raise the student performance level.
4. Content Knowledge in American Politics, Comparative Politics, International Relations, and Political Philosophy.	In PSCI 499, students completed the MFT which included sections in all four content areas.	Am Pol.: MFT departmental mean subscore should have 60% of other institutional means below ours. Comp. Pol.: MFT departmental mean subscore should have 50% of other institutional means below ours. Int'l Rel'ns: MFT departmental mean subscore should have 50% of other	In American Politics, the departmental mean (54) had 63% of other schools with a mean below ours. This is a slight decline from 2018, but still achieves our expectation. In Comp. Politics, the departmental mean (53) had 56% of other schools with a mean below ours. This is a slight decline from 2018 but still meets our target.	The Department has adjusted its benchmark targets now that we have three years' worth of data with the redesigned MFT. Our outcomes remain above the national average for the two categories where we have had very strong performances over the past decade. We are waiting to see another two years' of data for the other two categories to determine whether outcomes in the other two topic areas are aberrations

		institutional means below ours. Pol. Theory: MFT departmental mean subscore should have 30% of other institutional means below ours.	In Int'l Relations, the departmental mean (52) had 41% of other schools with a mean below ours. This is a decline from 2018, and we did not meet our target. In Political Theory, our departmental mean (45) had only 13% of other schools with a mean below ours. This was a significant decline from 2018, and we are not close to our target.	or strong indicators of a downward trend.
5. Oral Communication Skills: a) inclusion and clarity of a central message (thesis); b) use of appropriate delivery techniques, including posture, gestures, eye contact, etc.; c) demonstration of appropriate language skills, including appropriate vocabulary, terminology, and sentence structure; d) organization of the presentation; e) inclusion of supporting materials	In PSCI 340, students were assessed on their oral presentation of their research papers.	In PSCI 340, 75% of students should score 25 out of 30 points on the professor-developed rubric, with a class mean of 25 points or higher.	15 out of the 16 students who delivered oral presentations scored higher than 25 points out of 30. The class mean was 27.1 points.	These are good results, and no changes are being contemplated at the moment.

See the discussion below in part 2a.

Part 1b: Review of Student Success Data & Activities

a. What goals/objectives were established this past year to aid student performance, retention, persistence, and completion?	b. What primary action steps were taken to make progress on each goal and who was responsible?	c. What data informs progress on each goal?*	d. What were some accomplishments or achievements for each goal and/or challenges confronted?	e. Please indicate goals that are continuing and any goals that will replace a previous goal. Any additional goals can also be added on a new line.
1.Reduce DFDr rates in PSCI 340 (complements #4, above)	Changes in undergrad curriculum. Political science program and instructors in PSCI 340	DFDr rates for PSCI 340	See discussion below	See discussion and table below.
2.Reduce DFDr rates in 400 level PSCI courses (complements #2,3, 4, and 5, above)**	Political science program and instructors of 400 level courses. Audits of transcripts.	DFDr rates for 400 level courses	In AY 2015-16, our DFDr rate for all 400 level courses averaged 31.52%. In AY 2017-18, that total was down to 12.13% and remained roughly the same for AY 2018-19 at 13.22%.	It appears that we have greatly reduced our DFDr rates in 400 level courses over the past several years. The last two years' scores are well below our original target of 25%.
3.Increase one-year retention rates	Political science program, instructors and advisers. Changes in learning community. Changes in curriculum, including moving 245 to 340. Transcipt audits. Advisement survey administered to identify weaknesses of the advisement process.	One-year retention rates.	Over the seven years from 2011 through 2017, the political science program averaged a retention rate of .687 from one Fall to the next. This was slightly above the CAS average over the same period of 66.7%. The program's retention rate for 2018 was 72.73% for a cohort of 20. This is comparable to the rates of other departments of equivalent size: SSE 17 and 76.47; and Theater, 17 and 67.71%. It is slightly above the rate for CAS as a whole: 67.16%.	The program aims to stay at or above the CAS retention rate; and to remain comparable to that of departments of similar size.
4. Raise average student credit hours to 15 per semester	Same as 3, above.	Student credit hours, Fall to Fall.	Average Fall credit hours for students in the political science program have risen	Maintain average credit hours between the CAS Fall average

			from 13.98 in Fall, 2017, to 14.46 in Fall, 2018. The CAS averages for Fall 17 and Fall 18 were, respectively, 13.31 and 13.28.	and 15 credit hours per student.
5. Increase four- and six-year graduation rates	Same as 3 above.	Four- and six-year graduation rates, by cohort.	Four-year graduation rates for political science students have risen from 10% (2009 cohort) to 47.6% (2014 cohort). The rate for the 2015 cohort, though, shrunk to 25%. Six-year graduation rates average about 40% per cohort, beginning with the 2007 cohort. But that rate rose to 56.25% for the 2013 cohort, which graduated in 2019.	Maintain or increase cohort graduation rates to about 50%, which the 2011 cohort did achieve. But the 2015 cohort's rate was just half of that Increase 6-year cohort graduation rate to the CAS average, which was 40.85% for the 2013 cohort. This goal was met.
***Data source: Blue Reports **Includes PSCI 400, but excludes all course numbers below 400. Includes PSCI 499. Excludes PSCI courses 495, 497 and 498; and LS courses 418 and 419.**				

Part 2: Continuous Quality Improvement

Part 2a: The department discussed these assessment results in a meeting on October 9, 2019. Because all faculty in the department except for the department chair regularly contribute courses in the Political Science BA major, the discussion occurred in a departmental meeting.

Based on these results and those from the previous year, we will hold a more thorough discussion later this semester that will examine our assessment program for the Poli Sci major, starting with a review of the student learning outcomes, then reexamining how we should assess those outcomes, and what process we will use. The goal is to make the assessment process less cumbersome and more efficient – as well as more meaningful.

The discussion on October 9th considered the merits and rationales for moving PSCI 499, our Senior Seminar, from the spring semester to the fall semester to avoid the "senioritis" that has caused lower student performance over the past year or so. Because some key faculty members were unable to attend, no decision was reached.

Likewise, initial discussion was started regarding the writing skills results that are lower than our expectations. Some faculty noted that there were factors beyond our control at work here. However, some ideas were raised about how to move forward (either by adding a required course in the major program that would focus on writing in the discipline, or by adding strong writing components to existing courses). These discussions will continue later this fall semester as we discuss a broader review of our assessment program for the Poli Sci major.

Once we complete these discussions and decide on any potential revisions, we will notify students who are impacted as well as the administration through normal channels of communications.

Part 2b: A pivotal component to the department's student success plan is to reduce the DWF numbers in PSCI 245 (Political Inquiry). This PSCI 245 course is required for the Political Science major, and is an elective for the Political Science minor. From a thorough examination of data (reported as part of student success plan in 2015-2016), our department decided to make some curriculum changes to PSCI 245. First, the course now has prerequisites pertaining to class status (juniors and seniors) along with prerequisites pertaining to previous political science coursework completion. Second, the course number was changed to PSCI 340. This plan started its implementation in the Fall 2016 semester.

Table 1 lists student data that show DWF rates in PSCI 340 decreased in its first offering. Although the added prerequisites decreased the number of students enrolling in PSCI 340, they also dramatically decreased the DWF rates. While previous semesters, when the course was offered as PSCI 245 with no prerequisites, the average DWF rate was 32.2% (from 2010 to 2015). For 2016, the average was 27.7%, for 2017 it was 15.7% and for 2018 it was 23.8%. These three years combine for an average of 22.4%. These are clear effects of our student success plan working to reduce DWF rates in our department. It seems the change has made significant progress away from DWF rates being over a third of the class and now moved closer to a quarter. We will continue to make necessary changes to the course to get these numbers as low as possible.

Table 1: DWF Rates in PSCI 245 (2010-2015) and PSCI 340 (2016 - 2018)

Semester	*# of students*	*Total Class DWF (%)*
Fall 2010	31	12 (38.7%)
Fall 2011	32	12 (37.5%)
Fall 2012	34	9 (26.4%)
Fall 2013	28	10 (35.7%)
Fall 2014	29	8 (27.5%)
Fall 2015	29	8 (27.5%)
Fall 2016	18	5 (27.7%)
Fall 2017	19	3 (15.7%)
Fall 2018	21	5 (23.8%)

Dear Mike, Matt, & Stan,

Thank you so much for sharing your assessment process and findings for AY 2018-19 with the Assessment Council. You will find feedback and ratings on the rubric below. It is understood that some of the feedback might encompass practices that you already engage in but were not documented in this report. As the purpose of this evaluation is focused on recognizing great work and helping faculty improve assessment practice, it is not necessary to retroactively add documentation. Please feel free to let me know if you have any questions or if there is any way I can assist you in further developing assessment in your program.

This report will be shared with the Associate Dean(s) and Dean of your college and summarized findings will be shared as composite college/institutional data with the President's Office and the Provost's team.

Sincerely,

Kelley (x7975)

Program: B.A. Political Science	**Overall Rating: Mature (2.50/3.00)**
Strengths	**Recommendations**
• Learning outcomes are clear and specifically broken down into more measurable demonstrations of learning. • Courses and assignments for measures are clearly described. Most include multiple student demonstrations of learning and/or a variety of sources of student learning data to provide a more comprehensive picture of student learning. • A standardized instrument (ETS MFT) is utilized as one point of data for multiple outcomes, alongside course-based assessments that utilize learning-outcome and/or AAC&U adapted rubrics for evaluation. • Clear information is provided about expected and actual student performance. • Faculty have identified some potential areas to address based on data. More conversation continued throughout the semester, and other outcomes will require more assessment over time to understand trends. • The assessment process, sharing, and determining what to do based on results is clearly a shared process among faculty.	• When considering whether to change expectations for student performance based on their current achievement levels, be careful about lowering expectations when students are not meeting current expectations. The focus in on improving student learning, even if the expectation isn't met. Changing the support for that learning, whether through curriculum, pedagogy, student support, etc., is a better focus than lowering the expectation. • To that extent, some of the current expectations seem fairly low (22/42 as the expectation for critical thinking on the research paper, for instance). If this is due to prior/anticipated current performance it could be seen as reasonable. Your faculty just have to decide on whether that is truly satisfactory and whether the expectation is your realistic projection or your own standards. • I hope that the subsequent department meeting discussions about some of the potential responses to findings were productive and you can use these to shape future assessment and/or interventions.

Student Outcomes Assessment & Success Report Rubric **Unit/Program: BA Political Science**
Office of Assessment & Accreditation, Indiana State University **Evaluation Date: 1/3/20**

Evaluation Criteria	Exemplary	Mature	Developing	Undeveloped
Student Learning Outcomes	At least one learning outcome that is aligned with program coursework is assessed this cycle. Learning outcome(s) is specific, measureable, and student-centered. Rationale for assessment of this outcome(s) is made clear (ex: it is part of a standing assessment cycle, a need was identified, etc.) Learning outcome(s) directly link to college, institutional, and/or accreditor goals/standards.	At least one learning outcome that is aligned with program coursework is assessed this cycle. Learning outcome(s) is specific, measureable, and student-centered. Rationale for assessment of this outcome(s) is made clear (ex: it is part of a standing assessment cycle, a need was identified, etc.)	At least one learning outcome that is aligned with program coursework is assessed this cycle. Learning outcomes(s) is measurable.	No learning outcomes are identified for assessment or the outcomes that are identified are not linked to program outcomes aligned with program coursework (e.g. – curriculum map) or are not measurable.
Performance Goals & Measures	Performance goal identified for each learning outcome is clear and reasonable (ex: based on previous performance data, professional standards, etc.). Identified measures are designed to accurately reflect student learning, including at least one direct measure. Tools used to measure student performance are described and were reviewed for validity or trustworthiness prior to use (note this in the report; attach tools if applicable – ex: rubrics, checklists, exam keys, etc.).	Performance goal identified for each learning outcome is clear and reasonable (ex: based on previous performance data, professional standards, etc.). Identified measures are designed to accurately reflect student learning, including at least one direct measure. Tools or processes for evaluating student performance on measures are described (attach tools if applicable – ex: rubrics, checklists, exam keys, etc.).	Performance goal(s) is identified for each learning outcome. Identified measures (ex: assignments, projects, tests, etc.) are poorly suited to performance goals or are solely indirect measures. Tools or processes for evaluating student performance on measures are not described.	No goals for student performance of learning outcomes is identified, and/or no measures are provided.

Analysis & Results	Data is collected using the measures and tools identified. Results are reported with clear description of quality analysis (e.g., analysis follows accepted statistical or qualitative procedures). Results are shared in relation to performance goals. Results are discussed in relation to college, institutional, and/or accreditor goals/standards.	Data is collected using the measures and tools identified. Results are reported with clear description of analysis (e.g., analysis follows accepted statistical or qualitative procedures). Results are shared in relation to performance goals.	Data is collected using the measures and tools identified. Results are reported with little description of analysis.	No data is being collected. No results are provided.
Sharing & Use of Results for Continuous Improvement	Clear information is provided about sharing and using results to inform practice. Discussion of what was learned from results is provided and connected to plans for sharing and using results to inform practice. A plan for adjusting performance, goals, assessment, and/or program components based on results is outlined.	Clear information is provided about sharing and using results to inform practice. Discussion of what was learned from results is provided and connected to plans for sharing and using results to inform practice.	Limited information is provided about sharing or using results to inform practice. Some discussion of what was learned from results is provided.	No information is provided about sharing or using results to inform practice. No evidence of reflection on results is provided (ex: discussion, conclusions drawn)
Overall Rating	□ **Exemplary**	□ **Mature**	□ **Developing**	□ **Undeveloped**