

Weber State University
Annual Assessment of Evidence of Learning

Cover Page

Department/Program: Political Science
Academic Year of Report: 2014/15
Date Submitted: 9 November 2015
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A. Brief Introductory Statement:

Please review the Introductory Statement and contact information for your department displayed on the assessment site:

<http://www.weber.edu/portfolio/departments.html> - if this information is current, please place an 'X' below. No further information is needed. We will indicate "Last Reviewed: [current date]" on the page.

x Information is current; no changes required.

Information is not current; updates below.

Update:

B. Mission Statement

Please review the Mission Statement for your department displayed on the assessment site: <http://www.weber.edu/portfolio/departments.html> - if it is current, please indicate as much; we will mark the web page as “Last Reviewed [current date]”. No further information is needed. If the information is not current, please provide an update:

Information is current; no changes required.

Information is not current; updates below.

C. Student Learning Outcomes

Please review the Student Learning Outcomes for your department displayed on the assessment site:

<http://www.weber.edu/portfolio/departments.html> - if they are current, please indicate as much; we will mark the web page as “Last Reviewed [current date]”. No further information is needed.

If they are not current, please provide an update:

Information is current; no changes required.

Information is not current; updates below.

Measurable Learning Outcomes

At the end of their study at WSU, students in this program will:

- 1) ...
- 2) ...
- 3) ...
- 4) ...
- 5) ...
- 6) etc.

D. Curriculum

Please review the Curriculum Grid for your department displayed on the assessment site: <http://www.weber.edu/portfolio/departments.html> - if it is current, please indicate as much; we will mark the web page as “Last Reviewed: [current data]”. No further information is needed. If the curriculum grid is not current, please provide an update:

- Information is current; no changes required.
- Information is not current; updates below

Curriculum Map

	Department/Program Learning Outcomes							
	Learning Outcome 1	Learning Outcome 2	Learning Outcome 3	Learning Outcome 4	Etc...			
Core Courses in Department/Program								
Pols 3400 Sexual Orientation, Politics, and Law (new course)		2	2					
Pols 4070 Sex Roles and the Law **DELETED**								
Pols 4620 U.S. Supreme Court (new course)		3	2					

Note^a: Define words, letters or symbols used and their interpretation; i.e. 1= introduced, 2 = emphasized, 3 = mastered or I = Introduced, E = Emphasized, U = Utilized, A = Assessed Comprehensively; these are examples, departmental choice of letters/numbers may differ
Note^b: Rows and columns should be transposed as required to meet the needs of each individual department

Additional Information (if needed) The above reflects the changes to be made to the curriculum map for two new courses (Pols 3400 and Pols 4620) and one deleted course (Pols 4070).

E. Assessment Plan

Please review the Assessment Plan for your department displayed on the assessment site: <http://www.weber.edu/portfolio/departments.html> - if the plan current, please indicate as much; we will mark the web page as “Last Reviewed [current date]”. No further information is needed.

The site should contain an up-to-date assessment plan with planning going out a minimum of three years beyond the current year. Please review the plan displayed for your department at the above site. The plan should include a list of courses from which data will be gathered and the schedule, as well as an overview of the assessment strategy the department is using (for example, portfolios, or a combination of Chi assessment data and student survey information, or industry certification exams, etc.).

Please be sure to include your planned assessment of any general education courses taught within your department. This information will be used to update the General Education Improvement and Assessment Committee’s planning documentation.

Assessment plan:

POLITICAL SCIENCE

Learning Outcomes 4 and 5 will be assessed in 2015-2016

Learning Outcome 1 will be assessed in 2016-17

Learning Outcome 2 and 3 will be assessed in 2017-18

Learning Outcome 1 will be assessed in 2018-19

AMERICAN INSTITUTIONS

Pols 1100 will be assessed in 2016-17 and again in 2018-19

SOCIAL SCIENCE GENERAL EDUCATION

Pols SS 1520, Pols SS 2100, Pols SS 2200, Pols SS 2300, and Pols SS 2500 will be assessed in 2015-16, 2016-17, and 2017-18.

Each course will be assessed once during each academic year for all 3 social science general education learning outcomes.

F. Report of assessment results for the most previous academic year:

There are a variety of ways in which departments can choose to show evidence of learning. This is one example. The critical pieces to include are 1) what learning outcome is being assessed, 2) what method of measurement was used, 3) what the threshold for ‘acceptable performance’ is for that measurement, 4) what the actual results of the assessment were, 5) how those findings are interpreted, and 6) what is the course of action to be taken based upon the interpretation.

A. Evidence of Learning: Courses within the Major

(this is a sample page for purpose of illustration only; a blank template can be found on the next page)

Sample only - Evidence of Learning: Courses within the Major – Sample only					
Measurable Learning Outcome: Students will...	Method of Measurement*	Threshold for Evidence of Student Learning	Findings Linked to Learning Outcomes	Interpretation of Findings	Action Plan/Use of Results
Learning Outcome 1: Students should be able to identify the political institutions and processes of the government of the United States.	A 20 question test was administered in our Pols 1100 courses at the start of the semester and again at the end of the semester.	Students, on average, will demonstrate an improvement of at least 50% in re-taking the test at the end of the semester	The average score on the post-test was 57% higher than on the pretest	We determined that the data we generated were not very significant since we had a very low response rate for the post-test. This contrasts significantly from our assessment of this outcome in 2012-13 where the response rate for the post-test was very high.	Discussions are ongoing on how best to increase the number of students who take the post-test in the future.

*Can be a mix of direct and indirect measures, but at least one measure must be direct

c. Evidence of Learning: General Education Courses

(duplicate this page as needed or delete if department does not offer GE courses)

Evidence of Learning: General Education Area American Institutions					
Measurable Learning Outcome	Method of Measurement	Threshold for Evidence of Student Learning	Findings Linked to Learning Outcomes	Interpretation of Findings	Action Plan/Use of Results
Students will...					
Learning Outcome 1: Students will demonstrate a reasonable understanding of the history of the United States	Measure 1 A 20 question exam is administered during the first and last week of the semester in all PolsAI 1100 classes. 5 of the questions specifically address this outcome.	Measure 1 Students, on average, will demonstrate an improvement of at least 50% in re-taking the test at the end of the semester	Measure 1: Student improvement in this area was 46%, from an average score of 2.8 to 4.1 correct out of 5.	Measure 1: We determined that the numbers we generated were not very significant since we had a very low response rate for the post-test. This contrasts significantly from our assessment of this outcome in 2012-13 where the response rate for the post-test was very high.	Measure 1: Discussions are ongoing on how best to increase the number of students who take the post-test in the future.
Learning Outcome 2: Students will demonstrate a reasonable understanding of the principles of the United States	A 20 question exam is administered during the first and last week of the semester in all PolsAI 1100 classes. 5 of the questions specifically address this outcome.	Students, on average, will demonstrate an improvement of at least 50% in re-taking the test at the end of the semester	Student improvement in this area was 45%, from an average score of 2.2 to 3.2 correct out of 5.	See above	See above
Learning Outcome 3: Students will demonstrate a reasonable understanding of the political processes of the United States government	A 20 question exam is administered during the first and last week of the semester in all PolsAI 1100 classes. 5 of the questions specifically address this outcome.	Students, on average, will demonstrate an improvement of at least 50% in re-taking the test at the end of the semester	Student improvement in this area was 55%, from an average score of 2.7 to 4.2 correct out of 5.	See above	See above

Evidence of Learning: General Education Area American Institutions					
Measurable Learning Outcome	Method of Measurement	Threshold for Evidence of Student Learning	Findings Linked to Learning Outcomes	Interpretation of Findings	Action Plan/Use of Results
Students will...					
Learning Outcome 4: Students will demonstrate a reasonable understanding of the economic system of the United States	A 20 question exam is administered during the first and last week of the semester in all PolsAI 1100 classes. 5 of the questions specifically address this outcome.	Students, on average, will demonstrate an improvement of at least 50% in re-taking the test at the end of the semester	Student improvement in this area was 109%, from an average score of 1.1 to 2.3 correct out of 5.	See above	See above

*At least one measure per objective must be a direct measure; indirect measures may be used to supplement direct measure(s).

c. Evidence of Learning: General Education Courses

(duplicate this page as needed or delete if department does not offer GE courses)

Evidence of Learning: General Education Area Social Science Breadth					
Measurable Learning Outcome	Method of Measurement	Threshold for Evidence of Student Learning	Findings Linked to Learning Outcomes	Interpretation of Findings	Action Plan/Use of Results
Students will...					
Learning Outcome 1: Students will describe how individuals and groups influence and are influenced by social contexts, institutions, physical environments, and/or global process.	Measure 1	Measure 1	Measure 1:	Measure 1:	Measure 1:
Learning Outcome 2: Students will apply basic social science concepts, theories, and/or methods to a particular issue and identify factors that influence change.	Measure 1:	Measure 1:	Measure 1:	Measure 1:	Measure 1:
Learning Outcome 3: Students will identify an argument about a social phenomenon and understand alternative explanations.	Measure 1:	Measure 1:	Measure 1:	Measure 1:	Measure 1:

*At least one measure per objective must be a direct measure; indirect measures may be used to supplement direct measure(s).

Additional narrative (optional – use as much space as needed):

As we have been informed, political science has been negligent in assessing our social science general education courses over the past several years. We have met and put forth a plan for assessing what are now our 5 social science general education breadth courses: Pols SS 1520 Leadership and the Political Life, Pols 2100 SS Introduction to International Politics, Pols 2200 Introduction to Comparative Politics, Pols SS 2300 Introduction to Political Theory, and Pols SS 2500 Human Rights. We will have sufficient assessment data for these courses going forward.

G. Summary of Artifact Collection Procedure

Artifact	When/How Collected?	Where Stored?
Pre-test post-test	Beginning and end of semester. Exam is administered in classes and through chi-tester.	Department office and Assessment webpage
Papers/Exams	Throughout the semester	Department office and Assessment webpage
Student research/reports from CEL courses, internships, extra-curricular academic teams, etc.	Throughout the semester	Department office and Assessment webpage

Summary Information (as needed)

Appendix A

Most departments or programs receive a number of recommendations from their Five-Year Program Review processes. This page provides a means of updating progress towards the recommendations the department/program is acting upon.

Date of Program Review: Fall 2011	Recommendation	Progress Description
Recommendation 1	The Political Science Mission statement lacks an explicit reference highlighting and connecting its High Impact pedagogy.	The Mission Statement was revised in 2012.
Recommendation 2	The open Public and Constitutional Law faculty line needs to be filled	This was filled with the hire of Dr. Richard Price, who began in the 2012-13 academic year.
Recommendation 3	There is a need for an additional faculty member in the area of International/Comparative politics.	No progress has been made on this recommendation. Funding from the Dean would need to become available in order to add a new person to our faculty. And given that we are hybrid department with the Philosophy program – a program that is also in need of an additional faculty member – the likelihood of making progress on this recommendation in the near future is not good.
Recommendation 4	Re-evaluate subfields, course offerings, and promote online and hybrid teaching	Part of this recommendation included not hiring based on subfields, which the department rejected. The department has, however, re-thought the subfields in place for our majors and minors and is in the process of revising the requirements for both the major and minor along these lines – combining the law subfield with the American and Public Administration subfields and combining the International Politics and Comparative Politics subfields for the

		major; with respect to the minor we are grouping all upper division political science courses together and allowing students to choose from among any course in that combined list. In addition we have increased the number of online and hybrid course offerings.
Recommendation 5	Workload fairness issue involving the different courses faculty are assigned to teach.	This has been resolved.
Recommendation 6	Value role of high impact teaching more in tenure/promotion	The Department is constrained by the College and University requirements for tenure/promotion.
Recommendation 7	Concern about low graduation rate	The graduation rate for political science is not significantly different than for other majors in the college. That said, the department has taken steps to better inform students about courses being offered and where they fit into the major/minor requirements, not to mention proposing new requirements (see #4 above). The above items are designed to help student make better progress toward graduation.
Recommendation 8	Re-word the program's learning outcomes to make assessment of them more effective	Learning outcomes were updated in the fall of 2012.
Recommendation 9	Create an Alumni Council and strengthen community ties	We have made no progress on the first half of this recommendation. But we do consider it to be a good idea that we hope to address directly in 2016-17. As for the second half, the department feels that it is constantly in the process of strengthening community ties through its connection with entities like the

		Walker Institute and the American Democracy project.
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Additional narrative:

Appendix B

Please provide the following information about the full-time and adjunct faculty contracted by your department during the last academic year (summer through spring). Gathering this information each year will help with the headcount reporting that must be done for the final Five Year Program Review document that is shared with the State Board of Regents.

Faculty	
Headcount	12
With Doctoral Degrees (Including MFA and other terminal degrees, as specified by the institution)	7
Full-time Tenured	4
Full-time Non-Tenured (includes tenure-track)	2
Part-time	
With Master's Degrees	5
Full-time Tenured	
Full-time Non-Tenured	
Part-time	5
With Bachelor's Degrees	
Full-time Tenured	
Full-time Non-tenured	
Part-time	
Other	
Full-time Tenured	
Full-time Non-tenured	
Part-time	
Total Headcount Faculty	12
Full-time Tenured	6
Full-time Non-tenured	
Part-time	6

Please respond to the following questions.

- 1) Based on your program's assessment findings, what subsequent action will your program take?

First and foremost we will pursue a yearly assessment of our Social Science general education courses beginning this year. Second, we need to work on a better way to have students take the pre-test and post-test for our assessment of the department's learning outcome #1 in order to insure that the data we collect is significant.

- 2) Are there assessment strategies within your department or program that you feel are particularly effective and/or innovative? If so, what are those strategies and what do you learn about your students by using them?
No. We do not feel that any of our assessment strategies are particularly effective or innovative. We do feel that that they do the job, however.