<u>**2016-2017 Institutional Effectiveness Report**</u>

Name of Program/Department: Department of Political Science and Geography

Year: 2016-2017

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<u>**Program Mission Statement**</u>

The mission of the Department of Political Science and Geography is to provide instruction that enables students to complete, as part of their general education requirement, an introductory-level course in political science that includes material dealing with the United States Constitution and Federalist Papers. Students may earn a major, minor, or collateral in political science. The program offers its majors a broad understanding of political phenomena, including political institutions, political processes, political behavior, political thought patterns, and contemporary political issues. The course of study for the major prescribes a set of core courses in the discipline's traditional sub-fields of American government, comparative politics, international relations, political philosophy, and political methodology. Students elect the remainder of their primary work from a range of course offerings pertaining to foreign and/or domestic American government and politics. The flexibility of the curriculum permits students to pursue a program of courses tailored to their individual interests and career goals. Graduates with a major in political science receive the broad training and develop the general competence in the discipline to equip them for successful careers in public service, politics, the military, journalism, and quasi-public agencies, commerce and industry, teaching, and other occupations for which preparation in the field is desirable, or to undertake postgraduate professional study in political science, public administration, or law.

<u>**Program Learning Outcomes (PLOs)**</u>

1. Political Science graduates will understand political phenomena and demonstrate proficiency in the United States Constitution and Federalist Papers.

2. Political Science students will be able to critically analyze written material and demonstrate a proficiency in oral communication.

3. The Political Science Department will provide opportunities for students to connect classroom instruction with real world experience through internships, study abroad programs, and guest speakers.

4. The Political Science Department will encourage students to create their own path of study by providing flexibility in the curriculum.

Executive Summary of Report

The Institutional Effectiveness report details the student learning outcomes and assessment measures used in the 2016-2017 academic year. The report illustrates the department met the target on one of the student learning outcomes but not on the second. For our first student learning outcome, our target was to have 70% of students correctly answer three embedded questions asked of all students taking POL 101 and 103. Eighty-one percent of students correctly answered all three of these embedded questions.

A second student learning outcome was that students would be able to interpret statistical analysis, as measured in the POL 295 final examination and on the final statistics problem set in POL 295. The target for this goal was for students to achieve 70% or higher. For the POL 295 final examination, this target was achieved as students performed at the 80% level. For the final statistics problem set, this benchmark was not achieved as students performed at the 57% level.

Based on these outcomes the Department of Political Science and Geography decided to implement the following improvements for 2017-2018:

Student Learning Outcomes

1. SLO 1.0: Political Science Students, in POL 101 and 103 on average, will perform at the 70% level or above [benchmark = 60%] when DESCRIBING and EXPLAINING content areas in political science, specifically explaining and describing the United States Constitution and Federalist Papers.
2. SLO 2.0: Political Science Students in POL 295 will EVALUATE and INTERPRET statistical output and ANALYSIS on average, the 70% level or above [benchmark = 60%]

Assessment Methods

SLO 1.0: Political Science students, in POL 101 and 103 on average, will perform at the 70% level or above [benchmark=60%] when DESCRIBING and EXPLAINING content areas in political science, specifically when explaining and describing the United States Constitution and Federalist Papers as measured by three multiple choice questions embedded in tests across all POL 101 and 103 classes.

SLO 2.0: Political Science students in POL 295 will EVALUATE and INTERPRET statistical output at the 70% level or above [benchmark=60%] as measured by performance on the final examination and two additional problem sets. One tested qualitative and mixed methods skills, using exercises from the course workbook. Another tested quantitative reasoning and methodology, both using statistical problems from the workbook, as well as data analysis exercises in SPSS.

Assessment Results

SLO 1.0: Political Science Students, in POL 101 and 103 on average, performed at the 81% level [benchmark = 60%] when DESCRIBING and EXPLAINING content areas in political science, specifically explaining and describing the United States Constitution and Federalist Papers as measured by the three multiple choice questions embedded in class tests across all POL 101 and 103 sections.. Since our goal was 70%, this target was achieved.

SLO 2.0: Political Science Students in POL 295 on average performed at the 80% level [benchmark=60%] when EVALUATING and INTERPRETING statistical output and ANALYSIS on the POL 295 final examination and performed at the 58% level when EVALUATING and INTERPRETING statistical output and ANALYSIS on the final statistics problem set. The target for the final POL 295 examination was achieved but the target for the final statistics problem set was not achieved.

Action Items

To address concerns identified in the evaluation of data from the 2016-2017 academic year, the Department developed the following action plan to be implemented during the 2017-2018 academic year.

SLO 1.0: Political Science Students, in POL 101 and 103 on average, performed at the 81% level [benchmark = 60%] when DESCRIBING and EXPLAINING content areas in political science, specifically explaining and describing the United States Constitution and Federalist Papers as measured by the three multiple choice questions embedded in class tests across all POL 101 and 103 sections.

Based on data collected during the 2016-2017 academic year using the three multiple choice questions across all sections of POL 101 and 103, students, on average performed at the 81% level. As our target was 70%, this target was achieved. Based on this finding, through discussion and collaboration, the department has decided to increase the target to 80% for the 2017-2018 academic year.

The Political Science Department will also add an additional measure, such as a video explaining and describing content areas in political science. This will be piloted in 2 sections of each POL 101 and POL 103 in the fall and fully implemented in Spring 2018 across all POL 101 and 103 classes.

Additionally, the Department of Political Science and Geography will separate SLO 1 into two different SLOs, the first focusing on POL 101 and the second focusing on POL 103. This will allow the Department to make more rigorous the assessment method by adding in more questions targeting each of these specific classes. This will allow for a clearer understanding of what students know, how they think and what they can do. These SLOs will be:

SLO 1.0: Political Science Students will perform at the 80% level or above [benchmark = 60%] when describing and explaining content areas in political science, specifically explaining and describing the United States Constitution and Federalist Papers in POL 101.

SLO 2.0: Political Science Students will perform at the 80% level or above [benchmark = 70%] when describing and explaining content areas in political science, specifically explaining and describing the United States Constitution and Federalist Papers in POL 103.

Our second SLO will then be SLO 3.0, as detailed below.

SLO 2.0: Political Science Students will perform at the 70% level or above [benchmark = 70%] when evaluating and interpreting statistical output and analysis.

The data collected during the 2016-2017 academic year using the POL 295 final examination and final statistical problem set, students performed at the 80% and 57% level, respectively. Therefore, one of our targets was met and the other one was not achieved. As a result, the department feels it simply may take more time for these measures to take hold in POL 295. The goals for POL 295 for the 2017-2018 academic year remain the same for the final statistics problem and for the final examination to determine whether the continuation of these changes improve student learning in this area.

This SLO will now become:

SLO 3.0: Political Science Students will perform at the 70% level or above [benchmark = 57%] when evaluating and interpreting statistical output and analysis.

The political science department will also add an indirect measure of student learning through the development of an opinion survey for graduating political science majors to measure the effectiveness of the political science program.

<u>Appendix</u>

The three embedded questions for SLO 1:0 are as follows:

1. The separation of powers in the United States government refers to the distribution of authority between/among which of the following?
     A. The Senate and the House of Representatives.
     B. The two major political parties.
     C. The national government and the state governments.
     D. The legislative, executive, and judicial branches of the federal government.

2. Which of the following was the first constitution of the United States of America?
     A. The Articles of Confederation
     B. The Declaration of Independence
     C. The Constitution
     D. The Bill of Rights

3. The basic premise of federalism is that
     A. supreme political authority remains with the states.
     B. power is divided between national (central) and state (regional) governments.
     C. ultimate authority rests with the same political units closest to the people.
     D. a national government has ultimate sovereignty over a country's land and people.