

2016-2017 Assessment Cycle COLA_Political Science BA

Mission (due 1/20/17)

University Mission

The University of Louisiana at Lafayette offers an exceptional education informed by diverse worldviews grounded in tradition, heritage, and culture. We develop leaders and innovators who advance knowledge, cultivate aesthetic sensibility, and improve the human condition.

University Values

We strive to create a community of leaders and innovators in an environment that fosters a desire to advance and disseminate knowledge. We support the mission of the university by actualizing our core values of equity, integrity, intellectual curiosity, creativity, tradition, transparency, respect, collaboration, pluralism, and sustainability.

University Vision

We strive to be included in the top 25% of our peer institutions by 2020, improving our national and international status and recognition.

College / Department / Program Mission

College Mission

Provide the college mission in the space provided. If none is available, write "None Available in 2016-2017."

The College of Liberal Arts is dedicated to the advancement of knowledge through teaching, research, and service. The College teaches students to think critically, applying scientific principles and intellectual schema to understand human behavior and society in a diverse world, to express ideas and ideals in a variety of forms, and to understand themselves and others as members of regional and global communities. The intellectual and creative foundations of this enterprise are written and oral communication, analytical and reasoning skills, and the ability to solve problems creatively. Each departmental curriculum presents perspectives from the past, provides an understanding of the present and directs attention to the challenges of the future. As active researchers, faculty in the College work to advance the frontiers of knowledge and our understanding of humanity and the world we live in, and to use that knowledge and understanding to improve the human condition.

Department / Program Mission

Provide the department / program mission in the space provided. If none is available, write "None Available in 2016-2017."

MISSION STATEMENT FOR THE DEPARTMENT OF POLITICAL SCIENCE UNIVERSITY OF LOUISIANA AT LAFAYETTE First and foremost, the mission of the Department of Political Science at the University of Louisiana at Lafayette is to make students wonder—to wonder at the character or nature of the American regime; to wonder at the rich and manifold tapestry of regimes other than our own; and to wonder at the multitudinous ways, both obvious and unseen, that politics shapes our own self-understanding of who we are as individuals and as citizens. Only a student capable of wonder—of asking why someone or something is the way that it is—will be genuinely capable of reflection and openness, and therefore of learning. Thereafter, we attempt to provide students with the full range of intellectual tools to critically evaluate and judge. For example, what are the strengths and weaknesses of American government, in particular, and democracy, in general? What qualities constitute a thoroughly robust and vigorous citizen and what specific right and/or duties (if any at all) should that citizen expect from and/or owe to their regime? Or again, what are the arguments of those who advocate or advance an entirely different political architecture and way of life as superior to our own? The awakening of a student's curiosity must be coupled with an ability to think critically both about one's own way of life (and the political forces that shape that life) and the most serious alternatives proffered by others: without the ability to make reasoned and

discerning judgments (and the ability to revisit and revise those judgments in the light of new evidence or ideas), a student risks wandering aimlessly in their education, or even degenerating into a myopic dogmatism. Finally, we wish to help students make an informed decision about the future course of their lives, a decision that reflects their strengths and interests as individuals as well as their progress and achievements in the Department, University, and community as a whole. Not only do we endeavor to canvass the full range of career possibilities—from graduate education to law school to immediate employment—but we also encourage students to keep in contact with us as they advance in their future endeavors. Wonder, judgment, decision: these are the hallmarks of an undergraduate degree in the Department of Political Science. We seek to provide students with a genuinely liberal arts education—an education that prepares each student to become a free and enlightened individual and citizen. To borrow the language of Aristotle, we hope to awaken the student to the possibility of genuine human excellence or eudaimonia; and that possibility can only be realized if one first confronts the architectonic science of politics. Of course, every Department's mission must be tailored to its resources, and we are an admittedly smaller Department with fewer resources, both within the University and by national standards of comparison for a university of our size: consequently, we cannot offer the full range of courses necessary to cover every subfield in political science. Thus, the Department has successfully focused on depth rather than breadth in our curriculum, targeting and tapping the diverse intellectual strengths of the faculty as it currently exists. Indeed, despite our Department's small size, we have managed to excel at each of the three principal areas by which a department is judged: teaching, research and service. In respect to teaching, we offer a general degree program in political science as well as two area concentrations in pre-law and international relations: the former concentration is one of the most popular, and the Department has had great success in sending students to some of the most prestigious law schools in the state and across the nation, including Duke, William & Mary, Vanderbilt, Baylor, Tulane, LSU, Southern Methodist and others. The international relations concentration was only recently instituted, but it is rapidly proving to be extremely popular with students in this new era of globalization. In addition to teaching the Department's traditional course requirements and offerings, the faculty regularly offers new and innovative courses. Some recent courses include Dystopia and Human Nature in Film, Feminism, The Politics of Shakespeare, Presidential Elections, International Security and Conflict, and Sports and Politics. As evidenced by student evaluations of teaching, faculty in political science have some of the highest ratings of any department in the University. In respect to research, the Department is committed to the continued professional development of our faculty, through pursuing every opportunity to provide the requisite time, resources and facilities necessary for the advancement of knowledge. The political science faculty has published articles in a great many peer-reviewed academic journals, including Presidential Studies Quarterly, Journal of Environmental Law and Litigation, Review of Metaphysics, Policy Research Quarterly, The University of Memphis Law Review, Journal of Comparative European Politics, Peace Review, and Review of International Studies. In addition to other scholarly venues—including encyclopedia entries, internet-based offerings, book reviews or review essays, and attending national and regional academic conferences—the faculty have also published books, edited volumes, and translations with such publishers as Rowman and Littlefield, Lynne Rienner, and Transaction. In respect to service to our students, university, and community, the Department has an extraordinary record which promises to become even brighter in the near future. For example, the Department offers a very vibrant and rewarding internship program, where students can work with United States Senators and members of Congress, as well as work in Lafayette city-parish government. We offer over a dozen different fellowships and/or awards to political science students throughout their career, one of the most recent being the Tom and Lena Ritchie Endowed Memorial Scholarships, which provide up to 10 student with \$1,500 awards for law school. We also host or are involved in a number of university and community events throughout the year, including the UL Lafayette Law Club, forums debating the Iraq war, debates in the Philosophy Club, a political science film series, and most recently creating the International Studies Society, which sponsors an array of events and guest speakers. Our service to students is exemplary in other ways as well. For example, students have easy access to their professors: the entire faculty has at least 10 hours of office hours a week, and we all have a "drop on by" attitude when it comes to addressing students' questions or concerns. Several of our faculty have won awards for advising. The Department's service to the community is demonstrated in regular faculty commentary given to the media and departmental sponsorship of public awareness events, such as forums and debates between candidates for elected office. Additionally, several members of the Political Science faculty are asked to provide election night coverage on local television stations and are sought out by state and national media to provide analysis and commentary on important political events throughout the year. Finally, the Department works to make the University community a better place through service on important committees including general education and the American Democracy Project, participation in the Faculty Senate, and answering the call on special projects. Working together, the Political Science Department at the University of Louisiana at Lafayette serves students through teaching and advising, the university community and southwest Louisiana through service, and the intellectual community through cutting-edge research.

Assessment Plan (due 1/20/17)

Assessment List (Goals / Objectives, Assessment Measures and Criteria for Success)

Assessment List

Goal/Objective	Students will increase their level of active engagement with the political system.								
Legends	SLO - Student Learning Outcome/Objective (academic units);								
Standards/Outcomes									
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Goal/Objective	Students will demonstrate increased positive attitudes towards political participation.		
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Goal/Objective	Students will demonstrate increased ability to read, think, and write critically in the discipline of political science.		
Legends	SLO - Student Learning Outcome/Objective (academic units);		

Standards/Outcomes			
Assessment Measures			
	Assessment Measure	Criterion	Attachments
	Direct - Written Assignment	The fourth goal articulated in the Assessment Plan for the Department of Political Science is that students completing the political science degree will be able to read complex primary and secondary texts, critique those texts, and write critically about them. In order to measure the Department's success in preparing students for these complex tasks, the Department typically selects 15 papers from majors with less than 60 credit hours and 15 papers from majors with more than 90 credit hours. The basic assumption behind this strategy is that students with more hours in the Political Science program should be able to read, think and write more effectively than should students with fewer hours. The papers collected are then graded by three members of the Political Science faculty according to a 6-point rubric developed by the entire Department. Target: We seek an increase of at least .5 (on a 4.0 scale; a 12.5% improvement or half-letter grade) between the under 60 papers and the over 90 papers.	

Goal/Objective	Students will demonstrate improved knowledge about the academic discipline of Political Science and careers in the field.		
Legends	SLO - Student Learning Outcome/Objective (academic units);		
Standards/Outcomes			
Assessment Measures			
	Assessment Measure	Criterion	Attachments
	Direct - Pre/Post Test	An assessment will be administered twice in POLS 101 Introduction to Political Science. A pre-test once at the beginning of the semester and the same measure will be given again as a post-test at the end of the semester. We will measure knowledge of the major; writing in the discipline; knowledge of club and volunteer opportunities in political science; knowledge of career opportunities; how research is conducted in political science; careers in the various sub-fields of political science; awareness of honors program, study abroad program and scholarship. Target: We seek to double the percent of students passing the test with a 70% (C=satisfactory) or better grade between the pre-test and post-test (i.e. a 100% increase in the passing rate)	

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Goal/Objective	The Department of Political Science will retain first-year majors to their second year in the major.								
Legends	PO - Program Objective (academic units);								
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Results & Improvements (due 9/15/17)

Results and Improvement Narratives

Assessment List Findings for the Assessment Measure level for Students will increase their level of active engagement with the political system.

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Indirect - Survey - students	Has the criterion Measurement of our efforts in this area is accomplished by the creation of a "passport" which records each student's involvement by academic progress (credit hours earned). The passport itself was the result of a collaborative effort among political science faculty. It is an instrument which allows advisors to monitor and record the self-reported participatory activities of each student during regular advising sessions once per academic year (either fall or spring). Target: We hope to see a 100% increase (doubling) of the average of civic participations and social involvements as the students progress from less than 30 hours to over 90 hours. been met yet?	We did not measure this objective during the 2016-2017 assessment cycle. We will measure it during the 2017-2018 assessment cycle during the Fall 2017 two-week advising session in October 2017.		- Assessment Process: Continuous monitoring: We did not measure this objective during the 2016-2017 assessment cycle. We will measure it during the 2017-2018 assessment cycle during the Fall 2017 two-week advising session in October 2017.

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Assessment List Findings for the Assessment Measure level for Students will demonstrate increased positive attitudes towards political participation.

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Assessment Measures	Assessment Measure	Criterion
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		<p>Has the criterion The POLS Department seeks to develop positive attitudes towards participating in civic activities, believing that an engaged citizenry is necessary for self-government . One way that the Department seeks to accomplish</p>	<p>POLS 317 is a course required of most pols majors, including those with concentrations in pre-law or political science. The field trip requires students to attend a local governmental meeting. Typically this requirement is completed by attendance at a city council or a school</p>	<p>Local_Government_Atitudinal_Survey.doc</p>	<p>- Assessment Process: Data Collection changed: The class on which the assignment is based will now be taught in two sections by two different instructors. One test of the measure will be to see if there is significant variation between the</p>

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		<p>will increase the likelihood that students will continue to develop positive attitudes towards their government, will increase their likelihood of attending another governmental meeting and, as a concomitant, will increase the probability of participating in political activities of all types. The Reaction Paper that is a small part of the Field Trip Assignment seeks information about changes in students' attitudes after attending the meeting. Target: We seek to double the percent from the survey pre-</p>	<p>were as follows: Question 1: Attendance at the meeting made me better informed of how government meetings are conducted. Results: Strongly Agree: 18; Agree: 9; No Change: 1; Disagree: 0; Strongly Disagree: 0 (28 total) Question 2: Attendance at this meeting helped me see that people can make a difference or have a voice in local government. Results: Strongly Agree: 7; Agree: 13; No Change: 5; Disagree: 3; Strongly Disagree: 0 (28 total) Question 3: Attendance at the meeting positively changed the way that I viewed my government. Results: Strongly Agree: 7; Agree: 7; No</p>		
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		<p>test versus post-test of students indicating on the survey positive affect towards political interest and efficacy between the pre-test and post-test). been met yet? Met</p>	<p>Change: 12; Disagree: 2; Strongly Disagree: 0 (28 total) Question 4: Attendance of the meeting made me more likely to attend a government meeting in the future. Results: Strongly Agree: 12; Agree: 7; No Change: 7; Disagree: 2; Strongly Disagree: 0 (28 total) Question 5: Attendance at this meeting made it more likely that I would become more involved in local government in the future. Results: Strongly Agree: 10; Agree: 8; No Change: 7; Disagree: 3; Strongly Disagree: 0 (28 total) Question 6: Attendance at this meeting made it more likely that I will exercise my participation rights in other ways as a</p>		
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			<p>citizen at some point in the future.</p> <p>Results: Strongly Agree: 14; Agree: 12; No Change: 2; Disagree: 0; Strongly Disagree: 0 (28 total)</p> <p>Discussion: As may be seen from the results, students exposed to a governmental meeting, overwhelmingly find that their experience was transformative and are much more likely to attend future meetings and participate in politics in the future.</p> <p>Indeed, among the 28 students responding, nearly 96% strongly agreed or agreed that "attending a meeting made [them] better informed.</p> <p>These data correspond well with the department goal of increasing student and citizen participation</p>	
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			<p>in and with government. These results were replicated on every question. For example, 71% of students felt that attendance at the meeting increased their sense of efficacy, the point charted in question 2; 50% of student's attitudes were positively affected about government (question 3); 68% of students reported that they were more likely to attend a government meeting in the future; 64% of students were more likely to become involved in local government in the future; and finally, 93% of students believed they were more likely to participate as a citizen in the future. This is the first time that</p>		
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			<p>this new and improved assessment scale has been used and the results are both much clearer and also more positive, fulfilling the promise of the last report which hoped for improvements in these areas. These results far exceed the target of 50% improved likelihood of participation to view the target as met. Thus, the target for positive affect is to be improved to 60% for the measures in question for 2017-18.</p> <p>Changes: The class on which the assignment is based will now be taught in two sections by two different instructors. One test of the measure will be to see if there is significant variation between the two classes and also across larger</p>		
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			<p>numbers of students. Further refinement of the measure and expansion of the civic component awaits feedback from this larger and more varied student group.</p>	
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Assessment List Findings for the Assessment Measure level for Students will demonstrate increased ability to read, think, and write critically in the discipline of political science.

Goal/Objective	Students will demonstrate increased ability to read, think, and write critically in the discipline of political science.				
Legends	SLO - Student Learning Outcome/Objective (academic units);				
Standards/Outcomes					
Assessment Measures	Assessment Measure		Criterion		
	Direct - Written Assignment	<p>The fourth goal articulated in the Assessment Plan for the Department of Political Science is that students completing the political science degree will be able to read complex primary and secondary texts, critique those texts, and write critically about them. In order to measure the Department's success in preparing students for these complex tasks, the Department typically selects 15 papers from majors with less than 60 credit hours and 15 papers from majors with more than 90 credit hours. The basic assumption behind this strategy is that students with more hours in the Political Science program should be able to read, think and write more effectively than should students with fewer hours. The papers collected are then graded by three members of the Political Science faculty according to a 6-point rubric developed by the entire Department. Target: We seek an increase of at least .5 (on a 4.0 scale; a 12.5% improvement or half-letter grade) between the under 60 papers and the over 90 papers.</p>			
Assessment Findings					
	Assessment Measure	Criterion	Summary	Attachments of the Assessments	Improvement Narratives

	Direct - Written Assignment	Has the criterion The fourth goal articulated in the Assessment Plan for the Department of Political Science is that students completing the political science degree will be able to read complex primary and secondary texts, critique those texts, and write critically about them. In order to measure the Department's success in preparing students for these complex tasks, the Department typically selects 15 papers from majors with less than 60 credit hours and 15 papers from majors with more than 90 credit hours. The basic assumption behind this strategy is	Our goal in the text assessment portion of our annual assessment is to compare how students with less than 60 credit hours compare to students with more than 90 hours. In other words, we are trying to assess whether, or to what degree, students improve their writing, analytical, and/or critical thinking, skills. In order to assess this, the Department has created an assessment/writing rubric (see Appendix ***) which we believe captures and measures the essentials of a quality essay— from a cogent, articulated thesis, thoughtful organization, proper grammar and syntax, and a developed conclusion. As a smaller Department in the university, one of the benefits of doing this is that students with less than 60 hours will more than likely be the same students who participate in the above 90 hour assessment—thus, we can accurately measure improvement over a substantial period of time. (It	RESEARCH_PAPER_rubric.docx	- Assessment Process: Measures changed: Clearly, this evaluative scheme is quite solid and illustrative. It does not need to be changed. However, it should be noted that if an improvement is needed, then one might include in the rubric a “degree of difficulty” factor. What we mean by this is that students in the POLS 400-level courses (in general) are being asked to do an essay of a higher degree of difficulty, both in terms of length, but more importantly in terms of conceptual formulation and presentation . If this factor could be added into the rubric, then the improvement
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		<p>that students with more hours in the Political Science program should be able to read, think and write more effectively than should students with fewer hours. The papers collected are then graded by three members of the Political Science faculty according to a 6-point rubric developed by the entire Department . Target: We seek an increase of at least .5 (on a 4.0 scale; a 12.5% improvement or half-letter grade) between the under 60 papers and the over 90 papers. been met yet? Met</p>	<p>should go without saying that students in this Department will more likely take every professor over the course of their career, and thus they will likely be included in both assessments, or at least a large number of them will.) The courses that are selected for assessment are generally randomly chosen, i.e., those courses which for the most part have students below 60 credit hours and above 90. In this assessment year, Ryan Teten's POLS 335: Campaigns and Elections was chosen and Bryan-Paul Frost's POLS 470: Political Philosophy: Major Themes. POLS 335 had a total of 43 students, 18 of whom had less than 60 credit hours; POLS 470 had a total of 20 students complete the course, and all of their essays were evaluated. The topic in POLS 335 was to research and to discuss three alternatives to the electoral college system of election of the president of the United States, assessing the strengths and weaknesses of those plans versus</p>		<p>t seen over the course of a few years for students (from sophomores to near-graduating seniors) would be even more drastic. Nonetheless , we believe that the assessment, even as it now stands, suffices for an optimal evaluative standard.</p>
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			<p>the electoral college as it currently exists. The topic in POLS 470 was to write a 3,000 word interpretive essay of Aristotle's discussion of friendship in books 8-9 of the Nicomachean Ethics, highlighting the most significant political/philosophical dimensions of the discussion. All of the essays for each of these courses were submitted to three professors (Ryan Teten, Bryan-Paul Frost, and Jason Maloy) and evaluated according to the rubric. Obviously, both Teten and Frost evaluated their own students' papers (as well as the other set) and then assessed them according to the rubric, while Maloy read both sets of papers as well even if he was not the instructor of record in either course. We feel that having three different professors assess the papers gave the process sufficient reliability for an accurate assessment; the students final grade for the course, it should go without saying, had nothing to do with how the professors scored</p>		
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			<p>them according to the rubric. The scores for each paper were then averaged according to each evaluator's marks for each section of the rubric. The scores were then tabulated and averaged for the class as a whole. The results are indicated below, as are the improvements seen in each particular area. As one can clearly see, in each area of the rubric, student in the POLS 470 did markedly better than their peers in the 335 course. The conclusion seems quite obvious: on average, students improve their writing, analytical, and critical thinking, skills as they proceed in the political science department over the course of their career. Clearly, this evaluative scheme is quite solid and illustrative. It does not need to be changed. However, it should be noted that if an improvement is needed, then one might include in the rubric a "degree of difficulty" factor. What we mean by this is that students</p>	
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		<p>in the POLS 400-level courses (in general) are being asked to do an essay of a higher degree of difficulty, both in terms of length, but more importantly in terms of conceptual formulation and presentation. If this factor could be added into the rubric, then the improvement seen over the course of a few years for students (from sophomores to near-graduating seniors) would be even more drastic. Nonetheless, we believe that the assessment, even as it now stands, suffices for an optima evaluative standard. Here are the numbers. The first number indicates the rubric description. The percentage increase is quite remarkable. 1. 79% increase 2. 70% increase 3. 25% increase 4. 51% increase 5. 71% increase 6. 99% increase Based on: Above 90 hours (the rubric number is first, then the average across papers): 1. 2.75 2. 2.95 3. 3.05 4. 3.12 5. 2.85 6. 3.47 Less than 60: 1. 1.54 2. 1.74 3. 2.43 4. 2.06 5. 1.67 6. 1.74</p>		
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Assessment List Findings for the Assessment Measure level for Students will demonstrate improved knowledge about the academic discipline of Political Science and careers in the field.

Goal/Objective	Students will demonstrate improved knowledge about the academic discipline of Political Science and careers in the field.													
Legends	SLO - Student Learning Outcome/Objective (academic units);													
Standards/Outcomes														
Assessment Measures	<table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th style="width: 20%;">Assessment Measure</th> <th>Criterion</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Direct - Pre/Post Test</td> <td>An assessment will be administered twice in POLS 101 Introduction to Political Science. A pre-test once at the beginning of the semester and the same measure will be given again as a post-test at the end of the semester. We will measure knowledge of the major; writing in the discipline; knowledge of club and volunteer opportunities in political science; knowledge of career opportunities; how research is conducted in political science; careers in the various sub-fields of political science; awareness of honors program, study abroad program and scholarship. Target: We seek to double the percent of students passing the test with a 70% (C=satisfactory) or better grade between the pre-test and post-test (i.e. a 100% increase in the passing rate)</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>		Assessment Measure	Criterion	Direct - Pre/Post Test	An assessment will be administered twice in POLS 101 Introduction to Political Science. A pre-test once at the beginning of the semester and the same measure will be given again as a post-test at the end of the semester. We will measure knowledge of the major; writing in the discipline; knowledge of club and volunteer opportunities in political science; knowledge of career opportunities; how research is conducted in political science; careers in the various sub-fields of political science; awareness of honors program, study abroad program and scholarship. Target: We seek to double the percent of students passing the test with a 70% (C=satisfactory) or better grade between the pre-test and post-test (i.e. a 100% increase in the passing rate)								
	Assessment Measure	Criterion												
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Assessment Findings	<table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th style="width: 15%;">Assessment Measure</th> <th style="width: 25%;">Criterion</th> <th style="width: 20%;">Summary</th> <th style="width: 15%;">Attachments of the Assessments</th> <th style="width: 25%;">Improvement Narratives</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Direct - Pre/Post Test</td> <td>Has the criterion An assessment will be administered twice in POLS 101 Introduction to Political Science. A pre-test once at the beginning of the semester and the same measure will be given again as a post-test at the end of the semester. We will measure knowledge of the major; writing in the discipline; knowledge of club and volunteer opportunities in political science; knowledge of career opportunities; how</td> <td>We did not measure this objective during the 2016-2017 assessment cycle. We will measure it during the 2017-2018 assessment cycle in the Spring 2018 semester.</td> <td></td> <td>- Assessment Process: Continuous monitoring: We did not measure this objective during the 2016-2017 assessment cycle. We will measure it during the 2017-2018 assessment cycle in the Spring 2018 semester.</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>				Assessment Measure	Criterion	Summary	Attachments of the Assessments	Improvement Narratives	Direct - Pre/Post Test	Has the criterion An assessment will be administered twice in POLS 101 Introduction to Political Science. A pre-test once at the beginning of the semester and the same measure will be given again as a post-test at the end of the semester. We will measure knowledge of the major; writing in the discipline; knowledge of club and volunteer opportunities in political science; knowledge of career opportunities; how	We did not measure this objective during the 2016-2017 assessment cycle. We will measure it during the 2017-2018 assessment cycle in the Spring 2018 semester.		- Assessment Process: Continuous monitoring: We did not measure this objective during the 2016-2017 assessment cycle. We will measure it during the 2017-2018 assessment cycle in the Spring 2018 semester.
Assessment Measure	Criterion	Summary	Attachments of the Assessments	Improvement Narratives										
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		<p>research is conducted in political science; careers in the various sub-fields of political science; awareness of honors program, study abroad program and scholarship. Target: We seek to double the percent of students passing the test with a 70% (C=satisfactory) or better grade between the pre-test and post-test (i.e. a 100% increase in the passing rate) been met yet?</p>			
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Assessment List Findings for the Assessment Measure level for The Department of Political Science will retain first-year majors to their second year in the major.

Goal/Objective	The Department of Political Science will retain first-year majors to their second year in the major.				
Legends	PO - Program Objective (academic units);				
Standards/Outcomes					
Assessment Measures	Assessment Measure		Criterion		
	Direct - UL Enrollment Data on Student Retention (Other)	Target: We seek that first-year retention rate of students in the major will be higher than UL's average first-year retention rate across all disciplines.			
Assessment Findings	Assessment Measure	Criterion	Summary	Attachments of the Assessments	Improvement Narratives
	Direct - UL Enrollment Data on Student Retention (Other)	Has the criterion Target: We seek that first-year retention rate of students in the major will be	To measure POLS program retention, we created an Excel spreadsheet of all POLS majors across all years who were declared POLS majors in the Spring of 2016. Although the original plan was to track only First-year students,		- Assessment Process: Data Collection changed: One possible action item might be to contact students enrolled in UL but who transferred out of POLS as

		<p>higher than UL's average first-year retention rate across all disciplines. been met yet? Met</p>	<p>we realized that our data would yield more robust and helpful results if we tracked all POLS majors. This spreadsheet will be used to track retention and graduation rates of those co-horts over the next several years. The total number of declared POLS majors in Spring 2016 was 225. At the end of Spring 2016, 30 of those majors successfully graduated, leaving 195 continuing POLS majors. Of those 195 continuing POLS majors, at the start of Fall 2017, 20 of them were enrolled at UL but were no longer listed as POLS majors by Banner. This left 175 continuing POLS majors. However, 16 of those continuing POLS students were still listed as POLS majors in Banner were not enrolled in UL at the end of the first two weeks (14 days) of the semester. This left 159 students out of 195 non-graduating POLS majors who were retained as enrolled and declared POLS majors, an 81.5% retention rate from Spring 2016 to Fall 2017. We are still awaiting data from UL's Enrollment Services on UL average retention rates for comparison. Regardless, 81.5% seems to be a reasonable/acceptable number of students stopping out and transferring out of POLS, since stop-outs are presumably beyond our control (e.g. health, finances, family issues, change in life goals, etc.) and that number does not include students transferring into POLS at</p>		<p>their declared major, to find out why they changed their major. This would determine whether students are leaving the major due to unpreventable reasons (such as they changed their career goals) or preventable reasons (such as mistaken understandings about career availability or career options with a POLS degree).</p>
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		<p>UL, either from other UL majors or from other schools. As a result of these considerations, given the lack of comparison data, we are still marking the target as "met." Nevertheless, one possible action item might be to contact students enrolled in UL but who transferred out of POLS as their declared major, to find out why they changed their major. This would determine whether students are leaving the major due to unpreventable reasons (such as they changed their career goals) or preventable reasons (such as mistaken understandings about career availability or career options with a POLS degree).</p>		
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Reflection (Due 9/15/17)

Reflection

1) How were assessment results shared in the unit?

Please select all that apply. If "other", please use the text box to elaborate.

- Distributed via email (selected)
- Presented formally at staff / department / committee meetings
- Discussed informally (selected)
- Other (explain in text box below) (selected)

Since we are a small department, all full-time continuing faculty are part of the assessment process. Thus, we have no separate "assessment committee" other than the "committee of the whole" (i.e the entire departmental faculty).

2) How frequently were assessment results shared in the unit?

- Frequently (>4 times per cycle)
- Periodically (2-4 times per cycle)
- Once per cycle (selected)
- Results were not shared this cycle

3) With whom were assessment results shared?

Please select all that apply.

Department Head (selected)

Dean / Asst. or Assoc. Dean (selected)

Departmental assessment committee (selected)

Other faculty / staff (selected)

4) What were the measurable or perceivable effects on your current (2016-2017) findings based on prior action plans (created in 2015-2016)?

All of the POLS faculty are always striving to improve the quality of the educational content and teaching methods in all our courses. This is reflected in the excellent assessment outcomes achieved in the objectives measured in the 2016-2017 assessment cycle: student engagement with the political process, quality of student writing as students advance through curriculum, and retention of POLS students year-to-year.

5) What has the unit learned from the current assessment cycle?

We learned that we are correctly providing high-quality political science education to our majors, at least so far as regards the objectives measured during this assessment cycle.

Attachments