

Rutgers University, Camden Campus Arts and Sciences (CCAS)

**Assessment Plan
Department of Political Science**

November 2007

Program Goals and Objectives for the Department of Political Science*

Goal: Knowledge Acquisition

Objective: Students should be able to demonstrate they have acquired a body of knowledge specific to the courses they have taken.

Goal: Critical Thinking

Objective: Students should be able to assess the quality of information available, understand the importance of appropriate knowledge sources, understand the importance and relevance of topics under discussion, be able to critically evaluate conflicting information, and be able to draw logical conclusions from information and discussions.

Goal: Quality of Expression

Objective: Students should be able to communicate both orally and in writing, produce original and creative analyses, understand proper citation, and recognize and avoid plagiarism.

Goal: Applied Knowledge

Objective: Students should be able to apply theoretical knowledge to real world situations.

Student Learning Outcomes and Assessment Measures

Student learning outcomes will be evaluated in four categories: knowledge acquisition, critical thinking, quality of expression, and applied knowledge. The syllabi for all courses will indicate how each course will cover the goals and objectives in these categories.

The Assessment Committee of the Department of Political Science will collect the syllabi for Political Science courses taught during the academic year and verify that all courses have addressed the goals and objectives in the syllabi.

The Assessment Committee of the Department of Political Science will collect documentation of student performance by gathering the written assignments and final exams from Political Science courses for a randomly selected group of five to seven Political Science majors. The documents will be compiled into Student Learning Outcome Portfolios. Four written assignments and/or exams will constitute the minimum portfolio. The identifying information of the faculty instructors, students, and grades will be removed.

The Assessment Committee will review and assess the quality of the Student Learning Outcome Portfolios on a scale "Excellent", "Good", "Fair", to "Poor" and "Not Applicable" in each of the four sets of goals and objectives established in the Assessment Plan. The Committee will write a brief statement to the Department Chair and faculty members to report the extent to which the student learning outcomes have been demonstrated.

Assessment Schedule

May: Remind faculty members that the syllabi need to indicate how each course will cover the goals and objectives in four categories: knowledge acquisition, critical thinking, quality of expression, and applied knowledge where relevant.

September of Fall Term and January of Spring Term: randomly select five to seven Political Science majors in their third year to be the subjects of the Student Learning Outcomes Portfolios. Inform the instructors of those students that they need to collect blank copies (without grades) of the written assignments and final exams of those students, and submit the blank copies to the Assessment Committee.

November of Fall Term and March of Spring Term: Send reminders to the faculty members that they need to collect and submit the coursework of the students.

April: The Assessment Committee will meet to review the Student Learning Outcome Portfolios. The Committee will report the extent to which the students learning outcomes were demonstrated and provide specific suggestions on how to improve any failings.

Results

The assessment of Students Learning Outcome Portfolios will allow the department to document 1) the progress of a sample of students from year to year, and 2) the progress of senior class cohorts from year to year.

This will allow the department to demonstrate that individual students are learning as they advance through the program, and that the senior class cohorts are improving from year to year.

Application of Results

The Assessment Committee will review and recommend changes in the goals and objectives of courses to improve coordination with the stated *Program Goals and Objectives for the Department of Political Science*. The committee will also facilitate the diffusion of information between faculty members to provide resources and ideas about how to improve each specific course. The recommendations and documentation of the corresponding changes will be sent to the Department Chair and the Camden Campus Arts and Sciences Assessment Committee.

* Note: These goals and objectives have been adapted from those developed by other universities.

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