

**Department of Political Science
California State University, Fresno**

**Outcome Assessment for the
Undergraduate Political Science Bachelor's Degree Program**

VISION STATEMENT

The Department of Political Science at California State University, Fresno, is dedicated towards teaching its undergraduate students the skills they need to confront the challenges of public governance and policy making in the 21st Century, to make them the new leaders for the Central Valley, California, and even on the world stage. Courses and programs offered by the Department of Political Science help students achieve these goals by teaching them how to critically analyze political and ideological debates over issues, understand the proper role of political representation in a democratic society, make public policy that is in the public interest, and effectively assess the consequences of those decision as political leaders, public managers, private sector attorneys, for-profit / nonprofit managers, and even as professional scholars.

STUDENT LEARNING OBJECTIVES

The objectives of the B.A. program in Political Science are for students to be able to:

- 1) Understand, explain and analyze the primary concepts, analytical techniques, theoretical and empirical literatures in the major subfields of the academic discipline of political science;
- 2) Analyze and discuss the primary issues in American government and electoral politics;
- 3) Analyze and discuss primary issues of international relations and comparative politics;
- 4) Demonstrate a mastery of the critical evaluation skills necessary to be able to write and speak in a scholarly fashion; and,
- 5) Be effectively prepared to be successful applicants to law school programs and graduate level programs in political science and international relations.

Instruments used to record outcome measures in the Political Science undergraduate program and brief explanations on how they will be designed and administered:

Alumni survey

An indirect measure that will be administered once every four years using the mailing addresses of alumni provided to us by the Registrar's Office, although we are looking into the possibility of conducting the survey on-line. The survey assesses student success in finding employment, the careers paths taken by older alums, and alumni feedback as to whether they felt they received the necessary training in our undergraduate program.

Data received from the survey will be statistically analyzed by department faculty with the name of alumni respondents kept confidential. Results will then be presented to the full department faculty and changes in the program discussed if weaknesses become apparent as a result of the survey data.

Student Paper Portfolios

A direct assessment measure applied once every two years. Generally all students write analytical research papers in our upper level undergraduate courses, thus this provides the faculty an opportunity to assess their progress in learning how to think analytically, express abstract concepts, and conduct basic research from one core course to another across their time in the major. We have used, and will continue using, the attached rubric to analyze the papers and assess whether students are making progress in terms of developing their analytical thinking and writing abilities.

Students majoring in political science in every upper division core course are required to turn in two copies of their paper, one of which is held in that student's file in the department office until the time comes for assessment with the scoring rubric. Responsibility for analyzing the papers is divided up evenly among all tenured and tenure track faculty who then discuss the data yielded from the rubrics in a department meeting where changes will be discussed to improve student abilities, should any be found to be necessary.

Student Enrollment Records

This is an indirect measure simply consisting of annual statistics on our graduation rates which allows us to track these rates over time and assess issues of timely graduation and retention within the major. This data will be assessed annually by the designated coordinator for the department's undergraduate degree and presented to the faculty annually for discussion of concerns, if there are any.

Pre-test / Post-test Assessment of Student Learning

This is a new direct measure that we anticipate starting in the fall semester of 2009 and will continue using every year. The faculty will identify a set of five or six questions (possibly more, the instrument is still under development) that capture the most crucial facts students should learn about political science and the representative form of government in the United States and around the world, facts all political science majors ought to know when graduating from the program. Unlike the paper portfolios, which are designed to assess thinking ability and skill, this measure assesses the acquiring of actual knowledge.

The pre-test version of the test will be administered in PLSI 1, generally the first course that new majors take in political science (all political science majors must take this course before taking other classes in the major, although students may take this course concurrent with other political science courses in their first semester). All students in the course will take the short test, but only those by students with a declared major in political science will be kept. Each semester the department also receives a list of all students applying to graduate with a political science major. These students will be contacted and asked to take the same test once again (this will probably be done by e-mailing the test to students, having them indicate their answers and e-mailing it back). Taking the test twice at the beginning and end of the major provides an effective means of assessing student learning during their time in the major. The faculty will then be presented summary data from these tests on an annual basis for assessing whether any changes need to be made to the curriculum.

Although student names will have to be used to connect the pre-test to the post-test, these names, along with the tests themselves, will be held in strict confidence by the faculty member designated by the department as coordinator for the program. No other person will see the student names and all individual student data will be kept strictly confidential. Only aggregate statistics will be released to the rest of the department.

The pre-test will begin in the fall semester of 2009, but the post-test will not be administered until the fall of 2010.

Student Assessment of Learning for General Education

A direct measure. As part of the on-going improvement in the university's general education curriculum, the political science department was asked to submit revised learning outcomes for Area D2 (which is entirely under the control of the department through PLSI 2). The department has done so and a copy of the proposed outcomes is attached. Every semester select PLSI 2 courses will incorporate a small number of questions into regular PLSI 2 exams, answers to which will be reported to the department's coordinator for the undergraduate degree. Student names will not be recorded and all data will be kept confidential. Further development of this measure, including the schedule for implementation, is still in progress pending the outcome of the university G.E. committee's final recommendations taking shape and being approved by the academic senate.

Course Objective Matrix

	Goal 1	Goal 2	Goal 3
PLSI 001	I	I	I
PLSI 002	I	I	I
PLSI 071	R	R	R
PLSI 090			
PLSI 101	R	R	I
PLSI 102	R	R	R
PLSI 110	A	A	A
PLSI 111	A	A	A
PLSI 120	A	A	A
PLSI 121	A	A	A
PLSI 126	A	A	A
PLSI 140	I	I	R
PLSI 141	R	R	R
PLSI 144	A	A	A
PLSI 147	A	A	A
PLSI 148	A	A	A
PLSI 150	R	R	A
PLSI 151	A	A	A
PLSI 152	A	A	A
PLSI 153	A	A	A
PLSI 154	A	A	A
PLSI 157	A	A	A
PLSI 160	A	A	A
PLSI 163	A	A	A
PLSI 170	A	A	A
PLSI 171	A	A	A
PLSI 174	A	A	A

Key: I= Introduced, R= Reinforced, and A = Advanced

Assessment Activity Timeline for the Undergraduate Political Science Program

2009-2010 Academic Year

- Student Paper Portfolios
 - Papers will be collected and distributed to faculty in the fall semester of 2009
 - Rubrics will be returned and program review based on the data performed in the spring semester of 2010
- Pre-Test / Post-Test
 - Pre-tests will begin in PLSI 1 courses in the fall semester of 2009
- Analysis and discussion of graduation and retention data in the spring semester of 2010

2010-2011 Academic Year

- Alumni Survey
 - Names and addresses will be collected in the fall semester of 2010
 - Survey will be sent at the beginning of the spring semester of 2011
 - Data will be analyzed over the summer of 2011
 - Department assessment and discussion of program change will take place in the fall semester of 2011
- Pre-Test / Post-Test
 - Pre-tests will be given in all PLSI 1 classes
 - Post-tests will be administered for the first time in the spring semester of 2011
 - Data will be presented to the department for discussion in the fall semester of 2011
- Analysis and discussion of graduation and retention data in the spring semester of 2011

2011-2012 Academic Year

- Student Paper Portfolios
 - Papers will be collected and distributed to faculty in the fall semester of 2011
 - Rubrics will be returned and program review based on the data performed in the spring semester of 2012
- Pre-Test / Post-Test
 - Pre-tests will be given in all PLSI 1 classes
 - Post-tests will be administered in the spring semester of 2012

- Data will be presented to the department for discussion in the fall semester of 2012
- Analysis and discussion of graduation and retention data in the spring semester of 2012

2012-2013 Academic Year

- Analysis and discussion of graduation and retention data in the spring semester of 2013
- Pre-Test / Post-Test
 - Pre-tests will be given in all PLSI 1 classes
 - Post-tests will be administered in the spring semester of 2013
 - Data will be presented to the department for discussion in the fall semester of 2013

2013-2014 Academic Year

- Pre-Test / Post-Test
 - Pre-tests will be given in all PLSI 1 classes
 - Post-tests will be administered in the spring semester of 2014
 - Data will be presented to the department for discussion in the fall semester of 2014
- Student Paper Portfolios
 - Papers will be collected and distributed to faculty in the fall semester of 2013
 - Rubrics will be returned and program review based on the data performed in the spring semester of 2014
- Analysis and discussion of graduation and retention data in the spring semester of 2014
- Alumni Survey
 - Names and addresses will be collected in the fall semester of 2013
 - Survey will be sent at the beginning of the spring semester of 2014
 - Data will be analyzed over the summer of 2014
 - Department assessment and discussion of program change will take place in the fall semester of 2014

2014-21015 Academic Year

Program Review Year

California State University, Fresno
Department of Political Science:
Student Outcomes Assessment Plan (SOAP)
Undergraduate Public Administration Program

MISSION STATEMENT

The undergraduate degree in public administration program is committed to teaching students of all backgrounds the discipline of public administration and to foster modern administrative knowledge and creative problem solving, as well as serve the diverse communities of current and future public servants.

STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES

Goal 1: To prepare Public Administration students for management in the public and non-profit sectors.

Objective 1.1: Students should develop skills and knowledge to meet the changing needs of public and non-profit employers.

Goal 2: To demonstrate knowledge of various theoretical approaches to understanding organizational behavior.

Objective 2.1: Students should be able to synthesize and critique the predominant theories in the public administration field.

Objective 2.2: Students should be able to apply theoretical approaches to real world issues confronting public and non-profit agencies.

Goal 3: To develop professional skills that will produce effective leaders.

Objective 3.1: Students should be able to communicate clearly and effectively in writing and speaking.

Objective 3.2: Students should be able to analyze and assess problems in order to arrive at reasonable solutions.

Assessment Activity Planning

Instruments Used to Assess Outcome Measures:

To measure our success in meeting the B.A. in Public Administration mission and the objectives necessary to achieve that mission, the Department of Political Science has adopted the following instruments.

1. Employer survey

To assess how the Department is meeting the needs of potential employers of our graduates, we will conduct an employer survey to collect and analyze the following:

- The current and future needs of the agencies.
 - The value of our B.A. graduates in regard to their preparation, knowledge, and abilities.
 - What suggestions may be made by employers to strengthen the B.A. program
2. Content knowledge exam
To assess how well our students are developing content knowledge of the field, we will conduct a pre-test and post-test of student knowledge upon entry and exit to the major.
 3. Student portfolio of papers
To assess writing and critical thinking skills, as well as content knowledge, we will collect papers from students in the core classes, analyze the papers, and discuss ways to improve these skills and knowledge.
 4. Alumni survey
To assess how well students are prepared for their chosen careers, we will collect data on the following:
 - The value of the students' education in relation to employment.
 - The strengths and weaknesses of the B.A. program in preparing the students for employment.
 - Graduates' employment placement.
 - Graduates' pursuit of graduate education.
 5. Student enrollment/graduation records
To evaluate growth of the program and student progress towards graduation, we will review data on the number of majors, retention rates, and graduation rates.

TIMELINE FOR SOAP IMPLEMENTATION

	Assessment Instrument Employed						
	<u>Year 1 2009-10</u>	<u>Year 2 2010-11</u>	<u>Year 3 2011-12</u>	<u>Year 4 2012-13</u>	<u>Year 5 2013-14</u>	<u>Year 6 2014-15</u>	<u>Year 7 2015-16</u>
Objective Measured	Portfolio	Content Knowledge Exam Alumni Survey	Portfolio	Content Knowledge Exam Student Enrollment/ Graduation Data	Employer Survey Portfolio	Alumni Survey	<u>Review Year</u>
1.1		x		x	x	x	
2.1	x	x	x	x	x		
2.2	x	x	x		x	x	
3.1	x		x		x		
3.2	x		x		x		