Southeastern Oklahoma State University  
Department of Social Sciences  
Bachelor of Arts in Political Science  
Program Assessment Plan

Revised 7/23/02

I. DEPARTMENT MISSION

The mission of the Department of Social Sciences is to provide traditional, liberal arts baccalaureate degree programs of study in the social arts and sciences, provide the academic core curriculum for baccalaureate and masters degree programs of study in secondary social studies education, and provide required and elective social studies curriculum in support of general education and other degree programs.

II. DEPARTMENT VISION

By 2005, the Department of Social Sciences will become a leader within the University and among its peers in the improvement of teaching/learning, use of appropriate technologies, and provision of services to majors.

Goal: To improve teaching and learning among students and faculty.

Strategy: Develop a comprehensive assessment program that adds classroom assessment techniques, peer review, and student and faculty focus group discussions to the existing assessment methods. Expand faculty and student research/scholarship opportunities and funding sources.

Goal: To expand the integration of appropriate technologies into the teaching/learning process.

Strategy: Place all current course syllabi on-line, update software/hardware used by faculty in instruction and research, and establish departmental discussion groups for development of on-line activities and links for class use.

Goal: To provide students the opportunities and information necessary to make timely, rational choices.

Strategy: Develop program-tracking systems, long-term course sequencing plans, recruitment activities, links to employers and graduate schools, and mandatory meetings with advisors each semester.

III. CONCEPTUAL MODEL

[Diagram of teaching, learning, improvement, and assessment pathways]
IV. PROGRAM GOAL AND OBJECTIVES

Program Goal:

The goal of the Political Science program is to provide Political Science majors with a broad and eclectic knowledge of United States national, state, and local government and politics, comparative politics, global politics, political philosophy, and public administration and policy.

Program Objectives:

A student completing a B.A. in Political Science will be able to:

1. Identify American institutions, structures and process of government;
2. Identify American non-governmental political institutions, structures and processes;
3. Assess values and belief systems which underlie the American polity;
4. Analyze political ideology, theory, and philosophy, ancient and modern;
5. Demonstrate action strategies open to citizens for participation in the political process: interest groups, lobbying, political parties, campaigning and voting;
6. Identify the role played by racial, ethnic, class, gender and age groups in our political institutions, structures and processes;
7. Compare political systems and cultures of Europe, Asia, and Latin American;
8. Exhibit cross-country comparisons;
9. Identify international political institutions, structures and processes (both formal and informal); and
10. Demonstrate knowledge of the history and current status of the American political science discipline.

V. ASSESSMENT INSTRUMENTS

A. STANDARDIZED PRETEST (ACAT Political Science Pre-tests)

The Area Concentration Achievement Tests (ACAT) Pre-test will provide a baseline measurement of core knowledge of political science students prior to their advancement through the political science program. The will be given to each declared major enrolled in his/her first POSC 3000 or POSC 4000 level course. Any entering transfer student will also take these pretests.

B. STANDARD EXIT EXAM (ACAT Political Science Exam)

All graduating political science majors will take the exit exam at the end of the semester in which they have completed the program of study. The exam, which covers all sub-fields included in the political science program, will provide information about the level of student achievement relative to national norms, evidence of student learning when compared with pre-test results, and provide cumulative information about historical trends relative to all 10 program objectives. As a whole, graduates are expected to perform at or above national averages.
C. PORTFOLIO
A portfolio is maintained for each student who is majoring in political science at Southeastern Oklahoma State University (SOSU). This requirement became effective for students declaring a major in political science as of Fall Semester 1998 (with those students already in the program allowed to continue under previous program requirements). The first significant cohort of students to graduate under the portfolio requirement did so Spring Semester 2001.

The purpose of the portfolio is to provide evidence of a student's substantive knowledge, competencies and skills as evaluated by individual professors teaching in the political science program. This is accomplished by placing in the portfolio the student's current/final transcript, with its official record of grades assigned in each class, along with at least one research paper from a 3000 level course and one research paper from a 4000 level course. The research papers are especially important in assessing academic research and writing skills. Also to be placed in the portfolio are a student's program exit test results in order to assess substantive knowledge as compared to students in similar academic institutions. And when possible, there should be placed in the portfolio a student's program pre-test results in order to assess the value added. All of this is relevant to program objectives 1 through 10.

D. FACULTY EVALUATION OF STUDENT COURSE PERFORMANCE (GPAs)
A rich source of information evaluating the level of student learning is available in the letter grades assigned to students in program courses. Program grade point averages should be discriminating and positively correlated to exit exam performance. Historical grade point information will also be used to filter out the effects of any trends in student quality from trends in student performance. The resulting trends, after accounting for any trends in the quality of program majors, are suggestive of non-student dependent trends in program quality.

E. EXIT INTERVIEW
An exit interview for each student who has majored in political science at SOSU and is about to graduate is conducted by political science professors. This requirement became effective for students graduating as of Spring Semester 2001. These informal interviews generally are unstructured even though some questions are common to each interview.

The purpose of the exit interview is to encourage each graduating major to assess the political science program by discussing its strengths and weaknesses and by making recommendations for its improvement. This provides an important perspective on the political science program by those who have been its participants. The exit interview also is used to obtain addresses and telephone numbers for future contact in order to monitor the career progression of graduates (the “ultimate program assessment”).

F. POSTGRADUATION PLACEMENT AND CAREER ANALYSIS
Nothing can measure the effectiveness of the program more than successful post-graduation placement of its majors. The political science program will maintain an alumni placement file, which will be used to analyze general alumni career success.

G. PROGRAM Curriculum/ACAT/Objective MATRIX
A program curriculum/ACAT/Objective matrix will be reviewed annually to assess the correspondence of program requirements with program objectives. A copy of this matrix is provided in Appendix A. Results of the annual review will be used to demonstrate the degree of correspondence of course to program objectives. No gaps
should exist between the program objectives and course curriculum objectives contained in any possible program of study.

H. SUMMA Student Opinion Surveys

SUMMA student opinion surveys are administered in all political science courses at least one every five years. Information from the surveys will be reviewed to identify student concerns and potential program weaknesses.

VI. ASSESSMENT MECHANISM

All political science faculty will meet at least once each year to review the information collected from the assessment instruments, discuss opportunities for improving student learning among the history students, and provide recommendations for improving the Teaching/Learning/Assessment processes. Continual faculty assessment of the efficacy of the political science program will occur informally and in response to specific issues throughout the academic year.
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