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**Semester Assessment Report Form: Fall 2008 Data  
DUE March 31, 2009**

**Directions:** Please complete a form for each of the programs within your department. This form was designed to provide a format for assessment reporting and should not be used to limit the amount of information provided. Each box that is attached to each of the sections is designed to adjust to varying lengths. If you have any questions, please contact Dr. Bea Babbitt at x51506 or via email at: [bea.babbitt@unlv.edu](mailto:bea.babbitt@unlv.edu).

**\*\*\*Please submit the report electronically to [bea.babbitt@unlv.edu](mailto:bea.babbitt@unlv.edu)**

1. Program Information:

Program	Bachelor of Arts in Political Science
Department	Political Science
College	Liberal Arts
Program Assessment Coordinator	Dr. Kenneth E. Fernandez
Semester Data Collected	Fall 2008
Report Submitted by	Dr. Kenneth E. Fernandez
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Date Submitted	March 31, 2009

2. According to the Assessment Plan for this program, what were the planned assessments to be conducted during the Fall 2008 semester? You may want to copy and paste from this program's assessment plan.

Which outcomes for this program were measured?	How did you measure the outcomes?	What results did you expect? If the students performed well what would their performance look like, i.e. percentages, means, or comparisons to a national standard?
8 outcomes are evaluated this semester.		
1. Development of critical thinking skills necessary for the evaluation of social scientific concepts.	Pre/Post Tests and Program Exit Surveys	20% to 30% improvement between the Pre and Post Tests and agreement from a majority of students who completed the program that their critical thinking skills improved
2. Development of persuasive writing skills.	Program Exit Surveys	Agreement from a majority of students who completed the program that their persuasive writing skills improved

3. Knowledge of the research process in the social sciences	Pre/Post Tests and Program Exit Surveys	Agreement from a majority of students who completed the program that their understanding of the research process improved
4. Development of the skills for sophisticated information consumption	Pre/Post Tests and Program Exit Surveys	20% to 30% improvement between the Pre and Post Tests and agreement from a majority of students who completed the program that their information processing skills improved
5. Comprehension of the obligations and expectations of citizenship.	Program Exit Surveys	Agreement from a majority of students who completed the program that their understanding of the expectations of citizenship improved
6. Knowledge of the interplay between preferences and institutions for shaping political outcomes.	Pre/Post Tests and Program Exit Surveys	20% to 30% improvement between the Pre and Post Tests and agreement from a majority of students who completed the program that their understanding of the factors shaping political outcomes improved
7. Comprehension of the multiple motivations and constraints underlying political behavior.	Pre/Post Tests and Program Exit Surveys	20% to 30% improvement between the Pre and Post Tests and agreement from a majority of students who completed the program that their understanding of the factors underlying political behavior improved
8. Identification of the multi-causal nature that characterizes the social world.	Pre/Post Tests and Program Exit Surveys	20% to 30% improvement between the Pre and Post Tests and agreement from a majority of students who completed the program that their understanding of the multi-causal nature that characterizes the social world improved

3. Results. What are the results of the planned assessments listed above? Describe below or attach to the form.

Results

During the Fall of 2008, the Department of Political Science used two instruments to assess student learning. For lower division course offerings required for the undergraduate major (PSC 100, 101, 200, 211, and 231) a ten question multiple-choice test, unique to each course, was administered at the start (n = 1704) and end of the semester (n = 1627). The purpose of this assessment instrument was to measure student learning over the course of the term by examining differences between the pre and post-tests. The second assessment instrument consisted of an exit survey administered to all students graduating in the Fall of 2008 with either a major or minor in Political Science (n= 43).

Turning first to the assessment of the program's lower division offerings, which are presented in Table 1 below, the results show that 18 of the 28 courses (64%) assessed met or exceeded expectations (with an average improvement of 20 to 30%). Specifically, the table summarizes the overall course test score means (out of a possible score of 10) for both the pre and post tests and the differences between the two tests and the percent improvement. With the exception of one section of PSC 302, classes assessed demonstrated improvement from the start to the end of the term (summarized in the Difference and % Improve columns). However, the improvement across courses and across sections for the same courses was uneven. PSC 100 sections had improvement ranging from 47% to 119% and an overall average improvement of around 70 percent. PSC 302 only section had negative improvement. It is difficult to read too much into the results because there is also a great deal of variation in the pre test scores (3.95 to 7.25 out of 10 points). This is most notable for the various sections of PSC 200 (Survey of Political Theory) where the pre-test course means are quite high (average 7.25 out of 10), leaving little room for improvement (this was also the case with the Fall 2006, Spring 2007, Fall 2007, and Spring 2008 data). Overall, full-time faculty had slightly higher improvement levels than part-time faculty (except in one case, PSC 231, where the difference was very large).

Table 4 provides a summary of the assessment of program learning requirements for students graduating with either a major or minor in Political Science in the Fall of 2008. Specifically, the table displays the frequencies gleaned from a series of questions taken from the program exit survey asking students to rate how well the program fulfilled their expectations, as well as how the program helped them master the learning outcomes summarized above. Overwhelmingly, the 43 students who completed the exit survey indicated satisfaction with the program and more importantly, that completion of the program instilled the skills encompassed in the learning. Specifically, the results indicate the following:

- 93% of students responding to the exit survey either agreed or strongly agreed that the program improved their critical reasoning skills.

- 78% agreed or strongly agreed that the program helped developed their writing skills.
- 81% agreed or strongly agreed that the program helped them to better understand the social scientific research process.
- 95% either agreed or strongly agreed that the program improved their ability to understand sophisticated political information.
- 78% either agreed or strongly agreed that the program helped them to better understand the obligations and expectations of citizenship.
- 95% either agreed or strongly agreed that the program improved their understanding of how preferences and institutions affect political outcomes.
- 93% either agreed or strongly agreed that the program improved their understanding of the factors that underlie political behavior.
- 85% either agreed or strongly agreed that the program helped them to better understand the multi-causal nature that characterizes the social world.
- 78% either agreed or strongly agreed that completion of the program helped them better understand how multi-culturalism shapes political outcomes in the international arena.

4. Conclusions and Discoveries. What conclusions or discoveries were made from these results? Describe below or attach to the form.

Conclusions and Discoveries
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<p>Overall, the assessment data shows that the core courses in the program are meeting their objectives. All but one course assessed showed improvement in the pre and post-test and 64% of the courses showed improvement of 20% or more. The exit survey data showed 76 percent of students felt the program met or exceeded their expectations (with 15% unsure answering both yes and no and only 10% actually stating that the program did not meet their expectations). The most common suggestion on how to improve the undergraduate program was to offer more types of courses each semester. These results are consistent with data from prior semesters.</p>
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5. Use of Results. What program changes are indicated? How will they be implemented? If none, describe why changes were not needed.

No immediate or major changes are currently planned for the program given the overwhelming satisfaction among those completing the major or minor undergraduate degrees in Political Science. The most frequently made suggestion in the exit surveys was simply to increase the number of course offerings. With budget constraints and several faculty vacancies still left unfilled (Asian Politics Position and European Politics Position) and the retirement of a constitutional law faculty member and the election of Dina Titus to Congress, the department will be hindered in expanding the number of courses offered. In addition, the last round of budget cuts required the department to reduce the number of part-time faculty hired to teach some lower-division courses. The new curriculum change of requiring majors to take PSC 302 (research methods) prior to their junior year was recently implemented but it is too soon to assess the impact on student learning.

6. Dissemination of Results, Conclusions, and Discoveries. How and with whom were the results shared?

The information is distributed to all instructors teaching undergraduate courses in the Department of Political Science and have been posted on the Department of Political Science web page.

**Table 1: Results of Pre and Post Test**

Course	Number	Pre Mean	N	Post Mean	N	Difference	% Improve
NV Constitution	100-OM1	4	43	6.4	50	2.4	60.00
NV Constitution	100-OM2	4.1	51	6.4	54	2.3	56.10
NV Constitution	100-OM3	4.6	21	6.9	23	2.3	50.00
NV Constitution	100-OM4	4.7	46	8.4	40	3.7	78.72
NV Constitution	100-OM5	4.1	39	7.7	47	3.6	87.80
NV Constitution	100-OM6	4.2	31	6.6	32	2.4	57.14
NV Constitution	100-OM7	4.3	17	6.3	20	2	46.51
NV Constitution	100-OM8	3.6	35	7.9	33	4.3	119.44
NV Constitution	100-OM9	4.7	39	8.2	47	3.5	74.47
Intro Amer. Gov't	101-Q01	6.2	4	6.7	4	0.5	8.06
Intro Amer. Gov't	101-001	4.8	39	7.5	43	2.7	56.25
Intro Amer. Gov't	101-002	5.4	44	6	44	0.6	11.11
Intro Amer. Gov't	101-003	4	49	4.6	46	0.6	15.00
Intro Amer. Gov't	101-005	4.8	54	5.2	54	0.4	8.33

Intro Amer. Gov't	101-006	3.9	43	5.7	47	1.8	46.15
Intro Amer. Gov't	101-008	5.4	50	6	47	0.6	11.11
Intro Amer. Gov't	101-010	4.3	196	5.5	191	1.2	27.91
Intro Amer. Gov't	101-011	4.2	132	5.1	126	0.9	21.43
Intro Amer. Gov't	101-013	5.2	132	8.1	128	2.9	55.77
Intro Amer. Gov't	101-014	4.4	194	5	165	0.6	13.64
Intro Amer. Gov't	101-015	4.9	130	8.1	106	3.2	65.31
Survey Pol. Theory	200-001	7.3	27	7.7	30	0.4	5.48
Survey Pol. Theory	200-002	7.2	32	7.5	24	0.3	4.17
Comparative Gov/Politics	211-001	4.7	65	4.9	53	0.2	4.26
Comparative Gov/Politics	211-002	5.2	48	6.6	44	1.4	26.92
World Politics	231-001	2.7	79	7.9	65	5.2	192.59
World Politics	231-002	5.2	41	7.6	42	2.4	46.15
Research Meths Pol Sci	302-001	4.5	23	4.2	22	-0.3	-6.67

**Table 2: Overall Average and Range of Improvement**

N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
28	-6.67	192.59	44.3989	42.14454

**Table 3: Average improvement by course groupings**

Course	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Minimum	Maximum
NV Constitution	9	70.0214	23.09792	46.51	119.44
Intro Amer. Politics	12	28.3393	21.45248	8.06	65.31
Survey Pol. Theory	2	4.8231	.92828	4.17	5.48
Comparative Gov/Politics	2	15.5892	16.02853	4.26	26.92
World Politics	2	119.3732	103.54783	46.15	192.59
Research Meths Pol Sci	1	-6.6667	.	-6.67	-6.67
Total	28	44.3989	42.14454	-6.67	192.59