

# Political Science

## B.A./B.S.

### *Expanded Statement of Institutional Purpose*

#### **Institutional Mission Reference**

The Bachelor of Arts and Bachelor of Science degrees in Political Science offer the student a comprehensive program of study which develops the critical thinking and analytical skills of students. Political Science faculty encourage students to develop their intellectual and pre-professional skills through course work and instructor-student interaction. The faculty in Political Science offer a wide range of courses and specialize in American politics, comparative politics, and international politics. The program supports the University mission of internationalizing its undergraduate curriculum through its comparative and international politics courses and comparative elements in its American politics courses. The faculty are committed to teaching an ethnically diverse student body and fostering a better understanding between different cultures.

#### **Institutional Goal(s) Supported**

The Political Science program supports the University goals of a) high quality undergraduate academic programs, b) high quality teaching, c) promoting the discovery of new knowledge and high quality scholarship, d) supporting international education, e) contributing to the enrichment of the University community, f) providing practical experience for students outside the classroom, g) improving computer and data analysis skills. The Political Science program also supports Strategic Initiatives: a) high quality, distinctive undergraduate programs, b) providing distance learning for the IDS program, c) enhancing international education by preparing undergraduates for graduate education, d) ensuring new levels of knowledge and skills through technology-assisted learning.

### *Intended Educational (Student) Outcomes, Methods for Assessment, Criteria for Success, Assessment Results, and Use of Results*

#### **Intended Outcome 1**

Discipline-specific Knowledge -- Students will gain a fundamental understanding of the central themes, concepts, and political institutions in political science.

**Method for Assessing Outcome 1 and Criterion for Success:** A senior capstone paper is required for graduation and will be reviewed annually for satisfactory quality by a panel of three faculty members.

**Summary of Assessment Data Collected for Outcome 1:** A three member faculty committee evaluated the capstone papers for Academic Year 2000/2001 to ensure satisfactory quality in discipline-specific knowledge.

**Intended Outcome 2**

Students will develop analytical and critical thinking skills.

**Method for Assessing Outcome 2 and Criterion for Success:** A senior capstone paper is required for graduation and will be reviewed annually for satisfactory quality by a panel of three faculty members. Additionally, the syllabi of all courses in the program will be reviewed by a Portfolio Committee of three faculty members each year.

**Summary of Assessment Data Collected for Outcome 2:** A three member faculty committee evaluated the capstone papers to ensure satisfactory quality in analytical and critical thinking skills. A Portfolio Committee comprised of three faculty members reviewed course syllabi.

**Intended Outcome 3**

Students will develop effective writing communication skills.

**Method for Assessing Outcome 3 and Criterion for Success:** All students will earn scores of satisfactory or higher on their capstone papers which are judged by a panel of three departmental faculty members. Students will pass the Exit Exam of Writing Proficiency, and 80% will pass on their first attempt. All students will successfully complete a writing intensive political science course.

**Summary of Assessment Data Collected for Outcome 3:** Three faculty members evaluated the capstone papers. The average score for senior's capstone papers was 3.79 on a five-point scale (1=low, 5=high) indicating satisfactory or higher performance. 71% of seniors passed the Exit Writing Exam. All students completed a writing intensive course.

**Intended Outcome 4**

Students will develop effective oral communication skills.

**Method for Assessing Outcome 4 and Criterion for Success:** All students will successfully complete a lower level oral communication course and oral communication requirement in a 400-level political science course.

**Summary of Assessment Data Collected for Outcome 4:** All seniors completed requirements in oral communication courses.

**Intended Outcome 5**

Students will learn research and methodological skills.

**Method for Assessing Outcome 5 and Criterion for Success:** A senior capstone paper is required for graduation and will be reviewed annually for satisfactory quality by a panel of three faculty members. In addition, all students must satisfactorily complete Political Science 302 (Introduction to Research) and Political Science 308 (Research Design).

**Summary of Assessment Data Collected for Outcome 5:** A three member faculty committee evaluated the capstone papers to ensure that students have gained research and methodological skills. The chair directed a department methods committee to evaluate the linkage between the methods courses and how they are meeting the needs of students in upper level courses. The results of the committee's report will be discussed in the Fall.

**Intended Outcome 6**

: Political science is known as a multidisciplinary field of study, and students will gain multidisciplinary knowledge.

**Method for Assessing Outcome 6 and Criterion for Success:** Students are required to complete lower level general education courses in communications, economics, foreign language, math, geography, and philosophy, among others. Upper level political science courses employ multidisciplinary approaches.

**Summary of Assessment Data Collected for Outcome 6:** All seniors completed lower and upper level courses which provided multidisciplinary study and knowledge.

**Intended Outcome 7**

Students are encouraged to gain practical work experience.

**Method for Assessing Outcome 7 and Criterion for Success:** The Political Science program has a longstanding internship program. Fifty percent of students will participate in at least one internship experience during their undergraduate careers.

**Summary of Assessment Data Collected for Outcome 7:** 45% of seniors participated in the Internship Program to gain practical work experience. In the Fall, the chair will direct faculty advisors to place more emphasis on the importance of the internship experience

during advising.

**Intended Outcome 8**

Electronic Communication -- Students will develop effective computer skills and gain familiarity with the Internet.

**Method for Assessing Outcome 8 and Criterion for Success:** All students are required to pass POLS 302 (Introduction to Research) and use a word processing program to prepare their research papers in upper level political science courses. Research paper references will reflect proper use of Internet sites.

**Summary of Assessment Data Collected for Outcome 8:** All seniors completed Political Science 302 to develop computer skills and gain familiarity with the Internet.

**Use of Assessment Results from Intended Outcome 8 to Improve Academic Program:** Students completing Political Science 302 are better prepared for the required Political Science 308 methods course.

**Intended Outcome 9**

Students will gain a multicultural perspective (diversity).

**Method for Assessing Outcome 9 and Criterion for Success:** The content of political science courses includes coverage of the role and contributions of women and minorities. At least 70% of graduating students will indicate on the Senior Student Satisfaction Survey that they are Satisfied or Very Satisfied with their understanding of contributions of women and minorities.

**Summary of Assessment Data Collected for Outcome 9:** Seniors are exposed to the contributions of women and minorities in political science courses. The data from the Senior Student Satisfactory Survey are not available at this time. In the Fall 2001, the chair will direct the department Portfolio Committee and Curriculum Committee to ensure that all courses include coverage of the contributions of women and minorities.

**Intended Outcome 10**

Students will improve their leadership skills and team orientation.

**Method for Assessing Outcome 10 and Criterion for Success:** Political Science courses include a variety of activities (e.g., small group exercises, simulations) which help students develop their leadership skills and social interaction. At least 70% of

students participating in internships will be rated as Good or Excellent on Collaboration Skills.

**Summary of Assessment Data Collected for Outcome 10:** Seniors in upper level courses learn teamwork and leadership skills in upper-level political science courses. 100% of student interns were rated above average to excellent on collaboration skills by their supervisors.