

# **Texas A&M International University**

## **Annual Institutional Effectiveness Review (AIER)**

**Date Submitted** 1 February 2006

**Assessment Period Covered (2006)**

**Academic Program/AES Unit** Bachelor of Arts with a Major in Political Science

**Person(s) Preparing Review** Dr. James A Norris

### **Provide summary of the last cycle's use of results and changes implemented**

Eight students took the capstone Senior Seminar locally-generated exam. Four scored 4 (excellent), three scored 3 (good), and one scored 1 (fail). Nine seniors took the ACAT and five of their scores were above the standardized average. As a whole students performed at the 54th percentile, exceeding our goal. Scores varied from a high of 692 (192 points above average) to a low of 365 (135 points below average). The mean score in American Government was 521 (21 points above average). The mean score in International Relations/Comparative Government was 497 (3 points below average). The mean score in Public Administration was 508 (8 points above average). Lastly, the mean score in Political Theory/ Research Methods was 507 (7 points above average). No changes were made based upon these results since, on the whole, the students met our standards. All but one student met or exceeded our expectations for the locally-generated exam and only the mean score in the sub-area of International Relations/Comparative Government is below standards. Even so, it is less than one percent below the national average which means it is not significant. Nevertheless, the Political Science faculty are mildly concerned and will continue to monitor the program and always seeks better ways to maximize student success and learning.

## Section I: Planning and Implementation

### **Institutional Mission**

Texas A&M International University, a Member of The Texas A&M University System, prepares students for leadership roles in their chosen profession in an increasingly complex, culturally diverse state, national, and global society ... Through instruction, faculty and student research, and public service, Texas A&M International University embodies a strategic point of delivery for well-defined programs and services that improve the quality of life for citizens of the border region, the State of Texas, and national and international communities.

### **Academic Program or Administrative/Educational Support Unit Mission**

The Department of Social Sciences enjoys a broad mission in teaching, research, creative activities, and service to our international community.

The Bachelor of Arts in Political Science is a traditional liberal arts degree designed to provide a sound undergraduate education that helps prepare graduates to think critically and constructively about the world, to be active and concerned citizens, and for a wide range of careers relating to teaching, management, government, politics, and the law. Many of our students intend to continue their education to earn either a Master's degree or a law degree. Accordingly, the degree plan seeks to provide students with a broad, integrated knowledge of all the major subfields of the discipline: political philosophy, American government and politics, comparative politics, and international relations. In addition, the degree plan emphasizes analytic and writing skills as these are critical to success in education beyond the bachelor's degree. Some students earning this degree will likely become teachers, but this degree itself is not intended to stand alone as a teacher preparation degree, since the state of Texas' most closely related teaching specialization, Social Studies, is far broader than just Political Science. Enter text here

### **Identify outcomes and the relationship to Strategic Plan**

#### **Outcome 1**

**Is this outcome related to writing (QEP)?**

Students completing the Political Science program will understand political behavior, political institutions, public policies, and the role of government in society. Senior Political Science students will be required to take a capstone course that reviews political behavior, political institutions, public policies, and the role of government in society. The final examination, a locally generated exam, focusing on these components, will be given to students at the end of their final semester. Enter text here

#### **Identify Strategic Plan Goal related to Outcome 1**

Goal 1 Academics

#### **Identify Strategic Plan Objective related to Outcome 1**

1.2 Support a student-centered learning environment supported by excellent teaching.

#### **Identify methods of assessment to be used**

Senior Political Science students will be required to take a capstone course that reviews political behavior, political institutions, public policies, and the role of government in society. The final examination, a locally generated exam, focusing on these components, will be given to students at the end of the semester. It will be team graded by political science faculty using a rubric ranging from 1 (poor) to 4 (excellent).

#### **Indicate when assessment will take place**

Spring

#### **Criteria/Benchmark**

The average score on the examination will be at least 3 (good).

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#### **Outcome 2**

**Is this outcome related to writing (QEP)?**

Students completing the baccalaureate program will compare favorably in their knowledge of political science with students at other universities completing similar programs. Graduating

seniors will take the ACAT examination in political science.

**Identify Strategic Plan Goal related to Outcome 2**

Goal 1 Academics

**Identify Strategic Plan Objective related to Outcome 2**

1.7 Establish and pursue student learning outcomes appropriate for each program with systematic assessment and use of results for continuous quality improvement.

**Identify methods of assessment to be used**

Graduating seniors will take the Political Science ACAT examination in political science.

**Indicate when assessment will take place**

Spring

**Criteria/Benchmark**

The average score of TAMIU graduates will not fall below the average scores of other students completing similar programs nation. Subscales on the ACAT will be analyzed to identify specific areas of the program that need attention. On no subscale will the average score fall below the average of other students completing similar programs nationwide.

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**Outcome 3**

**Is this outcome related to writing (QEP)?**

Students majoring in Political Science will, within reason, express satisfaction with the variety and frequency (or scheduling) of the Department's upper division course offerings. Enter text here

**Identify Strategic Plan Goal related to Outcome 3**

Goal 1 Academics

**Identify Strategic Plan Objective related to Outcome 3**

1.3 Increase student retention and graduation rates.

**Identify methods of assessment to be used**

We will develop a short on-line survey for seniors and recent graduates.

**Indicate when assessment will take place**

Spring

**Criteria/Benchmark**

Students will agree that course variety and frequency rates at least satisfactory.

## Section II: Analysis of Results

### **When (term/date) was assessment conducted?**

**Outcome 1**  
Spring 2006

**Outcome 2**  
Spring 2006, although the results were not available until the end of July 2006.

**Outcome 3**  
Spring 2006

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### **What were the results attained (raw data)?**

**Outcome 1**  
Twelve seniors took the capstone Senior Seminar locally-generated exam. Three scored 4 (excellent), three scored 3 (good), five scored 2 (pass) and one scored 1 (fail).

**Outcome 2**  
Twelve seniors took the ACAT and four of their scores were above the standardized average. As a whole, students performed at the 52nd percentile, exceeding our goal. Scores varied from a high of 740 (240 points above average) to a low of 419 (81 points below average). The mean score in American Government was 494 (6 points below average- 48th percentile). The mean score in International Relations/Comparative Government was 529 (29 points above average- 61st percentile). The mean score in Public Administration was 485 (15 points below average- 44th percentile). Lastly, the mean score in Political Theory/ Research Methods was 513 (13 points above average-55th percentile).

**Outcome 3**  
Our survey of graduating seniors found that 27 percent of students take longer than four (4) years to graduate, 45 percent of the seniors said they had been unable to choose all the upper division PSCI courses they wanted to take in order to graduate "on-time," 18 percent strongly agreed with the previous statement, 45 percent said they had to use a course substitution to graduate "on time," 18 percent said they had used two course substitutions, and 18 percent said they had asked for an independent study class in order to graduate "on-time."

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### **Who (specify names) conducted analysis of data?**

**Outcome 1**  
Dr James Norris

**Outcome 2**  
Dr James Norris

### Outcome 3

Dr James Norris

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**When were the results and analysis shared and with whom (department chair, supervisor, staff, external stakeholders)? Submit minutes with data analysis to [assessment@tamiu.edu](mailto:assessment@tamiu.edu) (Please use Minutes Template located on the **Project INTEGRATE** web page.)**

Meeting with the department chair on 30 January 2007. Political Science faculty meeting on 31 January 2007.

**NOTE: Submit all assessment documentation (i.e., surveys, rubrics, course exams with embedded questions, etc.) to the Office of Institutional Effectiveness and Planning.**

**Use of Results: Indicate whether criteria were met/not met and what changes, if any, have been identified based on the data collected?**

#### Outcome 1

Met    Not Met

**Provide narrative:** No changes were made based upon these results, since, on the whole, the students met our standards. All but one student met or exceeded our expectations for the locally-generated exam. That one student failed is lamentable, but not unexpected. The Political Science faculty are concerned and will continue to monitor the program and always seeks better ways to maximize student success and learning.

#### Outcome 2

Met    Not Met

**Provide narrative:** No changes were made based upon these results, since, on the whole, the students met our standards. All but one student met or exceeded our expectations for the locally-generated exam and only the mean scores in the sub-areas of American Government and Public Administration are slightly below standards. The American Government score is only two percent below the national average which means it is not particularly significant and could be merely a random variation. The Public Administration score is six points below the national average score. We do not require our majors to take Public Administration as part of the major, the course is an elective. The Political Science faculty are concerned and will continue to monitor the program and always seeks better ways to maximize student success and learning. If this trend continues we may add the Public Administration course as another core course required in the major.

#### Outcome 3

Met    Not Met

**Provide narrative:** Based upon these results in order to put a stop to the use of course substitution the political science faculty recommend that we offer two to three more additional upper division courses per semester and repeat the more popular courses more often than

biannually. This will require one more faculty line. Hence, this is a suggestion that we cannot implement this year, but will have to wait at least another year. Our short-term solution is to hire adjuncts to teach more lower-division courses and one upper division course, but this is less than ideal. One problem is that this solution continues to overburden the faculty; a second problem is that this solution deprives lower-division students exposure to seasoned faculty and the highest quality instruction. This year we do have one professor emeritus teaching one upper division course each semester, which has helped out a great deal, but we cannot absolutely count on his availability for the future.

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**How have these data-based changes improved your program/unit?**

Not applicable

Section III: Programmatic Review

**Are resources affected by the changes identified in Section II?**  Yes  No

**If so, specify the effect(s) using the chart below:**

Funding	Physical	Other
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> New resources required	<input type="checkbox"/> New or reallocated space	<input type="checkbox"/> Primarily faculty/staff time
<input type="checkbox"/> Reallocation of current funds		<input type="checkbox"/> University rule/procedure change only
		<input type="checkbox"/> Other: Enter text here

**Provide a narrative description and justification for requested resources (include linkage to Strategic Plan)**

In order to put a stop to the use of course substitution the political science faculty recommend that we offer two to three more additional upper division courses per semester and repeat the more popular courses more often than biannually. This will require one more faculty line. Hence, this is a suggestion that we cannot implement this year, but will have to wait at least another year. Our short-term solution is to hire adjuncts to teach more lower-division courses and one upper division course, but this is less than ideal. One problem is that this solution continues to overburden the faculty; a second problem is that this solution deprives lower-division students exposure to seasoned faculty and the highest quality instruction. This year we do have one professor emeritus teaching one upper division course each semester, which has helped out a great deal, but we cannot absolutely count on his availability for the future.

<b>Identify proposed outcomes for the next assessment cycle:</b>
Continuation of present outcome(s) – (Indicate reason for continuation): These are perennial areas for concern. Furthermore there has been no movement towards granting us additional faculty.
New Outcome(s) – (List outcomes below):
Modification of present outcome(s) – (Indicate reason for modification):

**\*\*\*\* This section to be completed by dean/director/vice-president \*\*\*\***

**Are resources requested a priority for the academic program/AES unit?**

Yes  No

**Comments:**

Enter text here

**If funding, physical or other resources were requested, what is the impact of the budget decisions on the academic program/AES unit?**

Enter text here