

**Texas A&M International University
Annual Institutional Effectiveness Review (AIER)
of Academic Programs**

Program: Bachelor of Arts in Political Science

Assessment Period Covered: March 1, 2008 to January 31, 2009

Program Coordinator (Preparer of Report) Dr. James A Norris

List Other Program Faculty:

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The Annual Institutional Effectiveness Review for Academic Programs is directed at Goal 1: Academics of the Texas A&M International University 2006-2010 Strategic Plan:

Develop, maintain, assess, and improve academic programs, administrative/educational support services and student services, to admit, retain, and graduate students who achieve established learning outcomes designed to prepare them for success in their chosen careers.

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 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.

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

In the last cycle outcomes 2 and 3 were addressed. These outcomes are of continued interest and concern and were the same as in the previous cycle.

OUTCOME 2: Ten students took the Political Science ACAT exam, and four of their scores were above the standardized average. As a whole, students performed at the 38th percentile, failing to meet our goal. Scores varied from a high of 622 (122 points above average) to a low of 376 (124 points below average). The mean score in American Government was 505 (5 points above average- 52nd percentile). The mean score in International Relations/Comparative Government was 473 (27 points below average- 39th percentile). The mean score in Public Administration was 427 (73 points below average- 23rd percentile). Lastly, the mean score in Political Theory/ Research Methods was 504 (4 points above average- 52nd percentile).

On the basis of this cycle's results the political science faculty extensively revised the BA in political science by adding more required courses to the major, including PSCI 3345, Introduction to Public Administration (the major weak area). The old program allowed students far too much freedom to avoid taking some of the more challenging, yet necessary and valuable, courses in the discipline. This revision is currently undergoing review through the curriculum committee system and will hopefully be entered into the new catalog.

OUTCOME 3: Our survey of graduating seniors found that 64 percent of students take longer than four (4) years to graduate, 35 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," 7 percent strongly agreed with the previous statement, 35 percent said they had to use a course substitution to graduate "on time," 21 percent said they had used two or more course substitutions, and 21 percent said they had asked for an independent study class in order to graduate "on-time."

Based upon these results and in order to put a stop to the use of course substitution and independent study, the political science faculty recommend that we offer three to four more additional upper division courses per semester and repeat the more popular courses more often than biannually. We are in process of hiring another Political Science assistant professor and hoping in the near future for another line to allow us to hire a second additional Political Science professor.

Selected list of program-level intended student learning outcomes *It is recommended that programs rotate through their entire set of outcomes over a multi-year period. Programs may focus on one or two outcomes each year, as deemed appropriate.*

1. Students completing the Political Science program will demonstrate an understanding of 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.
2. Students completing the baccalaureate program will compare favorably in their knowledge of political science with students at other universities completing similar programs.

3. 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.

Section I: Planning and Implementation

Outcome(s): *Identify the outcome(s) that will be focused upon this year.*

Outcome 1. Students completing the Political Science program will demonstrate an understanding of 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

Outcome 3. 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.

Please indicate if the outcome(s) is(are) related to writing (Write-On TAMIU!).

Methods of assessment to be used:

OUTCOME 1: Senior Political Science students are 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).

OUTCOME 3: We will develop a short on-line survey for seniors and recent graduates.

Indicate when assessment(s) will take place:

Spring Semester 2009

Criteria/Benchmark(s): *Specify, if deemed appropriate to assess outcome(s). Criteria/benchmark(s) may be optional, especially if qualitative measures are used for data collection.*

OUTCOME 1: The average score on the examination will be at least 3 (good).

OUTCOME 3: Students will agree that course variety and frequency rates at least satisfactory.

Section II: Analysis of Results

What were the results attained? *Describe the primary results or findings from your analysis of the information collected. This section should include an explanation of any strength(s) or weakness(es) of the program suggested by the results.*

No data were collected, or at least the data have been lost. These data are collected in the capstone course each Spring semester. The faculty member teaching the capstone course this time left TAMIU suddenly without notice and did not leave us with any data what-so-ever. We do not know if he collected these data or not, because ever since he was told his position was not to be renewed last April, which is the very month that most of the data are collected, he passively refused to communicate. The faculty failed to anticipate this result.

What were the conclusions reached? *Should include a brief description of the procedure used for reaching the conclusion(s) based on the evidence collected and describe the process used to disseminate the information to other individuals. For example, if the discussion took place during the annual spring retreat, include a summary from those deliberations using the Meeting Minutes template found at <http://www.tamtu.edu/integrate/docs/Minutes-Template.doc>. Once completed, submit the minutes to [assessment @tamtu.edu](mailto:assessment@tamtu.edu).*

No conclusions are possible.

Describe the action plan formulated. (The plan may be multi-year in nature.) *Based on the conclusion(s), describe the action plan to be implemented to improve or maintain student learning, including a timeline for implementation.*

Based upon our findings in the last several rounds of assessment the political science faculty extensively revised the BA in political science in 2008 by adding more required courses to the major, including PSCI 3345, Introduction to Public Administration (the major weak area in the previous report). The old program allowed students far too much freedom to avoid taking some of the more challenging, yet necessary and valuable, courses in the discipline. Furthermore, in order to put a stop to the use of course substitution and independent study the political science faculty recommend that we offer more upper division courses per semester and repeat the more popular courses more often than biannually. Moreover, we are about to enter a period of additional stress on our faculty caused by the addition of large numbers of additional students, perhaps hundreds, in our entry-level core courses from the Early College High School.

In-so-far as the data collection problem that occurred this assessment period, the faculty will not allow this to occur again. The faculty resolve that henceforth the professor assigned the capstone course will be reminded in a diplomatic and timely manner of his/her responsibilities to the discipline and to the department.

Section III: Resources

Resource(s) to implement action plan: *Describe the resources that will be needed to implement the action plan. Also indicate if the resources are currently available, or if additional funds will be needed to obtain these resources.*

Funding

X New Resources Required

- Reallocation of current funds
- Current funding resources are sufficient.

Physical

- New or reallocated space

Other

- Primarily faculty/staff time
- University/rule procedure change only

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

We desperately need more faculty lines to be able to teach the rapidly increasing numbers of students in the core courses as well as to offer greater variety in the upper division courses. We have already stretched our capabilities to expand to the limits. We already teach two university core courses that average over 75 students each. Several sections have over 100 students each.

Identify proposed outcomes for the next assessment cycle:

Continuation of present outcome(s) – (Indicate reason for continuation):

These are perennial areas for concern. In addition we have lost two faculty members this year and have not yet hired any new faculty.

New Outcome(s) – (List outcomes below):

N/A

Modification of present outcome(s) – (Indicate reason for modification):

N/A