

Political Science BA/BS

Improve Undergraduate Curriculum

Goal Description:

The department will work to improve its undergraduate curriculum with an eye toward (1) improving student learning outcomes and (2) improving the resilience of the program by making it easier to recruit majors.

Providing Department: Political Science BA/BS

RELATED ITEMS/ELEMENTS

RELATED ITEM LEVEL 1

Finalize thematic tracks

Performance Objective Description:

The department will finalize the thematic tracks (for students' elective hours) -- initially drafted in 2018-2019 -- and incorporate them into the next major catalog revision.

RELATED ITEM LEVEL 2

Tracks ready to be incorporated into next cycle of catalog changes

KPI Description:

The department will finalize the thematic tracks and have the information ready to be incorporated into the next catalog update cycle in Fall 2021.

Results Description:

During the 2021-2022 academic year, the department pivoted away from the track strategy and began to talk about something more concrete: the possibility of developing certificate programs and/or new minors. The worry with tracks is that although they allow students ways to cluster their electives, the information about the track does not formally appear on their transcripts.

We continue to search for ways to create an innovative and attractive undergraduate curriculum.

RELATED ITEM LEVEL 3

Tracks ready to be incorporated into next cycle of catalog changes

Action Description:

Department should step back and think about revising curriculum in the most straight-forward, efficient, and exciting (for students) ways possible. Given the time and challenges associated with creating new programs, the department should first focus on low-hanging fruit: course titles and descriptions, changes to curriculum, etc.

Promote Positive Undergraduate Student Outcomes

Goal Description:

The political science department aims to offer educational instruction that promotes strong critical thinking, clarity of thought, excellent communication capabilities, and sophisticated research skills.

Providing Department: Political Science BA/BS

RELATED ITEMS/ELEMENTS

RELATED ITEM LEVEL 1

Develop Students' Disciplinary Skills

Learning Objective Description:

Students in the major will develop their ability to analyze and present empirical data, explain key concepts of research design, and write coherent reports and research papers.

RELATED ITEM LEVEL 2

Student Paper Outcomes in 3379

Indicator Description:

POLS 3379 Research and Writing is a required course. Faculty members who teach the course will receive and review 5 randomly selected papers POLS 3379 courses. Faculty members will review the papers using a rubric. Papers will be scored on a scale of 1 - 5 with 5 being the highest.

Criterion Description:

We expect that 75% of the written assignments selected for committee review will receive a score of three or better.

Findings Description:

Of the five randomly selected papers from POLS 3379 from the 2021-2022 academic year, four papers (80%) received a score of three or better.

RELATED ITEM LEVEL 3

Student Paper Outcomes in 3379

Action Description:

Going forward, the department should work to develop new assessment metrics from 3379 (and/or 3374). The existing measures are ok, but there is too much variance in the way 3379 is taught (in terms of assignments) that it is difficult to compare across sections.

RELATED ITEM LEVEL 1

Develop Students' Knowledge of Civic Engagement

Learning Objective Description:

Students will learn the skills and knowledge necessary to participate and engage in civic and political life at the local, state, and national levels of government.

RELATED ITEM LEVEL 2

Pre/Post Testing of POLS 2305 and POLS 2306 Students

Indicator Description:

Students enrolled in 2305 American Government and 2306 Texas Government will complete pre/post tests designed to capture information about students learning progress on matters relevant to civic and political engagement.

Criterion Description:

We expect to see significant differences between the pre and post tests scores.

Findings Description:

Students enrolled in POLS 2305 American Government and POLS 2306 Texas Government were administered pre and post tests designed to assess the knowledge they learned about information relevant to civic engagement and social responsibility in the context of national and Texas state government. For 2305 in Fall 2021, the post test scores "a statistically significant difference at the $p < .05$ level between students' pre- to posttest scores, $z = -2.25$."

For 2306 in Spring 2021, only 121 students completed the pre-test and only 39 completed the post-test. This low response rate significantly limits the value of the data.

It should be noted that, there were very low response rates in both semesters.

See attached documents for more detailed information about pre and post test results.

Attached Files

RELATED ITEM LEVEL 3

Pre/Post Testing of POLS 2305 and POLS 2306 Students

Action Description:

In the coming AY, the department should implement and assess new strategy for assessing SLOs in 2305 and 2306 based on plan developed.

RELATED ITEM LEVEL 1

Evaluate assessment tools relative to goals

Performance Objective Description:

Department will evaluate the current assessment tools relative to the student learning objectives for its undergraduate (BA & BS) programs.

RELATED ITEM LEVEL 2

Develop measures to assess progress on SLOs

KPI Description:

Given newly specified learning outcomes, the department will attempt to develop measures assess progress. This includes revising the use of the pre- and post-tests for POLS 2305 and POLS 2306.

Results Description:

During the 2021-2022 academic year, a department committee comprised of Drs. Waggener and Bussing met with the chair and members of the SHSU Assessment office to develop a plan for revising the 2305 and 2306 tests. It was decided that we would trim down the instrument and begin to utilize random sampling in order to try to increase response rates on the assessment in 2305 and 2306.

RELATED ITEM LEVEL 3

Develop Measures to assess programs on SLOs

Action Description:

In coming year, implement and assess new strategy for assessing SLOs in 2305 and 2306 based on plan developed.

RELATED ITEM LEVEL 2

Finalize undergraduate SLOs

KPI Description:

Department will finalize work begun during 2018-2019 to more clearly specify learning outcomes for its undergraduate majors.

Results Description:

The department had several discussions about these issues in 2021-2022. This will continue in the 2022-2023 academic year.

RELATED ITEM LEVEL 3

Finalize Undergraduate SLOs

Action Description:

In the coming year, the department should continue to fine-tune undergraduate major (BA/BS) SLOs.

RELATED ITEM LEVEL 1

Finalize thematic tracks

Performance Objective Description:

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RELATED ITEM LEVEL 2

Tracks ready to be incorporated into next cycle of catalog changes

KPI Description:

The department will finalize the thematic tracks and have the information ready to be incorporated into the next catalog update cycle in Fall 2021.

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We continue to search for ways to create an innovative and attractive undergraduate curriculum.

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Tracks ready to be incorporated into next cycle of catalog changes

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Department should step back and think about revising curriculum in the most straight-forward, efficient, and exciting (for students) ways possible. Given the time and challenges associated with creating new programs, the department should first focus on low-hanging fruit: course titles and descriptions, changes to curriculum, etc.

Recruit more undergraduate majors

Goal Description:

The department will work to improve the number of undergraduate majors (BA or BS) in political science.

Providing Department: Political Science BA/BS

RELATED ITEMS/ELEMENTS -----

RELATED ITEM LEVEL 1

Develop a marketing and recruiting strategy

Performance Objective Description:

Department will work with Enrollment, Marketing and Communications to develop and begin to implement a comprehensive marketing strategy for recruiting students into BA and BS programs.

RELATED ITEM LEVEL 2

Begin to implement recruitment strategy

KPI Description:

Throughout 2021, the department will meet to discuss and implement initial phases of the recruitment strategy.

Results Description:

The department implemented a new series of events (Help Me Make Sense of This!) to attempt to develop a stronger community within the political science department, particularly among our majors. In addition, the several members of the department discussed the idea of moving to a strategy of small, invited events to incentivize greater attendance among students.

RELATED ITEM LEVEL 3

Begin to implement recruitment strategy

Action Description:

In the coming year, we need to work toward (1) developing an online recruiting campaign, (2) continue the "Help Me Make Sense of This" series and (3) developing small-group events where students are personally invited to participate.

RELATED ITEM LEVEL 2

Meet with EMC, develop strategy

KPI Description:

In early 2021, the department chair and recruitment committee will meet with the Enrollment Marketing and Communication office to develop a marketing strategy.

Results Description:

This was not completed in AY 2021-2022. It will be a point of focus in AY 2022-2023.

RELATED ITEM LEVEL 3

Meet with EMC, develop strategy

Action Description:

In the coming year, the department chair should meet with the Enrollment Marketing and Communication office to develop a marketing strategy.

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Update to Previous Cycle's Plan for Continuous Improvement Item

Previous Cycle's Plan For Continuous Improvement (Do Not Modify):

Closing Summary

For the 2021-2022 academic year, the department has three primary goals with respect to its BA/BS programs. These build off the actions from the current assessment cycle.

1. Rethink BA/BS program goals and underlying objectives, KPIs, etc. with an eye toward more useful assessment metrics.
2. Develop curriculum (elective) tracks and move toward catalog inclusion.
3. Continue to emphasize recruiting majors and minors in our programs.

The department chair will take the lead on these working with undergraduate curriculum committee and undergraduate recruitment committee as appropriate.

Update of Progress to the Previous Cycle's PCI:

The department made decent progress these goals in 2021-2022. For example, we were able to develop a new process for assessing SLOs in POLS 2305 and 2306 which we feel will give us (1) better response rates and (2) better assessment data overall. However, in the coming year, we must continue to think about revising the curriculum in the most straight-forward, efficient, and exciting (for students) ways possible. Given the time and challenges associated with creating new programs, the department should first focus on low-hanging fruit: course titles and descriptions, changes to curriculum, etc.

New Plan for Continuous Improvement Item

Closing Summary:

For the 2022-2023 academic year, the department has a handful of tasks to accomplish with respect to its BA/BS programs. These build on the actions from the current assessment cycle.

1. Create new assessment metrics for POLS 3379
2. Work toward (1) developing an online recruiting campaign, (2) continue the "Help Me Make Sense of This" series and (3) developing small-group events where students are personally invited to participate.
3. implement and assess new strategy for assessing SLOs in 2305 and 2306 based on plan developed.
4. Continue to fine-tune undergraduate major (BA/BS) SLOs.
5. Meet with the Enrollment Marketing and Communication office to develop a marketing strategy.
6. Think about revising curriculum in the most straight-forward, efficient, and exciting (for students) ways possible. Given the time and challenges associated with creating new programs, the department should first focus on low-hanging fruit: course titles and descriptions, changes to curriculum, etc.

The department chair will take the lead on these working with undergraduate curriculum committee and undergraduate recruitment committee as appropriate.