

Political Science, Department of  
Assessment Plan Summary

Political Science, Department of

Center for the Study of Disasters and Emergency Management (CDEM)

Goal Description:

Continue growing the CDEM.

RELATED ITEMS/ELEMENTS -----

RELATED ITEM LEVEL 1

CDEM

Performance Objective Description:

Increase the activities relevant to the growth of CDEM.

RELATED ITEM LEVEL 2

CDEM

KPI Description:

This is the first year CDEM will have been formally in existence. Thus, we will use this year to establish a baseline for publications, grants, and community partnerships. We anticipate growth in all three categories.

Results Description:

Faculty associated with CDEM produced 26 publications and received \$360,000 in grants. The director of CDEM established community partnerships at the state and international level. A complete listing of CDEM activities can be found in the supporting documents file.

RELATED ITEM LEVEL 3

CDEM

Action Description:

The first year performance of CDEM was impressive. The CDEM Director will continue last year's actions that produced impressive accomplishments in the areas of grants, publications, and community/state/international partnerships.

Curriculum And Pedagogy

Goal Description:

Faculty in the department of political science will offer high quality curriculum at the undergraduate level.

RELATED ITEMS/ELEMENTS -----

RELATED ITEM LEVEL 1

Changes And Improvements To The Undergraduate Program

Performance Objective Description:

The department will offer curriculum that is comparable to SHSU's competitive institutions.

RELATED ITEM LEVEL 2

Curriculum Committee Review

KPI Description:

During department discussions of the degree plans, it became clear that there concerns about the the major foundation and course listings under required subfield hours. Thus, this coming year the department undergradaute curriculum committee will review these two areas of the degree plans and make recommendations to the department.

Results Description:

Minor changes were made to the undergraduate curriculum, specifically in the area of the required subfield of theory. Specifically, POLS 3380 Introduction to International Relations was moved from the subfield of theory to the subfield if international relations and a new course, POLS 3373 Ideologies and Democracy, was added to the theory subfield.

Discussions regarding the major foundation of the undergraduate degree plan led to broader issues reagarding the type of student learning objectives that should be included in the degree plan, degree tracks, preparation of students for market placement, etc. It became evident to faculty that these broader issues could not be discussed AND resolved in a single academic year. Faculty agreed it was best to move the goal of undergraduate curriculum revision into the coming academic year.

RELATED ITEM LEVEL 3

Curriculum and Pedagogy

Action Description:

The Department's Undergraduate and Curriculum Committee will provide a brief report to faculty outlining the department's BA and BS degree plans and comparing the department's BA and BS degree plans to BA and BS degree plans in the SHSU College of Humanities and Social Sciences as well as political science undergraduate degree plans found at other universities that are comparable to SHSU.

RELATED ITEM LEVEL 1

**Faculty Teaching**  
**Performance Objective Description:**

Faculty teaching performance will rank alongside or above the teaching performance of other faculty teaching in political science and public administration.

RELATED ITEM LEVEL 2

**The Individual Development And Educational Assessment System**  
**KPI Description:**

Faculty will be evaluated using the data collected through the Individual Development and Educational Assessment system currently used by Sam Houston State University as a tool for evaluating faculty teaching.

In the 2014-2015 academic year, 75% of the face to face political science courses and 70% of the online courses will be scored at or above the national average as identified by the Individual Development and Educational Assessment program. Faculty members who score below or near the national average on the Individual Development and Educational Assessment program for three consecutive semesters will meet with the department chair to discuss and implement an improvement plan that includes mentoring and use of the Sam Houston State University Professional and Academic Center for Excellence (PACE). The expectation is that scores will improve by .5 on the IDEA scoring scale for the 2014-2015 academic year for those who are identified as underperforming.

**Results Description:**

Fall 2015

96% of political science face to face courses had adjusted scores at or above the national average as identified by IDEA. 72% of political science online courses had adjusted scores at or above the national average as identified by IDEA.

Spring 2016

84% of political science face to face courses had adjusted scores at or above the national average as identified by IDEA. 60% of political science online courses had adjusted scores at or above the national average as identified by IDEA.

No faculty member scored below or at the national average for three consecutive semesters and thus there was no need to implement a teaching improvement plan with any individual faculty member.

RELATED ITEM LEVEL 3

**Faculty Teaching**  
**Action Description:**

The Individual Development and Educational Assessment (IDEA) system will continue to be used as a means of assessing teaching performance. A department committee will be formed to discuss and identify additional means of assessing teaching performance.

**Faculty Research**

**Goal Description:**

Faculty in the department of political science will engage in research activities consistent with a dynamic and growing academic environment.

RELATED ITEMS/ELEMENTS -----

RELATED ITEM LEVEL 1

**Faculty Research Agendas**  
**Performance Objective Description:**

Faculty will produce and maintain active research agendas pertinent to their areas of research.

RELATED ITEM LEVEL 2

**Publications, Grants, And Conference Presentations**  
**KPI Description:**

Faculty research progress will be measured by the number of publications (peer reviewed journal articles, book or book chapter, and extensive book reviews), grants, and confernce presentations.

We expect research track (3:3 course load) faculty to produce at least one publication per year or be awarded at least one internal or

external grant and to present at a minimum of one conference per year.

We expect teaching track (4:4 course load) to present at a minimum of one conference per year.

**Results Description:**

Faculty teaching a 3:3 load:

11 of 11 faculty produced one or more publications (a total of 26 publications), attended at least one conference (a total of 25 conferences), and three out of eleven faculty obtained four grants.

Faculty teaching a 4:4

Two of the three faculty members attended at least one conference and one of three faculty members published.

RELATED ITEM LEVEL 3

**Faculty Research**

**Action Description:**

Faculty research has been assessed during the past several years. Faculty continue to perform well in the area of research. However, there are opportunities for faculty to increase their research collaboration with undergraduate students. This coming year the department will increase its interaction with the Center for Enhancing Undergraduate Research Experiences and Creative Activities (EURECA). The department is positioned well for increased interaction with EURECA as Heather Evans, Associate Professor in the department of political science, will begin serving as a member of the EURECA board. She has proven record of engaging undergraduates students in research and co-authoring with undergraduate students.

**Graduate Student Recruitment**

**Goal Description:**

Improve the quantity and quality of graduate student applications.

RELATED ITEMS/ELEMENTS -----

RELATED ITEM LEVEL 1

**Improve Graduate Student Applications**

**Performance Objective Description:**

The number of students entering the graduate programs will increase and the average GRE and GPA of incoming students will increase.

RELATED ITEM LEVEL 2

**Number Of Applications And Average GRE And GPA**

**KPI Description:**

We expect to see a 10% increase in graduate student enrollment overall. We expect that the average GRE and GPA of students will improve or stay consistent. We will ascertain how successful the efforts to develop new prospective student recruitment pools for the MA program have been, specifically our efforts at targeting high school and community college teachers. We anticipate these recruitment efforts will increase the number of applicants beyond the minimum expectation of a 10% increase.

Students admitted under a conditional acceptance plan will go through a more rigorous application process (two writing samples, three letters of recommendation, and an interview with the graduate advisor), thus we expect to see the number of conditional acceptance move to permanent acceptance within one semester.

**Results Description:**

**Number of Applications and Average GRE and GPA**

MA in Public Administration Program

Application numbers are as follows: total number of applications 76, accepted applications 30, denied applications 10, applications withdrawn due to duplicate applications 14, and 22 applications incomplete by application deadline.

Average GPA of accepted applicants = 3.36

Twenty-seven of the thirty accepted applicants had GPAs and professional work experience that qualified them for the GRE waiver. The average GRE score for the three applicants who submitted GRE scores was 297.

MA in Political Science Program

Application numbers are as follows: total number of applications 27, accepted applications 13, denied applications 3, applications withdrawn due to duplicate applications 0, and 11 applications in complete by application deadline.

The average GPA of accepted applicants = 3.30

Eight of the accepted applicants possessed a master degree or law degree which qualified for GRE waivers. The average GRE score for accepted applicants who submitted GRE scores was 300.

RELATED ITEM LEVEL 3

**Graduate Student Recruitment**

**Action Description:**

This coming year the department will send faculty to professional conferences deemed relevant to graduate student recruitment. The Masters of Public Administration program will be represented by two faculty members who will attend the annual Texas Emergency Management Conference in April, 2017. The Department's Masters of Political Science Graduate Recruitment sub-committee will select a conference deemed relevant to the program and will send faculty members to that conference. The department administrative assistants, in consultation with SHSU Assistant Director of Creative Services, will select promotional items to be used at the conferences and other graduate recruitment events. \$5,000 of department funds will committed to graduate program promotional items.

**MA in Political Science Online Program**

**Goal Description:**

MA directors and faculty will begin taking the steps necessary to move the MA program online.

RELATED ITEMS/ELEMENTS -----

RELATED ITEM LEVEL 1

**MA in Political Science Online Program**

**Performance Objective Description:**

Switch delivery mode of MA in political science from face-to-face to completely online.

RELATED ITEM LEVEL 2

**MA in Political Science Online Program**

**KPI Description:**

The MA program will be totally online by fall 2016.

**Results Description:**

The MA program is scheduled to be offered completely online beginning in fall 2016. In spring 2016 the MA program was under external review. In their report, the external reviewers commended faculty for moving the MA program online so quickly and efficiently.

RELATED ITEM LEVEL 3

**MA in Political Science Online Program**

**Action Description:**

The Masters of Political Science program's transition from face-to-face to online delivery mode was successfully completed. The program's co-directors will begin developing a sub-committees that will operate under the Masters of Political Science Graduate Committee. The sub-committees will the areas of recruitment, admissions, and curriculum as well as other areas the directors and faculty deem relevant to the online program.

**Student Satisfaction With Programs And Student Market Placement**

**Goal Description:**

The department of political science will monitor and, when necessary, improve students' satisfaction with their respective programs and monitor student market placement upon graduation.

RELATED ITEMS/ELEMENTS -----

RELATED ITEM LEVEL 1

**Entrance And Exit Instruments**

**Performance Objective Description:**

Develop instruments to measure student satisfacation with programs and student market placement upon graduation

RELATED ITEM LEVEL 2

## **Entrance And Exit Instruments**

### **KPI Description:**

Instruments will be developed and ready for department faculty review approval at the beginning of the 2015 fall semester.

### **Results Description:**

#### **MA Public Administration Program Exit Survey Results**

The response rate for the graduate exit survey was 89% (8 of the 9 students who graduated in the spring completed the survey. The survey instrument is designed to collect demographic information and assessment information (see attached supporting documents for survey instrument). The first section requires students to evaluate seven dimensions of the MPA program. Students had five descriptive categories to select from: poor, below average, average, above average, and excellent. The responses were then coded on a scale of 1 – 5 (i.e., poor = 1, below average = 2, etc.). The average score for all seven questions in this section was 4.6 and none of the individual responses varied dramatically from the average.

The second and third sections of the survey requires students to evaluate how the program contributed to the development of their professional skills and knowledge. The responses in the first section were coded on a scale of 1 – 5. The average score for all five questions in the second section was 4.40. Only question four (How much do you believe your coursework in the MPA program has improved your abilities and understanding in “my ability to make ethical decisions”?) received a score that was significantly below the average (3.88 versus 4.40).

The responses in the third section were coded on a scale of 1 – 4. The average score for all five questions in section three was 3.6. None of the individual responses varied dramatically from the average.

Question five (Has obtaining your degree in the MPA program helped you advance your current position or secure better employment?) received 50% yes responses and 50% no responses.

Question six (in your opinion, did the MPA program enhance your ability to integrate high levels of quality into your professional work?) resulted in the following responses:

No, not at all: 0%

Yes, a little: 12.5%

Yes, somewhat: 37.5%

Yes, significantly: 50%

The program scores were impressive with the exception of the score for the question addressing ethics and decision making. MPA faculty will need to determine what is driving the low scores.

#### **MA Political Science Program Exit Survey Results**

Two students graduated in spring and both students completed the survey. The first section of the survey included a 5-point scale with 5 being the highest score. Unfortunately, one of the students did not use the scales when answering questions. Thus, it is difficult to summarize the data numerically for both students.

The student who referenced the scale gave answers ranging between 4 and 5, with 4.33 being the average. The answers from the student who did not reference the scale consistently referenced a common theme – the student’s dislike of two professors who the student believed gave him low course grades due to his political opinions.

The last question on the survey asked if their MA degree helped them advance their political career, secure better employment, and/gain acceptance into a doctoral program. The student who did not reference the 5-point scale in the first section of the survey failed to answer the question. The other student indicated the degree helped in the area of professional advancement and better employment.

Undergraduate Program Exit Survey Results

Unfortunately, unlike the graduate program survey response rates, the undergraduate response rate was proved highly problematic. Not a single student responded to the survey.

RELATED ITEM LEVEL 3

Student Satisfaction with Programs and Student Market Placement

Action Description:

The response rates for the graduate student exit surveys were impressive. The results for the Masters of Public Administration were quite favorable with the exemption of the program's relevancy to professional ethics. The MPA director and faculty will review the survey results more carefully and take any action (e.g., reviewing content of PADM 5388 Ethics) deemed relevant to addressing the survey results regarding professional ethics. The results for the Masters of Political Science were difficult to interpret given errors made by one of the two students who completed the survey. The instructions for the political science survey will be revised for clarity.

The response rate for the undergraduate exit survey was not acceptable. The Department's Undergraduate Enrollment/Recruitment Committee will develop new survey procedures designed to increase the response rate. The new procedures will be in place by the next survey cycle scheduled for December, 2017.

Undergraduate Enrollment

Goal Description:

Faculty will discuss and develop strategies for increasing undergraduate enrollment.

RELATED ITEMS/ELEMENTS -----

RELATED ITEM LEVEL 1

Undergraduate Enrollment

Performance Objective Description:

Review past and current enrollment data and develop strategies for increasing enrollment.

RELATED ITEM LEVEL 2

Undergraduate Enrollment

KPI Description:

A undergraduate enrollment committee will be formed and given the tasks of developing strategies for retaining students and recruiting new students.

Results Description:

An undergraduate enrollment committee was formed. The committee members concluded that the department would take the following actions designed to retain student enrollment: host at least one event per semester that brings faculty and political science students together and have the department chair send out an email to all political science students at the beginning of the semester. The email content will provide students with registration information, updates on faculty and student accomplishments, welcome new students into the program, etc. This action will be taken in fall 2016.

The committee reviewed data addressing past and current enrollment. The following trends were noted: number of BA applications fall 2015 88 vs. fall 2016 117, number of BS applications fall 2015 43 vs. fall 2016 39, and number of pre-law minor applications fall 2015 97 vs. fall 2016 188. The number of applications increased substantially with the exception of a slight decrease in BS applications. The number of applicants who were accepted and who enrolled in classes also increased. However, there is a substantial difference between the number of applicants accepted and the number of applicants who actually registered. For example, in fall 2015 88 BA applicants were accepted but only 6 registered and in fall 2016 117 BA applicants were accepted but only 18 registered.

RELATED ITEM LEVEL 3

Undergraduate Enrollment

Action Description:

Department funds will be used to support monthly events for students and faculty. Fall semester events are already scheduled and are linked to the 2016 General Elections. By December, 2016 faculty will have spring 2017 events scheduled.

The Undergraduate Enrollment/Recruitment Committee will begin communicating with applicants early on in the application process in an effort to encourage more students to enroll in the undergraduate program rather than to simply apply to the undergraduate program.

## Update to Previous Cycle's Plan for Continuous Improvement

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

#### UNDERGRADAUTE CURRICULUM REVIEW

During department discussions of the degree plans, it became clear that there concerns about the the major foundation and course listings under required subfield hours. Thus, this coming year the department undergradaute curriculum committee will review these two areas of the degree plans and make recommendations to the department.

#### UNDERGRADUATE ENROLLMENT

The department chair conducted a five year analysis of enrollment in the POLS undegraduate programs and minors. The review showed a decrease in enrollment in programs and minors. This coming year the department will implement the following actions designed to increase undergraduate enrollment: (1) the department will begin working closely with SHSU marketing and undegradaute admissions (2) faculty will promote the programs and minors in their introductory courses, courses that typically include many undeclared students (3) the department will use COGNOS reports to determine which schools yield the highest number of POLS recruits and promotional material will be sent to those high schools and (4) the department will begin working more closely with LoneStar Community College campus. Chairs and faculty in an effort to improve the number of POLS students recruited from that campus

#### MA GRADUATE PROGRAM ENROLLMENT

Efforts to increase MA enrollment were not successful. Only 11.5% of the emails sent out were actually opened by recipient. Attempts to recruit from within SHSU did result in a few students, but not enough to support growth in enrollment. The market for a face-to-face MA program in political science is very limited. Thus, the department voted in favor of moving the MA online. This coming year the department will take the steps necessary to move the MA online.

#### MARKET PLACE ANALYSIS OF UNDERGRADUATE AND GRADUATE STUDENTS

The department will collect market placement data and will take actions appropriate to the data results.

THE CENTER FOR THE STUDY OF DISASTERS AND EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT (CDEM): Increase interdisciplinary research initiatives, develop an interactive case study project to be housed on the CDEM website and used for student learning, and establish a CDEM speaker series.

### Update of Progress to the Previous Cycle's PCI:

CDEM: Faculty associated with CDEM maintained an impressive record of publications and grants. The CDEM director secured additional partnerships with county and state officials.

Curriculum and Pedagogy: The Political Science Curriculum Committee produced a report comparing the BA/BS undergraduate degree plans to degree plans offered by other departments in the College of Humanities and Social Sciences as well as undergraduate political science degree plans found at other universities that are comparable to SHSU. The course offerings were consistent with other political science degree plans. However, degree requirements were not consistent. Several faculty members expressed a desire to enter into to discussions about the Major Foundation section of the BA/BS degree plans as this section of the degree plan was not comparable to other political science degree plans.

Faculty Teaching: The committee responsible for developing additional instruments for evaluating teaching performance provided faculty with several alternatives. Faculty agreed that each alternative raised logistical problems that would be difficult to overcome. Faculty agreed to use teaching performance measurements listed in the SHSU Faculty Evaluation System.

Faculty Research: Two faculty members worked with undergraduate students. The work resulted in co-presentations at regional conferences and co-publications in peer reviewed journals. Two faculty members submitted grant applications for EUREKA FAST Awards. Both members' applications were accepted and funded by CHSS.

MA Political Science Online Program: The MA co-directors developed a MA program committee and sub-committee system.

Student Satisfaction with Programs and Student Market Replacement: The task of revising the MA exit survey has been given to the appropriate committee. The exit survey will be revised and implemented in December 2017.

Undergraduate Enrollment: Faculty did not volunteer to organize any student events during spring 2017. However, POLS faculty did attend all SHSU and CHSS student recruitment events. The department chair and the two POLS undergraduate student advisers. Began reaching out to students with pending applications.

## Plan for Continuous Improvement

### Closing Summary:

#### Department progress on performance objectives

1. The Center for Disasters and Emergency Management (CDEM): CDEM performed well in the areas of grants, publications, and community/state/international partnerships.

2. Undergraduate Curriculum: Review of the curriculum for the undergraduate programs resulted in minor updates as well as agreement that this coming year the department needs to implement a more comprehensive review of all aspects of the curriculum: major foundation courses, degree plans, degree tracks, student learning objectives, and market placement.
3. Individual Development and Educational Assessment System (IDEA): Faculty IDEA scores were well above the national average. A committee will be formed to explore additional means for assessing teaching performance.
4. Faculty Research: Faculty performed very well in the area of research. The department will take action designed to increase the opportunities for faculty to engage in research and publications with undergraduate students.
5. Political Science Graduate Program (MA): The MA program was successfully moved online. This coming year the new MA co-directors and faculty will address the suggestions the MA program external reviewers included in their May, 2016 report.
6. Exit Surveys: The response rate for the graduate exit surveys were quite good. However, the instructions for the MA exit survey need to be revised for clarity and the MPA faculty need to discuss possible explanations for the low scores given on the question on professional ethics. The response rate for the undergraduate exit survey was not acceptable. Options for increasing the response rate need to be developed and tested this coming year.

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