

Political Science BA/BS

Civic Engagement and Social Responsibility

Goal Description:

Develop student skills and knowledge relevant to civic/political engagement.

RELATED ITEMS/ELEMENTS -----

RELATED ITEM LEVEL 1

Develop Students Knowledge of Civic Engagement and Social Responsibility

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

Civic Engagement and Social Responsibility

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:

We did not find significant differences between the pre and post tests scores. The 2305 American Government test is a 12 question test with a total possible score of 12. The pre-test mean score was 9.22 and the post-test mean score was 10. The 2306 Texas Government is a 10 question test with a total possible score of 10. The pre-test mean score was 4.28 and the post-test mean score was 5.48.

RELATED ITEM LEVEL 3

Civic Engagement and Social Responsibility

Action Description:

Faculty teaching 2305 American Government and 2306 Texas Government will examine the results of the pre/post tests and enter into discussions about possible explanations for the lack of significant differences in the pre and post test scores and recommend actions designed to address the lack of differences in pre and post test scores.

Students’ Skills

Goal Description:

Faculty teaching POLS 3379 Research and Writing, a required course of all majors, will developed and implement a set of pedagogical approaches to be used by all faculty teaching 3379. A common set of pedagogical approaches across all sections of 3379 will better ensure that upon completion of the undergraduate program students will possess skills relevant to employment fields associated with the study of political science.

RELATED ITEMS/ELEMENTS -----

RELATED ITEM LEVEL 1

Develop Students’ Skills

Learning Objective Description:

The pedagogical approach titled "Best in X" will be to improve students' abilities to analyze and present empirical data, explain key concepts of research design, and write coherent reports and research papers.

RELATED ITEM LEVEL 2

Student Skills

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:

The "Best in X" pedagogical approach was developed in fall 2015 and implemented in spring 2016. One of the assignments embedded in the approach was a research paper that required students to demonstrate their abilities to analyze and present empirical data, explain key

concepts of research design, and write coherently. Five research papers were randomly selected from each section of 3379. Three faculty members used a rubric to score the papers on a scale of 1 - 5. Three papers received a score of 5, five papers received a score of 4, and two papers received a score of 3. These scores exceeded anticipated scores. However, faculty scoring the papers felt that students need to improve their ability to better relate the conceptual and data sections of their papers.

RELATED ITEM LEVEL 3

Students' Skills

Action Description:

Faculty members teaching POLS 3379 will meet in the fall to discuss teaching strategies designed to improve students' ability to understand and express relationships between concepts and data. The strategies will be implemented in spring 2017.

Update to Previous Cycle's Plan for Continuous Improvement

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

ASSESSING STUDENTS' KNOWLEDGE OF CIVIC ENGAGEMENT AND SOCIAL REPSONSIBILITY

Last year the department revised its six core hours, specifically the department moved from offering American/Texas Government and Topics in Public Policy to American Government and Texas Government. Pre/post tests were designed by faculty to assess students' knowlledge of course material as well as students' knowledge of civil engagement. In fall 2015 students enrolled in American Government courses will complete pre/post tests and in spring 2016 students enrolled in Texas Government courses will complete pre/post tests. The department agreed to allow the SHSU Planning and Assessment Office to score the tests as the office has hardware and software that will allow for the test data to be mined in ways helpful to the department and the assessment office.

ASSESSING POLS MAJORS' KNOWLEDGE AND SKILLS

The POLS degree plan does not have a capstone course. However, POLS 3379 Research and Writing is a required course, its assignments require students to demonstrate the broad skills and knowledge associated with the discipline of political science, and most students take the course in their senior year. For these reasons, POLS 3379 is the best course to use for assessment purposes. POLS 3379 will become the primary vehicle for assessing POLS Majors' knowledge and skills. Faculty teaching 3379 agreed upon a set of pedagogical approaches to be used by all faculty teaching 3379 beginning fall 2015. Two faculty members teaching 3379 received SHSU assessment mini-grants that will help with the implementation of the new pedagogical approaches.

Update of Progress to the Previous Cycle's PCI:

All actions linked to student learning objectives will be implemented. In addition, the department faculty will use this coming year to address a number of questions relevant to the development of the undergraduate program: What skills and knowledge should students possess upon graduating from the program? How does a political science degree fit into today's employment market? Etc.

Plan for Continuous Improvement

Closing Summary:

Department progress on undergraduate student learning objectives

1. Civic Engagement and Social Responsibility: The pre-tests scores were high and there were not sufficient differences between the pre and post-tests in 2305 American Government and 2306 Texas Government courses. Faculty concluded that the questions on the tests were not difficult enough. Thus, the department's Undergraduate Committee/Curriculum Committee will revise the content of the tests.
2. Students' Skills: Overall faculty were pleased with the new assessment strategy implemented. Faculty felt the new strategy provided more detailed and accurate information about students' skills. Faculty were satisfied with students' skills in all areas except students' ability to understand and express relationships between concepts and data. Faculty teaching POLS 3379 will use peer review and in class activities this coming year in an effort to improve students' skills in the above noted area.