

UNIT REPORT

Political Science BA/BS

Assessment Plan Summary

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 Outcomes

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:



A total of 774 students took the pre-test and a total of 535 students took the post-test for POLS 2306: Texas Government in spring 2017. The average student score increased from 41.45% on the pre-test to 52.61% on the post-test, for an increase of approximately 11% points.

A total of 882 students took the pre-test and a total of 654 students took the post-test for POLS 2305: American Government in fall 2016. The average student score increased from 75.84% on the pre-test to 82.54% on the post-test, for an increase of approximately 7% points.

The differences in the pre/posts test scores for both POLS 2306 and POLS 2305 were statistically significant.

See attached documents for further information regarding the results.

Attached Files

-  [POLS 2306 Texas Government Spring 2017 Report](#)
-  [POLS 2305 American Government Fall 2016 Report](#)

RELATED ITEM LEVEL 3

Civic Engagement and Social Responsibility

Action Description:

The department is satisfied with the use and results of the pre/post-tests. However, the department has hired new faculty and adjuncts who are responsible for teaching 2305 American Government and 2306 Texas Government and the new hires need to be incorporated into discussions of how best to promote knowledge of civic engagement in 2305 and 2306.

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 Outcomes

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:

Faculty teaching 3379 Research and Writing incorporated new activities into the course sections and developed a rubric for assignments in 3379. These two actions occurred over 2016 fall semester and 2017 spring semester. Faculty could not measure the effectiveness of pedagogical changes in part because the agreed upon rubric was not finalized until mid-way through the 2017 spring semester. Thus, this coming year will be the first year that the pedagogical changes and shared rubric can be fully implemented.

RELATED ITEM LEVEL 3

Develop Students' Skills

Action Description:

The new rubric will be used in the fall 2017 and spring 2018 3379 courses.

Update to Previous Cycle's Plan for Continuous Improvement

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

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.

Update of Progress to the Previous Cycle's PCI:

1. The content of the pre- and post-tests were revised. The department is prepared to implement the revised instruments in 2017-2018.

2. The department did not achieve this objective. We identified a problem with the rubric. A corrected rubric was developed and will be deployed in 2017-2018.

2016-2017 Plan for Continuous Improvement

Closing Summary:

Civic Engagement and Social Responsibility

The department is satisfied with the use and results of the pre/post-tests. However, the department has hired new faculty and adjuncts who are responsible for teaching 2305 American Government and 2306 Texas Government and the new hires need to be incorporated into discussions of how best to promote knowledge of civic engagement in 2305 and 2306.

Develop Students' Skills

The new rubric will be used in the fall 2017 and spring 2018 3379 courses.