

Annual Assessment Report

Political Science

2015-2016

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1. The Annual Meeting

Political Science Major consists of Susan Tabrizi (Chair) and Tukumbi Lumumba-Kasongo. Professor Tabrizi was on sabbatical leave for the full academic year 2015-16. Thus, we did not formally meet to discuss the content of this report. However, we discussed often about the issues related to the department every time that we met.

We intend to meet more regularly in the fall semester (2016-17) to discuss about the needs for the major, the quality of what is being taught (curriculum), enrollment, rotation and the projection of the major for future (staffing).

Based on student's general academic performance, their grades in required political science courses, participation in internship, the enrollment in political science courses, and new students majoring in the discipline of political science, the major is in good standing. Interests and enrollment in the major are increasing. Some of the best Wells College students are majoring in political science.

2. Examination of Assessment Data

Based on various assessment documents and prioritization that we made in January 2016, we affirm with confidence that all the mechanisms that we have been using to assess the student's performance in the Political Science Major are adequate and relevant. These devices, which include, exams, oral and public presentations, comprehensive exams, evaluations of internships,

debates, book reviews, etc., meet without any question the missions and the goals of the major and those of the college.

In the introductory courses: Political Science 155 and International Studies 151, the exams are about understanding of the major concepts, their definitions, theoretical issues and their scholarly functions or usage. As required courses, these exams also test the ways in which the discipline of political science is perceived and defined within the paradigms of social sciences.

At the upper level courses, the exam tests the various nature of democratic institutions, policy analysis and interpretations of its social impact within various schools of thought of the discipline of political science, methodological applications and policy implications. Students are asked to make critical judgments and theoretical choices.

Comprehensive Exams: These written exams are the most elaborated tools that we use to assess student's academic performance. They are given to graduating seniors either in the fall or the spring semester. 3 questions cover the issues in the subfields of Political Science: American politics, international relations/politics and comparative politics. However, the answers are not expected to be compartmentalized. Students are given 48 hours to think and organize their answers in the forms of comprehensive essays.

These exams serve also as devices through which we evaluate how students link theories and practices both toward the analysis and in attempting to find possible solutions in a given issue. And some concrete solutions are also expected from these essays.

We are very much pleased by the performance of our students and the quality of the tools that we have been using to assess such performance through which we make sure that students are learning what we are offerings.

The grading of pass or pass with distinction or fail motivates students to work hard toward having a pass with distinction as there are no other intermediary grades between pass and fail.

In the academic year (2015-16), among 5 seniors who graduated from the major, 3 had distinction in Political Science. Their essays were excellent both in terms of the forms and contents of the arguments and analysis of the subject matter.

Internship: public presentations drawn from experiential learning establish the links between practical learning considerations and theoretical explanations.

In the seminar courses, the exigencies of the final papers are other rigorous means through which the knowledge acquisition is assessed. Furthermore, the requirement of full participation of students produces a space of learning that is individualized.

The usage of the digital and social media as teaching tools are used in several political science courses to facilitate the direct teaching from the Internet and how students are responding to the media and online publications.

3. Program Changes

The curriculum was not changed.

4. Action Plan for Next Year

Within the framework of sabbatical leaves, we will look again at the two-year-rotation traditions to make sure that within 4 years all the political science courses, which are listed in the catalog, are offered. Although we do not anticipate any significant change in terms of staffing, we continue to request staffing in Middle East politics, as this area is vital in world politics.

5. The Updated Assessment Plan

The number of students majoring in political science is increasing. Students seem to be pleased with what we offer. Those who go to graduate studies perform very well. We have not received any complaints from the students about the quality of education that we offer. The major is clearly relevant and its program is adequate.

Furthermore, our program goals, learning objective, means of assessment, measurements of learning outcomes, and means of assessment are consistent. We teach what is defined in the mission statement of both Wells College and that of the major.

Our program goals, learning objective, means of assessment, measurements of learning outcomes, and means of assessment will not change next year. They are still relevant.