Saint Louis University  
Program Assessment Annual Reporting  

It is recommended program assessment results be used to celebrate achievements of student learning as well as to identify potential areas for future curriculum improvement.

Please email this completed form as an attachment to thatcherk@slu.edu  
CAS PROGRAMS: Please email this completed form by July 1 to Donna LaVoie lavoiedj@slu.edu

1. Degree Program(s) included in this report: BA in Political Science  
2. Department: Political Science  
3. School/Center/College: A&S  
4. Name(s): Jason Windett  
5. Email: jwindett@slu.edu  
6. Phone: 977-3622

Instructions: Please answer the following five questions to the best of your ability for each degree program offered within your department.

1. Summarize your assessment activities during the past year for each degree program and how this work relates to the established assessment plan (e.g. what program outcomes were assessed, faculty discussions, new survey design, data collection, revised assessment plans or learning outcomes, etc.). Please include how Madrid courses/program were involved.

Our BA program has 4 learning outcomes, and this year we evaluated outcome #4 (“graduates will demonstrate a strong work ethic.”) Faculty members each picked one undergraduate course taught during 2015-2016 and filled in an evaluation addressing the degree to which students met the learning outcome. Faculty responded to these 4 questions related to the outcome being assessed:

1. How did your course contribute to this goal? What did you do to develop these skills in students?  
2. How well prepared were students coming into the class?  
3. How well did students accomplish this goal by the end of class? What tactics were effective in building student skills?  
4. How might the department help students better accomplish these goals?

Faculty also filled in this grid for each class they evaluated.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Majors (xx students)</th>
<th>Non-Majors (xx students)</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Number who met expectations</td>
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<tr>
<td>Number who exceeded expectations</td>
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<td>Number who did not meet expectations</td>
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Our department assessment coordinator (Ken Warren) collected and summarized the reports. This department summary serves as the basis for further analysis of results. The instructor summaries are saved on the department shared drive.

This year, the BA level classes included in assessment were:
POLS 1000: Introduction to Politics (Emmanuel Uwalaka)
POLS 1150: American Political System (Steve Rogers)
POLS 1500: Introduction to Comparative Politics (Ann Wainscott)
POLS 1600: Introduction to World Politics (Nori Katagiri)
POLS 2140: The American Presidency (Ken Warren)
POLS 2540: Ethnicity and Internal War (Ellen Carnaghan)
POLS 2750: Introduction to Latin American Politics (J.D. Bowen)
POLS 2700: Issues in Political Philosophy (Wynne Moskop)
POLS 3710: Ancient and Medieval Political Theory (Ruth Groff)
POLS 3770: Feminist Theory: Gender Justice (Wynne Moskop)
POLS 3915: Legal Internship (Robert Strikwerda)
POLS 3930-04: Atlas Internship (Michelle Lorenzini)
POLS 4630-M01: The European Union: Politics and Political Economy (Barah Mikail)
POLS 4710: Citizenship and Social Difference (Amber Knight)
POLS 4930: American Race Relation (Chryl Laird)
POLS 4930: Law, Policy, and Society (Morgan Hazelton)

2. Describe specific assessment findings related to the learning outcomes assessed for each degree program, including any pertinent context surrounding the findings. Please include the learning outcomes themselves. (e.g. Our goal was that 75% of students performed at the “proficient” level of competency in problem solving, using a new scoring rubric. 81% of students performed at the “proficient” level in problem solving, exceeding our expectations.) Do not include student-level data. Data included in this report should be in aggregate. Please include how Madrid courses/program were involved.
73.5% of majors met or exceeded expectations. 89.4% of non-majors met or exceeded expectations. Overall, 81.9% of our students met or exceeded expectations. Our goal was that 75% of our students to perform at proficient levels. This number may be low for the majors given the number of undeclared majors in the introductory courses. One Madrid course, POLS 4630: The European Union was included in this assessment report.

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<tr>
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<th>Majors (136 students)</th>
<th>Non-Majors (151 students)</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Number who met expectations</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>53</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number who exceeded expectations</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>82</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number who did not meet expectations</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>16</td>
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</table>

The vast majority of faculty believed that students met or exceeded their expectations pertaining to the development of a strong work ethic, while relatively few students were cited as not meeting expectations. Whether students met, exceeded, or did not meet expectations depended in part on whether students were majors or non-majors, experienced or inexperienced in the political science discipline (e.g., freshmen v. seniors); graduate or undergraduate students; or even whether they were part-time or full-time students. Although exceptions were noted, the students most likely to have met or exceeded expectations were upperclassmen with more experience in taking political science courses.

There was a host of reasons given for why some students failed to meet expectations regarding the upholding of an acceptable work ethic. The most common reasons given were: excessive absences; not completing assignments; not following instructions on assignments; not submitting work on time; submitting sloppy papers with various forms of errors (e.g., poor grammar and sentence construction; excessive typographical and spelling errors making papers seemed “rushed”); not participating in class discussions; failure to meet with faculty to rectify problems they were having in the course, and failure to meet with faculty to discuss for guidance or help in the development of their papers.

Some successful tactics to make sure that students meet the learning objective:

- “forcing” students to develop an acceptable work ethic by requiring attendance and grading down or even threatening to fail students for the course if they missed an excessive number of classes
- compelling students to meet with them to discuss their papers
- giving them pop quizzes to ensure that students prepared for class;
- requiring them to participate in class discussions or debates on a regular basis where faculty could observe whether students demonstrated a grasp of the issues discussed
- making students serve as discussant leaders
- “cold calling” on students in class, obligating students to come to class prepared
- holding students responsible for handing in drafts of their papers so they could receive feedback

*Please attach any tables, graphics, or charts to the end of this report.*
3. Describe how assessment feedback has been provided to students, faculty, and staff. *(e.g. report for faculty, executive summary for the dean, web page for students, alumni newsletter, discussion with students in class or club event, etc.)*

Our internal assessment summary has been circulated to faculty and staff via email, and will be discussed amongst department faculty at our next faculty meeting. We will post a summary of the report on our departmental website, removing any information that would identify specific students or faculty members.

4. In what ways have you used assessment findings to celebrate student achievements and/or to improve the curriculum this past year? *(e.g. prizes to students, hosting student parties, changes to curriculum, student projects, learning goals, assessment strategies, etc.)*

The department chair and director of undergraduate studies met on June 22 with Kathleen Thatcher to discuss improvements to our assessment process. Moving forward, we are changing the language of several of our learning outcomes for the sake of clarity, and we will assess outcomes in fewer courses per semester.

Assessment did not lead to any curriculum improvements this year, although it has in the past. This past year the department extended the curriculum to include two new concentrations, one in International Affairs and a second in Public Law based on last year’s assessment report. Previous years have led to changes in the method requirement, American Politics requirement, Political Thought requirement, and the number of upper division courses and seminars that students must take to fulfill the major. We discuss assessment at our annual retreat in August and make curricular and department revisions in the following months.

We will celebrate student success by posting the high rate at which students met or exceeded outcomes on our department website.

We are continuing to work with the Madrid faculty to coordinate assessment across the two campuses. Our plan ultimately is to integrate all their instructor reports into our summary and to include the Madrid faculty in assessment discussions. However, this year we were all somewhat late in figuring out how best to do that.

5. Describe any changes to your assessment plans, or any challenges or educational experiences with the assessment process this past year that you would like to share.

Assessment was a relatively smooth process this year. Assessing “a strong work ethic” is inherently tricky, given that student’s work ethics, as well as the faculty interpretation of signs of a strong work ethic may vary drastically. Faculty submitted their course-level assessment in a timely manner, the information was aggregated and analyzed by our assessment coordinator, and the DUS assembled this annual report.

Please submit any revised/updated assessment plans to the University Assessment Coordinator along with this report.