



Political Science [POLS]

Cycles included in this report:

Jun 1, 2019 to May 31, 2020

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Program Name: Political Science [POLS]

Reporting Cycle: Jun 1, 2019 to May 31, 2020

1 Is this program offered via Distance Learning?

100% Traditional or less than 50% Distance/Traditional

2 Is this program offered at an off-site location?

No

2.1 If yes to previous, provide addresses for each location where 50% or more of program credits may be earned.

3 Example of Program Improvement

2016-2017:

Met with IRE to improve master plans. Developed new benchmarks and assessments.

2017-2018:

Increased writing requirements for students enrolled in POLS courses, based on writing expectations within the political science profession.

2018-2019:

No changes were made to master plan assessments. No discussions occurred regarding assessment metrics or measurements. The program did include the hire of another full-time faculty position.

2019-2020:

During the 2019-2020, we hired a new POLS tenure-track faculty member, Dr. Diane Verrill. However, after the Spring 2020 semester, Ms. Jessica Markstrom was not retained as an Instructor of Political Science. With the above-noted changes in the POLS faculty within the Department of SOSC, it is anticipated that the assessments found within the POLS program plan will be revised by Dr. Verrill during the 2020-2021 reporting period. Finally, under the guidance and training of Dr. Angelica Ogea, Dr. Verrill is currently taking part in revising the POLS 201 class for the General Education curriculum at McNeese.

4 Program Highlights from the Reporting Year

2016-2017:

Students continue to meet benchmarks.

2017-2018:

The program had 16 graduates in the reporting period, evenly divided between the fall and spring semesters.

See attached file for program and faculty highlights.

2018-2019:

The program had 6 graduates within the 2018-2019 term. Dr. Rathnam Indurthy published "India-Pakistan Wars and the Kashmir Crisis" in February 2019 with Routledge India Publishers. Dr. Henry Sirgo served as the program chair and Vice President for the Louisiana Political Science Association and also traveled with two students to the University of Louisiana System Summit. Jessica Markstrom created a pre-law concentration and made alterations to the general concentration in Political Science.

2019-2020:

During the 2019-2020 reporting period, Dr. Michael Buckles appointed Dr. Diane Verrill as the Associate Dean of Internships for the College of Liberal Arts. In addition, two POLS students (Alexys Peron and Alexandra Williams) were chosen for internships in Washington, DC by Senator Bill Cassidy.

Files: See list of attachments to view. (Requires Adobe Reader or compatible viewer).

POLS(BA) 2017-18 Achievements

5 Program Mission

The purposes of the Bachelor of Arts degree in political science are:

- Students will broaden their knowledge of political science through a program of liberal arts study as well as specialized study in political sciences.
- Students will be introduced to political theories, comparative politics, political history, and other important aspects of government and its historical development.
- To offer students opportunities to minor in political science and/or better acquaint themselves with political sciences.
- All political science majors will receive instruction in statistics, the scientific method, languages, and philosophy to enhance their political science studies.
- To prepare interested political science majors for the study of law or graduate level study in political sciences.
- To serve the University, the academic community, and Southwest Louisiana through teaching, research, community service and University service. Faculty is encouraged to be engaged in research and publication.

6 Institutional Mission Reference

This degree supports the University's fundamental mission to offer baccalaureate curricula in service to the residents and employers of the SWLA region and beyond. It provides opportunities for student internships in local industry and prepares students to become effective in academic and professional environments.

7 Assessment and Benchmark POLS 201 Writing Assignment

Assessment: Students will demonstrate effective writing skills in POLS 201 by completing writing assignment.

Benchmark: 80% of students in POLS 201 will earn a B or better on their Application of Concepts Writing Assignment.

Prior to 2017-2018, the benchmark was 80% of students will earn a B or better on their research paper.

Files: See list of attachments to view. (Requires Adobe Reader or compatible viewer).

Assessment Template

POLS Application of Concepts Assignment

Course Links

POLS201 [American Government (Lec. 3, Cr. 3)]

Outcome Links

American Political System [Program]

Students will describe and analyze American political system.

International Politics [Program]

Students will analyze the international political environment.

Writing [Program]

Students will demonstrate effective written communication skills.

7.1 Data

2016-2017:

This is a new assessment, data tracking will begin next year.

2017-2018:

Hard copies of all the materials from the Political Science (POLS) 201 classes of Indurthy and Sirgo for 2017-2018 are in the possession of institutional research. Jessica Markstrom's online results were forwarded to Institutional Research.

Indurthy's application of concept results for the fall semester of 2017 were a slightly above average B for the fall semester of 2017 with a total enrollment in his three sections of 62.

Sirgo's application of concept results for the fall semester of 2017 were a slightly lower A with a total enrollment of 24.

Indurthy's application of concept results for the spring semester of 2018 were about a B, with a total enrollment in his three sections of 53.

Sirgo's application of concept results for the spring semester of 2018 were an A with a total enrollment in his two sections of 26.

2019-2020:

With the departure of Ms. Jessica Markstrom from McNeese, the data for the 2019-2020 reporting period is incomplete. With that being said, Dr. Diane Verrill will implement a new POLS 201 assessment protocol for future reporting periods.

Term	Students earning B or higher		Benchmark met?
	#	%	
Fall 2018	*36	46	No
Spring 2019	64	55	No
Fall 2019			
Spring 2020			

*Dr. Sirgo's 2 sections of POLS 201 offered in the Fall 2018 semester are not included in this analysis. Dr. Sirgo did not retain records of the paper grades in those courses. Attempts were made for Dr. Sirgo to provide this information, but he claims to no longer have them and to have turned them into Institutional Research on campus. Dr. Sirgo taught 27 students, which means 25.7% of the data is unavailable for this semester. While 105 students enrolled in POLS 201 in the Fall 2018 semester, we only have recorded information for this assessment on 78 students due to lack of data from Dr. Sirgo. Dr. Sirgo retired at the end of the Spring 2019 semester.

Course Links

POLS201 [American Government (Lec. 3, Cr. 3)]

7.1.1 Analysis of Data and Plan for Continuous Improvement

2016-2017:

This is a new assessment. Data tracking will begin next year.

2017-2018:

Results for students fall within the acceptable range for this outcome.

2018-2019:

We did not meet the benchmark by a significant margin. There are several possibilities as to why the benchmark was not met. First, the benchmark and how it was assessed were not explained to all Political Science instructors. Not knowing how an assignment is used for Master Plan purposes may not make instructors understand the importance of a letter grade on the assignment. Second, Dr. Sirgo, who was aware of the benchmark and designed the benchmark, taught more POLS 201 courses in the past years. Third, the assessment instrument was not treated by instructors as a means to meet a master plan benchmark for improvement.

Plans for improvement include wanting the Political Science faculty to meet with IRE members. This meeting should include a review of current assessments, benchmarks, and how benchmarks are measured in assignments. There are issues with how the current benchmark relates to assessing effective writing skills. The grade itself can reflect writing skills

but contain other elements like formatting, citation, logical analysis, or being topical. This separation makes this benchmark one that should be changed for the Master Plan for future years.

Additionally, Political Science could institute (or re-evaluate the current design of the instrument) the Pre-Test/Post-Test results as a means to determine a benchmark. This instrument and its results are not mentioned in the current Master Plan for Political Science. If the Pre-Test/Post-Test is not a sufficient or well-fit instrument for the assessment needed for ethical reasoning for the Master Plan, then another assessment test could be devised.

2019-2020:

With the departure of Ms. Jessica Markstrom from McNeese, the data for the 2019-2020 reporting period is incomplete. With that being said, Dr. Diane Verrill will implement a new POLS 201 assessment protocol for future reporting periods.

Course Links

POLS201 [American Government (Lec. 3, Cr. 3)]

8 Assessment and Benchmark SOSC 499 Capstone Assignment

Assessment: SOSC 499 prospectus grades for political science majors.

Benchmark: 90% of students will successfully (earn a B or better) develop a prospectus for future research as their capstone assignment in SOSC 499.

Files: See list of attachments to view. (Requires Adobe Reader or compatible viewer).

SOSC499 Grades 2017-18

SOSC499 Syllabus

Course Links

SOSC499 [Senior Research Seminar Capstone Experience (Lec. 3, Cr. 3)]

Outcome Links

American Political System [Program]

Students will describe and analyze American political system.

Critical Thinking [Program]

Students will demonstrate critical thinking.

International Politics [Program]

Students will analyze the international political environment.

Writing [Program]

Students will demonstrate effective written communication skills.

8.1 Data

Term	Students earning B or higher		Benchmark met?
	#	%	
Spring 2014	–	75%	No
Fall 2014	–	100%	Yes
Spring 2015	–	100%	Yes
Fall 2015	–	100%	Yes
Spring 2016	–	100%	Yes
Fall 2016	–	100%	Yes
Spring 2017	14/15	93.3%	Yes
Fall 2017	21/21	100%	Yes
Spring 2018	29/30	97%	Yes

Summer 2018	7/7	100%	Yes
Fall 2018	0/0	0	—
Spring 2019	4/4	100%	Yes
Fall 2019	2/2	100%	Yes
Spring 2020	2/2	100%	Yes

No Political Science majors were enrolled in SOSC 499 for the Fall 2018 semester.

Course Links

SOSC499 [Senior Research Seminar Capstone Experience (Lec. 3, Cr. 3)]

8.1.1 Analysis of Data and Plan for Continuous Improvement

2016-2017:

Benchmark exceeded. Continue maintaining high level of achievement. Continue providing appropriate assistance, mentorship, and resources for students in SOSC 499.

2017-2018:

Between 97% and 100% of the students earned a grade of B or better on the assessment. Benchmark exceeded.

2018-2019:

While the benchmark was met and exceeded this year, as well as years past, room for improvement exists regarding how the benchmark is assessed.

Political Science seeks to improve its benchmark by requesting a meeting with the Political Science faculty and IRE members. Evaluation of benchmarks and how they are assessed need discussion and potential revision. While the SOSC 499 paper is an instrument to determine student's reasoning and writing skills, the letter grade itself does not demonstrate in a specific, measurable manner of how those skills presented themselves. Another benchmark that determines these skills should replace the letter grade benchmark.

2019-2020

SOSC 499 is offered every Fall and Spring Semester. During the present reporting period, four students majoring in POLS took the SOSC 499 class. In analyzing the data from the Fall and Spring SOSC 499 courses, all four POLS students scored above 90% on the SOSC 499 assignment. The data suggest that the POLS students have a good understanding of how to critically apply their knowledge in a theoretical way to a research endeavor. The plan for continuous improvement will center on refining the SOSC 499 assignment to enhance the quality of the assessment.

Course Links

SOSC499 [Senior Research Seminar Capstone Experience (Lec. 3, Cr. 3)]

End of report