2015-2016 CLASS FACT Assessment Year End Report, June, 2016

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Program Name(s)</th>
<th>FACT Faculty Fellow</th>
<th>Department Chair</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Political Science</td>
<td>Norman Bowen</td>
<td>Kim Geron</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

[NOTE: Items A, B, C, and D are identical to your Page 2 on your Annual Report for CAPR. Please simply cut and paste from there. Item E is unique to the CLASS FACT Project.]

A. Program Student Learning Outcomes

SLO 1
POS C majors will develop and articulate an understanding of the theory and practice of political systems and gain practical experience in politics, public policy, and civic engagement in a democracy.
SLO1a: understanding the theory and practice of political systems
SLO1b: involvement in practical experience/civic engagement

SLO 2
POS C majors will demonstrate through oral and written competency, an understanding of the theories, concepts, empirical content, and research agendas of the fields of political science with advanced understanding in the selected option and the use of critical thinking.
SLO2a: understanding theories and concepts in political science and applying them to new material or situations
SLO2b: understanding quantitative and qualitative empirical content
SLO 2c: understanding research agendas

SLO 3
POS C majors will demonstrate an understanding of political institutions, processes, and culture in the U.S. and around the world including the economic, ideological, ethnic and cultural groups and movements that engage the political process.
SLO 3a: understand the relationship between ethnic, racial, religious and socio-economic diversity and national political cultures.
SLO 3b: understand the relationship between political culture and political institutions and processes.
SLO 3c: understand the institutions and processes of government
SLO 3d: understand the debate over the concept of sustainability as it applies to different public policy areas, including the economy and the environment.
SLO 4
POSC majors will articulate career goals, demonstrate knowledge of how to achieve those goals, and produce evidence of working to achieve the goals.

SLO 5
POSC majors will demonstrate the ability to apply knowledge through collaborative learning and teamwork.

B. Program Student Learning Outcome(s) Assessed

Same as above

C. Summary of Assessment Process

Because most political science majors are transfer students, POSC Program SLOs are introduced in POSC 3030, the upper-division gateway survey of the major. Students are advised to take 3030 when they first matriculate. The PSLOs are developed in all upper-division POSC courses, which are expected to practice all the SLOs that are appropriate to the individual subject matter. All upper-division course syllabi are expected to contain course SLOs aligned with the program SLOs. In particular, all upper-division courses are expected to introduce and practice research, analytic, writing, and oral skills in the POSC sub-fields, identify students struggling academically, seek appropriate assistance for them, and notify the department. SLO measurement occurs in POSC 3030 and in POSC 4910. Students are expected to achieve mastery of the SLOs in the seminar, which involves an extensive research plan, a 20-page research paper, a formal oral presentation, and participation in a seminar reading and analysis exercise. All POSC majors are assessed. However the results are aggregated. Assessment results are shared with the department. Expectations of individual faculty in support of assessment are renewed regularly. The Instructors in POSC 3030 and POSC 4910 work closely together. Both courses have been adapted extensively over the past few years to focus on the SLOs. Several years ago, the seminar formalized the literature review portion of the paper, which had been introduced in POSC 3030. In 2016, the POSC 3030 instructor introduced a formal research paper so that students could practice the various components that go into the seminar project. The seminar instructors use a highly detailed process approach to the research
project whereby weekly preliminary assignments provide incremental development of the final paper and multiple indicators of the SLOs. The rubric for POSC 4910 reflects this developmental approach and indicates how close students come to mastery of the program SLOs including the degree of instructor assistance required.

D. Summary of Assessment Results

During the 2014-2015 academic year assessment occurred in the three sections of the capstone seminar POSC 4910, the course in which students are expected to demonstrate mastery of the program student learning outcomes through targeted course SLOs. Prior year results are used every year because current year results and exit survey results are not available.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Aggregate 3 sections</th>
<th>Course: 4910</th>
<th>Section: 3</th>
<th>Quarter: W/S15</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>POOR</td>
<td>FAIR</td>
<td>GOOD</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(PSLO2a) Course SLO1: Ability, with minimum prompting, to develop a strong thesis statement.
Indicator: research paper
rubric:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Unable</th>
<th>With much help</th>
<th>With some help</th>
<th>Independently</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(PSLO2b) Course SLO2: Ability, with minimum guidance and suggestion of materials to develop a strong bibliography using appropriate academic, governmental, and other sources.
Indicator: paper preparation and bibliography
Rubric:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Weak prep even with help</th>
<th>Inconsistent strong</th>
<th>Generally independent</th>
<th>Strong</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>13</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(PSLO1a,2a) Course SLO3: Ability, independently, to write a well structured research paper with a sustained argument in error-free college-level English.
Indicator: research paper
Rubric:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>weak structure/argument</th>
<th>some structure/argument</th>
<th>mostly sustained argument</th>
<th>Strong all areas</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>4</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(PSLO2a) Course SLO4: Ability to understand and critique the concepts and theories of political science
Indicator: seminar discussion and roundtables
Rubric: none partial mostly understand and critique
5 19 16 8

(PSLO2a) Course SLO5: Ability orally to communicate course material and academic research in persuasive professional English.
Indicator: formal presentation
Rubric: limited some mostly strong or poor
4 12 21 11

(PSLO2b) Course SLO6: Ability to read, understand, and critique non-quantitative academic POSC articles.
Indicator: seminar presentation
Rubric: weak partial grasps basics strong and critique
6 25 7 10

(PSLO5) Course SLO 7: Ability to apply knowledge through collaborative learning and teamwork.
Indicator: seminar groups/roundtables/peer assessment
Rubric: weak some good insight/ assistance excellent insight/ assistance
6 17 14 10

The results of the direct indicators of student achievement are included in the charts above. They indicate that the department needs to redouble its efforts to help students reach the desired achievement levels. In addition to the direct indicators, the Department uses two indirect indicators, the graduate exit survey and the senior seminar focus group, to determine student satisfaction with the program and student perception of individual achievement of the PSLOs. The exit survey results summarized here are from the Winter 2015 section of the seminar, the only one available. In general, students tend to rate their skill levels somewhat higher than do their instructors.

A majority of Political Science majors were satisfied with the program. 12/17 agreed or strongly agreed that the major “fulfilled my expectations.” In addition, 9/27 said that the program had the right balance “between free choice and requirements.” 11/17 said that they were “satisfied with the curriculum.”
A majority of Political Science majors believed that they had improved their reading and interpretative skills. 38/49 thought they were now, “skilled at reading and interpreting different types of writing.”

12/17 majors said that they had a “clear understanding of Political Science as a discipline, including the main theoretical and methodological debates.” 4/17 disagreed.

11/27 were confident that they understood the “core issues, theoretical frameworks and analytic methods” of the various disciplinary sub-fields. 4/17 disagreed.

A majority of students (9/17) did not think that there was sufficient emphasis on “research, writing, speaking and analytical skills” in POSC courses. 7/27 thought that there was enough such emphasis.

A majority of Political Science majors believed that they had strengthened their analytic skills. 12/17 (4/17 disagreed) thought that they were now “skilled at distinguishing between well-substantiated argument and unsupported assertions.”

A majority of Political Science majors have confidence in their research skills. 12/17 (3/17 disagreed) asserted that they were now “skilled at finding political and legal information using books, journals and available electronic databases.”

10/27 said that they were “skilled at using social science methods of analysis” 3/27 disagreed.

Political Science majors were nearly as confident about their academic writing skills. 11/17 (3/17 disagreed) held that they could now “write knowledgably, correctly, clearly and logically on political subjects.” The senior seminar was cited most often as the course that helped develop writing skills.

Political Science majors affirmed (14/27) that political science instructors “explained plagiarism, taught me how to avoid it, checked for it and enforced plagiarism rules.” 2/27 disagreed.

Students felt confident (12/27) about their ability to “participate effectively in classroom dialogue on controversial political subjects, challenging the facts and ideas presented by others and defending my own ideas.” 2/27 disagreed.

Political Science majors were confident in their oral communication skills. 12/17 asserted that they were now “skilled at oral presentation.” 2/17 disagreed.
11/17 said that they had prepared at least 5 papers involving academic research prior to the seminar.

The vast majority of Political Science majors considered POSC to be a challenging major. 15/17 said “the Political Science curriculum challenged me to be the best student I could be.”

PSLO 1 identifies the goal of giving students the opportunity to gain political experience while completing the major. 5/16 students felt “there was adequate opportunity for internships, fieldwork, and service learning.” 5/14 “found my internship, fieldwork, service learning experience to be valuable.” These are troubling results that are in sharp decline from the 2014 results. They suggest the need to reevaluate the internship program.

In response to student concerns in years past, the department revised its academic advising program. In 2015, 8/15 said that they were “satisfied with the assistance from my major advisor.” 5/15 disagreed.

In response to student request for better career advising, Political Science added PSLO 4. The exit survey revealed that only 6/15 were “satisfied with the assistance I received from the political science faculty in the area of career counseling or preparation for graduate school.” More work needs to be done in this area.

The Political Science Department has always encouraged students to become engaged participants in politics. Political engagement was included in the revised PSLO 1. The exit survey shows that completion of the political science major increases the chances that a student will become politically active. Only 4/10 students were active in politics prior to entering the major. 9/10 said that they planned to be active after graduating. 5/10 said that their shift was due to the program.

Political Science students agree that the senior seminar “works well as a capstone experience in the major.” 10/16 agreed; 3/16 disagreed. In addition, 9/16 agreed that prior course work “prepared me to research write, and present the seminar project.” 3/16 disagreed. 10/16 students thought that the “format and structure of the seminar was conducive to the preparation of a quality research paper.” 4/16 disagreed.

In addition to the senior exit survey, the department also uses an end-of-the-year focus group in the senior seminar to allow students to articulate and discuss any issues relative to the political science program. Since these discussions address the capstone course where the PSLOs are “mastered” and advising, which is a separate PSLO, the focus groups serve as indirect indicators of PSLO achievement. The following comments summarize the focus group meetings in the three Winter and Spring Quarter seminars in 2016.
The students said that the senior seminar was a challenging but very valuable capstone experience that should not be dropped. They were proud of their achievements in the class. However, they felt that, except for POSC 3030, the other courses in the major had not prepared them for the work expected in the seminar. 3030, they thought, should work on all the components of the seminar paper. They want more courses to help them develop the skills they need for the seminar project. They were especially critical of the short response papers or discussion boards prevalent in many classes. They also complained that most instructors were not making comments on the writing assignments and, therefore, not helping them develop their research and writing skills. Many students felt that, as a result, the seminar was asking too much of them. Some would like to see the seminar split into two courses (similar to the History Department). Others thought that the seminar topic reading assignments could be reduced or dropped. Some thought that the switch to semesters would solve the problem.

A separate review of course syllabi indicates that while a majority of courses have PSLO related learning outcomes listed on the syllabus, many course syllabi do not include course objectives that align with the PSLOs. In addition, a review of course assignments also reveals that many courses are not practicing the PSLOs according to the agreed upon plan summarized above in the Summary of Assessment Process.

In the focus groups, the students also brought up program and career advising (PSLO 4). All three groups insisted that the advising system was not working. “Horrible” was the word that one group unanimously agreed on. Advisors, with a couple of exceptions, were rarely available, had very limited office hours, and were unwilling to spend more than a few minutes with students. Pre-law advisors were signaled out as being unhelpful. Students want the department to help guide them as they prepare for law school, grad school, and for other careers. They also want better advising on internship opportunities.

E. Suggestions and Recommendations for the CLASS FACT Project in the Future

The most important issue for future CLASS FACT teams is to address the level at which courses are taught, including reading and writing assignments. One place to start would be the rubric for upper-division GE courses including “advanced writing,” “methods of social science inquiry and vocabulary appropriate to those methods,” how to “plan or conduct research using an appropriate method of the social or behavioral sciences,” and “information literacy” and determine what they all mean in the context of a degree program, which should be more advanced than the GE SLOs.