

Year 0 Undergraduate Program Planning Report

College: Letters & Science

Department: Political Science

Submitted by: David C.W. Parker, Acting Head

Assessment reports are to be submitted annually by program/s. The report deadline is September 15th.

Which programs are requesting a planning year?

Indicate all majors, minors, certificates and/or options that are included in this planning year

Majors/Minors/Certificate	Options
Political Science Major	

Part 1: Review and approve program learning outcomes.

Program Learning Outcomes (PLOs): PLOs should be written as specific, measurable statements describing what students will be able to do upon completion of the program. The assessment of PLOs provide feedback on the expected knowledge, skills, and attitudes that students develop as they progress through their program.

Are you keeping existing outcomes? **Yes** **No**

If you are developing new program outcomes, what is your timeline for completion and approval

We currently have four learning objectives as follows:

- 1. Evaluate conflicting arguments;**
- 2. Assemble empirical evidence and analyze normative concepts;**
- 3. Make reasoned conclusions from evidence;**
- 4. Communicate orally and written effectively, credit and cite sources.**

While these are excellent learning outcomes, they are challenging to assess. We are going to revisit the learning objectives, compare our objectives to other peer-departments, and reconfigure our assessment instruments.

Part 2: Development of Assessment Plan

Each plan will require the following information:

Threshold Values: Along with PLOs, plans should include threshold values; minimums against which to assess student achievement for learning outcomes. Threshold values are defined as an established criteria for which outcome achievement is defined as met or not met.

Methods of Assessment & Data Source: Assessment plans require evidence to demonstrate student learning at the program level. This evidence can be in the form of a direct or indirect measure of student learning. Both direct and indirect assessment data must be associated with the program's learning outcomes. An assessment rubric will also need to be included that demonstrates how evaluation of the data was used to assess student achievement.

Timeframe for Collecting and Analyzing Data: Develop a multi-year assessment schedule that will show when all program learning outcomes will be assessed. As graduate assessment reports are biennial, faculty review of assessment results may only occur every other year, however, annual faculty meeting to review these data and discuss student progress may be beneficial.

Are any of your exiting thresholds, methods or data source rolling over to your new plan?

Yes No

If are developing new planning documents, please indicate what you committee will be developing (mark all that apply):

New threshold values: Developing

New Assessment Methods: Developing

New Data Source/s: Developing

Developing a multi-year rotation and data collection. In reviewing your existing planning schedule, will be keeping the same rotation? Yes No

In the following fields, please indicate what will be completed, and by whom. It is recommended that during Year 0 Planning that assessment data is collected to determine whether it will be supportive of the learning outcomes.

Part 3: Program Assessment

The assessment report should identify how assessment was conducted, who received the analyzed assessment data, and how it was used by program faculty for program improvement(s). Assessment reports should also reflect on previous assessment and program improvements by identifying previous program-level changes that have led to outcome improvements.

What is your current method? What has, and has not been effective?

Our current method utilizes one research paper from one course. Our program assessment indicates that this instrument does not completely address learning outcomes 2 and 3, and that our outcomes are not clear and measurable. At the same time, the process for assessment is onerous on faculty participating. We wish to reduce the amount of time required of faculty doing the assessment, while also making the process more seamless by drawing on assessments embedded across the department's curriculum.

Part 4: Program Assessment Plan

A) Program Description (from catalog) – If updated please include a brief statement as to what determined the need for the update.

The Bachelors (BA) Degree in Political Science will develop knowledge of American political institutions, world politics, political theory, public administration, and policy. Our students learn to analyze, interpret, and explain political phenomena through the lens, and with the methods, of a political scientist. Our integrated curriculum challenges students to develop their critical thinking, communication, and research skills, preparing our graduates for citizenship and leadership, post-graduate study and diverse employment possibilities. Political Science is an excellent background for students preparing for degrees in government, politics, civil society, the law, and the private sector.

As a Political Science major, you will construct an individualized course of study drawing on our rich curriculum, internship program, complimentary majors and minors, and study abroad opportunities. Students will take a lower division foundation block of five courses that introduces them to the sub-fields of Political Science and their modes of inquiry. After completion of the five-class foundation block, students individualize their course of study while fulfilling their upper division coursework requirements and a research design class.

Requirements for a degree in Political Science include:

1. Completion of five Political Science lower division foundation courses;
2. Completion of seven Political Science upper division courses;
3. Completion of PSCI 390R-Research Methods in Political Science your Junior year;
4. Completion of MSU general graduation requirements of 120 credits, including 42 upper division credits, and the MSU core.

*All Major requirements must be completed with a grade of "C" or better

Please include the current plan and schedule. Make a note of what will be updated and or reconsidered

ASSESSMENT PLANNING CHART						
PROGRAM LEARNING OUTCOMES	2016-2017	2017-2018	2018-2019	2019-2020	Data Source	Threshold Value
Evaluate Conflicting Arguments	x	x			Research Design Paper from 390 R	Unclear
Assemble Empirical Evidence and Analyze normative concepts	x	x			Research Design Paper from 390 R	Unclear
Make reasoned conclusions from evidence	x	x			Research Design Paper from 390 R	Unclear
Effective Written communication, crediting and citing sources	x	x			Research Design Paper from 390 R	Unclear

We are revisiting everything above. As you can see, we don't have a threshold value that's clearly defined (that is to say, we don't have an expectation articulated as to what percentage of assignments should have a good or excellent score on our program learning outcomes).

Part 5: Program Assessment Results

This section will be completed and reported in next year's report. If there is an existing rubric for assessment, please include.

What is the goal for the end of Year 0, and who all will be involved in the process?

The goal for the end of Year 0 is to create a new battery of assessment outcomes, to embed instruments measuring these outcomes into our existing curriculum, and to establish clearer threshold values with which to measure assessment progress. David Parker, current Acting Head, will chair an assessment committee in the spring to make recommendations to Franke Wilmer, who will return in her role as Department Head in the Spring of 2020. The assessment plan will be approved by the department at the end of the academic year and embedded into the existing curriculum for the 2020-2021 academic year.

Submit report to programassessment@montana.edu