

Annual Departmental Report
2021-2022

Program Information

Program/Department: Political Science/Economics, History and Political Science

Department Chair: Daniel Sarefield, Acting

Department Assessment Committee Contact: Josh Spero

This document is to be kept in the department and an electronic file is due to the AVP of Institutional Research & Planning by June 1, 2022.

A. Departmental Special Section for AY21-22

Department Lessons Learned and Accomplishments

The department continued to make progress on important initiatives and to advance innovative methods of teaching and learning

B. Program Learning Outcomes (PLOs) (Educational Objectives)

I. List of PLOs and the timeline for assessment.

PLO #	PLO – Stated in assessable terms	Where are the learning outcomes for this level/program published? (please specify) Include URLs where appropriate	Timing of assessment (annual, semester, bi-annual, etc.)	When was the last assessment of the PLO completed?
1.	POLITICAL SCIENCE KNOWLEDGE: Demonstrates evidence of comprehension of Political Science knowledge	Annual / Fall	2022 (see attached 2021-2022 Assessment Matrix)	2021
2.	POLITICAL SCIENCE REASONING AND ARGUMENTATION: Demonstrates evidence of comprehension of Political Science reasoning and argumentation	Annual / Fall	2022 (see attached 2021-2022 Assessment Matrix)	2021
3.	POLITICAL SCIENCE METHODOLOGY: Demonstrates evidence of comprehension of Political Science methodology	Annual / Fall	2022 (see attached 2021-2022 Assessment Matrix)	2021
4.	POLITICAL SCIENCE THEORY: Demonstrates evidence of knowledge of Political Science theory	Annual / Fall	2022 (see attached 2021-2022 Assessment Matrix)	2021

II. PLO Assessment (Please report on the PLOs assessed and/or reviewed this year. Programs should be assessing at least once each year.)

Using the table below, list and briefly describe the **direct method(s)** used to collect information assessing whether students are learning the core sets of knowledge (K), skills (S) and attitudes (A) identified as essential.

PLO # (from above)	Assessment description (exam, observation, national standardized exam, oral presentation with rubric, etc.)	When assessment was administered in student program (internship, 4 th year, 1 st year, etc.)	To which students were assessments administered (all, only a sample, etc.)	What is the target set for the PLO? (criteria for success)	Reflection on the results: How was the “loop closed”?
1	Assessment of Political Science “Knowledge” consists of a portfolio via the TK20 online database. The submissions entailed: one attachment for the portfolio "artifact" typically from an upper-level Political Science course (2000+ level), fulfilling that course’s requirement: course exam, paper, memorandum, report, case brief, or appellate brief. The other attached document provided three-four in-depth paragraphs reflecting how this selected Political	4 th year	Fall 2021 Political Science Capstone Seminar (6 students)	98.1% meets or exceeds standard	Implementation of clear guidelines, per discussion by the three Political Scientists in 2021 maintained threshold required for the student TK20 portfolio documentation submission – based on approval or rejection of the one 2000+ POLS course’s Artifact. The assessment process also integrated more comprehensive and analytical “Self-Reflection” on how

	Science portfolio's artifact demonstrated <u>student's mastery</u> of this specific Political Science category's skill set.				the student believed proficiency improved. Nearly all students met or exceeded the PLO in Political Science "Knowledge" (98.1% / per attached 2021-2022 Capstone Seminar Assessment Report/PDF), inter-rater reliability remaining consistently effective.
2	Assessment of Political Science "Reasoning & Argumentation" consists of a portfolio via the TK20 online database. The submissions entailed: one attachment for the portfolio "artifact" from an upper-level Political Science course (2000+ level), fulfilling that course's requirement: course exam, paper, memorandum, report, case brief, or appellate brief. The other attached document provided three-four in-depth paragraphs reflecting how	4 th year	Fall 2021 Political Science Capstone Seminar (6 students)	100% meets or exceeds standard	Implementation of clearer guidelines, per discussion by the three Political Scientists in 2021 maintained threshold required for the student TK20 portfolio documentation submission – based on approval or rejection of one 2000+ POLS course's Artifact. The assessment process also integrated more comprehensive and analytical "Self-

	<p>this selected Political Science portfolio's artifact demonstrated <u>student's mastery</u> of this specific Political Science category's skill set.</p>				<p>Reflection" on how the student believed proficiency improved. All students met or exceeded the PLO in Political Science "Reasoning & Argumentation" (100% / per attached 2021-2022 Capstone Seminar Assessment Report/PDF), inter-rater reliability remaining consistently effective.</p>
3	<p>Assessment of Political Science "Methodology" consists of a portfolio via the TK20 online database. The submissions entailed: one attachment for the portfolio "artifact" from an upper-level Political Science course (2000+ level), fulfilling that course's requirement: methodological calculations and analysis or Research Methods proposal. The other attached document provided three-four in-</p>	4 th year	Fall 2021 Political Science Capstone Seminar (6 students)	100% meets or exceeds standard	<p>Implementation of clear guidelines, per discussion by the three Political Scientists in 2021 maintained threshold required for the student TK20 portfolio documentation submission – based on approval or rejection of the one 2000+ POLS course's Artifact. The assessment process also integrated more</p>

	depth paragraphs reflecting how this selected Political Science portfolio's artifact demonstrated <u>student's mastery</u> of this specific Political Science category's skill set.				comprehensive and analytical "Self-Reflection" on how the student believed proficiency improved. All students met or exceeded the PLO in Political Science "Methodology" (100% / per attached 2021-2022 Capstone Seminar Assessment Report/PDF), inter-rater reliability remaining consistently effective.
4	Assessment of Political Science "Theory" consists of a portfolio via the TK20 online database. The submissions entailed: one attachment for the portfolio "artifact" from an upper-level Political Science course (2000+ level), fulfilling that course's requirement: Capstone Seminar's extended & annotated Literature Review, or other course analysis, such as exam,	4 th year	Fall 2021 Political Science Capstone Seminar (6 students)	96.29% meets or exceeds standard	Implementation of clear guidelines, per discussion by the three Political Scientists in 2021 maintained threshold required for the student TK20 portfolio documentation submission – based on approval or rejection of the one 2000+ POLS course's Artifact. The assessment process

	<p>assessment, or paper. The other attached document provided three-four in-depth paragraphs reflecting how this selected Political Science portfolio's artifact demonstrated <u>student's mastery</u> of this specific Political Science category's skill set.</p>				<p>also integrated more comprehensive and analytical "Self-Reflection" on how the student believed proficiency improved. Nearly all students met or exceeded the PLO in Political Science "Theory" (96.29% / per attached 2021-2022 Capstone Seminar Assessment Report/PDF), inter-rater reliability remaining consistently effective.</p>
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You may use this comment box to provide any additional information, if applicable:

Organization of the TK20 portfolios improved as Capstone Seminar Professor and FSU Assessment Director coordinated during past year to simplify TK20 database process, reducing steps needed to structure data and decreasing ways students needed to submit documentation. Portfolios became much easier to review and, via increased number of artifact and self-reflection standards required, student submissions improved.

Consistently, Political Science as a discipline demonstrates great flexibility and, as the pandemic continued, finds many ways to use technology more creatively for online, often synchronous teaching/learning. At the same time, the continuing pandemic underscored the value of in-person teaching and learning for significant numbers of students, and the Political Scientists tried to teach in-person as much as possible.

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III. Summary of Findings: Briefly summarize the results of the PLO assessments reported in Section II above combined with other relevant evidence gathered and show how these are being reviewed/discussed. How are you “closing the loop”?

Reflection Prompt	Narrative Response
<p>Other than GPA, what data/evidence is used to determine that graduates have achieved the stated outcomes for the degree? (e.g., capstone course, portfolio review, licensure examination)</p>	<p>-- Required Capstone Seminar/ Portfolio course provides Political Science baselines for Majors to graduate, particularly since Seminar requires both extensive research paper and career development portfolio, both assessing student’s political science experiences and providing in-depth reflections.</p>
<p>Who interprets the evidence? What is the process? (e.g. annually by the curriculum committee)</p>	<p>-- The three Political Scientists</p> <p>-- The Political Science Professor who teaches both courses, grades in the Capstone Seminar course. For the Capstone Seminar process, as determined by the three Political Scientists in 2021, the TK20 Capstone Seminar’s Portfolio assessment enables all three Political Science Faculty to assess each PLO’s data/rubric (per Sections I-II) regarding whether each student fulfills requirements. Discussion</p>

	then follows where the three faculty discuss the results and make suggested programmatic changes as warranted.
What changes have been made as a result of using the data/evidence? (close the loop)	<p>-- Clearer guidelines and standards for the Capstone Seminar TK20 Portfolio Rubrics maintained high thresholds required by student TK20 portfolio documentation submission.</p> <p>-- Stricter selection standards for student artifacts and self-reflections denoted better proficiency in the four TK20 Rubrics, meeting or exceeding Political Science proficiency in all four Rubrics with thresholds reaching 100%.</p> <p>-- The PLO threshold for Political Science theory now consistently marks higher threshold, given option for students to submit their Capstone Seminar's Literature Review as the theory "Artifact" – measuring growth and improvement in this Rubric's area.</p>

C. Assessment Plan for Program/Department

- I. Insert the program or department Assessment Plan / *Please see explanation above in Section II/#1-4.*
- II. Explain any changes in the assessment plan including new or revised PLOs, new assessments that the program/department plans to implement and new targets or goals set for student success. / *Please see per explanation above in Section II/#1-4.*
- III. If you do not have a plan, would you like help in developing one?
 N/A

D. Program Review Action Plan or External Accreditation Action Letter/Report

Annual Reflection/Follow-up on Action Plan from last Program Review or external accreditation (only complete the table that is appropriate for your program)

I. Programs that fall under Program Review:

- i. Date of most recent Review: 2019-2021 (delayed due to pandemic)
- ii. Insert the Action Plan table from your last Program Review and give any progress towards completing the tasks or achieving targets set forth in the plan.

Specific area where improvement is needed	Evidence to support the recommended change	Person(s) responsible for implementing the change	Timeline for implementation	Resources needed	Assessment Plan	Progress Made this Year
None mentioned from the external evaluation of the Program Review.	Changes made during Annual Report's explanation in previous sections II-III above -- accounted for better learning outcomes measurement, particularly with regard to broadening the portfolio of student artifacts used for learning outcomes assessment.	Capstone Seminar's faculty member, in conjunction with other full-time Political Science faculty.	Complete	None	Provided in previous sections II-III above.	Explained in previous sections II-III above.

- iii. If you do not have an action plan, would you like help in developing one based on your last program review and needs of the program?

N/A

II. Programs with external Accreditation: N/A

- i. Professional, specialized, State, or programmatic accreditations currently held by the program/department.
- ii. Date of most recent accreditation action by each listed agency.
- iii. Date and nature of next review and type of review.

List key issues for continuing accreditation identified in accreditation action letter or report.	Key performance indicators as required by agency or selected by program (licensure, board or bar pass rates; employment rates, etc.)(If required.)	Update on fulfilling the action letter/report or on meeting the key performance indicators.

E. Departmental Strategic Initiatives

Accomplished Initiatives AY 21-22 <small>Add more rows as needed</small>	Corresponding Strategic Plan Goal & Strategy <small>Goal # followed by Strategy # ex: 1.3</small>	Indicate if a Diversity, Equity and Inclusiveness (DEI) Goal
Placed courses into the new General Education Curriculum	2.12	
Davis Educational Foundation Grant. The DEF Grant work completed to date includes the development of career	2.19	X

competencies for all three disciplines and the drafting of advising action plans for all three disciplines. Please note that the EHPS department will need to have discussions Re: potential curricular revisions (or classroom practice) to teach more directly to the career competencies.		
Explored alternative pedagogies through “Reacting to the Past” simulations and through faculty experimentation with digital and critical pedagogies	2.17	
Created and offered courses aimed at ensuring diversity in the curriculum	2.18 1	X
Participated in the use of Open Educational Resources	2.25	X
Explored new methods to recruit students and to publicize courses. We used social media to publicize our courses	5	
Continued to build FLIP (Fitchburg Local Innovation Project)	3	X

Carried out community-engaged coursework and scholarship with students (Economics and Political Science) and pre-practica in History teaching methods courses	1: 5,15	
Carried out collaborative research and exhibitions with students (Economics, History and Political Science)	1:15	
Carried out High Impact Practices: through student internships such as internships with the Washington Center, and with forms of experiential learning, such as Moot Court, Model U.N., and through study abroad courses and interdisciplinary team-taught courses	1: 13,14, 17	

Planned Initiatives for AY 22-23 <small>Add more rows as needed</small>	Associated Strategic Plan Goal & Strategy <small>Goal # followed by Strategy # ex: 1.3</small>	Indicate if a Diversity, Equity and Inclusiveness (DEI) Goal
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Advance the Davis Education Foundation Grant by creating new advising materials	2.19	X
Carry out alternative pedagogies through “Reacting to the Past” simulations and through faculty experimentation with digital and critical pedagogies.	2.17	
Offer courses to ensure diversity in the curriculum	2.18 1	X
Participate in use of Open Educational Resources	2.25	X
Use new methods to recruit students and to publicize courses	5	
Continued to build FLIP (Fitchburg Local Innovation Project)	3	X
Carry out community-engaged coursework and scholarship with students and pre-practica in History teaching methods courses	1:5,15	
Carry out collaborative research with students	1:15	
Carry out High Impact Practices: through student internships with	1: 13,14	

the Washington Center, and provide experiential learning opportunities via Moot Court, Model U.N., etc.		
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F. Departmental Reflection:

Take this section to reflect on--

- 1) *Initiatives that you may be considering for 22-23 academic year that you did not already capture above.*

The 2021-2022 academic year was another active one, in spite of the continued impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. The department worked to achieve a number of goals in addition to the teaching and learning and advising responsibilities of the faculty.

Following the retirement of Professor Rod Christy, we submitted a request for a new/replacement faculty line in Political Science. We have now received approval for a one-year replacement position and we will be carrying out this search during the coming 2022-2023 academic year.

Members of the department spearheaded the development of several innovation grant proposals during the 2021-2022 academic year, including Paul Weizer and Kate Jewell. Dr. Jewell’s proposal, developed in collaboration with Professor Kevin McCarthy from the Communications Media Department, seeks to develop and pilot *Perseverantia: A Fitchburg State University Podcast*, a podcast dedicated to the Fitchburg State University community. This University Innovation Fund proposal received approval and will be moving forward during AY2022-2023. By the end of AY23, the goal will be to have established the organization, infrastructure, student labor, applied learning opportunities, and media presence and marketing for the podcast.

Economics, History, and Political Science provide many course disciplines in liberal arts and sciences, strengthening the Arts and Sciences in Political Science, since Political Science courses provide key credit for students in other majors across all disciplines.

2) *Any other thoughts or information that you would like to share.*

The graduate program will be developing an assessment plan in the future.