

1-1-2011

Academic Learning Compact : Political Science [Effective 2011]

University of South Florida St. Petersburg.

Follow this and additional works at: http://digital.usfsp.edu/institutional_research_acl

Recommended Citation

University of South Florida St. Petersburg, "Academic Learning Compact : Political Science [Effective 2011]" (2011). *Institutional Research: Academic Learning Compacts*. 48.
http://digital.usfsp.edu/institutional_research_acl/48

This Other is brought to you for free and open access by the Research Documents, Learning Compacts, and Institutional Statistics at Digital USFSP. It has been accepted for inclusion in Institutional Research: Academic Learning Compacts by an authorized administrator of Digital USFSP.



Academic Learning Compacts
POLITICAL SCIENCE

2011 – 2012

Signature Page for Academic Program

Academic Program: Political Science

Chair/Coordinator: Seth McKee

Date: May 11, 2012

Summary Statement – Academic Program Performance in 2011-12

Provide a summary statement about academic program performance over the previous year including high points and low points.

A major overhaul of the Political Science degree program was approved by the college and campus curriculum committees this spring. These changes were long overdue. We inherited the current political science major from USF Tampa. The revised curriculum is appropriate for a department and institution of our size and reflects the strengths and direction of our program. The external reviewers who assessed the political science program in Spring 2010 recommended reducing the number of field areas along the lines we have adopted. A simpler and more focused major will help students to complete the degree in a timely manner.

Although we are certainly headed in the right direction regarding the emphasis and direction of our program, the short term has been anything but smooth. I made the mistake of hiring an adjunct instructor to teach several (3) courses in Spring 2012 and her performance was abominable. I have dealt with numerous student complaints and currently at least one student is moving forward with an Academic Grievance (there could be several more). This instructor, to put it bluntly, only cared about collecting a paycheck. She disrespected her students by injecting her teaching with biased viewpoints and playing favorites. Even worse, she was completely insubordinate – not adhering to any of my directives, including refusing to administer teaching evaluations. The Political Science major and by extension, my department and the institution took a hit for having this instructor teach at USFSP. I hired her so I will accept responsibility but I also must stress that this situation would have never transpired if we were able to renew Darryl Paulson's line in American Politics. Hiring a visiting professor in American Politics

is the number one priority in Political Science and as I write this it appears we will be able to hire Mijeong Baek, the same candidate we selected to replace Darryl several years ago.

Additionally, our visiting professor Ty Solomon has proven to be an extremely valuable member of our small Political Science faculty. By all accounts his performance is notable – he’s an excellent teacher, researcher, and colleague. Ty teaches International Relations and his courses have consistently high enrollments. We must have a professor in this capacity and thus I have advocated for turning this into a tenure-track line. Another bonus to having Ty is that his girlfriend Mirjam Allik is a Comparative Politics scholar and we have her slated to teach two courses next spring despite recently finding out that there may be a hold up related to her visa status (she is Estonian and currently finishing her PhD at Trinity College in Dublin, Ireland).

For the health of our program it is critical that we make these hires and down the road make additional hires as well. The Political Science major is popular at USFSP and it will only remain so if we have the capacity to sustain and expand our stable of full-time Political Science professors and instructors.

Summary Statement – Impact of Changes Made in 2011-12

Provide a summary statement about changes that were made in your program as a result of ongoing assessment in 2009-10 and the positive/negative impact of the changes that were made.

The overhaul of the curriculum was the major change we made as a result of our ongoing assessments. In addition, we successfully internationalized our civic engagement. POS 4624 Constitutional Law II partnered with the Women Lawyers Group of the Middle East. Each student worked with a practicing lawyer from the country the student was researching. Another student incorporated a trip to Cuba into her internship class; another built an internship around a teaching assignment in South Africa. With regard to communication skills, earlier findings on poor structure and citation in research essays led to systematically stressing these skills in class. As a result, student papers this year were much improved. With regard to critical thinking skills, student essays in POT 3003 – Introduction to Political Theory also showed improvement.

Academic Learning Compacts: 2011 – 2012

“... to ensure student achievement in undergraduate and graduate degree programs ...”

Academic Program: Political Science

Person Responsible: Thomas Smith

Mission of Academic Program (include URL):

Committed to the liberal arts tradition of intellectual curiosity and diversity, the Political Science program at the University of South Florida St. Petersburg offers students a rigorous program of study that prepares them for successful careers in a rapidly globalizing world. Students in the program examine basic questions of political science, including how nations struggle over power and wealth, how political communities reconcile claims of liberty, authority, and justice, and how governments and societies produce the laws and policies that influence our lives. Students choose courses from the major subfields of American politics, international relations and comparative politics, political theory and public law. Students develop critical analytical skills that allow them to understand and to explain political problems and issues at the local, state, national, and international levels. The USFSP program is unique in its focus on human rights and civil rights across the curriculum, as well as its commitment to civic engagement and experiential learning. A degree in political science will prepare students for positions in public service and the private sector, for law school, and for graduate work in political science, international relations, public administration, and related disciplines.

<http://www.usfsp.edu/hp/politicalscience.htm>

List Program Goal(s) / Objective(s):

Program Goals / Objectives must be mapped to College Goals / Objectives – use consistent nomenclature. [Please note impact of any changes that were made as a result of 2010-11 assessment]

ALCs must address student learning in four areas: 1. Content/Discipline Skills; 2. Communication Skills; Critical Thinking Skills; and 4. Civic Engagement.

1. Content/Discipline Skills

Goals/Objectives	Means of Assessment/ Corroborating Evidence*	Criteria for Success	Findings	Plan for Use of Findings in 2012-13
1a. Demonstrate an understanding of American political institutions, culture and behavior.	1. In the final examination for POS 2041 (American National Government), students will evaluate American political institutions, culture, and behavior.	80 percent of students will successfully identify three distinct differences between American political institutions and behavior. Corroborating Evidence (ALC Requirement Only): 80 percent of students will score at least 70 percent and above on a final examination in POS 2041(American National Government).	These data will be updated after POS 2041 is taught during the 2012 Summer A session.	

**Please include multiple assessments. For example: students perform well on classroom assignments, norm-referenced tests/surveys, and they get accepted to graduate school or are employed.*

Academic Learning Compacts: 2011-2012 (Continued)

2. Communication Skills				
Goals/Objectives	Means of Assessment/ Corroborating Evidence*	Criteria for Success	Findings	Plan for Use of Findings in 2012-13
2a. Demonstrate written communication skills through written assignments	1. Students must complete writing assignments in two different upper-level political science courses.	The political science department maintains a portfolio of samples of outstanding, average and unsatisfactory papers written for upper-level political science courses (student identification is redacted). These papers serve as examples for students as well as a basis for measuring performance. At least 75 percent of papers will be average to outstanding. Corroborating Evidence (ALC Requirement Only): At least 80 percent of students will score at least 70 percent on the major writing assignment or written portion of the final examination in two upper-level political science courses.	79 percent of students scored a 70 percent or better in the major writing assignment in POS 4624 - Constitutional Law II. 93 percent of students in POT 4064 – Contemporary Political Theory scored a 70 percent or higher on the major writing assignment. Earlier findings on poor structure and citation in research essays led to systematically stressing these skills in class. As a result, this year student papers were much improved.	The findings suggest other areas of written communication that we will continue to stress: 1.) coherent development of argument; 2.) mastery of the texts; 3.) proper citation form; 4.) clarity of writing; and 5.) grammar and spelling.
3. Critical Thinking Skills				
Goals/Objectives	Means of Assessment/ Corroborating Evidence*	Criteria for Success	Findings	Plan for Use of Findings in 2012-13
3a. Demonstrate ability to understand and articulate the philosophical, legal and political factors influencing the government and politics of nations	1. Students will write essays in POT 3003 (Introduction to Political Theory) in which they critically engage competing political and/or legal philosophies	Criteria for Success: At least 80 percent of students will successfully explicate the philosophies of two different theorists concerning issues of politics and/or law.	97 percent of students scored at least a 70 percent on the final exam in POT 3003 – Introduction to Political Theory. Student engagement was very good. Expectations for the exam	Although the findings are extremely promising, the class will be encouraged to develop exam essays in greater depth.

		Corroborating Evidence (ALC Requirement Only): At least 80 percent of students will score at least 70 percent on the final examination in POT 3003 (Introduction to Political Theory).	were clearly defined.	
--	--	--	-----------------------	--

4. Civic Engagement

Goals/Objectives	Means of Assessment/ Corroborating Evidence*	Criteria for Success	Findings	Plan for Use of Findings in 2012-13
4a Relate theoretical knowledge with practical experience by engaging in internships in the student's area of interest. Internships may be served in local, state, and federal governments; the legal field, campaigns or public service, or in international or non-governmental organizations.	1. Students must complete either POS 4941 -- Fieldwork, or POS 3931 -- Practical Politics, or complete a civic engagement project in another class (e.g., Law and Politics, American National Government, or the Road to the White House).	At least 75 percent of students will receive a positive evaluation from the sponsoring agency or the supervising faculty member based on a standard set of questions. Corroborating Evidence (ALC Requirement Only): Students will prepare a written summary of their internship or civic engagement project.	Between summer 2011 and Spring 2011, 54 students took POS 4941 – Fieldwork, POS 3931 – Practical Politics, or POS 3931 – Road to the White House. All of those student tallied received a positive evaluation for the internship. A positive evaluation is defined as a “B” or higher from the supervisor.	The data show very few international internships. We’re seeking to “globalize” civic engagement. Con Law II incorporated an international component into the class. This year one student did an internship that involved a trip to Cuba; another student built an internship around a teaching assignment in South Africa.

**Please include multiple assessments. For example: students perform well on classroom assignments, norm-referenced tests/surveys, and they get accepted to graduate school or are employed.*