

# Degree Program Student Learning Report

Revised August 2017

## Department of History & Political Science

### **BA in Public Affairs**

For 2017-2018 Academic Year

#### **PART 1**

#### **Degree Program Mission and Student Learning Outcomes**

A. State the school, department, and degree program missions.

University Mission	School Mission	Department Mission	Degree Program Mission
Our mission is to ensure students develop the skills and knowledge required to achieve professional and personal goals in dynamic local and global communities.	The mission of the School of Liberal Arts is to further the study and practice of the arts, humanities, and social sciences at Rogers State University, in the community, and in the region.	The mission of the Department of History and Political Science is to support discipline-specific degree programs as well as the University's general education program.	The Bachelor of Arts in Public Affairs is an interdisciplinary, professional degree for individuals who desire to work in, lead, and manage public organizations. Specifically, the program endeavors to provide students with the knowledge and skills necessary to think critically, ethically, and practically about the purposes of public policy and how those policies can be improved; and to develop the understandings needed to work collaboratively with multiple sectors and diverse interests. Graduates of the public affairs program will be well prepared to begin careers in public and nonprofit organizations at all levels of society.

University Commitments	School Purposes	Department Purposes	Student Learning Outcomes
To provide quality associate, baccalaureate, and graduate degree opportunities and educational experiences which foster student excellence in oral and written communications, scientific reasoning and critical and creative thinking.	The School will offer innovative degrees, which focus upon developing skills in oral and written communication, critical thinking, and creativity.	Offers innovative and quality teaching both within the classroom and through distance education.	Students will demonstrate analytical and critical thinking skills through written and oral presentations based on the history and current issues and events in American Federal Government.
To promote an atmosphere of academic and intellectual freedom and respect for diverse expression in an environment of physical safety that is supportive of teaching and learning.	The School will educate liberal arts majors to think critically, creatively, and independently and to have the skills to work in all types of situations and communicate with all types of people.	Foster the skills of critical thinking, writing, research, and oral communication among our students.	Students will demonstrate mastery of the essential facts relevant and necessary to the study of American political life.
To provide a general liberal arts education that supports specialized academic programs and prepares students for lifelong learning and service in a diverse society.	The School will offer general education courses of high quality and purpose that provide a foundation for life-long learning.	Serve the University and the community through the provision of quality general education courses.	Students will demonstrate that they possess a solid educational foundation in the structures and functions of American Federal Government.
To provide students with a diverse, innovative faculty dedicated to excellence in teaching, scholarly pursuits and continuous improvement of programs.	The School will foster a community of scholars among the faculty and students of the institution.	Foster values of scholarship, creativity, appreciation of diversity, and community service among our faculty, staff, and students.	Students will be able to compete successfully for placement in graduate programs or employment relevant to the field of study.
To provide university-wide student services, activities and resources that complement academic programs.			

**NOTE:** The table below shows all of the department's four-year degrees. Also noted are degree program changes that have taken place in the past 3-4 years. The BA in Public Affairs and the BA in History are the newest degree programs. Relevant to the issue of degree program changes are several recommendations made by faculty at their October 2018 department meeting. Details appear below in **Part 2**.

Degree Programs Department of History & Political Science	Academic Years								
	2010 2011	2011 2012	2012 2013	2013 2014	2014 2015	2015 2016	2016 2017	2017 2018	2018 2019
BA Military History	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
BA Public Administration	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	-	-	-
BS Social Science (History & Political Science)	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
AA Secondary Education	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
AA Social Sciences (History & Political Science)	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
BA Public Affairs (Public Administration & Political Science)	-	-	-	-	-	-	✓	✓	✓
BS Social Studies Education	-	-	-	-	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
BA History (American History & General History)	-	-	-	-	-	-	✓	✓	✓

Entrepreneurship was first listed in the 2011-2012 RSU Bulletin and has been listed every academic year up to 2017-2018. Beginning in 2018-2019 it is listed only as a minor. It is not included in the table above because it has never been formally assessed or treated as an authentic degree. Please read the following history data points:

- 1) In its seven years as a four-year program, there have probably been fewer than five majors.
- 2) The Military History degree first appeared in the 2010-2011 RSU Bulletin.
- 3) The Public Affairs and History degrees first appeared in the 2016-2017 RSU Bulletin.

## PART 2

### Revisit Proposed Changes Made in Previous Assessment Cycle

Revisit each instructional/assessment change proposed in Part 5 of the degree program SLR for the preceding year. Indicate whether the proposed change was implemented and comment accordingly. Any changes the department implemented for this academic year, but which were not specifically proposed in the preceding report, should also be reported and discussed here. Please note if no changes were either proposed or implemented or this academic year.

Proposed Change	Implemented? (Y/N)	Comments
As mentioned above, the History and Political Science faculty set forth proposals at the October department meeting. At present there are two measures for assessing the BA in Public Affairs: (1) the course, "Politics Matters"; and (2) the course, "Policy and Program Evaluation." It was also suggested that a third course be added to the assessment group. Its called, "Intergovernmental Relations." It is an intermediate course compared to the other two, but it is also one of the most important courses in the curriculum. Finally, it was suggested that "Policy and Program Evaluation" be re-evaluated. It is generally considered to be the degree plan's capstone course because of the cumulative and integrative nature of the requirements. Yet, the faculty are concerned that it must undergo a thorough review to build assurance that it best meets the needs of both those who choose the political science option and public administration option.	No	The proposed changes have yet to be fully vetted, which is likely to occur early in the spring semester.

## PART 3

### Response to University Assessment Committee Peer Review

The University Assessment Committee provides written feedback on departmental assessment plans through a regular peer review process. This faculty-led oversight is integral to RSU's commitment to the continuous improvement of student learning and institutional effectiveness. UAC recommendations are not compulsory and departments may implement them at their discretion. Nevertheless, respond below to each UAC recommendations from last year's peer review report. Indicate whether the recommendation was implemented and comment accordingly. Please indicate either if the UAC had no recommendations or if the program was not subject to review in the previous cycle.

Peer Review Feedback	Implemented (Y/N)	Comments
NA	-	Since the Department of History and Political Science has not been peer reviewed in two years, there is no feedback to review.

#### PART 4 Evidence of Student Learning

Dr. Hicks and Dr. Housel are the principal instructors for the Public Affairs degree. As mentioned above, the courses Politics Matters (POLS 2003) and Policy and Program Evaluation (POLS 4993) constitute the degree's assessment platforms; specifically, course grades comprise the measures. Probably the most frequent criticism of using course grades is that different instructors are likely to emphasize and utilize different learning outcome components. That is not the case in our situation because Dr. Hicks is the only faculty member who teaches Politics Matters and Dr. Housel is the only faculty member who teaches Policy and Program Evaluation.

These two courses are the cornerstones of the degree program. All BA-PA majors must take the courses. Both are taught each academic year. Politics Matters is a foundation course and Policy and Program Evaluation is a summative course. First, here is a review of Politics Matters: POLS 2003 *Politics Matters* should be first political science course that BA-PA majors take in the degree. The course is intended as a broad introductory course into all of the sub-disciplines of political science. From that course we will develop a place to acquire an idea of the baseline quality of incoming cohorts, as well as areas of weakness within each cohort that will need to be addressed in future, higher-level courses. The political science faculty also hope to get an idea of the broader interests of the students, and use assessment data from this course as a platform for future curriculum changes.

The principal student learning components that comprise the course grade in Politics Matters are: (1) article reviews based on readings from relevant academic journals, e.g., *World Policy Journal* and *Journal of Politics*; (2) weekly quizzes; and (3) exams based on readings from the course textbook, *The Challenge of Politics*.

The Policy and Program Evaluation course can be considered a capstone experience because of the cumulative and integrative nature of the requirements. The principal student learning components that comprise the course grade are, first, writing assignments based on classic and contemporary readings drawn from a variety of high-grade sources and, second, a substantive paper based on a current policy issue.

The performance standard for both measures is a grade of B. The sampling method is reporting the grades from all BA-PA majors in the class. Given the fact that AY 2016-2017 is the first year the degree program has been offered, the sample size is small; nevertheless, the results were worthy:

- ✓ Five BA-PA majors took Politics Matters. The performance standard was met: four students earned an A and one earned a B.
- ✓ Two BA-PA majors took Policy and Program Evaluation. The performance standard was met; both students earned an A

## **PART 5**

### **Proposed Instructional or Assessment Changes**

Learning outcomes assessment can generate actionable evidence of student performance that can be used to improve student success and institutional effectiveness. Knowledge of student strengths and weakness gained through assessment can inform faculty efforts to improve course instruction and program curriculum. The changes being considered by the department are described in Part 4 above.

## **PART 6**

### **Summary of Assessment Measures**

- A. How many different assessment measures were used? Two were used. At least four are planned for the next assessment cycle.
  - List the direct measures (see appendix):
  - Class assignments
  - Internship or clinical evaluations
  - Portfolio evaluation
- B. Senior thesis or capstone projects. This is planned for the next assessment cycle.
- C. List the indirect measures (see appendix). These will be determined before the next cycle begins.



## Faculty Participation and Signatures

**A. Provide the names and signatures of all full time and adjunct faculty who contributed to this report.**

[illegible]

**B. Reviewed by:**

Titles	Name	Signature	Date
Department Head			
Dean			