

Degree Program Student Learning Report

Revised November 2019

Department of History & Political Science

BA in Public Affairs

For 2019-2020 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.	Central to the mission of the School is the preparation of students to achieve professional and personal goals in their respective disciplines and to enable their success in dynamic local and global communities. Our strategy is to foster an academic setting of diverse curricula that inherently incorporates an environment of service and collegiality.	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 Degree in Public Affairs is designed to provide students with the organizational, administrative, and time management skills to excel in public service and non-profit sectors.

B. Align school purposes, department purposes, and program student learning outcomes with their appropriate University commitments.

University Commitments	School Purposes	Department Purposes	Student Learning Outcomes
<p>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.</p>	<p>The School offers innovative degrees, which focus upon developing skills in oral and written communication, critical thinking, creativity, empirical and evidenced-based inquiry, experimental investigation and theoretical explanation of natural phenomena, and innovative technology.</p>	<p>Offers innovative and quality teaching both within the classroom and through distance education.</p>	
<p>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.</p>	<p>The School educates its majors to think independently and have the knowledge, skills and vision to work in all types of situations and careers and communicate with all types of people.</p>	<p>Foster the skills of critical thinking, writing, research, and oral communication among our students</p>	<p>Students will demonstrate an ability to analyze and critique a variety of approaches to understanding public policies.</p>
<p>To provide a general liberal arts education that supports specialized academic programs and prepares students for lifelong learning and service in a diverse society.</p>	<p>The School offers general education courses of high quality and purpose that provide a foundation for life- long learning.</p>	<p>Serve the University and the community through the provision of quality general education courses.</p>	<p>Students will demonstrate an ability to apply knowledge and understanding of different views toward public affairs.</p>
<p>To provide students with a diverse, innovative faculty dedicated to excellence in teaching, scholarly pursuits and continuous improvement of programs.</p>	<p>The School fosters a community of scholars among the faculty and students of the institution.</p>	<p>Foster values of scholarship, creativity, appreciation of diversity, and community service among our faculty, staff, and students.</p>	<p>Students will integrate public affairs-oriented research into their understanding and practice of public affairs.</p>
<p>To provide university-wide student services, activities and resources that complement academic programs.</p>			

University Commitments	School Purposes	Department Purposes	Student Learning Outcomes
To support and strengthen student, faculty and administrative structures that promote shared governance of the institution.			
To promote and encourage student, faculty, staff and community interaction in a positive academic climate that creates opportunities for cultural, intellectual and personal enrichment for the University and the communities it serves.	The School fosters a community of scholars among the faculty and students of the institution.	Attract and retain high quality traditional and nontraditional students.	

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
<p>Complete the assessment program.</p> <p>Because many of the students in POLS 3273 <i>Intergovernmental Relations</i> did not complete all of the writing assignments, the instructor believes there were too many writing assignments and has decided to scale back to three for future courses.</p>	<p>Y</p> <p>Y</p>	<p>The Public Affairs degree commenced in 2016-17. All of the student learning outcomes were replaced the following academic year.</p> <p>The instructor reduced the writing assignments down to three. However, after the university moved to distance learning because of the coronavirus, the instructor waived the third writing assignment. Because there were fewer</p>

	<p>writing assignments, all of the majors in the class completed all of the assignments. This change allowed them to perform well on the writing assignments and to meet the student learning objective. However, because the coronavirus impacted the course, the instructor would like further data before determining what lessons can be drawn.</p>
--	---

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
<p>Recommendation to add any major changes to the instruction and assessment within the program. These were placed in part 5, but should move to part 2 next iteration.</p>	Y	<p>There are comments in part 5 that show planned changes to the instruction and assessment processes that will hopefully improve both the program of study and the assessment of student learning.</p>
<p>The previous document had no faculty comments in the conclusions.</p>	Y	<p>Every SLO now has conclusions based on the data provided.</p>
<p>Parts six and seven were not completed.</p>	Y	<p>Parts six and seven are now completed.</p>
<p>Include students who do not pass for academic reasons in SLO #3.</p>	Y	<p>All students who complete the course will now be reviewed rather than just those who pass the course.</p>
<p>Include measures of learning or demonstrating skills in SLO #4 rather than just showing completion.</p>	Y	<p>The SLO is being improved to include instructor and advisor input.</p>

Part 2 should explain the revitalization of the program.	Y	Part 2 now explains the revitalization of the program.
--	---	--

PART 4
Evidence of Student Learning

Evidence and analyze student progress for each of the student learning outcomes (same as listed in Part I B above) for the degree program. See the *Appendix* for a detailed description of each component. Note: The table below is for the first program learning outcome. Copy the table and insert it below for each additional outcome. SLO numbers should be updated accordingly.

A.					
Student Learning Outcome					
B. Assessment Measure	C. Performance Standard	D. Sampling Method	E. Sample Size (n)	F. Results	G. Standard Met (Y/N)
SLO #1: Students will demonstrate an ability to analyze and critique a variety of approaches to understanding public policies.					
The course grade earned by PA majors who completed POLS 2003 <i>Politics Matters</i> and POLS 3273 <i>Intergovernmental Relations</i> .	At least 80% of all BA-PA majors will earn an average grade of 80% or better on exams in POLS 2003 and POLS 3273.	All majors who pass the class are included.	5	All students in POLS 3273 earned an average grade of 80% or better on all exams. The department did not offer a POLS 2003 <i>Politics Matters</i> course.	Y
H.					
Conclusions					
Students appear to be able to analyze and critique a variety of approaches to understanding public policies. The average grade on the three exams was 91%. No student's test grade was lower than 84%.					

**A.
Student Learning Outcome**

SLO #2: Students will demonstrate an ability to apply knowledge and understanding of different views regarding public affairs.

B. Assessment Measure	C. Performance Standard	D. Sampling Method	E. Sample Size (n)	F. Results	G. Standard Met (Y/N)
Public affairs majors will be able to execute a policy or program evaluation.	90% of public affairs majors will earn an 80% or better on a policy or program evaluation in POLS 4993 Policy and Program Evaluation.	All majors who pass the class are included.	2	Although two students began the POLS 4993 course, one was forced to withdraw because of a personal crisis. The other student earned well above an 80%.	N/A

**H.
Conclusions**

Because there were so few students in the course and one was forced to withdraw for personal reasons, no conclusions can be reasonably drawn from this data. We will continue to assess for useful data from future courses.

**A.
Student Learning Outcome**

SLO #3: Students will integrate public affairs oriented research into their understanding and practice of public affairs.

B. Assessment Measure	C. Performance Standard	D. Sampling Method	E. Sample Size (n)	F. Results	G. Standard Met (Y/N)
Students will show an ability to use research in short writing assignments.	80% of students will earn an 80% or better on writing assignments in POLS 3273	All majors who pass the class are included.	5	All students earned an 80% or higher on writing assignments in POLS 3273 Intergovernmental Relations. However, the instructor waived the third assignment when the university moved to distance learning because of the	Y

A. Student Learning Outcome					
SLO #3: Students will integrate public affairs oriented research into their understanding and practice of public affairs.					
B. Assessment Measure	C. Performance Standard	D. Sampling Method	E. Sample Size (n)	F. Results	G. Standard Met (Y/N)
	<i>Intergovernmental Relations,</i>			coronavirus. For this reason, he would like further data before drawing any conclusions.	
H. Conclusions					
Students did complete all writing assignments, unlike the students in the previous class who had significantly more writing assignments. However, the instructor waived the third assignment when the university moved to distance learning because of the coronavirus. For this reason, he would like further data before drawing any conclusions.					

A. Student Learning Outcome					
SLO #4 Every student will apply skills needed in the law or non-profit sector, or with federal, state, or local government through internships.					
B. Assessment Measure	C. Performance Standard	D. Sampling Method	E. Sample Size (n)	F. Results	G. Standard Met (Y/N)
Public affairs majors will be able to use their education in an internship with the law or non-profit sector or in federal, state, or local government	All public affairs majors will complete an internship with the law or non-profit sector or in federal, state, or local government	All majors are included.	3	All three graduating Public Affairs majors completed an internship through SBS 4033. However, many of the internships in the 2019-2020 academic year were cut short because of the response to coronavirus.	Y

A. Student Learning Outcome						
SLO #4	Every student will apply skills needed in the law or non-profit sector, or with federal, state, or local government through internships.					
B. Assessment Measure	C. Performance Standard	D. Sampling Method	E. Sample Size (n)	F. Results	G. Standard Met (Y/N)	
state, or local government.	through SBS 4033 <i>Internship 1.</i>					
H. Conclusions						
Since an internship is required for graduation, this SLO is not as informative as it should be. For this reason, the faculty would like to provide more granular data on the internship, gathering information on the success of the internships from both the SBS instructor and the internship supervisor.						

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. Below discuss potential changes the department is considering which are aimed at improving student learning or the assessment process. Indicate which student learning outcome(s) will be affected and provide a rationale for each proposed change. These proposals will be revisited in next assessment cycle.

Proposed Change	Applicable Learning Outcomes	Rationale and Impact
The faculty would like to provide more granular data on the internship, gathering information on the success of the internships from the SBS instructor and the internship host.	SLO #4: Every student will be provided an opportunity to work in the law or non-profit sector, or with federal, state, or local government through internships.	Because an internship is required for graduation, SLO #4 is not as informative as it should be. By providing information about the success of the internship, the department will

Proposed Change	Applicable Learning Outcomes	Rationale and Impact
The major will reduce the number of options, streamlining the degree and reducing the number of courses required.	Program-wide change.	have a better understanding of the capabilities of our students. Because there are so many options in the degree program, there is no way that the assigned professors can teach all of the required courses. In addition, there are not enough majors to fill all of the options.
Change sampling measure to all students who complete rather than pass the class.	SLOs # 1, 2, and 3.	Peer review feedback revealed that the change reflects the success rate more clearly.

PART 6





Summary of Assessment Measures

- A. How many different assessment measures were used? Four different assessment measures were used.
- B. List the direct measures (see appendix): Course grades, writing assignments, internships, and senior capstone projects.
- C. List the indirect measures (see appendix): None.

PART 7

Faculty Participation and Signatures

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

Faculty Name	Assessment Role	Signature
David Bath	Department representative/primary author	
Steve Housel	Department Review Board/advisor	
Michael Beauchamp	Department Review Board	
Paul Hatley	Department Review Board	

Jane Johansson	Department Review Board	
Carolyn Taylor	Department Review Board	
Quinton Taylor	Department Review Board	<i>Quinton Taylor</i>
Sigismund Wilson	Department Review Board	<i>Sigismund Wilson</i>

B. Reviewed by:

Titles	Name	Signature	Date
Department Head	Ken Hicks	<i>[Signature]</i>	6-2-20
Dean	Keith Martin	<i>Keith W. Martin</i>	6/2/2020

Appendix

Student Learning Outcome

Student learning outcomes are the observable or measurable results that are expected of a student following a learning experience. Learning outcomes may address knowledge, skills, attitudes, or values that provide evidence that learning has occurred. They can apply to a specific course, a program of study, or an institution. Outcomes should be worded in language that clearly implies a measurable behavior or quality of student work. Outcomes should also include Bloom's action verbs appropriate to the skill level of learning expected of students.

Examples:

Students will be able to apply principles of evidence-based medicine to determine clinical diagnoses and implement acceptable treatment modalities.

Students will be able to articulate cultural and socioeconomic differences and the significance of these differences for instructional planning.

Assessment Measure

An assessment measure is a tool or instrument used to gather evidence of student progress toward an established learning outcome. Every program learning outcome should have at least one appropriate assessment measure. Learning outcomes are frequently complex, however, and may require multiple measures to accurately assess student performance. Assessment plans should try to incorporate a combination of direct and indirect assessment measures. Direct provide concrete evidence of whether a student has command of a specific subject or content area, can perform a certain task, exhibits a particular skill, demonstrates a certain quality in their work, or holds a particular value. Because direct measures tap into actual student learning, it is often viewed as the preferred measure type. Indirect measures assess opinions or thoughts about the extent of a student's knowledge, skills, or attitudes. They reveal characteristics associated with learning, but they only imply that learning has occurred. Both types of measures can provide useful insight into student learning and experiences in a program. Each also has unique advantages and disadvantages in terms of the type of data and information it can provide. Examples of common direct and indirect measures are listed below.

Direct Measures

- Comprehensive exams
- Class assignments
- Juried review of performances and exhibitions
- Internship or clinical evaluations
- Portfolio evaluation
- Pre/post exams
- Third-party exams such as field tests, certification exams, or licensure exams
- Senior thesis or capstone projects

Indirect Measures

- Graduate exit interviews
- Focus group responses
- Job placement statistics
- Graduate school placement statistics
- Graduation and retention rates
- Student and alumni surveys that assess perceptions of the program
- Employer surveys that assess perceptions of graduates
- Honors and awards earned by students and alumni.

Performance Standard

A performance standard is a clearly-defined benchmark that establishes the minimally-acceptable level of performance expected of students for a particular measure.

Examples:

At least 70% of students will score 70% or higher on a comprehensive final exam.

At least 75% of students will earn score a "Proficient" or higher rating on the Communicate Effectively rubric.

Sampling Method

Sampling method describes the methodology used for selecting the students that were assessed for a given measure. In some cases, such as most course-embedded measures, it is possible to assess all active enrolled students. In other cases, however, it is not feasible to measure the population of all potential students. In these cases, it is important that a well-designed sampling scheme be used to ensure the sample of students measured is an unbiased representation of the overall population. Where multiple instructors teach a particular course, care should be taken to assess students across all instructors, including adjuncts.

Examples:

All students enrolled in BIOL 4801 Biology Research Methods II

All majors graduating in the 2016-17 academic year.

Sample Size

Sample size is the number of students from which evidence of student learning was obtained for a given assessment measure.

Results

Results are an analytical summary of the findings arising from the assessment of student performance for a particular assessment measure. Typical presentation includes descriptive statistics (mean, median, range) and score frequency distributions.

Standard Met?

This is a simple yes/no response that indicates whether the observed level of student performance for a particular measure meets or exceeds the established standard. An N/A may be used where circumstances prevented the department from accurately assessing a measure.

Conclusion

The conclusion is a reflective summary and determination of the assessment results obtained for a specific learning outcome. Questions to consider in this section include the following:

- Does the assessment evidence indicate the learning outcome is being satisfactorily met?
- Where multiple measures are used for a single outcome, do the results present a consistent or contradictory pattern?
- What are the most valuable insights gained from the assessment results?
- What strengths and weaknesses in student learning do the results indicate?
- What implications are there for enhancing teaching and learning?
- How can the assessment process be improved?