

UNIVERSITY ASSESSMENT COMMITTEE

Feedback to Departments on Assessment Activities Reported in 2004-2005 Annual Reports

DEPARTMENT Political Science DATE 8/31/06

COMMITTEE MEMBER(S) CONDUCTING REVIEW Cheryl Saunders & Elizabeth Bjerke

STUDENT LEARNING GOALS

- | | | | |
|---------------------------------------|--------------|---------------|--------------------------|
| • Were any goals referenced? | YES <u>x</u> | NO <u> </u> | QUALIFIED Y/N <u> </u> |
| • If so, were goals well articulated? | YES <u>x</u> | NO <u> </u> | QUALIFIED Y/N <u> </u> |
| • Do goals address student learning? | YES <u>x</u> | NO <u> </u> | QUALIFIED Y/N <u> </u> |

Comments:

Undergraduate: The goals of the undergraduate program state what students "will" be able to do. The goals are: students will have the ability to think critically and relate theoretical information to practical experiences; they will have high levels of written communication skills; they will develop the ability and confidence to communicate orally effectively; they will develop an understanding of the discipline in which they are being educated; they will be prepared for further education and/or careers; they will be capable of using the knowledge gained effectively and positively and be able to adapt to the changing global environment in which we live. The goals align with the General Education goals of the university.

Graduate: The Master of Public Administration (MPA) program, which is the graduate program in the Political Science department, has the same goals as the undergraduate programs.

Certificate Program: The goals are listed above.

ASSESSMENT METHODS

- | | | | |
|--|--------------|---------------|--------------------------|
| Were any specific assessment methods referenced? | YES <u>x</u> | NO <u> </u> | QUALIFIED Y/N <u> </u> |
| • If so, were specifically chosen assessment methods appropriately aligned with individual goals? | YES <u>x</u> | NO <u> </u> | QUALIFIED Y/N <u> </u> |
| • Were both direct and indirect assessment methods used as components of a "multiple measures" approach? | YES <u>x</u> | NO <u> </u> | QUALIFIED Y/N <u> </u> |

Comments:

Undergraduate: The department relies on a senior capstone course in Political Science and a senior project in Public Administration to assess the undergraduate programs. In addition, students are given written assignments, tests, class discussion opportunities (to assess oral communication skills), and opportunities to reveal critical thinking skills.

Graduate: Students are required to complete an independent study and to pass comprehensive examinations.

Certificate: The department does not have an assessment mechanism for the certificate program as stated in the annual report.

ASSESSMENT RESULTS

Were any assessment results reported? YES ☒ NO ☐ QUALIFIED Y/N ☐

- If so, were the results clear in terms of how they specifically affirm achievement of goals? YES ☐ NO ☐ QUALIFIED Y/N ☒
- If so, were the results clear in terms of how they indicate need for improvement? YES ☒ NO ☐ QUALIFIED Y/N ☐
- Were the results tied to goals for student learning? YES ☒ NO ☐ QUALIFIED Y/N ☐

Comments:

Undergraduate: Student evaluation and feedback were reported, which reflected flexibility in course selection. This does not measure student achievement. However, the annual report revealed that department's evaluation of papers from the Public Administration Professional Project (senior project) created an increase emphasis on writing skills in each course. In addition, 70% of the students answered correctly five major areas on American Government exams; therefore, no changes in the course were deemed necessary.

Graduate: The MPA program's comprehensive exams revealed a problem with the quality of performance of some students. The annual report stated that graduates of the program along with the employers of the graduates and current students were surveyed to prepare for accreditation by NASPAA.

CLOSING THE LOOP

Were any actions taken on the basis of assessment results reported? YES ☒ NO ☐ QUALIFIED Y/N ☐

- If so, do curricular or other improvements/ changes arising from assessment results directly address goals for student learning? YES ☒ NO ☐ QUALIFIED Y/N ☐

Comments:

Undergraduate: The Department has made or not changes to course offerings along with structure based on student feedback and performance. The ongoing assessment activities along with the modification of programs to facilitate student learning and preparedness is commendable.

Graduate: The Department not only evaluates student comprehensive exams, but also considers indirect and external assessment activities and results to evaluate its program and student learning. The Political Science Department has not only considered the recommendations (which included student and faculty diversity) of the NASPAA during its site-visit, but also surveyed MPA alumni, their employers of the alumni, and current students.

SUMMARY

Strengths

☒ A specific plan for assessment is in place.
☒ Student learning goals are well-articulated.
☒ Assessment methods are clearly described.
☒ Assessment methods are appropriately selected.
☒ Assessment methods are well-implemented.
☒ Direct and indirect methods are implemented.
☒ Results are reported.
☒ Results are tied to closing the loop.
(Decision-making is tied to evidence.)

Areas for Improvement

☐ No specific plan for assessment is in place.
☐ Student learning goals are not well-articulated.
☐ Assessment methods are not clearly described.
☐ Assessment methods are not appropriately selected.
☐ Assessment methods are not well-implemented.
☐ A single type of assessment methods predominates.
☐ No results are reported.
☐ Results are not clearly tied to closing the loop.
(Decision-making is not directly tied to evidence.)

OVERALL SUMMARY AND RECOMMENDATIONS:

The Political Science Department has an excellent assessment plan. The Department's attention to student learning is evident. It would be more beneficial (in our opinion) to submit more quantitative data in the annual report. The students in this department are well served by the intentional ongoing assessment activities of the faculty and leadership of Political Science. The Department's attention to the recommendations of the NASPAA will enhance its ability to achieve its goals and objectives.

Reviewer(s):	Name	Cheryl Saunders
	Department	University Learning Center
	Phone Number	7-4390
	E-mail	cherylsaunders@mail.und.nodak.edu

Section 1: ___N___ Section 2: _Y___ Section 3: ___?___ Section 4: __Y___

Coding Key:

Y	=	yes, this is done appropriately and well
N	=	no, this is not done at all, or it is not done in relationship to student learning
NA	=	no information available
?	=	action or progress is apparent; however, evidence is lacking that this is completely and appropriately done