Colorado State University – Pueblo Academic Program Assessment Report for AY 2013-2014   **Due: June 2, 2014**

Program: Political Science   **Date:** May 14, 2014

Completed by: Gayle Berardi and Colette Carter

Assessment contributors (other faculty involved in this program's assessment): Colette Carter (Gayle Berardi and Steve Liebel attended some of the debates and filled out assessment forms for the class.)

Please complete this form for <u>each undergraduate, minor, certificate, and graduate program</u> (e.g., B.A., B.S., M.S.) in your department. Please copy any addenda (e.g., rubrics) and paste them in this document, and return it to Erin Frew, erin.frew@colostate-pueblo.edu as an email attachment before June 2, 2014. You'll also find the form at the assessment website at http://www.colostatepueblo.edu/Assessment/ResultsAndReports/Pages/default.aspx.

Please describe the 2013-2014 assessment activities for the program in Part I. Use Column H to describe improvements planned for 2014-2015 based on the assessment process. In Part II, please describe activities engaged in during 2013-2014 designed to close-the-loop (improve the program) based on assessment activities and the information gathered in 2012-2013. Thank you.

I. Program student learning outcomes (SLOs) assessed in this cycle, processes, results, and recommendations.

A. Which of the program SLOs were assessed during this cycle? **Please include the outcome(s) verbatim from the assessment plan.**	B. When was this SLO last assessed? Please indicate the semester and year.	C. What method was used for assessing the SLO? **Please include a copy of any rubrics used in the assessment process.**	D. Who was assessed? Please fully describe the student group(s) and the number of students or artifacts involved.	E. What is the expected achievement level and how many or what proportion of students should be at it?	F. What were the results of the assessment?	G. What were the department's conclusions about student performance?	H. What changes/improvements to the <u>program</u> are planned based on this assessment?
Knowledge and Critical Thinking Knowledge: Student should have factual knowledge	Knowledge: Spring 2013 Critical	The objective of the 2014 assessment process was evaluating graduating	14 Senior Seminar students were assessed. The seminar is	It is the expectation of the program that 80% of students will	8 students were at the proficient level and 6 were at the exemplary	There were a number of very positive outcomes of the new format for the senior seminar as an	Based on the success of the debate format, the program is considering utilizing debates in other political science

about the various subfields in political science. This includes knowledge about the major theories, issues and methods of inquiry for each subfield. Critical Thinking: Students should be able to define problems, examine evidence and analyze the assumptions leading to a conclusions; Question arguments, causal theories, evidence, broad generalizations and simple correlations; Are open to both sides of an argument; and are prepared to examine and expose holes in all arguments.	Thinking: This is the first time critical thinking is being assessed.	majors on the assessment dimensions of critical thinking and knowledge of the discipline. As a tool for assessing student performance the senior seminar was re-formatted to a debate format. A rubric created by the Political Science faculty was used. **It is attached.**	required for political science majors and is only offered during the spring semester.	score on each assessment rubric at least at the competent (proficient) level.	level.	assessment tool. One was the enthusiasm of the students. That enthusiasm led to significant greater involvement in research in developing their arguments. As one student put it, they are used to writing long papers in all of the upper division political science courses, but they have never had to demonstrate for an audience their broader knowledge of the subject and defend the logic of their positions. A second outcome of the new format was a suggestion of how this can be used in other courses as an assessment tool as students move through the program.	courses. This would provide continuity in assessment throughout the program classes and provide students with an early introduction to the debate format in their academic career. **Change/Improvements** Because this year was the first time the debate format was used as an assessment tool, attention was given to how well it served that purpose. A number of modifications were made over the course of the semester as different issues arose. For instance, in terms of knowledge of the discipline, it was not until well into the semester that it became apparent that students had not all been exposed through course work to all of the areas of the disciplines covered by department courses. Hence, the topic for

							debate did not give all of the students the same starting point in developing an argument around the topic. Beginning next year, students will be required to provide a transcript of courses taken during the first week of the semester. Courses taken will provide the bases for out-of-class readings and research, and in-class mini-debates. In order to improve the senior seminar as an assessment tool, students were required to submit a written assessment of "what went wrong" and "what went right" with the new format. Their assessments were insightful and direct, suggesting how to improve the course. • Have the director of the forensic team introduce students to the debate format – This prepares students for

							understanding how success in a debate format requires critical thinking skills in terms of knowledge, evidence, and the logic of arguments.
							• Have informal, in-class mini-debates based on research throughout the semester – These should serve to refresh students' knowledge about some areas of the discipline that may have been covered in course(s) taken in the freshman or sophomore years. This will also help to increase the knowledge of different areas of the discipline for those students who perhaps did not

							take a course on a specific subject.
							• Have faculty conduct class sessions on the major debate topics to be covered in the course – For each topic, a faculty member with expertise in the subject area will conduct at least one class meeting with students to clarify the significant dimensions of the topic, and the scope of research that is required to develop an argument.
							• Finally, it is assumed that modifications to the course will continue to be made as we move forward. However, based on

							student responses, and the current outcomes, the program is considering using a modified debate format in more of its upper-division courses as a means for enhancing critical thinking and knowledge skills before reaching the Senior Seminar.

Comments:

II.   Follow-up (closing the loop) on results and activities from previous assessment cycles. In this section, please describe actions taken during this cycle that were based on, or implemented to address, the results of assessment from previous cycles.

A. What SLO(s) did you address? Please include the outcome(s) verbatim from the assessment plan.	B. When was this SLO last assessed? Please indicate the semester and year.	C. What were the recommendations for change from the previous assessment?	D. Were the recommendations for change acted upon? If not, why?	E. What were the results of the changes? If the changes were not effective, what are the next steps or the new recommendations?
Knowledge	Spring 2013	Redo the Rubric to better reflect what is being measured.	A new rubric was created by the program that links critical thinking and knowledge SLOs.	The change was very positive. It was realized that the two SLOs are closely linked and thus should be assessed by one rubric and at the same time.
		Clarify Achievement Levels	Yes. This is reflected in our **updated assessment plan. (Attached)**	Clarification of the % of students that should be at proficient and exemplary levels.

Comments:

Political Science Critical Thinking and Knowledge Rubric

Critical Thinking	Exemplary	Proficient:	Emerging:	Not Present:
A. Evidence	*Accurately* interprets evidence, statements, graphics, questions	*Usually accurate* interpretation of evidence, statements, graphics, questions	*Misinterprets* evidence, statements, graphics, questions	
B. Points of View	Thoughtfully analyzes and evaluates *major* alternative points of view	Offers analyses and evaluations of *obvious* alternative points of view	*Superficially* evaluates obvious alternative points of view	
C. Justifications	Justifies *key* results, explains assumptions and reasons	Justifies *some* results, explains reasons	Justifies *few* results, seldom explains reasons	
Knowledge of discipline	*Accurately* understands and clearly displays a knowledge of the discipline including theories, ideas and concepts	*Usually accurate* evidence of knowledge of theories, ideas, and concepts of the discipline	*Misinterprets* the key theories, ideas and concepts of the discipline	

Assessment Plan: Political Science Program
Bachelor of Arts and Bachelor of Science
College of Humanities and Social Sciences
Chair: Dr. Colette Carter
Program Coordinator: Gayle K. Berardi

The political science program is housed within the Department of History, Political Science, Philosophy, and Geography. At present, the political science program has four full-time faculty members. The members of the program embrace the University's mission of providing a quality education that supports improved graduation rates, increased numbers of students attending graduate school, and the development of research skills and the ability to become a critical thinker.

The political science program offers both a major and minor. Political science is a fundamental element in the general education requirements of the University and is essential to any liberal arts education. It is also a component for secondary education teachers. Although students interested in law school need not be political science majors, the majority of pre-law students throughout the nation and at CSU-Pueblo are political science majors.

In addition to the more narrow objectives contained in specific emphasis areas of the political science major, such as American politics and global studies, the program faculty is committed to the broader goals of increasing the student's understanding, awareness, and involvement in a wide variety of political issues and processes at the University and in the local community. To this end, faculty members have made a substantial commitment to community service in its broadest definition and accomplishment. This includes establishing the Center for Leadership and Community Development which offers leadership workshops and internships for community members, serving as consultants to local citizens groups and placing students in local and state internships. The program also established in 2010 the Center for the Study of Homeland Security. The Center provides the Southern Colorado region with University opportunities to study the growing field of homeland security and also prepare students to succeed in related careers that include government, military and high technology industries.

Finally, the faculty is dedicated to the development of its students, whether they are political science majors, minors, or others, in and out of the classroom. Untold hours are spent in counseling and advising political science majors and minors and other students in political science courses. In addition, the political science faculty is committed to providing diagnostic and remedial help with writing assignments. All our lower and upper division courses require short papers, essays or longer research papers.

INSTITUTIONAL AND PROGRAM MISSION

The University mission calls for "baccalaureate programs with a strong professional focus and a firm grounding in the liberal arts and sciences." The political science major offers students a firm grounding in the liberal arts by providing students with concepts and

knowledge of national and international political systems and institutions as well as basic political theory; students develop skills in reading, discussion, writing, research, and critical thinking. The political science program prepares its students to engage in wide range of career activities and to function as productive citizens in the global world.

INSTITUTIONAL STRATEGIC PLAN AND PROGRAM MISSION

The political science program contributes significantly to the goals set forth in the University's current strategic plan. The program provides courses in political science for the knowledge component of the general education curriculum as well as providing courses for majors and minors in political science. At all levels, the program strives to enhance student knowledge and to enhance communication and critical thinking skills. Technology is used appropriately at all levels of instruction, students are encouraged to work in community organizations as interns, and an integration of learning is required of all majors as is basic research.

Goals and Objectives

The goals of the political science program are:

To prepare graduates with a major in the discipline to be able to:
- Demonstrate a basic understanding of historical, philosophical and empirical foundations of political science**;**
- Demonstrate a general command of knowledge about the American political system, global studies, the history of political thought, standard political science research approaches; and
- Demonstrate ability to continue personal study and learning on an independent basis about specific subjects in the discipline.

To prepare graduates with a minor in the discipline to be able to:
- Demonstrate a basic understanding of the nature of the discipline; and,
- Demonstrate general knowledge and understanding of the American political system and comparative and world politics.

Student Learning Outcomes

Knowledge Outcome: Students should have factual knowledge about the various subfields in political science. This includes knowledge about the major theories, issues and methods of inquiry for each subfield.

Writing Outcome: Students should be able to write complex prose, with correct grammar. They should be able to present a coherent and persuasive argument on a political science topic in a research format following the American Political Science format.

Critical Thinking Outcome: Students should be able to:

-Define problems, examine evidence, and analyze the assumptions leading to a conclusion;
-Question arguments, causal theories, evidence, broad generalizations, and simple correlation;
-Are open to both sides of an argument; and
-Are prepared to examine and expose holes in all arguments (including their own).

Communication Outcome: Students should be able to clearly and concisely present their ideas as participants in classroom discussions and in presenting their research.

Student Outcomes: Assessment Measures

Students coming into the political science program at CSU-Pueblo arrive with a diverse set of academic and scholastic skills, ranging from serious deficiencies to college level competencies. It is the expectation of the program that 80% of students will score on each assessment rubric at least at the competent (proficient) level. This level is defined in detail in each student learning outcome rubric.

Outcome Assessment Activities for the Political Science Program

Direct Assessment

In political science 493, the senior seminar, (and in other lower and upper division political science classes), students are required to write a major paper that depends on independent research and utilizes political science theory and methods taught in earlier classes. Papers are assessed based on mechanics of writing, organization, clarity of ideas, depth of critical analysis and ability to integrate an understanding of the historical, philosophical and empirical foundations of political science in written work. The senior seminar may be used to measure one student learning outcome every year. In addition, when a major paper is not required, a series of debates held throughout the semester in the senior seminar will be used to assess the SLOs.

Use of Information

Faculty members discuss their reviews and deliberate as to what actions to take to improve curriculum, instruction, and learning. Also, the results are shared with the Department chair.

Indirect Assessment

Students are required as part of the senior seminar to complete a survey about their experiences in the political science program. The results are analyzed by the program coordinator and shared with the faculty. At that time the faculty determines if any action are needed to improve the program.

Five Year Review

Every five years the political science program conducts a review of its program. This includes an evaluation of its assessment plan and recommendations for changes.

As part of the process an outside evaluator from another university reviews the program and its assessment plan. The recommendations are reported to the faculty, the department chair and college dean.

Conclusion

Curriculum

Routine, periodic faculty discussions are undertaken to determine if students are gaining substantive knowledge in the sub-fields of political science. We have linked our courses with both redundancy and a building-block approach to ensure that all students learn basic, fundamental knowledge in their chosen focus areas. One way we determine success in this is during our Senior Seminar for all political science majors, where the students pursue more depth in these areas as part of both the course and their final seminar thesis and debates, while allowing them choice in their focus areas for the discipline.

Future Considerations

On a yearly basis, the political science faculty evaluates its assessment plan and determines if additional forms of assessment are needed.

Assessment Dates

Writing SLO   Spring 2011   Spring 2015

Communication SLO   Spring 2012   Spring 2016

Knowledge SLO   Spring 2013

Critical Thinking/Knowledge SLOs   Spring 2014   Spring 2018
After the assessment of the knowledge SLO in 2013, the faculty decided that the critical thinking and knowledge SLO are very similar and should be assessed at the same time. The rubric used for spring 2014 will reflect this change.

CSU-Pueblo Political Science Program

Curriculum Map

Program: BA/BS Degree

	Content Knowledge	Writing Ability	Critical Thinking Ability	Communication Skills
Core Course				
POLSCI 101	I-Classroom lectures I-Classroom discussions I-Exams	R-Essay exams R-Discussion papers	R-Essay exams R-Classroom discussions	R-Classroom discussions R-Written assignments
POLSCI 201	I-Exams, I-Essays, I-Quizzes, I-Classroom discussion	R-Position papers, R-Essay Exams	R-Position papers, R-Essays, R-Exams, R-Quizzes, R-Classroom discussion	R-Classroom discussion, R-Written assignments
POLSCI 202	R-Exams	R-Research	I -Research	I-Classroom

	I-Classroom discussion	Paper R-Essay exams	design R-Research paper R-Essay exams	discussion I-Research Design R-Research paper
POLSCI 250	I-Lectures I-Classroom discussions	I-Classroom instruction R-Short essays R-Essay exams	I-Classroom discussions R-Research paper R-Policy paper	R-Project analysis papers R-Essay exams
POLSCI 370	R-Short Essays I-Essay Exams R-Small group discussions I-Research Paper	R-Short Essays R-Essay Exams R-Research Paper	R-Essays R-Essay Exams R-Research Paper R-Oral assignments	R-Small group discussions R Individual Presentation to the class
POLSCI 493	R/M-Short Essays R/M-Essays R/M-Research Paper R/M-Group R/M-Discussions Individual	R/M-Essays R/M-Research Paper	M -All written and oral assignments	M-Small group presentations M-Formal research presentation

	presentation			