

**POLITICAL SCIENCE DEPARTMENT
UNDERGRADUATE ASSESSMENT REPORT
September 15, 2010**

1. The Department's mission supports the University's mission.

The mission of Southern Connecticut State University is to

provide exemplary graduate and undergraduate education in the liberal arts and professional disciplines. As an intentionally diverse and comprehensive university, Southern is committed to academic excellence, access, social justice, and service for the public good.
(SCSU Strategic Plan, 2007-2012: 15)

The political science department seeks to have its undergraduate majors become active citizens and professionals by acquiring a sound knowledge of the discipline that assists them in developing analytic and problems solving abilities to understand and respond to the rapid economic, political, social and cultural changes occurring at the beginning of a new century. Students will be prepared to critically examine, understand, and appreciate the larger environment and to seek a vital role in local government, society and the larger environment. The department considers academic excellence, social justice, diversity, and community service as major components of its contribution to a sound liberal arts education at Southern.

The department in line with the University's mission seeks to promote the core values of excellence, access, diversity, social justice, and community service. The department promotes **excellence** by expecting students and faculty to meet the highest academic standards. The department endeavors to assist students to gain **access** to the study of politics by offering a variety of courses for both majors and non majors covering American politics (Congress, the presidency, public policy and administration, public opinion and public law) comparative politics (Asia, Africa, Western Europe, Latin America, and Russia), international relations (U.S. foreign policy, global politics, and U.S.-Latin American Relations), and political thought (American, classical and medieval, and contemporary). Efforts to promote **diversity** and **social justice** is reflected in the research and teaching interests of the faculty who offer courses on race and ethnicity, gender, and the law. We promote **community service** at Southern through our the Pre-Law Society and Phi Sigma Alpha, the political science honors society; and for the larger community, through our internship program which places students in various government, non-profit, business, and community organizations.

The department maintains three degree programs: B.S. (Political Science) which meets the needs of the majority of our students; the B.A. (Political Science) which meets the needs of students who wish to complete a double major or two or more concentrations; and, the B.S (certification) degree for students majoring in political science who seek secondary educational certification.

All three degree programs require majors to complete PSC365W Research Methods in Political Science and PSC475W Capstone Seminar (a research course for majors). Only the B.S. degree program in political science requires PSC367 Quantitative Analysis of Political Data. The B.S.degree program requires PSC497 Internship. It is an option for students in the other degree programs.

To support the new **Liberal Education Program**, the department plans initially to develop Tier 2 courses that meet the American Experience, Global Awareness and Social Structure, Conflict, and Consensus requirements.

2. The Department has clearly stated program goals and objectives.

The department seeks

To have our students understand the significant impact that politics has on their lives, careers, families, communities, the state, the nation, and the world.

To assist our students in developing life-long learning skills for community service, the law, educational institutions, and as citizens.

To prepare our students to work in the public and private sectors, go on to further graduate studies, seek a law degree, or to teach at the secondary or tertiary levels with additional educational training.

To encourage students to do research, complete a work experience through the internship program, and pursue further professional or academic studies.

3. The Department has clearly stated program-level outcomes.

The outcomes and methods for measurement developed by the faculty (based on student and faculty feedback and changes in the discipline) require students

A. To demonstrate a comprehensive knowledge of the methods and findings of the discipline.

B. To demonstrate a comprehensive knowledge of the key statistical tools used in political science.

C. To demonstrate critical thinking and writing skills in the study of political science.

D. To demonstrate an understanding of the workplace experience.

Methods of Assessment

The department has formed an Undergraduate Program Committee (UPC) to assess the undergraduate program and the students.

A. Measuring student outcomes for an understanding of the methods and findings of the discipline

To be measured

Writing a research paper (20-25 pages) in PSC365W Research Methods in Political Science (required for B.A. and B.S. degrees).

Direct Method of Measurement

The UPC will randomly sample the research papers submitted in PSC365W Research Methods in Political Science to assess the student authors' knowledge of research methods, data analysis, and their research findings.

Rubric:

Evaluation Indicators: thesis statement, research design, data collection, data analysis and findings.

Evaluation scale: (1 = excellent; 2 = very good; 3 = good; 4 = poor; and 5 = failure).

Indirect Method of Measurement

A student survey will be given in PSC365W Research Methods in Political Science to assess students' views about the content of the course and its value for understanding the methods and findings of the discipline.

B. Measuring student outcomes for a comprehensive knowledge of the key statistical tools used in political science.

To be measured

*Develop a statistical data set and write an analysis of the findings in PSC367 Quantitative Analysis of Political Data. (B.S.degree requirement).

Direct Method of Measurement

The UPC will randomly sample the statistical research papers submitted in PSC367 Quantitative Analysis of Political Data to assess the student authors' knowledge of statistical methods and the analysis of political data.

Rubric:

Evaluation Indicators: quality of data set, comprehensiveness of selected variables, presentation of data and findings and quality of written data analysis.

Evaluation Scale: 1 to 5 (1 = excellent; 2 = very good; 3 = good; 4 = fair; 5 = failure).

Grading: Political Science majors are expected to have taken PSC365W Research Methods prior to taking this course. They will be held to a higher level as they will have been introduced to the basics of statistical data collection and analysis in PSC365W.

Indirect Method of Measurement

A student survey will be given in PSC367 Quantitative Analysis of Political Data to assess students' views about the extent of their knowledge of statistical analysis and its value to understanding political data analysis and the writing of major research papers.

C. Measuring student outcomes for critical thinking and writing skills in the study of political science.

To be measured

*Writing a research paper (20-25 pages) incorporating the basic and advanced knowledge of a specific research topic in PSC475W Capstone Seminar in the senior year.

Direct Method of Measurement

The UPC will randomly review research papers in PSC475W Capstone Seminar to assess the student authors' ability to critically examine and write about a significant topic in political science.

Rubric:

Evaluation Indicators: thesis statement, research design, data collection, data analysis, findings, and quality of written work.

Evaluation scale: 1 to 5 (1= excellent; 2 = very good; 3 = good; 4 = fair; 5 = failure).

Grading: The students in PSC475 are primarily senior political science majors who will be evaluated on a higher standard than students in our first required course, PSC365W, Research Methods. They will be held to a higher standard on quality of the thesis statement, research design, data collection, data analysis and writing.

Indirect Method of Measurement

A student survey will be given in PSC475W Capstone Seminar to assess student views about acquiring the necessary critical thinking and writing skills and their value to the writing of the research paper and their future goals.

D. Measuring student outcomes for an understanding and appreciation of the workplace.

To be measured

*Writing an internship paper (20-25 pages) evaluating various public administrative and organizational theories and practices in an internship in the public sector, the nonprofit sector, or another type of organization in PSC497 Internship (B.S. requirement).

Direct Method of Measurement

The UPC will randomly review internship papers to assess the student authors' ability to critically examine and write about the work experience.

Rubric:

Evaluation Indicators: knowledge of work place experience, formal organizational structure, knowledge of various types of positions in the designated workplace, and roles of supervisors and administrators.

Evaluation Scale: (1 = excellent; 2 = very good; 3 = good; 4 = fair; 5 = failure)

Indirect Method of Measurement

A student survey will be given to students enroll in PSC497 Internship to assess student views about the work experience and their future career plans.

PSC Minors

Students who take PSC365, PSC367 and PSC475 will be surveyed in these courses and the results will be examined separately and comparatively with the majors. (We plan to revise our requirements for the PSC minor to include more emphasis on research methods and research).

Future Plans

To incorporate model developed in a section of PSC475W Capstone Seminar to correlate student grades for the PSC475W seminar with their overall GPAs to assess their progress by the senior year.
