

2018 Institutional Effectiveness Report: Political Science

Final Annual Report

Tennessee Tech University

President

Provost

College of Arts and Sciences

Sociology and Political Science

Political Science BS

Political Science Major Mission

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Mission/Vision/Goal Statement

Departmental Mission Statement

Within the context of the University's mission, the mission of the Department is to provide students with a quality liberal arts education that prepares them for a rapidly changing world and a variety of work environments and post-graduate educational possibilities.

The Department of Sociology and Political Science has the primary mission of offering strong academic programs in sociology, criminology and criminal justice, social work and political science. It provides students with a quality liberal arts education that prepares them for a rapidly changing world and a variety of work environments and postgraduate educational possibilities. Students are educated to not only master a diverse body of knowledge but also to think critically, analyze data, and clearly communicate what they know and discover.

Recognizing that we live in an increasingly technological and diverse world, we seek to incorporate technological expertise and appreciation of human diversity into our courses. The Department also strives to serve the wider university, the Upper Cumberland region, and the nation through research and public service.

Based on the mission to provide students with a quality liberal arts education that prepares them for a rapidly changing world and a variety of work environments and post-graduate educational possibilities, the Sociology program has identified two Program Goals and five student Learning Outcomes. These provide our students with a well-rounded education through fostering skills such as critical thinking, data analysis, effective communication and the ability to adapt to changing work environments within a variety of potential occupations. The two Program Goals and five student-Learning Outcomes also prepare our students to be more competitive on the job market or in graduate or law school after graduation.

Program Goal 1: The Program of Political Science will monitor the number of enrolled majors. This Program Goal will be accomplished with recruitment initiatives such as participation in Majors’ Fairs faculty engagement through Majors Fairs and Scholarship support.

Table 1: Enrolled Majors:

Year	Political Science	Political Science w/ Legal Studies Concentration	Political Studies w/ International Relations Comparative Government Concentration (*no longer available)
2013	69	20	5
2014	55	23	6
2015	48	31	6
2016	46	32	8
2017	48	36	11

Program Goal 2: The Program of Political Science will offer both curricular and extracurricular options for majors. Based on a recent Qualtrics survey of majors, a majority of students are satisfied with the departmental offerings, as demonstrated below:

Table 2 - Thinking generally about your experience within the political science major and interactions with political science faculty, please tell us how satisfied you are with the following:

#	Question	Very dissatisfied		Dissatisfied		Somewhat dissatisfied		Somewhat satisfied		Satisfied		Very satisfied		Total
5	The variety of POLS electives offered in the Department	0.00%	0	10.71%	3	10.71%	3	32.14%	9	32.14%	9	14.29%	4	28
1	Opportunities for professional development outside of the classroom (e.g., Moot Court, Model UN, trips to court and the capitol.)	0.00%	0	0.00%	0	7.14%	2	7.14%	2	28.57%	8	57.14%	16	28
3	Internship opportunities	0.00%	0	3.57%	1	7.14%	2	28.57%	8	35.71%	10	25.00%	7	28
4	Department clubs/organizations (e.g., Pi Sigma Alpha, Pre-Law, Young Americans for Liberty, College Democrats, College Republicans)	0.00%	0	0.00%	0	7.14%	2	14.29%	4	42.86%	12	35.71%	10	28

Learning Outcome 1: Majors in Political Science will demonstrate knowledge of their discipline at a level comparable to the national mean.

In the Political Science program, faculty administer the national Educational Testing Services (ETS) major field examination each fall and spring semester to all enrolled majors with senior classification. The outcomes of this test allow faculty to directly assess students' performance on Learning Outcome 1 by indicating how well our students demonstrate knowledge of the discipline at a level above or comparable to the national mean. Performance at a level above or comparable to the national mean on the ETS Major Field Examination is defined as Tech students having a mean score no lower than 1.644 standard errors below the national mean, the level at which a difference would become statistically significant at the 0.05 level. By using this standard, the department can regularly assess students' performance on Learning Outcome 1, as seen in Table 3.

Table 3: ETS Major Field- Political Science Knowledge

Student Learning Outcome 1		
Major Field Exam: Political Science Knowledge		
Spring 2018	TTU Data	National Data
Mean	155	152.4
S.D.	7	13.7
N	9	2268
Fall 2017	TTU Data	National Data
Mean	153.2	142
S.D.	14	18
N	7	1065
Spring 2017	TTU Data	National Data
Mean	147	152.2
S.D.	13	13.8
N	19	6691
Fall 2016	TTU Data	National Data
Mean	142	148.3
S.D.	9	12.4
N	29	4,998
Spring 2016	TTU Data	National Data
Mean	142	148.6
S.D.	13	12.3

N	35	3,804
Fall 2015	TTU Data	National Data
Mean	138	148.6
S.D.	9	12.3
N	32	3,804
Spring 2015	TTU Data	National Data
Mean	143	148.7
S.D.	11	12.2
N	39	2,543
Fall 2014	TTU Data	National Data
Mean	142	148.7
S.D.	9	12.2
N	27	2,543
Spring 2014	TTU Data	National Data
Mean	146	148.8
S.D.	9	11.8
N	38	1,143
Fall 2013	TTU Data	National Data
Mean	142	148.8
S.D.	8	11.8
N	30	1,143

Learning Outcome 2: Majors in Political Science will demonstrate critical thinking skills at a level comparable to the national mean.

Performance at a level above or comparable to the national mean on the critical thinking sub-score on the ETS Major Field Examination is defined as TTU students having a mean score on critical thinking no lower than 1.644 standard errors below the national mean, the level at which a difference would become statistically significant at the 0.05 level. By using this standard, the department is able to regularly assess our students' performance on Learning Outcome 2 as seen in Table 4 below.

Table 4: ETS Major Field Critical Thinking

Student Learning Outcome 2 Critical Thinking		
Spring 2018	TTU Data	National Data
Mean	58	60.4
S.D.	11	8.0
Fall 2017	TTU Data	National Data
Mean	53	45
S.D.	13.7	19
Spring 2017	TTU Data	National Data
Mean	43	47.8
S.D.	9	12
Spring 2016	TTU Data	National Data
Mean	44	48.4
S.D.	13	12.6
Fall 2015	TTU Data	National Data
Mean	39	48.4
S.D.	10	12.6
Spring 2015	TTU Data	National Data
Mean	43	48.3
S.D.	11	11.9
Fall 2014	TTU Data	National Data
Mean	41	48.3
S.D.	7	11.9
Spring 2014	TTU Data	National Data
Mean	47	48.4
S.D.	9	11.7
Fall 2013	TTU Data	National Data
Mean	42	48.4
S.D.	9	11.7

Learning Outcome 3: Majors in Political Science will be capable of effective oral and written communication.

Political Science analyzes the results from the National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE) in order to assess student confidence in their abilities to write and speak clearly and effectively. The results of the National Survey of Student Engagement allow us to assess how well our students perform on learning Outcome 3 by determining their capabilities in effectively using written and oral skills. These

results are compared to other TTU students and to our Carnegie peer institutions. Full access to the questions are copyright and trademark protected, but the 2017 TTU

College of Arts and Sciences NSSE questions are linked here:

[https://www.tntech.edu/assets/usermedia/provost/student-](https://www.tntech.edu/assets/usermedia/provost/student-surveys/NSSE17_Screenshot_US_English.pdf)

[surveys/NSSE17_Screenshot_US_English.pdf](https://www.tntech.edu/assets/usermedia/provost/student-surveys/NSSE17_Screenshot_US_English.pdf). Responses are evaluated by TTU

from these questions that address collaborative student research, teamwork, analytical research, research writing, exposure to diversity, faculty interaction, and cultural exposure, among others opportunities in preparation for professional development.

Results from the Senior Questionnaire are compared with data from the National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE). The NSSE was given spring semesters 2014 and 2016 and the senior majors demonstrated gains over their freshmen counterparts in both years and on both the oral and written questions components. The NSSE assesses students' engagement in curricular and extracurricular activities, abilities to work as a team, communicate, and critically think. Relevant values from the NSSE are compared to data from the senior questionnaire. The combination of the NSSE exam as well as the writing and presentation requirements in many of our courses ensure the continued ability to monitor students' performance on Learning Outcomes 3. We are pleased that the NSSE (see Table 5) reflects gains in both 2014 and 2016 among the seniors and that Tech Political Science students score comparably to students in their Carnegie peer institutions.

Table 5: NSSE Data: 2014 and 2016

	2014				2016			
	Oral		Written		Oral		Written	
	Freshmen	Seniors	Freshmen	Seniors	Freshmen	Seniors	Freshmen	Seniors
TTU Sociology	2.00	3.78	3.00	3.11	2.89	3.00	2.67	3.27
TTU Total	2.50	2.80	2.60	2.80	2.60	2.90	2.70	2.80
Carnegie	2.80	3.00	2.90	3.10	2.80	3.00	2.90	3.10

Learning Outcome 4: Majors in Political Science in the Legal Studies Concentration will demonstrate/indicate preparedness for legal study. As is indicated below, 87.5% of responding POLS Majors strongly agree, agree, or somewhat agree that the Legal Studies component of the Political Science curriculum prepared them well for Law School.

Table 6 - Please tell us your level of agreement with the following statement: I feel the Legal Studies component of the political science curriculum prepares me well for law school.

#	Answer	%	Count
5	Strongly Agree	37.50%	6
4	Agree	25.00%	4
3	Somewhat Agree	25.00%	4
2	Somewhat Disagree	6.25%	1
1	Disagree	6.25%	1
0	Strongly Disagree	0.00%	0