

## **Political Science BS: 2019-2020**

### **Definition of Unit:**

#### **Providing Department:**

Political Science BS

#### **Department/Unit Contact:**

Loretta Maxwell

### **Mission/Vision 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. 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. Additionally, these Program and Learning Goals will be clearly stated and defined and will be capable of being measured with a threshold of acceptable measurement indicated by our department and our own indications of our program strength and weakness.

## **Program Goal 1: Sufficient Student Population**

### **Define Goal:**

Program Goal 1: The Program of Political Science will have a sufficient number of students to sustain a strong educational program.

### **Intended Outcomes / Objectives:**

The Program will be involved in recruitment initiatives such as participation in Majors' Fairs faculty engagement through Majors Fairs and Scholarship support.

DRILL DOWN-----

RELATED ITEM LEVEL 1

### **Assessment: Program Goal 1 - Sufficient Student Population**

#### **Frequency of Assessment:**

Annually

#### **Rationale:**

Tracking sheet of the number of political science majors

Tracking the number recruitment activities

RELATED ITEM LEVEL 2

### **Results: Program Goal 1 - Sufficient Student Population**

#### **Results:**

Recruitment activities were changed for Spring 2020 due to COVID.

SOC/POLS will seek to increase student major numbers by participating in all recruitment activities on campus:

Fall 2019: Tech-wide Preview Day on the Quad with swag

Spring 2020: Spring Showcase with swag

Emails to all potential students from the Chair

Emails to all potential students from a current student major

Swag giveaways to current majors for retention

| Year | Total Political Science (Includes Concentrations) | Political Science with Legal Studies Concentration | Political Studies with International Relations & Comparative Government Concentration (*no longer available) |
|------|---|--|--|
| 2015 | 48  | 31   | 6  |
| 2016 | 46  | 32   | 8  |
| 2017 | 48  | 36   | 11   |
| 2018 | 19  | 7  | 3  |
| 2019 | 86  | 44   | 4  |

**Attachments:**

**Program Goal 2: Curricular and Extracurricular Opportunities**

**Define Goal:**

Program Goal 2: The Program of Political Science will offer both curricular and extracurricular options for majors.

**Intended Outcomes / Objectives:**

Students will judge that a sufficient number of curricular and co-curricular activities were offered by the program as reported by our students.

DRILL DOWN-----

RELATED ITEM LEVEL 1

**Assessment: Program Goal 2: Curricular and Extracurricular Opportunities**

**Frequency of Assessment:**

Annually

**Rationale:**

The annual survey of majors is delivered through Qualtrics and assesses student satisfaction with curricular and co-curricular offerings in Sociology.

## RELATED ITEM LEVEL 2

### **Results: Program Goal 2: Curricular and Extracurricular Opportunities**

#### **Results:**

The annual Qualtrics survey of majors (that consistently demonstrates student satisfaction with curricular and co-curricular offerings) was not administered in spring 2020 due to the adverse impact on our students of an F4 tornado followed by the global COVID-19 pandemic. However, the Department continues to offer numerous curricular and co-curricular opportunities, as demonstrated below:

#### **Political Science Curricular Options**

- Competition Course: Model United Nations
- Competition Course: Moot Court
- Credit-Based Internship Placements with Local Agencies
- Presenting Research with Faculty at Conferences
- Conducting Research with Faculty
- Serving as a Teaching Assistant
- QEP (grant based) Service Learning in the Community
- Internships in Washington D.C. and the Tennessee General Assembly
- Internships with Local Law Offices

#### **Political Science Co-Curricular Options**

- Sociology/Criminal Justice Club
- Pre-Law Club
- Pi Sigma Alpha – Political Science Honor Society
- Alpha Kappa Delta (AKD) – Sociology Honor Society
- One World
- Departmental Work Study
- YAL: Young Americans for Liberty
- Model United Nations of TTU
- Non-Traditional Student Organization (NTSO)
- Habitat for Humanity Build

#### **Attachments:**

## **Student Learning Outcome 1: Knowledge of the Discipline**

### **Define Goal:**

**Political Science majors will develop knowledge of their discipline.**

### **Intended Outcomes / Objectives:**

Political Science majors will demonstrate knowledge of their discipline at a level comparable to the national mean on the ETS major field exam.

DRILL DOWN-----

RELATED ITEM LEVEL 1

### **Assessment: Student Learning Outcome 1: Knowledge of the Discipline**

#### **Frequency of Assessment:**

Biannually

#### **Rationale:**

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 ETS exam outlines content questions related to Comparative Government and Politics, International Relations, and United States Government and Politics.

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.

RELATED ITEM LEVEL 2

**Results: Student Learning Outcome 1: Knowledge of the Discipline**

**Results:**

ETS Scores:

|             | TTU Data |      |    | National Data |       |       |
|-------------|----------|------|----|---------------|-------|-------|
|             | Mean     | S.D. | N  | Mean          | S.D.  | N     |
| Spring 2020 | 149.6    | 14.8 | 14 | 152.3         | 13.9  | 4190  |
| Fall 2019   | 140.4    | 17.2 | 8  | 130.9         | 152.2 | 3536  |
| Spring 2019 | 149.6    | 14.3 | 14 | 152.2         | 13.9  | 3536  |
| Fall 2018   | 139      | 1    | 2  | 152.4         | 14    | 2268  |
| Spring 2018 | 155      | 7    | 9  | 152.4         | 13.7  | 226.8 |
| Fall 2017   | 153.2    | 14   | 7  | 142           | 8     | 1065  |
| Spring 2017 | 147      | 13   | 19 | 152           | 13.8  | 6691  |
| Fall 2016   | 142      | 9    | 29 | 148.3         | 12.4  | 4998  |
| Spring 2016 | 142      | 13   | 35 | 148.6         | 12.3  | 3804  |
| Fall 2015   | 138      | 9    | 32 | 148.6         | 12.3  | 3804  |

FY2020

|                                     | N  | TTU Mean | S.D.  | National Mean |
|-------------------------------------|----|----------|-------|---------------|
| US Government and Politics          | 22 | 47.6     | 15.94 | 52.3          |
| Comparative Government and Politics | 22 | 45.7     | 14.52 | 52.5          |
| International Relations             | 22 | 45.8     | 16.87 | 53            |

Gen Ed Pre/Post results from POLS

| Fall 2019     | Pre-test Average | n  | Post-test Average | n  | Increase |
|---------------|------------------|----|-------------------|----|----------|
| POLS 1030-001 | 58.83            | 75 | 77.66             | 70 | 18.83    |
| POLS 1030-002 | 51.2             | 21 | 69.38             | 19 | 18.18    |

**Attachments:**

**Student Learning Outcome 2 : Critical Thinking Skills**

**Define Goal:**

**Majors in Political Science will develop critical thinking skills.**

**Intended Outcomes / Objectives:**

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

DRILL DOWN-----

RELATED ITEM LEVEL 1

**Assessment: Student Learning Outcome 2 : Critical Thinking Skills**

**Frequency of Assessment:**

Biannually

**Rationale:**

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 ETS exam measures Analytical and Critical Thinking, Methodology, and Political Thought.

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.

RELATED ITEM LEVEL 2

**Results: Student Learning Outcome 2: Critical Thinking Skills**

**Results:**

|             |   |                     |
|-------------|---|---------------------|
| Spring 2020 | TTU Data                                | National Data       |
| Mean        | *No Data Received                       |                     |
| S.D.        |   |                     |
| Fall 2019   | TTU Data                                | National Data       |
| Mean        | *No Data Received                       |                     |
| S.D.        |   |                     |
| Spring 2019 | TTU Data                                | National Data       |
| Mean        |   |                     |
| S.D.        |   |                     |
| Fall 2018   | TTU Data                                | National Data       |
| Mean        | *Two Students Tested                    |                     |
| S.D.        | *Sub-scores not reported when less than | five students test. |
| Spring 2018 | TTU Data                                | National Data       |
| Mean        | 61                                      | 60.4                |
| S.D.        | 9                                       | 8                   |
| Fall 2017   | TTU Data                                | National Data       |
| Mean        | 53                                      | 45                  |
| S.D.        | 13.7                                    | 19                  |
| Spring 2017 | TTU Data                                | National Data       |
| Mean        | 58                                      | 60.4                |
| S.D.        | 11                                      | 8                   |
| Fall 2016   | 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                |

**Attachments:**

Learning Outcome 2 Assessment Tool ETS Exam.pdf

**Student Learning Outcome 3: Effective Oral and Written Communication****Define Goal:**

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

**Intended Outcomes / Objectives:**

Students will report confidence in their abilities to write and speak clearly and effectively as measured by the National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE).

DRILL DOWN-----

RELATED ITEM LEVEL 1

**Assessment: Student Learning Outcome 3: Effective Oral and Written Communication****Frequency of Assessment:**

Semiannually

**Rationale:**

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 2019 TTU College of Arts and Sciences NSSE data is linked here:

[https://www.tntech.edu/assessment/pdf/NSSE19\\_Arts\\_and\\_Humanities.pdf](https://www.tntech.edu/assessment/pdf/NSSE19_Arts_and_Humanities.pdf).

The threshold of acceptability is improvement from the freshman year to the senior year in critical thinking skills on the NSSE data, and this threshold was met. *The continuous improvement strategy for Learning Outcome 3 is that all of the full-time POLS faculty require written presentations and to retain this requirement among all full-time POLS faculty.*

RELATED ITEM LEVEL 2

**Results: Student Learning Outcome 3: Effective Oral and Written Communication**

**Results:**

|                       | 2016     |         |          |         | 2019     |         |          |         |
|-----------------------|----------|---------|----------|---------|----------|---------|----------|---------|
|                       | Oral     |         | Written  |         | Oral     |         | Written  |         |
|                       | Freshmen | Seniors | Freshmen | Seniors | Freshmen | Seniors | Freshmen | Seniors |
| TTU Political Science | 2.89     | 3.00    | 2.67     | 3.27    | 2.75     | 4.00    | 2.75     | 4.00    |
| TTU Total             | 2.60     | 2.90    | 2.70     | 2.80    | 2.64     | 2.91    | 2.58     | 2.88    |
| Carnegie              | 2.80     | 3.00    | 2.90     | 3.10    | 2.60     | 2.90    | 2.80     | 3.10    |

**Attachments:**

**Student Learning Outcome 4: Legal Studies Concentration**

**Define Goal:**

Majors in Political Science in the Legal Studies Concentration be prepared for legal study.

**Intended Outcomes / Objectives:**

Majors in Political Science in the Legal Studies Concentration will indicate preparedness for legal study.

DRILL DOWN-----

#### RELATED ITEM LEVEL 1

### **Assessment: Student Learning Outcome 4: Legal Studies Concentration**

#### **Frequency of Assessment:**

Annually

#### **Rationale:**

Qualtrics survey of graduates

Individual Exit Interviews

The threshold of acceptability for this learning outcome is 80% of POLS-LS majors demonstrating/indicating preparedness so this is a strength for 2019-2020.

#### RELATED ITEM LEVEL 2

### **Results: Student Learning Outcome 4: Legal Studies Concentration**

#### **Results:**

In previous years, students were administered a Qualtrics survey. That was not given in 2019-2020 due to the combined student challenges with a regional F4 tornado and a mid-semester conversion to on-line courses due to the COVID-19 global pandemic. However, individual Exit Interviews were given to four students who took courses in the Legal Studies concentration and 100% of them indicated they felt prepared for legal study. Of these students, all four had also competed in the POLS Moot Court competition course that was a QEP-grant recipient course in 2019. One of these majors is currently admitted to Vanderbilt Law School and one is currently applying to various law schools; two of the above students are saving up money for future law school admission.

#### **Attachments:**