A. ACTIONS TAKEN TO IMPROVE STUDENT LEARNING
What actions did you take in 2012-2013, based on previous assessment findings, to improve student learning in your program? (Refer back to plans indicated in “Response to Assessment Findings” in 2011-2012 Assessment Report.)

Effective Fall 2012, all majors are required to complete a minor, chosen to complement and enhance their major.

Acquired funds in fall, 2013, to provide stipends to majors doing internships; this was based on student exit interviews in which seniors noted the need to offset lost wages so as to expand working student access to internships opportunities.

B. STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES ASSESSED AND EXAMINED
#1 Graduates will be effective writers.
#2 Graduates will be able to produce analyses of political issues, including domestic and international affairs

C. METHODS FOR COLLECTING DATA
Introductory and upper division classes with research paper requirements were sampled, including PLS 2220 International Politics and PLS 4860 Model United Nations.

Marker questions were employed in our core course, PLS 2000, Political Life.

D. ASSESSMENT MEASURES
• Key assessments/assignments/student work examined to directly assess the Program Level Student Learning Outcomes listed above? Students papers in PLS 2220 analyzed President Kennedy’s decision and policy making processes during the Cuban Missile Crisis, writing reviews of THIRTEEN DAYS or ESSENCE OF DECISION.

Student papers in PLS 4860 Model United Nations examined Italy’s foreign policy on a range of issues and problems before the U.N.

Papers were assessed with rubrics, including the ability to evaluate arguments, examine evidence critically, and formulate a defend conclusions.

• What, if any, indirect assessments (e.g. exit survey, alumni survey, focus groups, etc.) did you use to indirectly assess the Program Level Student Learning Outcomes listed above?

- exit interviews with seniors applying to graduate
- interviews with employers of alumni
- interviews with alumni
E. SIGNIFICANT FINDINGS

This was the first year that an introductory political science class was assessed in terms of student writing. Wide variation in student preparation for analytical writing was evident. Students who submitted a revised draft improved their work significantly.

The senior level class papers provided strong evidence of solid research, analysis and writing. These papers were the product of numerous revisions and drafts.

F. DISCUSSION OF RESULTS

Results were reported to department faculty. Recommendation for requiring at least two drafts plus one outline of writing requirements was supported by faculty, most of whom are already employing this method to enhance student writing and analytical and critical thinking. Faculty noted the connection to the integrated writing requirement as being an effective tool to improve student writing.

G. ACTIONS PLANNED TO IMPROVE STUDENT LEARNING

This assessment process has highlighted the issue of requiring writing earlier and more frequently in PLS 2000, 2120 and 2220. This discussion is ongoing, including the related issues of class size, and availability of graduate assistants.