



## Program Assessment Report (PAR)

**Political Science (PLS) Baccalaureate Degree**

**REPORT PREPARED by: Green, December**

**ACADEMIC YEAR COVERED BY THIS REPORT: [AcademicYear]**

### **I. PROGRAM LEARNING OUTCOMES**

Graduates will be able to... analyze and evaluate local, national, or global political, legal, or social issues (LO for 2019-20). The following learning outcomes have been or will be assessed other years Graduates will be able to... communicate effectively in writing. demonstrate an understanding of the value of diversity and multicultural competence in today's global environment. apply analytical tools to analyze problems relevant to politics, geography, the public sector, or the nonprofit sector.

### **II. PROCEDURES USED FOR ASSESSMENT**

#### **A. Direct Assessment**

Outcome Assessed for 2019-20 Graduates will be able to analyze and evaluate local, national, or global political, legal, or social issues. The SPIA Assessment Committee assessed research papers collected at the end of the Fall 2019 semester from all the PLS majors in PLS 4720, an upper-level IW course. The course instructor collected the data and members of the SPIA Assessment Committee conducted the analysis. We used a rubric drawn from the AAUC's Critical Thinking rubric.\* 1) "States an issue or problem clearly and describe it comprehensively, delivering relevant information necessary for understanding" (AS#1). 2) "Draws information from source(s) with enough interpretation/evaluation to develop a comprehensive analysis or synthesis" (AS#2). \*Rhodes, Terrel. "Assessing Outcomes and Improving Achievement Tips and Tools for Using Rubrics." Washington, DC Association of American Colleges and Universities, 2010.

#### **B. Scoring of Student Work**

The rubric employed the following assessment strategies (drawn from the AAUC's Critical Thinking rubric\*) 1) "State an issue or problem clearly and describe it comprehensively, delivering relevant information necessary for understanding" (AS#1). 2) "Draw information from source(s) with enough interpretation/evaluation to develop a comprehensive analysis or synthesis" (AS#2). Members of the SPIA Assessment Committee did the scoring. \*Rhodes, Terrel. "Assessing Outcomes and Improving Achievement Tips and Tools for Using Rubrics." Washington, DC Association of American Colleges and Universities, 2010.

### **C. Indirect Assessment**

Outcome Assessed for 2019-20 Graduates will be able to analyze and evaluate local, national, or global political, legal, or social issues. Assessment Strategy #3 The instructor sent a Qualtrics survey to all students in PLS 4720 at the end of the Fall 2019 semester, on the following statement, "This course helped me think critically to analyze and evaluate political, legal, or social issues at the local, national, or global level" (AS#3). Please note that there was a design error in the survey which resulted in a combined result between GEO, PLS, and URS majors. We are unable to sort by major. We won't make that mistake again. The SPIA Assessment Committee also sent out a general exit survey to graduating seniors. It is attached to the last page of this report, along with a summary of the responses.

### **III. ASSESSMENT RESULTS/INFORMATION:**

"State an issue or problem clearly and describe it comprehensively, delivering relevant information necessary for understanding" (AS#1). "Draw information from source(s) with enough interpretation/evaluation to develop a comprehensive analysis or synthesis" (AS#2). "This course helped me think critically to analyze and evaluate political, legal, or social issues at the local, national, or global level" (AS#3).

100% of students achieved AS #1. 54% of students achieved AS #2. 100% of students agreed or strongly agreed with AS #3. However, only 8% of the class responded to the survey.

PLS majors are graduating with developed critical thinking skills to analyze and evaluate local, national, or global political, legal, or social issues. PLS majors are able to state an issue, utilize information, and describe it comprehensively, but we need to do more to help students learn how to interpret and evaluate information in order to develop a comprehensive analysis. Of those who responded, PLS majors unanimously reported that they are equipped to think

critically to analyze and evaluate information.

#### **IV. ACTIONS TO IMPROVE STUDENT LEARNING**

The SPIA Assessment Committee will present the findings of the report, particularly the area that needs improvement, to the PLS faculty at our next department meeting. We will discuss ways in which we can help students interpret and evaluate data, such as inviting research librarians to conduct workshops in our classes. This was our first year assessing this LO, so it is impossible to compare to previous years.

#### **V. SUPPORTING DOCUMENTS**

Additional documentation, when provided, is stored in the internal Academic Program Assessment of Student Learning SharePoint site.