Institutional Research: Academic Learning Compacts

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2016

Academic Learning Compact : Political Science [Effective 2016]

University of South Florida St. Petersburg.

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Academic Learning Compacts
POLITICAL SCIENCE
Academic Year: Fall 2016 & Spring 2017

Due: May 19, 2017

Academic Program-linked College Mission-based Goals/Objectives

In the matrix on the following page, please place an X in the grid that identifies the degree program goals and objectives that align with the institutional mission-based goals/objectives and the College based goals/objectives. These goals/objectives need to be documented in your ALC data.

UNIVERSITY OF SOUTH FLORIDA ST. PETERSBURG GOALS & OBJECTIVES		COLLEGE OF ARTS & SCIENCES GOALS & OBJECTIVES	UNDERGRADUATE PROGRAMS											
			Anthropology	Biology	Criminology	Literature & Writing	Environmental Science (BA)	Graphic Design	Political Science	Psychology	History	I.S.S.	journalism (BA)	World Languages
Academic Performance	Use sustained evidence of SLO's and student achievement for continuous improvement	Initiate and expand graduate programs and develop formal academic ties to other graduate programs within the USF system							X					
	Offer certificate, undergraduate and graduate programs that meet regional needs								X					
	Implement and support information and instructional technologies that facilitate effective pedagogies								X					
	Enhance programs that specifically support academic excellence								X					
	Increase student awareness of participating in a global society								X					
Student Engagement	Create a freshman experience that enables students to thrive and move successfully through to graduation	Our students will have critical skills and a broad outlook that will make them engaged and productive citizens Incorporate civic engagement, service learning, and experiential learning into their classes, when appropriate												
	Foster institutional pride and strengthen connections within the campus community								X					
	Enhance opportunities for increased student involvement in curricular and co-curricular activities								X					
Diversity & Inclusion	Insure an inclusive community where differences are respected and valued	Cultivate a vigorous liberal arts culture by recruiting talented diverse students, maintaining small class sizes, and mentoring those students we have. Encourage free discussion, foster critical thinking, demand that our students write, and work across disciplines							X					
	Attract and retain a diverse student population								X					
	Increase the diversity of faculty and staff								X					
Research & Creative Activities	Create a vibrant culture of faculty research and creative scholarship	Make significant and meaningful contributions to ongoing dialogues in our academic fields. We expect our undergraduate and graduate students to engage in research in collaboration with faculty							X					
	Promote and support undergraduate research as a meaningful aspect of campus life								X					
	Enhance and support research and scholarly collaborations with community partners								X					

Signature Page for Academic Program

Academic Learning Compact: Fall 2016- Spring 2017
"... to ensure student achievement in undergraduate and graduate degree programs ..."

Academic Program: Political Science

Chair/Coordinator: Thomas Smith   **Date**: May 19, 2017

<u>Summary Statement – Academic Program Performance in Fall 2016- Spring 2017</u>
Provide a summary statement about academic program performance over the previous year including high points and low points

This academic year the Political Science program offered multiple courses in each of the major sub-fields of the discipline: Political Theory, American Politics, International Relations, Comparative Politics, and Public Law. Our efforts were strengthened by the addition of a new full-time tenure-track Assistant Professor of International Relations as well as a new full-time Visiting Assistant Professor of American Politics. These much-needed additions to our faculty were instrumental in developing new courses and improving existing ones.

We are pleased that we exceeded our goals in all of the assessment areas with the exception of multiculturalism/diversity. We undertook a formal program review (including external assessment) this year. As part of the program review our faculty focused closely on student learning outcomes and needed improvements to the program, particularly with regard to internships and other practical and research experiences for students. We inducted 10 new members into the Pi Sigma Alpha Political Science Honors Society and our students participated in the Women's Empowerment Club, the Pre-Law Society, and Moot Court. We provided new and substantial internships for our students. Students continue to distinguish themselves with awards and scholarly recognition, such as nomination for membership in the Tampa Bay Council on Foreign Relations. We were pleased to see our graduates offered admission and scholarships to an array of graduate programs and law schools again this year.

There is a great deal of untapped potential in the program and among our students. A 2011 study by the Center on Education and the Workforce at Georgetown University found that political science is the largest of the social sciences by number of graduates, and that graduates in the field have the third highest median earnings of all social science graduates, after statistics and economics. Working with the College and the University we aim to launch marketing and other public outreach initiatives to help meet this robust student interest and market demand.

<u>Summary Statement – Impact of Changes Made in Fall 2016- Spring 2017</u>

Provide a summary statement about the changes that were made in your program resulting from the ALC's in the preceding Academic Year.
Include both the high points and low points

We revised and updated the core readings and assignments used in key courses such as POS 2014 American National Government, POS 4614 U.S. Constitutional Law and POT 3003 Introduction to Political Theory. We devoted significant effort to enhancing sustained partnerships with local and national organizations, expanded the internship options available to students in POS 4941 Fieldwork, and deepened our collaboration with a variety of local agencies to create volunteer opportunities for students in POS 3931 Practical Politics. We reinforced all of our courses to ensure that students develop a robust understanding of diversity. These are all items that we committed to doing based on the findings of previous ALCs.

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Academic Program: Political Science

Responsible Person: Thomas Smith

Mission of Academic Program (include URL):
Committed to the liberal arts tradition of intellectual curiosity and diversity, the Political Science program at the University of South Florida St. Petersburg offers students a rigorous program of study that prepares them for successful careers in a rapidly globalizing world. Students in the program examine basic questions of political science, including how nations struggle over power and wealth, how political communities reconcile claims of liberty, authority, and justice, and how governments and societies produce the laws and policies that influence our lives. Students choose courses from the major subfields of American politics, international relations and comparative politics, political theory and public law. Students develop critical analytical skills that allow them to understand and to explain political problems and issues at the local, state, national, and international levels. The USFSP program is unique in its focus on human rights and civil rights across the curriculum, as well as its commitment to civic engagement and experiential learning. A degree in political science will prepare students for positions in public service and the private sector, for law school, and for graduate work in political science, international relations, public administration, and related disciplines.
http://www.usfsp.edu/hp/politicalscience.htm

List Program Goal(s) / Objective(s):

ALCs must address student learning in four areas: 1. Content/Discipline Skills; 2. Communication Skills; Critical Thinking Skills; and 4. Civic Engagement.

Academic Program: Political Science

Person Responsible: Thomas Smith

ALC GOALS ESTABLISHED FOR DATA COLLECTION: Fall 2016 & Spring 2017

1. Content / Discipline Skills:

Learning Outcomes	Means of Assessment	Criteria for Success	Findings	Plan for Use of Findings Fall 2017 & Spring 2018
Demonstrate an understanding of American political institutions, culture and behavior.	In the final examination for POS 2041 (American National Government), students will evaluate American political institutions, culture, and behavior.	80 percent of students will successfully identify three distinct differences between American political institutions and behavior. Corroborating Evidence (ALC Requirement Only): 80 percent of students will score at least 70 percent and above on a final examination in POS 2041(American National Government).	In Fall 2016 and Spring 2017, 100 percent of students in POS 2041 scored at least a 70 percent on the final examination. In Summer 2016, 92 percent of students who took the final exam scored at least a 70 percent.	While we surpassed our content and disciplinary skills goals, we will further develop the civic engagement component of the class as a way to reinforce the "in-class" SLOs. The online version of the class received Quality Matters certification in July 2016. The lectures for that class will be updated and re-recorded in Fall 2017 to bring the course up to date.

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2. Communication Skills:

Learning Outcomes	Means of Assessment	Criteria for Success	Findings	Plan for Use of Findings Fall 2017 & Spring 2018
Demonstrate written communication skills through written assignments	Students must complete writing assignments in two different upper-level political science courses.	The political science department maintains a portfolio of samples of outstanding, average and unsatisfactory papers written for upper-level political science courses (student identification is redacted). These papers serve as examples for students as well as a basis for measuring performance. At least 75 percent of papers will be average to outstanding. Corroborating Evidence (ALC Requirement Only): At least 80 percent of students will score at least 70 percent on the major writing assignment or written portion of the final examination in two upper-level political science courses	During Fall 2016, 100 percent of students received at least a 70 percent on the 10-page writing assignment in POS 4614 – Constitutional Law I. The paper required critical thinking, legal reasoning, and creative us of legal precedents. During Spring 2017 97 percent of students earned at least a 70 percent on the 7-8 page essay assignment in POT 4064 – Contemporary Political Thought. The assignment focused on effective writing and compelling arguments.	In the Constitutional Law class the professor introduced new hypothetical case scenarios and spent more time prepping students for the assignment. In the Political Theory class most of the papers were good but not great. While writing and citation format have improved over past years (these have been the subject of past ALCs), the arguments themselves are often lacking. To try to improve on this score, the professor will distribute a "How to make an argument" outline. The idea is to help students with the logic rather than the polemics of their arguments.

3. Critical Thinking Skills:

Learning Outcomes	Means of Assessment	Criteria for Success	Findings	Plan for Use of Findings Fall 2017 & Spring 2018

| Demonstrate ability to understand and articulate the philosophical, legal and political factors influencing the government and politics of nations | Students will write essays in POT 4064 (Contemporary Political Theory) in which they critically engage competing political and/or legal philosophies | Criteria for Success: At least 80 percent of students will successfully explicate the philosophies of two different theorists concerning issues of politics and/or law. Corroborating Evidence (ALC Requirement Only): At least 80 percent of students will score at least 70 percent on the final examination in POT 4064 (Contemporary Political Theory). | In Spring 2017 91 percent (29/32) of students in POT 4064 earned at least a 70 percent on the final exam in POT 4064. | Many of the themes in the essays were left underdeveloped. To try to remedy this, the instructor will work on "anchoring" essay length and complexity and also talk about the way to build a coherent argument. |

4. Civic Engagement (optional):

Learning Outcomes	Means of Assessment	Criteria for Success	Findings	Plan for Use of Findings Fall 2017 & Spring 2018
Relate theoretical knowledge with practical experience by engaging in internships in the student's area of interest. Internships may be served in local, state, and federal governments; the legal field, campaigns or public service, or in international or non-governmental organizations.	Students must complete either POS 4941 -- Fieldwork, or POS 3931 -- Practical Politics, or complete a civic engagement project in another class (e.g., Law and Politics, American National Government, or the Road to the White House).	At least 75 percent of students will receive a positive evaluation from the sponsoring agency or the supervising faculty member based on a standard set of questions. Corroborating Evidence (ALC Requirement Only): Students will prepare a written summary of their internship or civic engagement project.	Between Summer 2016 and Spring 2017 the political science program oversaw only 3 internships. All students receipted positive evaluations, but the number of internships was very low. Several classes did entail assignments related to civic engagement.	We intend to expand the number of internships and other hands-on learning and research experiences offered to our students. A message will be sent to all political science majors outlining possibilities and encouraging them to participate. These learning experiences will become an integral part of the program, possibly serving as a capstone option.

5. Multiculturalism / Diversity

Goals/Objectives	Means of Assessment/ Corroborating Evidence*	Criteria for Success	Findings	Plan for Use of Findings Fall 2017 & Spring 2018
Demonstrate an understanding of the diversity of peoples and cultures and the impact of this diversity in global and/or domestic politics.	At least 80 percent of students will produce compelling arguments exploring both sides of major debates in global politics. Corroborating Evidence (ALC	At least 80 percent of students will produce compelling arguments exploring both sides of major debates in global politics. Corroborating Evidence (ALC	As for CPO 2002, in Fall 2016, 88 percent of students scored 80 percent or higher on the two debate assignments. In	We fell short of our goals in this area. To enhance students' abilities to articulate arguments from multiple viewpoints, the instructor will develop an in-class

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Demonstrate an understanding of gender, race/ethnicity, sexual orientation and, as appropriate, other forms of diversity in domestic society in relation to American politics and government	Requirement Only): At least 80 percent of students will score at least 80 percent (average) on two debate papers in CPO 2002 (Introduction to Comparative Politics). Students will write debate papers in CPO 2002 (Introduction to Comparative Politics) in which they present diverse viewpoints on contemporary global crises and events.	Requirement Only): At least 80 percent of students will score at least 80 percent (average) on two debate papers in CPO 2002 (Introduction to Comparative Politics).	Spring 2017, 66 percent of students scored 80 percent of higher on the assignments.	activity in which students will work in small groups to brainstorm pro and con arguments for a contentious proposition. They will then present arguments to the class and we will workshop how these ideas could be developed or improved. The assignment will be tied to the subject matter. For example, during the lecture on nationalism, the instructor plans an exercise linked to debates about the European Union, asking students to consider pro- and anti-EU positions.

Academic Program: Political Science

Person Responsible:

ALC GOALS ESTABLISHED FOR DATA COLLECTION: <mark>Fall 2017 & Spring 2018</mark>

1. Content / Discipline Skills:

Learning Outcomes	Means of Assessment	Criteria for Success	Findings	Plan for Use of Findings Fall 2018 & Spring 2019

2. Communication Skills:

Learning Outcomes	Means of Assessment	Criteria for Success	Findings	Plan for Use of Findings Fall 2018 & Spring 2019

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3. Critical Thinking Skills:

Learning Outcomes	Means of Assessment	Criteria for Success	Findings	Plan for Use of Findings Fall 2018 & Spring 2019

4. Civic Engagement (optional):

Learning Outcomes	Means of Assessment	Criteria for Success	Findings	Plan for Use of Findings Fall 2018 & Spring 2019

5. Multiculturalism / Diversity

Goals/Objectives	Means of Assessment/ Corroborating Evidence*	Criteria for Success	Findings	Plan for Use of Findings Fall 2018 & Spring 2019

*Please include multiple assessments. For example: students perform well on classroom assignments, norm-referenced tests/surveys, and they get accepted to graduate school or are employed.