Program Information:

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<th>Program Assessed</th>
<th>M.A. and Ph.D. Programs</th>
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<td>Department</td>
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<tr>
<td>College</td>
<td>Liberal Arts</td>
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<td>Department Chair</td>
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<td>Date Submitted</td>
<td>1-11-17</td>
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Contact Person for This Report

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Please attach a narrative (not to exceed 4 pages, excluding appendices) addressing the following:

- What are the student learning outcomes? Please provide a numbered list.
- Which learning outcomes were assessed?
- How were they assessed? (Programs must use at least one direct assessment of student learning.)
- Undergraduate programs should assess at least one University Undergraduate Learning Outcome (UULO) each year, which may or may not overlap with a program learning outcome.
- Graduate programs should assess at least one outcome related to one of the following graduate level requirements each year:
  - student engagement in research, scholarship, creative expression and/or appropriate high-level professional practice.
  - activities requiring originality, critical analysis and expertise.
  - the development of extensive knowledge in the field under study.
- What was learned from the assessment results?
- How did the program respond to what was learned?
What are the student learning outcomes? Please provide a numbered list

Upon completion of the M.A. or Ph.D. program in Political Science, students should be able to:

1. Use advanced critical reasoning skills for problem solving.

2. Write persuasively and use evidence in order to develop, support and defend an argument.

3. Acquire knowledge of appropriate social science research methods to engage in high quality, original scholarship.

4. Develop knowledge of advanced theories and methods in the major fields of Political Science.

5. Acquire knowledge and skills to conduct research that leads to presentation of papers at scholarly meetings or publication in peer-reviewed outlets.

6. To prepare students for job opportunities in higher education and the private sector

Which learning outcomes were assessed?

We assess a limited number of outcomes (as this reflects best practice, based on the guidance provided by assessment staff). Consistent with last year, we assessed outcomes 3-5.

How were they assessed?

As discussed in our Assessment Plan, we employ two assessment measures. First, we surveyed faculty members who served on completed M.A. and Ph.D. committee during the evaluation period. Faculty members were asked to rate whether student theses “demonstrat[ed] originality and knowledge of advanced theories and methods,” using a 1-5 scale (1 = unsatisfactory; 2 = needs improvement; 3 = satisfactory; 4 = above average; 5 = outstanding/excellent). The standard we employ is that the mean rate from faculty is “3” or higher.
The second measure is the percentage of MA and Ph.D. students who submitted papers for presentation at regional or national meeting of a scholarly association. We expect at least 50% of students to be successful in their submissions. (We also collected data on student submissions to peer-reviewed publication outlets; however, our sample size was small during the evaluation period).

What was learned from the assessment results?

Analysis of Faculty Committee Members Views of M.A. and Ph.D. Theses

During 2016, a total of 9 students passed their comprehensive exams and advanced to doctoral candidacy, while 7 other students were at various stages in the doctoral work (with several nearing completion). However, no Ph.D. students completed their degree during the evaluation period. The analysis is therefore limited to analysis of one completed MA thesis in 2016 (the MA program enrolls fewer students given the department’s emphasis on the Ph.D. program). The faculty mean evaluation score for the MA thesis was 4.5/5. Some faculty members were particularly impressed with the student’s knowledge and application of advanced quantitative methods. The performance of the student is consistent with outcomes #3 and #4.

Analysis of Scholarly Conference Papers submitted by Doctoral Students

During the year, a total of 11 doctoral students submitted 15 paper proposals for presentations at scholarly conferences. The vast majority of the proposals were single authored, while a few were coauthored with other doctoral students or with a faculty member. The conferences included the American Political Science Association, the premier meeting of the discipline, and the International Studies Association, a high profile IR meeting with approximately 5,000 participants. Graduate students also proposed papers to the Mid-West Political Science Association, which is generally viewed as the second-best general meeting in Political Science, and other quality regional conferences (International Studies Association-West, Southwest Political Science Association, and the Pacific Coast Council on Latin American Studies). In 2016, all of the papers were accepted for conference presentation – a very good achievement, and consistent with learning outcome #5 of the program.

As in prior years, students (and graduates) were successful in publishing articles and book manuscripts. For example, in 2016, a recent graduate (Ph.D., 2014) had a single-authored, refereed book accepted with Routledge (forthcoming, April 2017). The same student also published a coauthored, refereed book with Palgrave (2016). Likewise, a Ph.D. student had a coauthored article accepted in Party Politics, a selective outlet that has very good impact (impact factor = 1.27), while another student contributed a coauthored book chapter in a volume with Routledge (2016) and published a coauthored,
A refereed journal article in *Politics and Governance*. Again, this is suggestive that we are meeting the objectives associated with outcome #5.

**Response of the Program**

The department only recently finished with collection of the assessment data (through December 2016). As a result, the review and response from faculty is still in-process. Provisionally, the findings suggest that we are moving the right direction. As a relatively new program, we are pleased that all of our Ph.D. graduates are employed in academic or related professional fields, including in the U.S. Department of State. We look forward to having additional data from completed Ph.D. theses to evaluate for the 2017 report.

This report will be forwarded to the Graduate Studies Committee and faculty for review and discussion.