Political Science Program Assessment Plan—Year One

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I. Mission of Program

The Political Science Program at Trinity Washington University provides exposure to the study of the discipline of political science through a combination of varied classroom and skills based experiences that take advantage of the location of the University in the nation’s capital. The Political Science Curriculum is structured to guide students in developing their capacities as civic participants and leaders who can act on their faith and values within the communities in which they live and work.

The program seeks to prepare students through exposure to courses in several sub-fields and pedagogical approaches. Students majoring in political science must take courses in each of the following areas; American Politics, Comparative Politics, International Relations, Values Based Courses; Research Seminars, and internship/fieldwork course selections. Many of these courses are interdisciplinary in part while maintaining integrity as political science classes. A number of the courses offer direct experiential learning opportunities in political settings or skills based assignments designed to prepare students for employment.

Through its General Education Curriculum offerings, the program faculty encourage student awareness of the responsibilities of citizenship both here and abroad and empower them with knowledge of the operations of the political process and their place in it. The Political Science Program supports the International Affairs major and the Women’s Studies Minor as well.

The Political Science Program curricular requirements for the major are designed to prepare graduates for graduate level study including political science, international relations, public policy and administration and law school. Students are also provided with skills and knowledge for various careers in public service such as lobbying and advocacy, political campaign work, survey and other political research positions, and federal agency and congressional staff work.

The Political Science Program mission, goals, and individual objectives embrace and seek to actualize the overall Trinity institutional mission of commitment to the education of women in the liberal arts integrated with professional preparation and preparation for civic life. Moreover, Political Science Program course goals integrate the goals as set forth in the CAS Gen Ed Curriculum—most directly Goal 7—to develop capacities for responsible citizenship and leadership in diverse communities.

II. Political Science Goals and Objectives

**Goal 1: Students will develop an understanding of the operation and outcomes of U.S. and international political systems**

Objectives

1.1 Students will demonstrate understanding of inputs to the

political system (parties, campaigns, and elections) in the U.S. and international community.

1.2 Students will demonstrate understanding of legislative, executive, and judicial branch operations

1.3 Students will demonstrate understanding of out-puts to the political system (policymaking)

1.4 Students will demonstrate understanding of behavioral

motivations of various political system participants in the U.S.

and internationally.

Data Sources POLS 101,199, 231

Assessment Instruments: Syllabi, Pre and Post Test Results,

Tests, Written Assignments, Rubrics

**Goal 2: Students will develop the capacity to articulate different perspectives or positions on political issues both verbally and in writing**

Objectives

2.1 Students will be able to demonstrate the ability to prepare

oral presentations and written expositions highlighting compteing positions on topical issues—(talking points)

Data Sources: POLS 199, 201,211

Assessment Instruments:

Oral and written assignments, syllabi, test results, embedded

Assessments, Rubrics, observation and written evaluation

2.2 Students will be able to demonstrate the ability to identify a central thesis of an author

2.3 Students will be able to present evidence/logic in support of an argument

2.4 Students will be able to evaluate evidence presented in support of an argument

2.5 Students will be able to identify possible critiques of the central thesis and /or evidence

2.6 Students will be able to identify key stakeholders and how their interests affect their positions on topical issues

2.7 Students will be able to integrate information and evidence to reach a personal conclusion based on items 2.1 through 2.6.

Data Sources: POLS 199, 313, 431

Assessment Instruments:

Oral and written assignments, syllabi, test results, embedded

Assessments, Rubrics

**Goal 3: Students will develop leadership skills and become acquainted with information that will allow them to participate effectively in citizenship roles in their civic and political communities through experiential and hands-on learning exercises**

3.1 Students will demonstrate learning from out- of -class participation units, internships, and fieldwork assignments

Data Sources:

POLS 101, 491

Assessment Instruments:

Written Assignments, Syllabi, Internship Contracts

3.2 Students will demonstrate their understanding of different

leadership skills and their implications as well as their own

leadership styles

Data Source: POLS 277

Assessment Instruments:

Written Assignments, Student Surveys,Tests

3.3 Students will demonstrate the ability to design all aspects of a survey, to evaluate public opinion polls to determine their validity and reliability, and to understand the importance of being aware of the quality of data that they use to make personal and political decisions

Data Source POLS 367

Assessment Instruments: Embedded Assignments put together to create a portfolio, pre and post testing and observation of a student during class presentation and written evaluation

3.4 Students will participate in role-playing exercises designed to develop leadership skills such as the ability to debate, to frame persuasive issue positions, and to prepare issue briefing papers or talking points

Data Source POLS 201, 211, 277, 213, 431

Assessment Instruments: Written Assignments,

Oral Debates Evaluated by Rubrics, observation of students during class presentations accompanied by written evaluation

**Goal 4: Students will develop an understanding of rights, responsibilities, and protections afforded by the U.S. Constitutional System**

Objectives

4.1 Students will be able to identify rights afforded by the Bill of Rights and the 14th, 15th, amendments to the Constitution

4.2 Students will be able to cite and explain Supreme Court precedents related to the 1st amendment to the U.S. Constitution and the Equal Protections Clause of the 14th Amendment

4.3 Students will be able to identify and explain Supreme Court tests to determine the constitutionality of alleged discrimination

based on race and gender

Data Sources: POLS 201, 211

Assessment Instruments: Syllabi, Pre and Post Test Results,

Tests, Written Assignments, Rubrics

**Goal 5: Students will develop an understanding of how societal differences based on race, gender, ethnicity, religion, and sexual orientation within the U.S. and other nations impact the operations and policy outcomes of political systems and how the nature of those political systems impacts women and minorities**

Objectives

5.1 Students will demonstrate an understanding of how diverse constituencies have been able to impact election and policy-making outcomes

5.2 Students will demonstrate an understanding of how key federal statutes and Supreme Court opinions protect against discrimination based on gender, race, religion, ethnicity, and sexual orientation

5.3 Students will demonstrate an understanding of how previously marginalized groups (African-Americans, women, religious minorities) have become empowered through mass movements, electoral politics, and litigation

Data Sources: POLS 201,211,313

Assessment Instruments: Assessment Instruments: Syllabi, Pre and Post Test Results,

Tests, Written Assignments, Rubrics

III. Data Collection Plan for Measuring Achievement of Program Objectives

--Time Frame for Data Collection---Fall 2015 and Spring 2016

--Courses that will be evaluated: POLS 101—Gen Ed Civic Knowledge/Major Requirement/ POLS 199 Honors Class/POLS 201, 211, 213, 231(Knowledge and Inquiry/Major Requirement) POLS 277, (Leadership/Gen Ed/Major Requirement), POLS 313 Capstone Applicant/Major/Requirement, POLS 365,367 (Field Work) 431 Seminar

---See Item II. For Assessment Instruments by Individual

Objectives