

UW Colleges Assessment Planning and Reporting Form
2005-2006

Email your reports to SAC@uwc.edu

Department	POLITICAL SCIENCE
Assessment Coordinator(s)	RICHARD FLANNERY

NOTE: Please attach relevant supporting information used to complete the Report Summary Sheet.

PART 1: Assessment of General Education Outcomes

Section 1: Identify the Proficiencies and Performance Indicators Assessed

- ❖ at the **Planning** stage, mark the performance indicators to be assessed in the left hand column below
- ❖ at the **Reporting** stage, report the numbers of students who did not meet, met, or exceeded expectations

Proficiency	Performance Indicators	Courses Fall Semester	Courses Spring Semester
A. Analytical Skills	2. Analyze and evaluate arguments.	POL 104 AMERICAN POLITICS	VARIOUS 200- LEVEL COURSES

Section 2: Explain how, in general, the institutional rubric was applied to assessment activities. Please attach examples of assessment activities (i.e. modified rubric, assignment, questions) and measurements used to place individuals into the three categories (exceeds, meets, fails to meet). **When completing this section, it may be best to explain the results by course (or course cluster if there were similar tools or results) rather than by instructor.**

.....
Instructors all applied some form of essay, short or long, since argument is the thrust of the A-2 proficiency. Most were embedded in exams, but some were take-home. Instructors in our Dept always use some part of the course that is also part of the letter-grading process to try and ensure that students take the assignment seriously and that most of them complete the exercise.

Proficiency	Exceeds	Meets	Fails to meet
A2: FALL	70	148	50
SPRING	88	114	32
2005/06 TOTAL	158	262	82

Section 3: Use of Results

1. **Use by instructors** - Summarize the ways individual instructors plan to use assessment results to improve the instructional process.

Two of our instructors performed an experiment on behalf of the Dept. One used the LEC 100 portion of a section to reinforce all the abstract rules and standards surrounding the construction of successful and effective academic arguments. The other just did it as part of the regular course allowing no additional time. They used the same instrument and checked each other's results. The outcome of this experiment was that there was **NO DIFFERENCE** in student achievement on the A-2 proficiency.

My conclusion is that there is no way to raise the approx 80% success level (adding the E plus the M student outcomes) we have achieved rather consistently except perhaps by direct coaching of exercises similar to the assessment instrument (as those SAT courses people take these days). Such coaching would cut into time instructors need to accomplish other things**, and seems to me foreign to purpose of the assessment process anyway.

(** all of us spend more and more time just presenting information as students knowledge of the political world recedes bit by bit each year)

Our discussions of assessment each August and each spring include discussions of how to go about assessing and whether or not suggested instruments and exercises fit the proficiency being assessed. Discussion of results always leads to swapping on how people did it, which ways are best, etc.. Thus, the assessment process is connected with an ongoing discussion among all of us of what people call "best practices."

2. **Use by department** - What changes will you and/or the department assessment committee recommend to your department. Include changes to:

- a. assessment process
- b.

We could go to a common instrument, but we are fairly close to that anyway. Department has experienced some success at getting IAS people to do the colleges-wide assessments—from near zero IAS participation to around 50%, but we would like to get it closer to 100%. Participation by faculty is now routinely 100% or just below. We are still not having success at getting IAS to participate in the Dept –specific outcomes. This is probably because they need to send those results to me while the colleges results go to Madison

- c. proficiencies selected

The Dept will be doing B2 as promised to the SAC/DAC mtg last summer. No other Dept has been doing B2. We will be assessing student ability to use

election statistics, tables, graphs.

- d. performance indicators used to measure proficiency
- e.
- f. assessment activities

The Dept needs to plan to assess our revamped POL 101 (Intro) class during 07/08. This course has been assessed only rarely in the past since more students take the POL 104 (-American) class for fall semesters and the Colleges have been emphasizing 200 level course for assessment. To accomplish this, we will need to get a bit out of step

with the normal SAC expectations. I believe that we are far enough into this new style of assessment to ask for some flexibility.

- g. evaluative rubrics
- h. student performance in a specific course (if there is something that stands out with department discussion.

The POL 101 course mentioned just above has been revamped towards students AS CITIZENS, global, national, and local, so the assessment will need to focus on that area of the course.

3. **Course of action** - After discussion of the results by the department, what course of action will **the department** take to improve student performance with respect to the assessed proficiency?

Frankly, the Dept does a good job at teaching the "A"---analytical--- proficiency, especially the A1 and A2 parts of that proficiency.

This is an overall emphasis in all our courses. Notice the close correlation between our assessment scores and our final grades. I believe we need to start focusing our assessment on other proficiencies and performance indicators.

2: Assessment of Department-Specific Outcomes
❖ at the **Planning** stage, complete section 1

Section 1: Identify department-specific learning objectives.

Outcomes/Performance Indicators	Courses Fall Semester	Courses Spring Semester
#8—DISTINGUISHES POLITICAL FACT AND POLITICAL OPINION		

Section 2: Insert the rubrics used here and explain how the rubric or standards were used to assess each outcome or performance indicator. Please attach examples of assessment activities (i.e. modified rubric, assignment, questions) and measurements used to place individuals into the three categories (exceeds, meets, fails to meet). **When completing this section, it may be best to explain the results by course (or course clusters if there were similar tools or results) rather than by instructor.**

Exceeds Expectations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Correctly identifies statements of opinion that contain objective proofs • Precisely determines the validity of a statement of fact within the context of a larger political argument • Accurately detects and classifies the type of political opinion being expressed, drawing conclusions about the effect of such bias on relevant facts presented • demonstrates the ability to distinguish between fact and inference, and inference from opinion
Meets Expectations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identifies and distinguishes between political facts and political opinions • Accurately recognizes relevant and/or important facts within context of a larger political argument • Able to identify a “claim” and the subsequent supporting “proofs” of that claim, and clearly differentiate the two • Distinguishes logical assertions from deceptive arguments
Fails to Meet Expectations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fails to differentiate between political fact and opinion, often confusing the two • Unable to make a distinction between a claim and its supporting proofs • Fails to recognize a falsifiable and/or testable premise or assertion • Fails to separate logical assertions and deceptive arguments within the context of a larger argument

Departmental Outcome/Performance Indicator	# Exceed	# Meet	# Do Not Meet
1.FALL	45	91	43

2. SPRING	56	78	35
3. TOTAL 2005/06	101	169	78

Section 3: Use of results.

1. **Use by instructors** - Summarize the ways individual instructors plan to use assessment results to improve the instructional process.

I was surprised that the overall success rate on this particular performance indicator was still nearly 80%.. Our students often seem weak to me at specific information questions. I do admit that my personal results showed students nearer to a 30% "X" rate. The exercise I used included knowing something accurate about Darwin's theory of evolution. I believe we'll hit that even harder the next time around.

2. **Use by department** - What changes will you and/or the department assessment committee recommend to your department. Include changes to:
 - a. assessment process
 - b. proficiencies selected
 - c. performance indicators used to measure proficiency
 - d. assessment activities
 - e. evaluative rubrics
 - f. student performance in a specific course (if there is something that stands out with department discussion.
3. **Course of action** - After discussion of the results by the department, what course of action will the department take to improve student performance with respect to the assessed proficiency?

^The POL Dept has now assessed 4 of our 8 indicators. We have been getting similar results. We need to focus___I believe--- on some of the more abstract performance indicators which focus on gaining a more sophisticated understanding of power, the key concept in our discipline.

PART 3: Additional Assessment and Contributions

Section 1: Please discuss activities that were supported by the assessment budget for the department assessment committee. In particular outline the department assessment committee activities for the academic year.

1. Results and quality control meeting: summer of '05....instructors exchanged instruments and compared scoring techniques and standards. Some decisions were made regarding greater uniformity
2. August mtg...members of the Dept assess committee produced suggested instruments for use esp by IAS people and the Dept selected the A-2 indicator along with Dept#8

.....a rubric was distributed and discussed for the Dept indicator
.....there was discussion of the NECESSITY of using the Colleges rubric for the A2 indicator.

3. March 2006 Mtg: Results of the fall assessment of POL 104 were distributed and discussed. There was also considerable discussion of our Dept results and practices vs other Depts. using some of the comparative data provided by Greg Nettesheim.

Section 2: Please discuss activities that were supported by the assessment budget for overall department assessment activities. In particular outline the department assessment activities for the academic year.

See above 1—3; some assessment funds were used to support each of these activities; Chair handles budget and is part of Dept Assessment Committee

I am afraid that the Chair and I failed to keep good records of just what part of assessment budget was used; we promise to do better next time.

Section 3: Please ask for and include in the report information from department members about any other assessment activities they have conducted, particularly in conjunction with grant-funded innovations. Also ask for and describe briefly any additional contributions to assessment such as publications, presentations, qualitative classroom innovations (**such as** Scholarship of Teaching and Learning activities), and other items relating to assessment that the department wishes to note.

Our Dept discusses assessment, SOTL activities, ESFY concerns, and curriculum offerings as part of a package. We see them each as aspects of student needs and what the Dept can do to serve students better. Our main activities in recent yrs have focused around reform of POL 101 (Intro) course to focus more on citizenship and on providing appropriate academic services and credits for “service learning” related to our discipline.

PART 4: Historical Trends

Section 1: History of General Education activities. Please add more rows as necessary. This should be an on-going list copied from each previous report.

1-D—"Values" question—old method

2002..... E—25%

M—50%

F-----25%

Proficiency	Year Assessed	Results	Year Assessed	Results	Year Assessed	Results
A-1	2003 - 04	E = 20% M = 60% F = 20%		E = M = F =		E = M = F =
C-3 (vocabulary)	2004-2005	E = 30% M = 53% F = 17%		E = M = F =		E = M = F =
A-2	2005-2006	E = 30% M = 54% F = 16%		E = M = F =		E = M = F =

NB A-2 was a part of A1 in 2003-04 and was separated, so this includes 'closing loop' acc. to conventional definitions of that concept.

Section 2: History of department learning objective activities. Please add more rows as necessary. This should be an on-going list copied from each previous report.

Objective	Year Assessed	Results	Year Assessed	Results	Year Assessed	Results
Race, class & gender	2004 - 05*	E = 27% M = 60% F = 13%		E = M = F =		E = M = F =
Political facts vs opinions		E = 28% M = 49% F = 23%		E = M = F =		E = M = F =
		E = M = F =		E = M = F =		E = M = F =

- many of you began assessing discipline specific in 04 - 05. If you started any other time, just change the date.
- Department has 8 objectives and intends to keep on assessing them one by one
- until there is an obvious problem with one of the objectives. So long as scores continue similar to other assessment scores, we will just continue on the
- list since it's all part of teaching political science.