Summary of Assessment Report: History/Political Science

2006-2007

During the 2006-2007 academic year, the History/Political Science Program assessed outcomes related to the goal, “Communications Skills.” The outcome, “Students will develop an effective historical argument or political theoretical framework,” was assessed in History A314, U. S. History 1917-45 and in the COAS S400 (capstone seminar). The components of the goal were: Recognition, Articulation, and Supporting Evidence. Students were evaluated in terms of whether they could recognize thesis statements and theoretical frameworks in assigned readings, and whether they were able to articulate a clear thesis and theoretical framework in their own written work in the final product (i.e., their research paper). As well, students had to demonstrate their ability to support their thesis adequately. The benchmark goal set was that 80% of the students would achieve satisfactory performance for all three components. The results indicated that the majority (although short of the 80% goal) of the students could satisfactorily recognize thesis statements in assigned readings and comprehend the theoretical framework. In the final drafts of their term papers, many students were able to articulate satisfactorily a clear thesis statement, while at the same time develop a theoretical framework. As well, many (once again, although short of the 80% goal) of the students were able to support their thesis and theoretical framework at a satisfactory level. Future assessment objectives for the History/Political Science program include better coordination and integration of History and Political Science assessment; better instruments to assess actual student learning; developing strategies and procedures for evaluating the goal of “Research Skills.” By meeting future assessment objectives, we will be in a better position to meet higher, targeted expectations.

2005-2006

During the 2005-2006 academic year the History/Political Science Department assessed outcomes related to the goal, “Communications Skills.”

In the area of History, the outcome, “Students will develop an effective historical argument or political theoretical framework,” was assessed in History A315, U. S. History Since 1945. Students were evaluated in terms of whether they could recognize thesis statements in assigned readings, whether they were able to articulate a clear thesis in their own written work, and whether they could provide adequate evidence to support their thesis. The benchmark goal set was that 80% of the students would achieve satisfactory performance for all three components. The results were that students 65.5 % of the times could satisfactorily recognize thesis statements in assigned readings. In the final drafts of their term papers, 86.7% of the students were able to articulate satisfactorily a clear thesis statement and 86.7% of the students were able to support their thesis at a satisfactory level.

In the area of Political Science students in Y301, Political Parties & Interest Groups were assessed on whether they could provide adequate supporting evidence in their written work. The benchmark goal was set at 80%, and 94% of the students in the class were evaluated as excellent or satisfactory in this area.

Future assessment objectives for the History/Political Science program include better coordination and integration of History and Political Science assessment; better instruments to assess actual student learning; developing strategies and procedures for evaluating the goal of “Research Skills;” and offering the capstone seminar, S400, in the Spring of 2007—which will give us another opportunity to fine tune our assessment efforts.