**Annual Departmental Report**

***Amended for 2020-2021 Academic Year to Accommodate and Reflect Adjustments due to Pandemic***

*There are amended instructions throughout this document to reflect the special circumstances of this academic year (AY20-21) that you will find red. As an institution and as departments we have learned that we can use our creativity to deliver learning even in the most difficult of circumstances.*

**Program Information**

Program/Department:Political Science/Economics, History and Political Science

Department Chair: Ben Lieberman

Department Assessment Committee Contact:

*This document is to be kept in the department and an electronic file is due to the AVP of Institutional Research & Planning by June 1, 2021.*

1. **Departmental Special Section for AY2021**

Department Lessons Learned and Accomplishments

In thinking through the academic year, report on how the department adapted to changes brought on by the pandemic. Reflect on actions that surprised you, on lessons learned that will help in the future, and major accomplishments.

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| The speed of response. Faculty made changes to multiple courses and continued to make changes as the pandemic persisted.  The department continued to make progress on important initiatives and continued to advance innovative methods of teaching and learning.  The responses to the pandemic demonstrated both the many ways in which we can make use of technology for high quality teaching and learning and for advising and meetings and the importance of in-person teaching and learning. A modality in which a faculty member met with some students in person while others attended remotely proved to be the most problematic. |

1. **Program Learning Outcomes (PLOs) (Educational Objectives)**
2. **List of PLOs and the timeline for assessment.**

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| **PLO #** | **PLO – Stated in assessable terms** | **Where are the learning outcomes for this level/program published? (please specify) Include URLs where appropriate** | **Timing of assessment (annual, semester, bi-annual, etc.)** | **When was the last assessment of the PLO completed?** |
| **1.** | **POLITICAL SCIENCE KNOWLEDGE: Demonstrates evidence of comprehension of Political Science knowledge** | Annual / Fall | 2021 (see attached 2020-2021 Assessment Matrix) | 2020 |
| **2.** | **POLITICAL SCIENCE REASONING AND ARGUMENTATION: Demonstrates evidence of comprehension of Political Science reasoning and argumentation** | Annual / Fall | 2021 (see attached 2020-2021 Assessment Matrix) | 2020 |
| **3.** | **POLITICAL SCIENCE METHODOLOGY:**  **Demonstrates evidence of comprehension of Political Science methodology** | Annual / Fall | 2021 (see attached 2020-2021 Assessment Matrix) | 2020 |
| **4.** | **POLITICAL SCIENCE THEORY: Demonstrates evidence of knowledge of Political Science theory** | Annual / Fall | 2021 (see attached 2020-2021 Assessment Matrix) | 2020 |

1. **PLO Assessment** (Please report on the PLOs assessed and/or reviewed this year. Programs should be assessing at least one each year.)

Using the table below, list and briefly describe the **direct method(s)** used to collect information assessing whether students are learning the core sets of knowledge (K), skills (S) and attitudes (A) identified as essential.

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| **PLO # (from above)** | **Assessment description (exam, observation, national standardized exam, oral presentation with rubric, etc.)** | **When assessment was administered in student program (internship, 4th year, 1st year, etc.)** | **To which students were assessments administered (all, only a sample, etc.)** | **What is the target set for the PLO? (criteria for success)** | **Reflection on the results: How was the “loop closed”?** |
| 1 | Assessment of Political Science “Knowledge” consists of a portfolio via the TK20 online database. The submissions entailed: one attachment for the portfolio "artifact" from an upper level Political Science course (2000 level/above), fulfilling that course's requirement: course exam, paper, extended & annotated research paper’s outline, Capstone Seminar research paper’s literature review, Research Methods proposal, memorandum, report, case brief, or appellate brief. The other attached document provided three-four in-depth paragraphs reflecting how this selected Political Science portfolio’s artifact demonstrated student’s mastery of this specific Political Science category's skill set. | 4th year | Fall 2020 Political Science Capstone Seminar (7 students) | 100% meets or exceeds standard | Implementation of clearer guidelines, per discussion by the four Political Scientists in 2020 provided the new threshold required for the student TK20 portfolio documentation submission – based on approval or rejection of one 2000+ POLS course’s Artifact. The assessment process also integrated more comprehensive and analytical “Self-Reflection” on how the student believed proficiency improved. All students met or exceeded the PLO in Political Science “Knowledge” (100% / per attached 2020-2021 Capstone Seminar Assessment Report/PDF), marking a significant increase in the effectiveness of inter-rater reliability. |
| 2 | Assessment of Political Science “Reasoning & Argumentation” consists of a portfolio via the TK20 online database. The submissions entailed: one attachment for the portfolio "artifact" from an upper level Political Science course (2000 level/above), fulfilling that course's requirement: course exam, paper, extended & annotated research paper’s outline, Capstone Seminar research paper’s literature review, Research Methods proposal, memorandum, report, case brief, or appellate brief. The other attached document provided three-four in-depth paragraphs reflecting how this selected Political Science portfolio’s artifact demonstrated student’s mastery of this specific Political Science category's skill set. | 4th year | Fall 2020 Political Science Capstone Seminar (7 students) | 100% meets or exceeds standard | Implementation of clearer guidelines, per discussion by the four Political Scientists in 2020 provided the new threshold required for the student TK20 portfolio documentation submission – based on approval or rejection of one 2000+ POLS course’s Artifact. The assessment process also integrated more comprehensive and analytical “Self-Reflection” on how the student believed proficiency improved. All students met or exceeded the PLO in Political Science “Reasoning & Argumentation” (100% / per attached 2020-2021 Capstone Seminar Assessment Report/PDF), marking a significant increase in the effectiveness of inter-rater reliability. |
| 3 | Assessment of Political Science “Methodology” consists of a portfolio via the TK20 online database. The submissions entailed: one attachment for the portfolio "artifact" from an upper-level Political Science course (2000 level/above), fulfilling that course's requirement: course exam, paper, extended & annotated research paper’s outline, Capstone Seminar research paper’s literature review, Research Methods proposal, memorandum, report, case brief, or appellate brief. The other attached document provided three-four in-depth paragraphs reflecting how this selected Political Science portfolio’s artifact demonstrated student’s mastery of this specific Political Science category's skill set. | 4th year | Fall 2020 Political Science Capstone Seminar (7 students) | 96.77% meets or exceeds standard | Implementation of clearer guidelines, per discussion by the four Political Scientists in 2020 provided the new threshold required for the student TK20 portfolio documentation submission – based on approval or rejection of one 2000+ POLS course’s Artifact. The assessment process also integrated more comprehensive and analytical “Self-Reflection” on how the student believed proficiency improved. The overwhelming majority (96.77% / per attached 2020-2021 Capstone Seminar Assessment Report/PDF) met or exceeded the PLO in Political Science “Methodology,” and the effectiveness of inter-rater reliability significantly progressed. |
| 4 | Assessment of Political Science “Theory” consists of a portfolio via the TK20 online database. The submissions entailed: one attachment for the portfolio "artifact" from an upper level Political Science course (2000 level/above), fulfilling that course's requirement: course exam, paper, extended & annotated research paper’s outline, Capstone Seminar research paper’s literature review, Research Methods proposal, memorandum, report, case brief, or appellate brief. The other attached document provided three-four in-depth paragraphs reflecting how this selected Political Science portfolio’s artifact demonstrated student’s mastery of this specific Political Science category's skill set. | 4th year | Fall 2020 Political Science Capstone Seminar (7 students) | 100% meets or exceeds standard | Implementation of clearer guidelines, per discussion by the four Political Scientists in 2020 provided the new threshold required for the student TK20 portfolio documentation submission – based on approval or rejection of one 2000+ POLS course’s Artifact. The assessment process also integrated more comprehensive and analytical “Self-Reflection” on how the student believed proficiency improved. All students met or exceeded the PLO in Political Science “Theory” (100% / per attached 2020-2021 Capstone Seminar Assessment Report/PDF), marking a significant increase in the effectiveness of inter-rater reliability.  A key lesson learned from 2020-2021 artifacts to meet the threshold for the PLO of theory resulted from the new “Self- Reflection” document and the option to submit the Literature Review from the Capstone Seminar’s Research Paper – provided important insights about that student’s PLO on Political Science Theory. The four Political Scientists agreed that these student efforts improved this year’s scoring for the theory artifacts and reflections significantly. |
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If applicable, use the space below to report on PLO assessment impacted by the move to remote learning.

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| No impact on PLO assessment as all of the Political Science Capstone Seminar’s Portfolio data/artifacts/self-reflections all submitted via TK20’s website/database – subsequently, assessments by the Political Scientists and Assessment Director all done online. |

**Summary of Findings:** Briefly summarize the results of the PLO assessments reported in Section II above combined with other relevant evidence gathered and show how these are being reviewed/discussed. How are you “closing the loop”?

Please reflect on changes that the department has had to engage in given changes to teaching modality and especially capstone experiences.

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| **Reflection Prompt** | **Narrative Response** |
| **Other than GPA, what data/ evidence is used to determine that graduates have achieved the stated outcomes for the degree? (e.g., capstone course, portfolio review, licensure examination)** | -- Required Capstone Seminar/ Portfolio course provides Political Science baselines for Majors to graduate. |
| **Who interprets the evidence?**  **What is the process?**  **(e.g. annually by the curriculum committee)** | -- The four Political Scientists  -- The Political Science Professor who teaches both courses, grades in the Capstone Seminar course. For the Capstone Seminar process, as determined by the four Political Scientists in 2020, the TK20 Capstone Seminar’s Portfolio assessment enables all four Political Science Faculty to assess each PLO’s data/rubric (per Sections I-II) regarding whether each student fulfills requirements. Discussion then follows where the four faculty discuss the results and make suggested programmatic changes as warranted. |
| **What changes have been made as a result of using the data/evidence? (close the loop)** | -- For the 2021 Political Science Capstone Seminar’s TK20 Portfolios, the “N/A” scoring category was removed for every Rubric to reduce skewing of the TK20 data assessment, per agreement from the 2020 assessment’s recommendations.  -- Clearer guidelines and standards for the Capstone Seminar TK20 Portfolio Rubrics provided new, higher thresholds required by student TK20 portfolio documentation submission.  -- More consideration by the four Political Scientists about how to weigh more heavily and score the new, more comprehensive and analytical student “Self-Reflection” (expanded to three-four paragraphs in the fall 2020 Seminar) illustrated improvement and proficiency in the four TK20 Rubrics. The objective to improve from the 82-86% thresholds in 2020 was achieved (meet or exceed Political Science proficiency in all four Rubrics) with 3 out of 4 thresholds reaching 100% and the final threshold achieving 96.77%.  -- The PLO threshold for Political Science theory also achieved the markedly higher threshold of 100%, particularly given the new option for students to submit their Capstone Seminar’s Literature Review as the theory “Artifact” -- on which students could “Reflect” more in-depth about their growth and improvement in this Rubric’s area. |

1. **Assessment Plan for Program/Department**
2. Insert the program or department Assessment Plan -- Please see revised per explanation above in Section II/#1-4.
3. Explain any changes in the assessment plan including new or revised PLOs, new assessments that the program/department plans to implement and new targets or goals set for student success. — Please see per explanation above in Section II/#1-4.
4. If you do not have a plan, would you like help in developing one?

[Grab your reader’s attention with a great quote from the document or use this space to emphasize a key point. To place this text box anywhere on the page, just drag it.]

Yes

1. **Program Review Action Plan or External Accreditation Action Letter/Report**

*Annual Reflection/Follow-up on Action Plan from last Program Review or external accreditation (only complete the table that is appropriate for your program)*

The Political Science Program Review was completed during 2019-2021 (given delays from the pandemic during 2020), inclusive of the improvements made during 2019-2020 in the Capstone Seminar’s student portfolio assessment process.

* 1. **Programs that fall under Program Review:**
     1. Date of most recent Review:
     2. Insert the Action Plan table from your last Program Review and give any progress towards completing the tasks or achieving targets set forth in the plan.

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| **Specific area where improvement is needed** | **Evidence to support the recommended change** | **Person(s) responsible for implementing the change** | **Timeline for implementation** | **Resources needed** | **Assessment Plan** | **Progress Made this Year** |
| None mentioned from the external evaluation of the Program Review. | Changes made during Annual Report’s explanation in previous sections II-III above -- accounted for learning outcomes measurement, particularly with regard to broadening the portfolio of student artifacts used for learning outcomes assessment. | Capstone Seminar’s faculty member, in conjunction with other full-time Political Science faculty. | Complete | None | Provided in previous sections II-III above. | Explained in previous sections II-III above. |

* + 1. If you do not have an action plan, would you like help in developing one based on your last program review and needs of the program?

Yes

[Grab your reader’s attention with a great quote from the document or use this space to emphasize a key point. To place this text box anywhere on the page, just drag it.]

* 1. **Programs with external Accreditation:**
     1. Professional, specialized, State, or programmatic accreditations currently held by the program/department.
     2. Date of most recent accreditation action by each listed agency.
     3. Date and nature of next review and type of review.

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| **List key issues for continuing accreditation identified in accreditation action letter or report.** | **Key performance indicators as required by agency or selected by program (licensure, board or bar pass rates; employment rates, etc.) (If required.)** | **Update on fulfilling the action letter/report or on meeting the key performance indicators.** |
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1. **Departmental Strategic Initiatives**

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| **Accomplished Initiatives AY 20-21** | **Corresponding Strategic Plan Goal & Strategy** | **Indicate if a Diversity, Equity and Inclusiveness (DEI) Goal** |
| Placed classes into the new LAS | 2.12 |  |
| Davis Education Foundation Grant mapping to improve department advising and mentoring | 2.19 | **YES** |
| Explored alternative pedagogies through Reacting to the Past, simulations and through faculty experimentation with digital and critical pedagogies. | **2.17** |  |
| Offered and creating courses to ensure diversity in the curriculum | **2.18**  **1** | **YES** |
| Participated in use of Open Educational Resources | **2.25** | **YES** |
| Explored new methods to recruit students and to publicize courses  Used social media to publicize courses | **5** |  |
| Continued to build FLIP (Fitchburg Local Innovation Project) | **3** | **YES** |
| Carried out community-engaged coursework and scholarship with students (Economics and Political Science) and pre-practica in History teaching methods courses | **1: 5, 15** |  |
| Carried out collaborative research and exhibitions with students (Economics, History and Political Science) | **1:15** |  |
| Carried out High Impact Practices: through Internships, the Washington Center  Experiential learning—Moot Court, Model UN, and Study abroad (remote work this past year), and interdisciplinary team-taught class | **1: 13, 14, 17** |  |

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| Advance Davis Education Foundation Grant by creating new advising materials | 2.19 | **YES** |
| Carry out alternative pedagogies through Reacting to the Past, simulations and through faculty experimentation with digital and critical pedagogies. | **2.17** |  |
| Offer courses to ensure diversity in the curriculum | **2.18**  **1** | **YES** |
| Participate in use of Open Educational Resources | 2.25 | **YES** |
| Use new methods to recruit students and to publicize courses | **5** |  |
| Continued to build FLIP (Fitchburg Local Innovation Project) | **3** | **YES** |
| Carry out community-engaged coursework and scholarship with students and pre-practica in History teaching methods courses | **1:5, 15** |  |
| Carry out collaborative research with students | **1:15** |  |
| Carry out High Impact Practices: through Internships, the Washington Center  Provide Experiential learning—Moot Court, Model UN | **1: 13, 14** |  |

**F. Departmental Reflection:**

1. *Initiatives that you may be considering for 22-23 academic year that you did not already capture above.*

*Economics will be carrying out a program review.*

*After the retirement of Dr. Christy, we hope to be able to carry out a Political Science search, particularly for an American Government AND Research Methods Professor, both crucial for the Political Science Capstone Seminar’s Portfolio Assessment preparation.*

*Economics, History, and Political Science are all course disciplines in the liberal arts and sciences. We hope to strengthen the Arts and Sciences.*

1. *Reflect on how the department adapted to the pandemic. Reflect on actions that surprised you and on lessons learned that will help in the future.*

*Again, we showed even greater flexibility and speed, finding many ways to use technology more creatively for online, often synchronous teaching/learning. At the same time, the pandemic underscored the value of in-person teaching and learning for significant numbers of students, even as significant numbers of professors and students adapted to remote teaching and learning, respectively.*