Department: Political Science
Program: BA
College: Social Sciences
Website: http://www.sjsu.edu/polisci/
X Check here if your website addresses the University Learning Goals.
http://www.sjsu.edu/polisci/students/
Program Accreditation (if any): None
Contact Person and Email: Melinda Jackson, Curriculum & Assessment Committee Chair
Date of Report: June 1, 2015

Part A
1. List of Program Learning Outcomes (PLOs)
   No Changes
2. Map of PLOs to University Learning Goals (ULGs)
   No Changes
3. Alignment – Matrix of PLOs to Courses
   No Changes
4. Planning – Assessment Schedule
   No Changes
5. Student Experience
   No Changes

Part B
6. Graduation Rates for Total, Non URM and URM students (per program and degree)
The university targets for first-time freshmen 6-yr graduation rates set by the Chancellor’s Office are 51.6%, 47.8%, and 53.2%, for total, URM and Non-URM populations, by 2015-2016. The university targets for transfer and graduate students are not specifically published, but generally improvement is expected here too.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>First-Time Freshmen</th>
<th>Undergraduate Transfer</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Fall 2008 Cohort: 6-Year Graduation Rate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Program Cohort Size</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>URM</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-URM</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All others</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Political Science BA 6-year graduation rates are slightly lower than the target set by the Chancellor’s Office for URM students (35.3% versus 47.8%), but higher than the target for Non-URM students (66.7% versus 53.2%). Our 3-year transfer graduation rates are higher than both college and university averages, for URM and Non-URM students. However, it should be noted that the number of students upon which these statistics are based is quite small (ranging from 9-17), so comparisons should be made with caution.
7. **Headcounts of program majors and new students (per program and degree)**

**Item 7. Headcount of Program Majors by Degree: Political Science**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Fall 2014</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>New Students</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>FT Admit</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>81</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BA</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MUP</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BS</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MPA</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The number of new FT undergraduate students is up slightly at 50 admits, compared to 43 last year. The number of new transfer students remains steady at 40 admits, the same as 2013. Continuing students is also steady at 206 undergraduates, compared to 204 in 2013. Demand for the Political Science major remains strong and consistent.

8. **SFR and average section size (per program)**

**Item 8. Student-Faculty Ratio (SFR) and Average Headcount per Section: POLS - Political Science**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Fall 2014</th>
<th>Fall 2014</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Subject</td>
<td>College</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>SFR</td>
<td>SFR</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lower Division</td>
<td>43.9</td>
<td>40.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Upper Division</td>
<td>25.4</td>
<td>26.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Graduate Division</td>
<td>12.2</td>
<td>20.8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Political Science undergraduate SFR is higher than the college and university averages for lower division, and approximately equal for upper division classes. Headcounts per section are slightly lower than the college average, but higher than the university average for lower division, and slightly lower than both college and university averages for upper division.

9. **Percentage of tenured/tenure-track instructional faculty (per department)**

**Item 9. Percentage of Full-Time Equivalent Faculty (FTEF): Political Science**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Fall 2014</th>
<th>Fall 2014</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Department</td>
<td>Department</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>FTEF #</td>
<td>FTEF %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tenured/Tenure-track</td>
<td>7.9</td>
<td>60%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not tenure-track</td>
<td>5.2</td>
<td>40%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>13.1</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Part C
10. Closing the Loop/Recommended Actions

The Political Science department held a faculty retreat in May 2015 and discussed a number of assessment-related issues in depth. This included a careful consideration of our Program Learning Outcomes, and a recommendation that the PLOs be updated to reflect more specific learning verbs and levels of achievement. The faculty agreed to continue the discussion and revision of PLOs in the 2015-16 academic year.

Faculty also participated in a curriculum mapping exercise, reflecting on and discussing the current map of courses to PLOs. This activity sparked active and useful discussion of the alignment of the current curriculum to PLOs, which will also continue along with the review and revision of PLOs in the coming year.

11. Assessment Data

The department curriculum and assessment committee examined PLO3: Disciplinary Methods in Spring 2015. Three members of the committee each rated a randomly selected sample of 10 final research proposal papers from our required research methods course, POLS195A: Political Inquiry, for a total of 30 rated papers. Papers were collected from course sections taught in Spring 2014 and Fall 2014 by two different instructors, and anonymized before committee review. Committee members developed an assessment rubric (attached) and participated in a norming session using the rubric before engaging in the review process. Copies of the paper assignments for each semester are also attached.

The results of this assessment are listed below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mean rating</td>
<td>2.90</td>
<td>2.83</td>
<td>2.86</td>
<td>2.31</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>30</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percentage of:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 ratings</td>
<td>24%</td>
<td>28%</td>
<td>24%</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 ratings</td>
<td>45%</td>
<td>34%</td>
<td>38%</td>
<td>38%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 ratings</td>
<td>28%</td>
<td>31%</td>
<td>38%</td>
<td>34%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 ratings</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>21%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

12. Analysis

The committee’s analysis of the Disciplinary Methods PLO revealed that students in our research methods class, which is recommended to be taken in the junior year, are meeting only some aspects of this learning outcome. While 70% of students met or exceeded expectations for formulating research questions, just 62% met or exceeded expectations for systematic literature search and gathering data, and less than half (45%) met or exceeded expectations for evaluating research studies. A significant number of students were also rated as partially meeting each of these expectations.
The final aspect of PLO3, the ability to critically analyze and interpret influential political texts applies primarily to the methods employed in the political theory subfield, which were not included in the assignment chosen for assessment. This aspect of PLO3 was therefore not rated in the current assessment.

13. **Proposed changes and goals (if any)**

The assessment results for PLO3 were discussed at the May 2015 faculty retreat, and there was broad consensus that the findings reflected what faculty have observed in other upper level courses across the curriculum. Ideas for incorporating additional training and practice in evaluating research studies were discussed in relation to the core competencies of critical thinking and information literacy.

The faculty members who will be teaching POLS195A (Political Inquiry) next year will discuss further ways to address the observed weaknesses in evaluating research studies, literature search, and data gathering.
### Political Science PLO3: Disciplinary methods

Student should be able to formulate research questions, engage in systematic literature searches using primary and secondary sources, have competence in systematic data gathering using library sources, government documents, and data available through electronic sources, should be able to evaluate research studies, and should be able to critically analyze and interpret influential political texts.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ability to…</th>
<th>Does not meet expectations (1)</th>
<th>Partially meets expectations (2)</th>
<th>Meets expectations (3)</th>
<th>Exceeds expectations (4)</th>
<th>Not Applicable</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Formulate research questions</td>
<td>No research question</td>
<td>Unclear or poorly formulated research question</td>
<td>Acceptable research question formulated</td>
<td>Well-formulated and appropriate research question</td>
<td>Not applicable to this assignment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Engage in systematic literature searches</td>
<td>No evidence of systematic literature search</td>
<td>Some evidence of literature search. Not systematic, or inappropriate to research topic</td>
<td>Evidence of systematic literature search appropriate to research topic</td>
<td>Evidence of extensive, systematic literature search well-suited to research topic</td>
<td>Not applicable to this assignment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gather data</td>
<td>No evidence of data collection (actual or planned)</td>
<td>Some evidence of data collection (actual or planned). Inappropriate or incomplete in some respects.</td>
<td>Evidence of data collection (actual or planned), appropriate to research question.</td>
<td>Evidence of data collection (actual or planned), well-suited to research question. Demonstrates detailed understanding of data collection procedures.</td>
<td>Not applicable to this assignment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Evaluate research studies</td>
<td>No evaluation of research studies</td>
<td>Some evidence of evaluation of research studies. May be inappropriate or incomplete in some respects.</td>
<td>Evidence of evaluation of research studies. Appropriately related to research topic.</td>
<td>Insightful evaluation of research studies. Well-suited to research topic, and integrated with overall paper.</td>
<td>Not applicable to this assignment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ability to...</td>
<td>Does not meet expectations (1)</td>
<td>Partially meets expectations (2)</td>
<td>Meets expectations (3)</td>
<td>Exceeds expectations (4)</td>
<td>Not Applicable</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Critically analyze and interpret influential political texts</td>
<td>No critical analysis or interpretation of influential political texts</td>
<td>Some critical analysis or interpretation of influential political texts. May be inaccurate or incomplete in some respects.</td>
<td>Evidence of appropriate critical analysis or interpretation of influential political texts.</td>
<td>Excellent critical analysis or interpretation of influential political texts.</td>
<td>Not applicable to this assignment</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
For this assignment, you will write a 10-12-page research proposal. This paper should focus on a political science research question and propose a research study to address it.

You will also prepare and deliver a 3 minute oral presentation of your research proposal in class during our final exam period, Thursday, May 15, 9:45am-12:00pm. PowerPoint slides or other visual aids are NOT required for this presentation, but you are expected to deliver a concise and polished oral description of your proposal. This oral presentation will count toward your grade for the paper.

Your paper should follow the outline listed below: Elements of a Research Proposal.

Elements of a Research Proposal

I. Title Page (1 page)
   Title should describe the specific research question (12 words or less)
   1. Author’s name
   2. Course name and number, professor’s name
   3. Date

II. Abstract (1 page)
   1. 100-150 word summary
   2. Research question; summary of expected findings; conclusions and implications

Tip: It usually works best to write the abstract last, so you can briefly summarize the whole paper after it is done

III. Introduction (approximately 2-3 pages)
   1. Broad introductory statements/paragraph that situates/illustrates your topic & outlines your research question(s). Why is this question/topic interesting and important? (Thesis statement)
   2. Literature Review & Argument Development
      1. Context/background for your topic
      2. Scholarly investigations related to your research question/topic (use minimum of 3 scholarly sources here)

Tip: For help with scholarly literature searches, see library tutorials “Finding Scholarly, Peer-reviewed Articles,” “Finding articles in Academic Search Premier,” and others, and check out the political science subject page, or make an appointment to meet with polisci librarian Crystal Goldman (crystal.goldman@sjsu.edu)
IV. Research Study Proposal (approximately 4 pages)

1. Describe how you would study this question in the ideal world (assume you have relatively unlimited time and financial resources, and design the best study possible, in your opinion)
2. What type of study would you do (experiment, survey, field research, content analysis, secondary data analysis, interviews, focus groups, etc. – or some combination of these methods)? Why do you think the method(s) you have chosen are the best suited to studying your research question?
3. Describe in detail the methods and procedures you will use in your study. If you are studying human subjects, how will participants be selected? If you are using unobtrusive research methods, what will your units of analysis be, and how will they be selected?
4. What ethical issues will you need to address? How will you practice good research ethics in your study?
5. What will the purpose of your research study be? (Exploratory, descriptive, explanatory, evaluation)
6. What are your hypotheses? How will you test these hypotheses in your research study? (If you are proposing a qualitative study, what kind of evidence will you be looking for? If you are proposing a quantitative study, what variables will you measure? What relationships do you expect to find between your independent and dependent variables?)

V. Discussion (approximately 1-2 pages)

1. Discussion of your expected findings and their implications
2. Further questions that may be raised by your analysis. Discuss ideas for future research that may arise from what you learn in your study.

VI. References (use APSA citation format – refer to guide on course website for details)

VII. Tables (if any, titled and numbered, each on a separate page)

VIII. Figures (if any, titled and numbered, each on a separate page)
Research Design Prompt
Your research design should be 10-12 pages using 12 point font (preferable Times New Roman), double-spacing, and one-inch margins on all sides. Please use subheadings.
You must have a title page which includes the following:
1. Your name and title of your paper
2. The citation format you are using in your paper and the reference you used as your APSA or APA source (e.g. specific edition of the APA style guide and the full citation; the Purdue OWL site with full citation.)

I. Introduction (about 1-1 ½ pages)
Why is this area of research important? What is (are) your research question(s)? This is a question that you are attempting to answer with your research. Your hypothesis is your answer to this research question. As an aside... be certain that you have chosen the appropriate method(s) below to test this hypothesis. Answer the “so what?” question in your introduction. Be certain to discuss how you think your research will add to the current knowledge in this area. This is the section where you can keep or lose an audience... so keep them interested and make certain they know what you are researching and why it’s important.

II. Literature Review or Previous Research-whatever title you like (about 1 ½-2 pages)
Following the format outlined in your text (and practiced in class), review the relevant scholarly literature in this area of research. Focus on the research that is most relevant to your topic. You don’t have to do a complete literature review, but do address the major work in this area. If it is a new area of research, address literature that is tangentially related.
Your literature review should include between 10-12 empirical sources (scholarly books, academic reports, conference papers, and peer-reviews journal articles). If you are unsure of a source, please contact me. Use JSTOR, Academic Search Premier, Political Science Complete, and other search engines and databases to find academic sources. By all means, look at what other scholars have cited—if it was important to them, you should probably take a look at it too.

III. Theory and Hypothesis(es) (about ½ to 1 page)
Please use those sources from the previous section that are most closely related to your topic here.
In the section above, you have reviewed the previous research in this area and discussed what theory(ies) (if any) have been developed. In this section then, you will begin in one of three ways. 1) You will discuss how your expectations use previous theories as a guide and how you build upon this work. 2) You will discuss how your expectations build upon research in this area but contrast with or challenge this work. Or 3) you will note that little work has been done in this area your goal is to further our understanding of a relationship you propose.
Then introduce your hypothesis(es).

IV. Methods (about 1 page)
How would you test your hypothesis(es)? Explain your research design and your methods here. Explain why this the best way to test it (them). Use the book and our class discussions to back you up.
1. If experimental describe the design (e.g. pre-test, post-test “classical” experimental design, post-test only design).
2. If quasi-experimental, describe the design and why quasi-experimental design was more appropriate than experimental.

3. If non-experimental, describe what you are going to do. 
   a. Survey
   b. Single case study (e.g. a country, an organization)—describe how you will research your case. Who are you going to interview and why? Why did you pick this case? Would it involve travel? When? Why would you need to go there to do the research?
   c. Comparative analysis—are you comparing two or more groups (organizations, nations, states)
   d. Content analysis of media, speeches, other (why is this the best way to study it?) What dates? What sources would you examine? How would you gain access?

V. Measurement (about 2 pages)
How will you define and measure your variables? Think about someone trying to replicate your work. Could they adequately do it based on what you provide here?
1. What is your dependent variable?
   1. How is it conceptually defined?
   2. How is it operationally defined? In other words, how did you measure it? Be specific here. 
   a. If survey questions were used, give exact question wording.
   b. If you would conduct an experiment, discuss the role of the treatment/control groups here.
   c. Are you creating a scale?
   d. What is the level of measurement (nominal, ordinal, interval, dichotomous)?
2. What is your independent variable?
   1. How is it conceptually defined?
   2. How is it operationally defined? In other words, how did you measure it? Be specific here.
   i. If survey questions were used, give exact question wording.
   ii. If you would conduct an experiment, discuss the role of the treatment/control groups here.
   iii. Are you creating a scale?
   iv. What is the level of measurement (nominal, ordinal, interval, dichotomous)?
   v. What descriptive statistics would you provide?
3. What variables are you including as control variables and why?

VI. Analysis or Hypothesis Testing (1 ½-2 pages)
You will not actually be testing your hypothesis; however, in this section, I would like you to do the following:
1) When would you do this project (e.g. as a senior seminar project, for a conference, in graduate school)
2) What do you think you would find?
3) What would your study add to our understanding in this area?

VII. Conclusion (about ¾ -1 page)
Again, why would your findings be significant, even if you didn’t find support for your hypothesis(es)? What do you think that social scientists might gain from your research? Might there be justification for further research in this area? Suggest where we should go from here.

VIII. References (not counted in page total)
Assemble a References page and attach it to the end of your RD. Be sure it follows the citation format you are using in the paper. You must use APA or APSA citation format.