

Annual Assessment Report

Department: Political Science

Academic Year: 2019-20

Date of Submission:

Department Chair: Jesse Covington

I. Response to the previous year PRC’s recommendations

Item: Review and if necessary restructure the curriculum to reflect the strengths of the department’s faculty, serve the needs of its students, and increase student interest in the Political Science major.	Response: We waited on a full curriculum review until we hired a full-time replacement for Susan Penksa. Now that we’ve hired Kate Bryant, we will conduct a full review of the curriculum over the next several years, according to our Program Review Action Plan.
Item: Ensure that Dr. Covington’s benefit to the Augustinian Scholars Program and Dr. Knecht’s benefit to Westmont Golf are carefully balanced against their value to students in the Political Science.	Response: This is an on-going discussion.
Item: Address student concerns related to scheduling, possibly by the use of a four-year course schedule and individual student four-year course schedules.	Response: As with the first recommendation, we will consider these concerns as part of our full curriculum review, per the schedule of our Action Plan.
Item: Strengthen career advising, possibly by alumni engagement in responding to requests for career advice.	Response: We have increasingly partnered alumni with current students through a mentoring program and informational interviews. We also had been working with the Office of Career Development and Calling to host a career event this spring. However, our plan for this was disrupted due to the COVID-19 crisis and the removal from campus activities.
Notes:	
1. It is worth noting that these recommendations from the PRC are in response to our six-year report and thus have implications for the next several years, not just for this year.	

- During the Department's presentation in Academic Senate this spring, it was suggested that the Department revise our program review plans in order to devote a year's efforts to curriculum review *instead of* (rather than in addition to) one year's annual assessment of one of our learning outcomes. The Department discussed this plan and decided to pursue it. A revised Action Plan is attached.

II A. Program Learning Outcome (PLO) assessment

If your department participated in the ILO assessment you may use this section to report on your student learning in relation to the assessed ILO. The assessment data can be requested from the Dean of Curriculum and Educational Effectiveness.

Program Learning Outcome	Active Social Engagement
Who is in Charge /Involved?	Tom Knecht
Direct Assessment Methods	We usually conduct a direct assessment of active social engagement through papers in POL 190. However, due to the low enrollment of POL 190 this fall and the effect of the coronavirus (no summer POL 190 course), we did not have a large enough sample to justify this method. Therefore, we moved to an indirect assessment of this PLO in the Spring of 2020.
Indirect Assessment Methods	Survey of political science majors. 23 majors responded and we compared these responses to all Americans and, when available, to other 18-24 year olds.
Major Findings	Appendix A provides the codebook for our survey. Appendix B compares the results from Political Science students to a national survey of 18-24 year-olds (PRRI) and all Americans (ANES). Overall, Westmont Political Science majors compare very favorably with other Americans. Our majors are more likely to vote (61% compared to 47% of 18-24 year olds), sign an online petition (74% to 44%); attend a rally or demonstration (52% to 8%); volunteer for a group or cause (43% to 14%); and post on social media about an issue of importance (56% to 23%). Our majors also reported a greater sense of political efficacy than the general public. Students were asked to evaluate two statements: 1) Sometimes politics and government seem so complicated that a person like me can't really understand what's going on. 2) People like me don't have any say about what the government does. For Q1, 55% of Political Science majors disagreed compared to 29% of all Americans. For Q2, 53% of Political Science majors disagreed compared to 36% of all Americans. Our majors believe that God calls to participate in politics (85%) and volunteer in the community (100%).

	Despite overwhelming evidence that our majors are socially engaged, there are two issues that deserve the Department's attention. First, students gave the Department a lackluster rating on how much we stress the importance of civic and social engagement: 23% said we stress social engagement "a great deal"; 32% said "quite a bit"; 41% somewhat; and 5% said "not very much." Second, although a majority of our students have taken a service learning course, only 33% took one through the major. We hope to both emphasize the importance of civic engagement and offer more service learning courses in the future.
Closing the Loop Activities	We will discuss the possibility of more service learning courses in our curriculum review. We will also be more intentional about naming social engagement in our substantive courses.
Collaboration and Communication	

or/and

II B. Key Questions

Key Question	These are listed in our Action Plan.
Who is in Charge/Involved?	
Direct Assessment Methods	
Indirect Assessment Methods	
Major Findings	
Recommendations	
Collaboration and Communication	

III. Follow-ups

Program Learning Outcome or Key Question	See Above.
Who was involved in implementation?	
What was decided or addressed?	
How were the recommendations implemented?	
Collaboration and Communication	

IV. Other assessment or Key Questions related projects

Project	
Who is in Charge /Involved?	
Major Findings	

Action	
Collaboration and Communication	

V. Adjustments to the Multi-year Assessment Plan (optional)

Proposed adjustment	Rationale	Timing
See Notes Above and attached revision to our action plan.		

VI. Appendices

- A. Prompts or instruments used to collect the data
- B. Rubrics used to evaluate the data
- C. Relevant assessment-related documents (optional)

Appendix A: Codebook

Social Engagement

This short survey asks about social and civic engagement of Westmont Political Science majors. The survey is anonymous and takes about 10 minutes to complete. The results will help the assess one of our key departmental objectives.

Thank you in advance for your participation!

[]How often would you say you vote?

Please choose **only one** of the following:

- Always
- Nearly always
- In about half of elections
- Seldom
- Never
- I am ineligible to vote/I have been ineligible to vote

- Other

Best,

The Political Science Department

There are 14 questions in this survey

Activity

[]

People engage in social, civic and political activity in different ways.

Over the past 12 months, have you...

Please choose the appropriate response for each item:

- | | | | | | | |
|--|-----------------------|--------------------------------------|---|-----------------------|------------------------|-----------------------|
| Yes | Uncertain | No | signed an online petition | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| attended a public rally or demonstration | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | liked or followed a campaign or organization online | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | donated money to a campaign or cause | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | posted on social media | <input type="radio"/> |
| about an issue that matters to you | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | | | |

[] Does your civic engagement give you a better understanding of diverse communities and cultures? If so, how?

Please write your answer here:

[]How much does the Political Science Department stress the importance of civic and social engagement?

Please choose **only one** of the following:

- A great deal
- Quite a bit
- Somewhat
- Not very much

Discipline

[]Have you taken a service learning course at Westmont? That is, have you taken a course that required engagement with the community as part of the requirements for the course?

Please choose **only one** of the following:

- Yes
- No

[]Was that service learning course in the Political Science Department?

Only answer this question if the following conditions are met:

Answer was 'Yes' at question '4 [D1]' (Have you taken a service learning course at Westmont? That is, have you taken a course that required engagement with the community as part of the requirements for the course?) Please

choose **only one** of the following:

- Yes
- No

[]What connections do you see between your political science major and your civic engagement?

Please write your answer here:

A large, empty rectangular box with a thin black border, intended for the user to write their answer to the question above.

[]

Please evaluate the following statements:

Sometimes politics and government seem so complicated that a person like me can't really understand what's going on.

Please choose **only one** of the following:

- Agree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Disagree

[] People like me don't have any say about what the government does.

Please choose **only one** of the following:

- Agree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Disagree

Beliefs

[] How much of the time do you think you can trust the government in Washington to do what is right-- just about always, most of the time or only some of the time?

Please choose **only one** of the following:

- Some of the time
- Most of the time
- Just about always

[] Would you say the government is pretty much run by a few big interests looking out for themselves or that it is run for the benefit of all the people?

Please choose **only one** of the following:

- A few big interests
- For the benefit of all

[]How do you think about civic engagement and volunteerism in the context of your faith?

Please write your answer here:

[]God calls us to participate in politics.

Please choose **only one** of the following:

- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- Neither Agree Nor Disagree
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree

[] God calls us to volunteer in our community.

Please choose **only one** of the following:

- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- Neither Agree Nor Disagree
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree

Thank you for your participation!

Submit your survey.

Thank you for completing this survey.

Appendix B. Results

Number of records in this query:	26			
Total records in survey:	26			
Percentage of total:	100.00%			
How often would you say you vote?				
Answer	Count	Westmont Pol Sci	18-24 Voting Turnout 2016	
Always (A1)	14	60.87%	47%	
Nearly always (A2)	5	21.74%		
In about half of elections (A3)	2	8.70%		
Seldom (A4)	1	4.35%		
Never (A5)	0	0.00%		
I am ineligible to vote/I have been ineligible to vote (A6)	0	0.00%		
Other	1	4.35%		
	23	100.00%		
Field summary for A2(SQ001)				

People engage in social, civic and political activity in different ways. Over the past 12 months, have you... [signed an online petition]				
Answer	Count	Westmont Pol Sci	Pew 18-24	
Yes (Y)	17	73.91%	44%	
No (N)	5	21.74%		
Uncertain (U)	0	0.00%		
No answer	1	4.35%		
	23			
Field summary for A2(SQ002)				
People engage in social, civic and political activity in different ways. Over the past 12 months, have you... [attended a public rally or demonstration]				
Answer	Count	Westmont Pol Sci	PRRI	
Yes (Y)	12	52.17%	8%	
No (N)	9	39.13%		
Uncertain (U)	1	4.35%		
No answer	1	4.35%		
	23			
Field summary for A2(SQ003)				
People engage in social, civic and political activity in different ways.				

Over the past 12 months, have you... [liked or followed a campaign or organization online]				
Answer	Count	Westmont Pol Sci	PRRI	
Yes (Y)	18	78.26%	22%	
No (N)	2	8.70%		
Uncertain (U)	3	13.04%		
No answer	0	0.00%		
	23			
Field summary for A2(SQ004)				
People engage in social, civic and political activity in different ways. Over the past 12 months, have you... [volunteered for a group or cause]				
Answer	Count	Westmont Pol Sci	PRRI	
Yes (Y)	10	43.48%	14%	
No (N)	11	47.83%		
Uncertain (U)	1	4.35%		
No answer	1	4.35%		
Field summary for A2(SQ005)				
People engage in social, civic and political activity in different ways. Over the past 12 months, have you...				

[donated money to a campaign or cause]				
Answer	Count	Westmont Pol Sci	PRRI	
Yes (Y)	5	21.74%	19%	
No (N)	16	69.57%		
Uncertain (U)	1	4.35%		
No answer	1	4.35%		
	23			
Field summary for A2(SQ006)				
People engage in social, civic and political activity in different ways. Over the past 12 months, have you... [posted on social media about an issue that matters to you]				
Answer	Count	Westmont Pol Sci	PRRI	
Yes (Y)	13	56.52%	23%	
No (N)	4	17.39%		
Uncertain (U)	5	21.74%		
No answer	1	4.35%		
Field summary for D1				
Have you taken a service learning course at Westmont? That is, have you taken a course that required engagement with the community as part of the requirements for the course?				

Answer	Count	Westmont Pol Sci		
Yes (Y)	13	59.09%		
No (N)	9	40.91%		
No answer	0	0.00%		
	22			
Field summary for D2				
Was that service learning course in the Political Science Department?				
Answer	Count	Westmont Pol Sci		
Yes (Y)	4	33.33%		
No (N)	8	66.67%		
Field summary for D3				
How much does the Political Science Department stress the importance of civic and social engagement?				
Answer	Count	Westmont Pol Sci		
A great deal (A1)	5	22.73%		
Quite a bit (A2)	7	31.82%		
Somewhat (A3)	9	40.91%		
Not very much (A4)	1	4.55%		
	22			
Field summary for B2				
Would you say the government is pretty much run by a few big interests looking out for themselves or that it is				

run for the benefit of all the people?				
Answer	Count	Westmont Pol Sci	ANES	
A few big interests (A1)	14	73.68%	83%	
For the benefit of all (A2)	5	26.32%	17%	
	19			
Field summary for B3				
Please evaluate the following statements: Sometimes politics and government seem so complicated that a person like me can't really understand what's going on.				
Answer	Count	Westmont Pol Sci	ANES	
Agree (A1)	3	15.00%	57%	
Neither agree nor disagree (A2)	6	30.00%	16%	
Disagree (A3)	11	55.00%	29%	
	20			
Field summary for B4				
People like me don't have any say about what the government does.				
Answer	Count	Westmont Pol Sci	ANES	
Agree (A1)	3	15.79%	48%	
Neither agree nor disagree (A2)	6	31.58%	16%	
Disagree (A3)	10	52.63%	36%	
	19			
Field summary for B5				

God calls us to participate in politics.				
Answer	Count	Westmont Pol Sci		
Strongly Agree (1)	12	60.00%		
Agree (2)	5	25.00%		
Neither Agree Nor Disagree (3)	3	15.00%		
Disagree (4)	0	0.00%		
Strongly Disagree (5)	0	0.00%		
	20			
Field summary for B6				
God calls us to volunteer in our community.				
Answer	Count	Westmont Pol Sci		
Strongly Agree (1)	16	80.00%		
Agree (2)	4	20.00%		
Neither Agree Nor Disagree (3)	0	0.00%		
Disagree (4)	0	0.00%		
Strongly Disagree (5)	0	0.00%		
	20			