

Form E-1-A for Boston College Core Curriculum

Department: Political Science (2020)

1) Have formal learning outcomes for the department's Core courses been developed? What are they? (What specific sets of skills and knowledge does the department expect students completing its Core courses to have acquired?)

Our department's learning outcomes are derived from those specified by the A&S Undergraduate Core Development Committee (UCDC) as Core Social Science course learning goals, and they have been in force as guidelines for our assessments since 2012.

Political Science Core courses should improve students' in the following areas:

- a. awareness of and sensitivity to the political dimensions of their human existence.
- b. awareness of the causes of human behavior.
- c. awareness of the dynamics and dimensions of political change.
- d. ability to identify and appreciate the social scientific dimension of problems facing society today

2) Where are these learning outcomes published? Be specific. (Where are the department's expected learning outcomes for its Core courses accessible: on the web, in the catalog, or in your department handouts?)

The learning outcomes had been published on the Political Science Department's Undergraduate Programs webpage (<http://www.bc.edu/schools/cas/polisci/undergrad/learningoutcomes.html>).

3) Other than GPA, what data/evidence is used to determine whether students have achieved the stated outcomes for the Core requirement? (What evidence and analytical approaches do you use to assess which of the student learning outcomes have been achieved more or less well?)

In previous years, the department had used simple four-question, multiple-choice quiz is given to most of the students enrolled in Core courses each semester. However, as noted in previous reports, this method has problems in terms of assessing whether students had achieved the stated outcomes for the Core. The quizzes were developed by the individual instructors of each of the courses to fit their specific course content, and were thus completely different from one another. The Undergraduate Committee will be developing an alternative method for assessment to put in place for the coming academic year. We have assigned two faculty members from the department (Profs. David Hopkins and Peter Krause) for this task.

4) Who interprets the evidence? What is the process? (Who in the department is responsible for interpreting the data and making recommendations for curriculum or assignment changes if appropriate? When does this occur?)

The Undergraduate Committee in Political Science, headed by the Director of Undergraduate Studies. With the quiz method noted above, the DUS made available the results to the instructors, and the instructors were responsible for making any changes to their courses. The method had been used for a number of years in much the same fashion, so a new method for assessment is needed to probe the achievements in a different way to gain useful data. As noted above, the committee will be developing a different method for assessing achievements in the core.

5) What were the assessment results and what changes have been made as a result of using this data/evidence? (What were the major assessment findings? Have there been any recent

changes to your curriculum or program? How did the assessment data contribute to those changes?

As noted above, the instructors of the courses were given the results of their quiz, and they were asked to consider the results in making changes to their courses.

6) Date of the most recent program review. (Your latest comprehensive departmental self-study and external review.)

May 2012.