2012-2013 Assessment Report
Program: Public Admin. & Public Policy, PHD

College of Liberal Arts

Political Science

Public Admin. & Public Policy, PHD

Expected Outcome 1: Knowledge of Literature/Critical and Creative Responses
When they complete the PhD coursework, students will have attained knowledge of the critical and relevant literature in the broad fields of Public Administration and Public Policy and will be able to critically and creatively respond to questions about the same.

Assessment Method 1: Written Comprehensive Exams
Assessment Method Description
Students take a written comprehensive exam covering four required core courses and three required track courses. Relevant graduate faculty grade the exams according to a scoring rubric.

Comprehensive Exams Scoring Rubric
(In parentheses suggested explanation of category, etc)

Standard 1. Knowledge of Relevant Literature on Subject

1. Not Demonstrated (no or few authors/concepts cited)
2. Significant problems (some lit there but several concepts/authors wrong)
3. Adequate (enough authors/concepts presented to demonstrate knowledge of several parts of the literature)
4. Mastered Material (demonstrates a broad knowledge and understanding of the literature)
5. Superior Response (demonstrates a superior understanding of concepts, critiques, linkages, etc across a broad range of authors and ideas)

Standard 2. Ability to Critically and Creatively Respond to Questions in the Relevant Field

1. Not Demonstrated (does not address question(s) asked and/or no ability to link literature to given question)
2. Significant Problems (addresses some of the question but does not use literature and/or
logic to support it; or, cites literature but response is not relevant to question)
3. Adequate (provides some synthesis of the relevant literature and answers questions based on logic/literature)
4. Mastered Skill (addresses question through synthesis of material, discussion of relevant debates/critiques about literature, and critically answers questions acknowledging multiple facets/arguments)
5. Superior Response (masters material-see 4 above-AND adds own thoughts, critiques, creative solutions, etc, that add or could add originality to the literature/question answer)

Standard 3. Written Communication Skills

1. Not demonstrated (response is incomprehensible)
2. Significant Problems (contains some answers to questions, but uses extremely poor grammar and spelling and serious problems with organization)
3. Adequate (is reasonably organized and responsive to all parts of question, may contain some minor lapses in organization or grammar)
4. Mastered Skill (is well-organized, answers all parts of the question in some detail, contains few grammatical problems. Nothing major- authors, concepts- is misspelled)
5. Superior Response (is well organized with thesis statements and continuous flow, answers all parts of the question in a detailed, concise manner, is easy to read, and has very few grammatical problems)
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Comments:

Findings
A score of "3" (on a scale of 1-5) is considered a passing grade. While this has not always been the case, in Fall 2012, 12 of 12 students taking the exam scored at least a "3" on their core questions. The policy track questions, however, saw only 2 of 6 earn the score of "3."

How did you use findings for improvement?
Faculty have yet to use these findings to see how they can help students improve their performance on the policy track questions.

Additional Comments
While they have yet to do so, faculty will assess these results and adopt concrete measures to help students attain this expected outcome.
Expected Outcome 2: Obtain in-field Employment
When they complete the PhD degree, students will be able to successfully obtain employment in areas related to public administration and public policy.

Assessment Method 1: Tracking Graduates
Assessment Method Description
Students are now tracked through their comprehensive exams, dissertation defenses, and subsequent employment.

Findings
In the last academic year, the program graduated six PhDs: two are in tenure track slots in academia, one returned to her native country for employment, one stayed in her existing job, and two are still actively seeking academic jobs.

How did you use findings for improvement?
The program set up a job placement assistance process. Department funds have also been set aside for graduate student travel to academic conferences for paper presentations. The program is also encouraging students to send out quality papers to scholarly journals. In addition, other money is now set aside to send gifted PhD students to an intensive statistical training program which enhances both their abilities and their CVs.

Additional Comments