Expected Outcome 1: Ability to Critique Arguments
When they complete this degree program, students will be able to critique arguments in public administration and public policy.

Assessment Method 1: Senior Survey
Assessment Method Description
A survey of graduating seniors contained this question: "My major courses helped me develop skills for analyzing arguments and evidence about politics."

In addition to the department survey referenced above, the exit survey administered by the University received 11 responses to the following questions which bear on an ability to critique arguments: Students were asked to rate their ability at graduation. Three questions seem relevant:
1) Read analytically and critically (on a 4.0 scale of ability rating)
2) Construct effective arguments in support of a position
3) Critique someone else’s argument

Direct assessment methods are not available for this assessment period

Findings
Of the 42 seniors questioned 79 percent (N=33) said that they had developed such skills.

1) Read analytically and critically (3.36 on a 4.0 scale of ability rating)
2) Construct effective arguments in support of a position (3.36)
3) Critique someone else’s argument (3.18)

How did you use findings for improvement?
The results of this survey caused faculty to put increasing stress on
policy analysis in several of their other classes so that students were better equipped to intelligently and confidently critique arguments.

Additional Comments

Expected Outcome 2: Effective Written Communication
When they complete this degree program, students will be able to write effectively about a public policy issue including describing a problem facing a public or non-profit decision-maker and proposing a policy to treat the problem.

Assessment Method 1: Written Papers
Assessment Method Description
A group project in POLI-5379 Non-Profit Management in Spring 2012 was used to assess this outcome. The class was divided into five groups. Each group composed a 20-page paper that described an actual non-profit and the successes and challenges that it experienced.

Findings
A core committee of curricular faculty found that one of the five papers submitted was adequate in terms of the effectiveness of the writing that was assessed. The other four exceeded the normal expectations for the quality of such work.

How did you use findings for improvement?
Having observed what constituted a solid paper in this particular course, curricular faculty members began to put more emphasis on similar policy analysis assignments in several of their other classes.

Additional Comments
The new director of the Public Administration BA and MPA programs took her position in January 2013 when the previous director retired.