

## DEPARTMENT OF POLITICAL SCIENCE

### 2004 Assessment Plan

#### **University Mission Statement**

In 1991, the Kansas Board of Regents approved the following mission statement for Wichita State University:

Wichita State University is committed to providing comprehensive educational opportunities in an urban setting. Through teaching, scholarship, and public service, the University seeks to equip both students and the larger community with the educational and cultural tools they need to thrive in a complex world, and to achieve both individual responsibility in their own lives and effective citizenship in the local, national, and global community.

High quality teaching and learning are fundamental goals in all undergraduate, graduate, and continuing education programs. Building on a strong tradition in the arts and sciences, the University offers programs in business, education, engineering, fine arts, and health professions, as well as in the liberal arts and sciences. Wichita State has 113 degree programs that range from the associate to the doctoral level; non-degree programs are designed to meet the specialized educational and training needs of individuals and organizations in south central Kansas.

Scholarship, including research, creative activity, and artistic performance, is designed to advance the University's goals of providing high quality instruction, making original contributions to knowledge and human understanding, and serving as an agent of community service. This activity is a basic expectation of all faculty members at Wichita State University.

Public and community service activities seek to foster the cultural, economic, and social development of a diverse metropolitan community and of the state of Kansas . The University's service constituency includes artistic and cultural agencies, business and industry, and community, educational, governmental, health, and labor organizations.

Wichita State University pursues its mission utilizing the human diversity of Wichita, the state's largest metropolitan community, and its many cultural, economic, and social resources. The University faculty and professional staff are committed to the highest ideals of teaching, scholarship, and public service, as the University strives to be a comprehensive, metropolitan university of national stature.

#### **Mission of Fairmount College of Liberal Arts and Sciences**

The mission of Fairmount College of Liberal Arts and Sciences is to cultivate intellectual curiosity and foster contemplation of the human experience and the natural world. Faculty members are dedicated to creating, expanding, applying, and preserving knowledge, and to introducing students to the scholarship, theories, methods, and perspectives of their widely



diverse disciplines. A liberal arts and sciences education develops transferable analytical skills—the capacity to gather and interpret information, think critically, and communicate effectively—and stimulates a lifelong love of learning that enriches graduates and their communities.

### **Mission of the Department of Political Science**

The Department of Political Science supports both the mission of the University and the mission of Fairmount College of Liberal Arts and Sciences through teaching, research, and service in order to help students become more effective citizens in acquiring an understanding of local, national, and global matters.

The purpose of the Department of Political Science is to stimulate intellectual curiosity about the discipline of political science and to encourage students to develop critical and analytical skills about different aspects of the political world. Specifically, the Political Science Department builds on a core curriculum that is determined by the University and Fairmount College of Liberal Arts and Sciences. The department offers a broad program of study, which introduces students to the major areas of the discipline with courses in American politics, comparative politics, international politics, and political theory. One goal is to help students develop an understanding of the forces shaping the political world, both domestically and internationally, and to develop skills in interpreting past, present, and future political events. In addition, the study of political science prepares students for further study and for entry into a variety of career opportunities such as law, government, journalism, teaching, business, public service, theology, and the military.

At present, political science majors are required to take a specific introductory course in each of the following fields: American politics, Comparative politics, International relations, and Political theory. A Senior Seminar is required of all majors, and an additional eighteen hours can be selected from the departmental offerings to complete the degree requirements. The Senior Seminar includes segments on each of the four major fields of the discipline. The goal is to help students integrate their prior learning experiences within the discipline after they have completed a minimum of eighteen hours of political science course work. Each professor in the department is responsible for teaching a segment of the course, and each student, in consultation with a faculty member selected by the student, is required to write a research paper and to make an oral presentation on the paper before the faculty and students in the class.

The Political Science Department will create and maintain a file on each student who selects political science as a major. The department's administrative assistant will keep a current list of all political science majors and set up a file for each student. The paper that is prepared and defended in the Senior Seminar will be placed in the folder of each political science major. As soon as possible after a student declares political science as a major, the student will be reminded of this requirement for graduation. A three-member faculty committee, including

the professor chosen by the student to be the advisor for the paper, will read and evaluate each Senior Seminar paper. The rank-and-file members of the department will advise the chairperson of the department on matters of policies and procedures in assessing the educational outcomes of students.

### **Program Goals and Objectives**

**GOAL I**—Students will acquire substantive knowledge of American politics, comparative politics, international politics, and political theory.

**Objective No. 1**--Students will demonstrate knowledge in each of the four major fields listed under Goal I.

**Learner Outcome:** Each student will have a “C” or better average in all introductory and other courses selected for completion of the political science major requirements.

**GOAL II**—Students will acquire a knowledge of the discipline of political science and an ability to think critically and analytically about the political world.

**Objective No 1**—Students will demonstrate their general knowledge of political science, have an acquaintance with the methods of political inquiry, and have the ability to employ key disciplinary concepts in analyzing and thinking about politics at all levels of government.

#### **Learner Outcomes:**

1. All political science majors will take the Senior Seminar course and research, write, and defend their paper in class before faculty and students. This paper will be placed in the student’s file.
2. Students will be expected to employ disciplinary research tools and concepts and to use both primary and secondary sources in preparing the paper.
3. The paper should conclude with an evaluation of the importance of the topic and its placement in the wider world of politics.

**GOAL III**—Students will possess a knowledge and an awareness of the workings of the political world in applied political settings.

**Objective No. 1**—Students will participate in activities that will provide the opportunity to learn about the world of practical politics.

**Learner Outcomes:**

1. Students will attend public symposia and lectures on politics.
2. Students will choose from a variety of possibilities for learning about practical politics:
  - A. Enrolling in and participating in the Model United Nations program.
  - B. Enrolling in an election workshop and learning about electoral processes.
  - C. Working in an internship program at the local, state, or national level.
  - D. Enrolling in a course on practical politics and actually carrying out a project related to the course.
  - E. Participating in the Cooperative Education program by working in a political office at any level of government.

**Assessment Plans for Measuring the Goals and Objectives of the Undergraduate Program**

**In addition to the assessment that will take place in Goal No. II**, the Political Science Department will evaluate student accomplishments related to the goals and objectives established by the department by conducting exit interviews with all graduating students who are present and willing to be interviewed. The purpose is to determine students' perceptions of their educational experiences within the department.

Every five years, the Department will also conduct a survey of all students who have earned political science degrees in the preceding five years. The survey will ask them about educational, career, and public service activities that they have experienced, and how well they think the undergraduate major in political science prepared them for those activities. If financial support is provided, the Department would like to be reviewed by an external evaluator every five years.

**Submitted by Ken Ciboski, November 30, 2004.**

