**Oakland University**

**B.A. in Political Science**

**Assessment Plan**

**Revised March 2009**

**Approved by University Assessment January 2010**

Revised November 2012

**1. Citation of appropriate goals from Oakland University’s Mission Statement.**

a) “…develop the skills, knowledge, and attitudes essential for successful living and active concerned citizenship.”

b) “…prepare students for post-baccalaureate education (or) professional schools directly after graduation.”

*2. Specification of academic unit goals that flow from each of the cited university goals.*

a) “The B.A. degree seeks to develop critical thinking about our political and social values and objective analysis of political systems and structures.”

b) The B.A. degree with a major in political science is the department’s broadest program and is appropriate for students with an interest in public affairs or …who intend to enter law school or graduate school.”

*3. Operationalization of the unit’s goals into objectives for student learning.*

a) In a research paper, political science majors will demonstrate adequate knowledge or skills of the discipline, including: appropriate use of political science concepts and methods; appropriate use of political science literature, documents, and/or references; appropriate analytical content; and writing that is well-organized and well-written.”

*4. Description of the methods by which progress toward the operationalized unit goals will be measured.*

**Direct Measure**

1. Research paper assessed by multiple readers. PS majors in capstone courses will be required to produce a research paper or other substantial project. This assignment will draw upon political science literature and require students to apply some of the methodological techniques and critical thinking skills they have acquired in other classes. We will assess these papers/projects to see if the students meet the criteria as specified in category 3a above. These papers will be assessed both by the instructor of the capstone course and by other faculty in political science or an Alumni Advisory Board member (2 readers per paper). Each will use the same five-point rubric. Should a difference of more than two points occur with the first two readers, a third reader reviews the paper; the middle score is used as the final score.

**Indirect Measure**

b.1Student Surveys We will administer each term a survey of students in the capstone courses. These courses will enroll only majors and these students will be juniors or seniors so they will have more experience on which to make assessments. This survey will ask about the quality and rigor of the program, assessments of skills students think they have acquired, and contain open-ended questions asking for feedback. These will be easier to administer than focus groups and can provide us with information that we may use to adjust the curriculum in terms of content, methods, and expectations of students.

*5. List the individual(s) who have primary responsibility for administering assessment activities.*

a) All faculty may be asked to serve as readers for the research paper assessment. The instructor of the capstone course will also serve as a reader. Departmental Advisory Board (Alumni) members volunteer to serve as second readers also. The Chair of the department’s Curriculum and Assessment Committee will summarize the results in a report that will be reported to the department on a yearly basis.

b.1) The student survey will be administered during a class session of the capstone courses by the instructor. This instructor will submit the surveys to the Curriculum & Assessment Committee, which will summarize the results, discuss any findings, and report to the departmental faculty once a year for full discussion. *6. Describe the procedures used in your academic unit for translating assessment results into program changes.*

Departmental faculty members meet on a monthly basis throughout the academic year. At least one meeting per semester is devoted in part or in whole to assessment. Additional meetings dedicated specifically to assessment are called if needed. Departmental faculty members occasionally discuss assessment-related topics via email on an on-going basis.

Once results from the research papers and capstone student surveys are analyzed and reported, all full-time faculty participate in a discussion of the results and their impact on the program’s objectives. Due to the nature of some of our information gathering, actual programmatic changes usually aren’t contemplated until consistent results across different methods and measures (and over multiple years) indicate a definite trend that suggests program or curricular revisions.

Departmental faculty members are committed to continuous, on-going self-assessment. Results from all of our assessment data collection activities are regularly evaluated to determine if any program changes are indicated.