Objective Assessed: #5: Preparation for the Workplace (via POLI 395, Internship in Political Science)  

Direct Assessments
   · Site Supervisors’ Evaluations of POLI Student Interns (5 students)
   · Student Interns’ Evaluations of Their Internships and Placements (4 students)

Indirect Assessment
   · Course Grade for POLI 395, Internship in Political Science

Description and Introductory Analysis of Results

These analyses are based on political science (POLI) majors’ internship evaluation forms received by June 15, 2015, including those from internship site supervisors and from students enrolled in POLI 395, Internship in Political Science, Summer 2014, Winter 2014-2015, and Spring 2015. Five POLI majors enrolled in POLI 395. Each student interned in a different location: a judge’s office, Hermitage House (a correctional and therapeutic program for juveniles), the office of Governor Tom Corbett, State Senator Sean Wiley’s office, and the borough of Brentwood, Pennsylvania. Thus, students have shown interest in learning more about workplaces of elected officials (Governor Corbett and Senator Wiley), a local government (borough of Brentwood), and an agency that serves the adjudicated juvenile population (Hermitage House).

Direct Assessments: Political Science Majors’ Internship Evaluations by Site Supervisors

Supervisors’ Evaluations: Quantitative and Qualitative Analyses

The analysis of the quantitative data (see Appendix) demonstrates that each internship site supervisor indicated that he or she would “definitely” consider the intern for a position with his/her department. Supervisors stated that 2014-2015 political science student interns were prepared as well or better than interns from other universities and colleges (2.55/3). They reported that POLI student interns’ work met or exceeded their expectations (2.6/3.0). In addition, POLI interns scored high on preferred employee qualities, including dependability (4.9/5), interpersonal and relationship skills (4.87/5), initiative (4.75/5), flexibility and adjustment to changing circumstances (4.97/5), critical thinking (4.97/5), as well as appearance, attitude, and character (4.93/5) and punctuality, attendance, and responsiveness (5/5). Each score in the last group of qualities was based on the possibility of receiving a 1 (very poor) to 5+ (exceptional performance), using a 5-point Likert scale.

Direct Assessments: Political Science Majors’ Internship Evaluations by POLI Student Interns
Student Interns’ Evaluations: Quantitative and Qualitative Analyses

Each of the 2014-2015 Political Science student interns (4 of 4) recommends that future political science majors who are interested in experiential learning consider his or her internship site. Each item that interns evaluated provided them with choices that ranged from 1 = Poor to 5 = Outstanding. Analysis of the POLI 395 internship program shows that students highly rated such qualities as access to internship information as the department’s website and pre-internship informational sessions (4.75/5) and the quality and frequency of faculty supervision and contact (4.75/5). Students were more critical in their evaluation of Edinboro University or Department of Political Science assistance with internship placement: as a group, they rated it between “good” (3) and “very good” (4): their rating was 3.67 (of a possible 5).

Each student intern evaluated his or her internship site as being “outstanding” (5/5) for providing learning and growth opportunities, helping with preparedness for a career in this field, and for the general quality of his/her internship experience. Student interns’ average rating for the quality of on-site internship supervision was 4.75/5: between excellent and outstanding.

Indirect Assessment: Interns’ Final Grades in POLI 395

Two students earned an A, two earned a B+, and one student earned a B in POLI 395, Internship in Political Science (Summer 2014, Winter 2014-2015, and Spring 2015). This assessment confirms the students’ site supervisors’ positive evaluations of these interns. The criteria that Edinboro University faculty members considered when they graded student interns were the quality of their internship logs/journals, a 15-page research paper, and internship site supervisors’ evaluations.

Evaluation of and Suggestions for Political Science Students’ Preparation for the Workplace

These quantitative and qualitative results of political science student interns’ and supervisors’ evaluations, and students’ internship grades, indicates that the political science program has been successful in achieving its goals in Objective 5: Preparation for the workplace between Summer 2014 and Spring 2015. The political science program has assessed this criterion by reviewing political science interns’ evaluation forms as well as those completed by their internship site supervisors.

Results of direct and indirect assessments demonstrate that political science majors who have chosen to register for internships have been well prepared for the rigors of such an experience, and understood the expectations of Edinboro University, the Department of Political Science and Criminal Justice, and their internship sites – a state senator’s office, an agency that serves adjudicated juveniles, a judge’s office, the office of the governor, and a Pennsylvania borough office. Students who have chosen this experiential learning opportunity comprise a selective population. They have earned an Edinboro University GPA of 2.0 or higher and a political science major GPA of 2.5 or higher. Although these analyses describe a small number of students (five interns from three semesters), the information that we have analyzed shows that the application process that has led to political science internships at Edinboro University ensured that quality students have been placed in excellent internship opportunities.

As some interns noted in their comments, in several cases, students have found their own internships, possibly based on their personal connections, discussions with faculty members, and/or review of internship opportunities listed in binders placed in the political science and criminal justice students’ resource center. Compared with their answers to other questions associated with the political science internship, students rated University and Department assistance with placement lower (3.67 of a possible 5: between
good and excellent) than other internship qualities. Thus, as recommended in an earlier assessment, faculty could speak about potential internship opportunities, including the program in general and selected internship sites, with their students and advisees. Faculty members could inform their lower-level students (POLI 100 through 103) that they will need at least a 2.0 Edinboro University GPA and 2.5 GPA in political science courses, and at least 60 credit hours. In addition, they could tell students about recent political science students’ internship sites and The Harrisburg Internship Semester (THIS). Political science majors and alumni who have served as interns could speak with majors about their internship experiences in the first semester FYE course, at internship informational meetings, and at Law, Government, and Criminal Justice Days in the future. The binders in the POCJ student resource center that hold information about potential internships should be updated regularly, including current contact persons and their phone numbers and websites. As faculty members receive announcements about potential internships, they should add copies of them to the binders holding potential internship information. In addition, faculty members could tell each other about new internship sites when they hear and read about them, using email and at faculty meetings. Finally, faculty members could communicate information about new internship sites through the Department’s Facebook and Twitter sites.

During the time period assessed, political science majors who participated in the Harrisburg Internship Semester (and their site supervisors) did not complete the forms discussed earlier. In the future, they should do so, in order for the Department to learn more about the THIS program, potential internship sites, and their students’ abilities and opinions about their internship semester.

**Action Items Proposed** for 2015-2016 academic year, based on political science program objectives

**Objective 1. Knowledge of politics**

- Consideration and possible development and adoption of a general objective test (e.g. 100 multiple choice items) that covers American politics, political theory, international relations, and comparative politics, to be given in POLI 507 (Seminar in Political Science)

**Objective 4. Effective communication skills**

- Consideration, development, and adoption of rubrics for oral presentation and written papers
- Development and adoption of assignments that emphasize oral communications skills

**Objective 5. Preparation for the workforce**

- Faculty communications with students and each other about newly-announced internship sites
- More frequent faculty communication with students about the internship program and its requirements
- Inclusion of The Harrisburg Semester Internship participants in the evaluation process
- Updating and maintenance of binders (in student resource center) listing POCJ internships
- Updating information about internships in POCJ social media sites
- Systematic tracking of political science majors who take POLI 395 over the data collection period

**Action Items Implemented & Continuing to Implement** (2014-2015 academic year or earlier)
Objective 1. Knowledge of politics (assessed 2013-2014; to be assessed 2017-2018)
· New and reintroduced political science courses: Dr. Jim Fisher’s Reproductive Politics (POLI 375, Fall 2014 and Fall 2015) and Dr. Rhonda Matthews’s Hip-hop, Rap, Politics, and Action (FYE 103, Fall 2015). Dr. Jeffery offered POLI 305, Politics and the Environment (last taught, Spring 1998).
· Dr. Matthews prepared a new course, Politics and Popular Culture (POLI 203), which she will guide through Edinboro University’s curriculum process in the future.
· Dr. Gerry Gendlin taught a new course, POLI 350, Terrorism, in Spring 2014.
· The new concentration in international studies has been approved for the B.A. in Political Science.

Objective 2. Critical analysis skills (assessed 2012-2013; to be assessed 2016-2017)
· POLI 507, Seminar in Political Science, is now a required capstone course.
· Papers from POLI 507, Seminar in Political Science, to be analyzed for assessment
· The former POLI 480, Research Methods, is now POLI 300, Political Analysis. Students are advised to take this course earlier so they can use research skills in higher-level courses.

Objective 3. Practical application of knowledge & skills (assessed 2012-2013; to be assessed 2016-17)
· Reintroduction in Spring 2015 of POLI 507, Seminar in Political Science, as a required capstone course
· Papers from POLI 507, Seminar in Political Science, may be analyzed for future assessments

Objective 4. Effective communication skills (assessed 2011-2012; to be assessed 2015-2016)
· Students enrolled in lower-level courses complete written assignments each semester.
· Upper-level courses’ students’ written assignments can be assessed for communications skills.

· Revision of the Dept. of Political Science and Criminal Justice Dept.’s internship evaluation tool
· Revision of the Department’s internship information on its website, www.edinboro.edu/departments/pocj/internships, including the Internship Manual, selected internship announcements, and links to criminal background check and child abuse clearance forms (some internships may demand that students complete these)
· Continuing collection and analysis of student interns’ and supervisors’ evaluation forms for POLI 395, Internship in Political Science, for future assessments