
Department of Political Science (and International Relations) Annual Report 2014-15

During the 2014-15 academic year, the Department of Political Science (12 tenured faculty, two tenure-track faculty, one full-time non-tenure-track faculty, nine adjuncts, and one executive aide) offered a total of 167 classes, including 44 general education courses and 11 online courses, enrolling 2,058 students and generating 6,563 credit hours, and supervised 291 credit hours of internships for 61 students. The Department and Department faculty administered two baccalaureate programs, three concentrations, six minors, including three interdisciplinary minors, a number of highly active student organizations and intercollegiate academic teams, and a master's degree program in international affairs, and continued its work to strengthen the quality of our programs, enhance student participation through a range of active learning initiatives, improve self-assessment, and develop and promote strategies to improve student success and retention. Department faculty also contributed to scholarship through research and publications, and participated actively in wide range of professional and institutional endeavors on campus, in the community, and around the world.

Of immense recognition, this past spring, three of the four University student awards were given to students from the Political Science Department. Though the institution sports upwards of 30 departments, 75% of the recipients this year came from just one of those.

This brief report provides an overview of the work of the Department during the year, presents the results from the major assessment tools used to evaluate student learning outcomes, and a brief plan for 2015-16.

I. YEAR IN REVIEW

Overview

- 167 classes enrolling 2,058 students
- 44 sections of the general education courses PS 1005 and PS 1010;
- 61 internships totaling 291 credit hours, including the Washington Center program and the Legislative internship program;
- Total of 6,563 credit hours for fall and spring;

Majors (fall 2014)

- Political Science
 - 90 General Focus
 - 143 Pre-law concentration
 - 25 Public Administration concentration

- 7 Teaching Licensure
- 63 - International Relations
(328 Total Undergraduate majors)
- 13 Masters in International Affairs

New Students

- 37 New First Time Freshman (fall 2014/spring 2015)
- 45 New Transfers (fall 2014/spring 2015)

Graduates (summer 2014/fall 2014/spring 2015)

- 65 - Political Science
- 17 - International Relations
- 5 – Masters in International Affairs

Recognition and Awards

- Student Awards. Last year, three of the four university awards went to majors within our department. International Relations major **Tandra Martin** (4.0 GPA) received the President's Award: the most prestigious award given to an MTSU student. Tandra also received a Boren Scholarship to study in Morocco. **Joseph (Davis) Thompson**, a political science major (4.0 GPA), received the Provost's Award for academic achievement. Davis served as an intern in the office of the First Lady. Not only did Tandra and Davis receive the university's two most prestigious academic awards, but also the nationally-competitive Fulbright award. Tandra will use the award to study in South Africa, while Davis will be studying in the Slovak Republic. The university's Robert C. LaLance, Jr. Achievement Award honored **Nissi Monsegue** for her determination and leadership. In addition, International Relations major **Caitlin Henderson** received the prestigious Critical Language Scholarship, a program of the U.S. Department of State, Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs, to study Chinese at the Beijing Language and Culture University over the summer.
- Faculty Student Success Award: **David Carleton** received the College of Liberal Arts award for promoting student success.
- Academic Performance Award for 2014-15 based on student performance on the Major Field Test.

Student Success Initiatives

- Student success initiatives marking the year include the **Virtual Mentoring Program** allowing students to consult with former graduates working in a wide range of fields; the retooling of PS 1005 and PS 1010 as part of the **course redesign** program; and the development of a new one credit hour course **PS 2000 Political Science and International Relations as a Profession** that will help students integrate career plans into a curriculum strategy. In addition, the Department participated in the University's course redesign project. In the fall, David Carleton and Vanessa Lefler redesigned PS 1010, teaching section of the retooled course in the spring, while Lisa Langenbach and Kent Syler began work to redesign PS 1005 in the spring. They will teach sections of the revised course in the coming fall.

Programmatic Changes

- New, required 1 credit hour course PS 2000 Political Science and International Relations.
- New course, PS 3270 NGOs and Non-profits
- Revised the requirements to the minor in Political and Civic Engagement to provide greater flexibility and more options to the students
- Revised the requirements to the teaching licensure program.
- Gained approval for the Accelerated Bachelors to Masters (ABM) Program: a program that will allow students to earn a B.A or B.S. in International Relations and an M.A. in International Affairs in just a little over 5 years.
- Gained approval to add the B.A. option to the degree in International Relations

Recruitment and Marketing

- As part of a promotional program, the Department gained approval to change the name of the department to **Political Science and International Relations** and the names of the two general education courses (PS 1005 Introduction to American Politics and PS 1010 Introduction to Global Politics). In addition, the department purchased T-shirts and decals featuring the department's name and logo and some rather edgy yard signs advertising courses in political science.
- Engaged in a range of recruitment initiatives including the mailing of materials and calls to potential students and special letters to students receiving a grade of 'A' in our two general education courses. We also began to reach out to colleagues in the main feeder community colleges.

Departmental Events / Activities

- Organized and Sponsored:
 - Tutoring for PS 1005, PS 1010 and PS 3001;
 - Mid-Term Election Pre-game Show with Kent Syler (fall);
 - Law School and the Legal Profession, by Alberto Gonzalez of Belmont University law school (fall);
 - LSAT Practice Test and Prep Sessions (fall and spring);
 - Frank Essex Practitioner Roundtable with Michael Hagley (spring);
 - Night at the Predators (fall and spring);
 - PS/IR Alumni Speaker (part of the CLA Alumni Day) featuring Larry Harrington (spring);
 - Mock Trial, Moot Court, Mediation, and Model UN. The student organizations competed in multiple national competitions;
 - Spring picnic;
 - Retirement reception for Mario Perez-Rielly;
 - Coffee and donuts during exam week.

Communications

- Publication of Department Newsletter (Fall and Spring)
- Maintain and utilize e-mail list of majors
- Internship Bulletin Board and Posters

- Redesigning of the Department's web pages.

Faculty

- Research.

In the area of research, Department faculty presented scholarly work at 18 academic conferences during the year, including meetings of the American Society for Public Administration, the American Political Science Association, the International Studies Association, the African Studies Association, the Asian Studies Association, and the National Conference of Black Political Scientists, among others. Faculty publications include "Strategic Forum Selection and Compliance in Interstate Dispute Resolution" by Vanessa Lefler, published in the journal *Conflict Management and Peace Science*; two articles on migration by Andrei Korobkov published in peer review journals in Russia; a book chapter by Sekou Franklin entitled, "Race, class and green jobs in low-income communities in the US: challenges for community development" published in *Class, Inequality and Community Development*; a book chapter by Steven Livingston entitled "Understanding and Analyzing International Competitiveness," published in a book by the same name; two book chapters by John Maynor: "Should Republican Liberty as Non-domination Be Outsourced?" in *Domination across Borders* and "Transnational Republicanism: A Challenge Too Far" in *Confronting Perspectives: Political or Philosophical Grounds for Constitutional Law*; and the chapter "Watching the Defectives: Identity, Invisibility, and What the Squib Saw" by Robb McDaniel soon to appear in the edited volume entitled *Harry Potter for Nerds II*. In addition, as editor of the journal *Global Commerce*, Livingston authored the lead articles for the four issues that appeared during the year, and Moses Tesi submitted a book manuscript entitled *Cameroon's Foreign Policy: Relations with France, Francophone Africa and Nigeria*.

- Service

Faculty also offered extensive service to the institution, the local community, and the profession during the course of the year. Examples of service to the institution include Lisa Langenbach's work as an Online Faculty Mentor, RODP master course developer, and on the Online Faculty Committee, as well as her role in coordinating the Department's internship program; David Carleton's presentation to the new Faculty Learning Community on Citizenship, his participation in the college's SWOT committee, and his service on the Distinguished Lecture Funds Committee; Sekou Franklin and Robb McDaniel's service on the Faculty Senate. Service to the community during the year includes presentations by Sekou Franklin to the Interdenominational Ministerial Fellowship in Nashville, the Davidson County Democratic Party Executive Committee, the L-Club in Nashville, and the State Convention of the Tennessee NAACP; Steven Livingston's service as an advisor/consultant to the Tennessee Department of Economic and Community Development's International Business (Division of Trade), and the Office of Business Enterprise (BERO) ECD International Division; and Zhen Wang's mentoring a Central Magnet School thesis and participating in MTSU's delegation to the Consulate-General of Japan at Nashville. Also within the local community, Kent Syler emerged as the public face of the department, appearing numerous times on local news stations including: WTVF *Morning Line*, WTVF *Open Line*, WTVF *Inside Politics*, and WGNS *The Truman Show*. He was also quoted in or

on: *The Tennessean*, *Daily News Journal*, *WGNS*, *WMOT*, *WSM*, *WTVF*, and the *Murfreesboro Post*. Examples of service to the profession include Andrei Korobkov's work on a project on "The Russian Academic Diaspora Abroad," administered by the Russian International Affairs Council and the New Eurasia Foundation and his election to the position of vice-president and program chair of the International Studies Association Comparative Interdisciplinary Studies Section; Moses Tesi's service as editor of the *Journal of African Policy Studies*; and John Maynor's service on the editorial board of the journal *Contemporary Political Theory*.

II. ASSESSMENTS

Major Field Test

	U.S. Gov't	International/Comparative	Public Administration	Normative/Empirical Theory	OVERALL
All Seniors (n=54)	479	506	550	530	527
PS (n=22)	488	516	555	546	540
Pre-law (n=17)	489	493	556	516	523
Pub. Adm. (n=3)	462	461	555	512	505
IR (n=12)	458	540	541	526	527

Scores on the Major Field Test for 2014-15 were down slightly for PS majors from 538 in 2013-14, but slightly higher for IR majors from 518 the prior year.

General Education Test

Major	Mean	Analytical 0-7	Deduction 0-17	Evaluation 0-11	Induction 0-17	Inference 0-16
IR (n=11)	17	4.5	6.7	4.9	9.5	6.8
PS (n=55)	17	4.8	7.5	5.1	9.9	7.5
Liberal Arts (n=451)	18	4.7	7.5	5.2	10.2	7.8
MTSU (n=2667)	16.7	4.5	7.2	4.6	9.5	7.6
Major	Mean	Analytical 0-7	Deduction 0-17	Evaluation 0-11	Induction 0-17	Inference 0-16
IR (n=12)	17.7	4.4	7.4	5.7	10.3	7.6
PS (n=55)	18.4	4.5	7.8	5.7	10.6	8.2
Liberal Arts (n=453)	17.9	4.6	7.6	5.3	10.3	8.0
MTSU (n=2360)	16.9	4.5	7.1	4.7	9.8	7.7

Results for the General Education Test were down slightly from the prior year almost across the board. While in 2013-14, PS major surpassed the average for the college in each category, this year they did so in only one.

Student Evaluations

Student evaluations from the past spring 2014 semester and fall 2014 continued to rank teaching within the Department at or above the averages for the college and the university.

	Department Avg. /College Avg. / University Avg.	
	<u>Spring 2014</u>	<u>Fall 2014</u>
Presentation Ability	4.6/4.5/4.5	4.5/4.5/4.4
Organization & Clarity	4.5/4.5/4.4	4.4/4.5/4.4
Assignments & Grading	4.6/4.5/4.5	4.5/4.5/4.5
Scholarly Approach	4.6/4.5/4.4	4.5/4.5/4.4
Student Interactions	4.5/4.5/4.4	4.5/4.5/4.3
Motivating Students	4.4/4.3/4.3	4.3/4.3/4.2
Effectiveness & Worth	4.4/4.2/4.2	4.2/4.2/4.1

Senior Survey

The Senior Survey is a large instrument with many questions. The following pulls questions used as part of the Department’s institutional effectiveness report:

MTSU’s Contribution to Knowledge, Skills, Personal Development

Percent selecting “Somewhat” or “Very Much”

	PS	IR	CLA	MTSU
	(N = 46	9	461	2,811)
Q19 Applying scientific methods of inquiry	76	67	58	71
Q22 Developing tolerance for divergent views	80	89	85	82
Q23 Understanding of diverse cultures and values	89	89	90	83
Q26 Appreciating racial and sexual equality	67	78	81	73

Major Degree Program

Percent selecting “Good” or “Excellent”

Q59 Content of courses in major	96	100	93	91
Q60 Availability of courses in major	80	89	77	72
Q62 Quality of instruction in major	89	78	91	85
Q64 Academic advising by faculty advisor	83	44	80	72
Q74 Opportunity to apply what was learned in classroom	83	78	88	83
Q76 Quality of courses in preparing for employment	74	50	75	76

Supplemental Questions

The Department asks a series of specific questions on the Senior Survey. These focus on advising, overall student satisfaction, and the rigor of the program:

Advising 2014-15

The ideal is for students to be advised from the start, relatively often, at least once a year, preferably by the same advisor, and find their advisor available. This year 49% first sought advising during their freshman year. This is down from 57% last year and 53% the prior year. At the same time, the percentage of respondents first seeking advising during their junior or senior year was 26%, up a bit from 23% last year but still down from the 32% in 2012-13. This year 71% sought advising at least once a year (down from 82% last year, but up from 66% the prior year). Though only 1 student reported not having been advised, 28% indicated only being advised once or twice. This is up from the 19% last year, but still below the 32% of respondents in 2012-13. In terms of advisor availability, the proportion claiming the advisor was always available stood at 79%, down slightly from 81% last year. Still, 7% claimed the advisor was frequently unavailable, up from 2% last year. Matching the results from the past two years, 65% reported seeing the same advisor on multiple occasions.

Satisfaction 2014-15

Levels of satisfaction with the educational experience in political science remained just slightly below last year with 60% very satisfied and another 31% somewhat satisfied.

Rigor 2014-15

This year 64% of students felt their political courses were much more difficult or somewhat more difficult than other courses, up slightly from 61% last year, with just 7% considering the courses much easier or somewhat easier, down from 12% last year.

III. Plans for 2015-16

Beyond further work in many of the areas mentioned above, the Department expects to recruit two new faculty, both in the area of public law, to replace Amanda DiPaolo who left in the spring of 2014 and Clyde Willis who will be retiring at the end of the coming year. These positions are vital to the pre-law program, the paralegal minor, and mock trial. In addition, the Department will seek to establish a collaborative relationship with local community colleges as a means to recruit transfer students, develop more rigorous assessment tools to evaluate interns and study abroad participants and students' research skills, and establish a system of peer evaluation of teaching and instruction. The Department also hopes to sponsor even more professional and academic events during the year and more effectively engage students both inside and outside the classroom.

*Submitted by Stephen D. Morris, Chair
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